By Douglas Long

WITH all the hype in recent months about Myanmar ending 50 years of isolation, it bears remembering that the secretary general of the United Nations from 1961 to 1971 was a top diplomat from Myanmar.

It’s also worth noting that 50 years ago this month, this particular secretary general, U Thant, not only presided over the UN during the Cuban Missile Crisis — one the most dire international emergencies of the 20th century — but also played a key role in ensuring that the situation did not devolve into an apocalyptic frenzy of nuclear destruction.

The crisis unfolded over 13 days in 1962, from October 16 to 28, after photos taken by U-2 spy plane pilot Richard Heyser alerted US president John F Kennedy to the presence of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba.

This revelation led the US government to mull airstrikes on Cuba, but Mr Kennedy went against the advice of many Senate leaders and instead implemented a naval blockade.

By October 24 the situation looked desperate: Reconnaissance photographs showed that the missiles in Cuba were in launch position and US and Soviet warships were engaged in a standoff, only a few hundred metres apart and pointing their weapons at one another.

On the same day, the US military’s five-level defense readiness condition (DEFCON) was advanced from Level 3 (increase in force readiness above normal readiness) to Level 2 (next step to nuclear war), still the highest in history.

Historically, there has been plenty of bluster from the US side about how military superiority forced the Soviets to back down but a report published in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists on October 12 details the crucial, and largely forgotten, role played by U Thant’s quiet, intelligent and tireless diplomacy in averting disaster.

The report – written by A Walter Dorn and Robert Pauk, and titled “The Closest Brush: How a UN Secretary General Averted Doomsday” – says that documents in the UN archives and oral histories show that U Thant “received a direct yet secret request from the United States, initiated by President Kennedy himself, to perform intermediary functions during the crisis”.

Thant also took bold initiatives of his own accord, “indeed, Thant seemed to have a fail-safe plan up his sleeve,” the report says.

However, the US military was not the only side to deploy its military assets in the crisis. A number of people were killed or seriously injured due to gunshot wounds inflicted by security forces on October 25. The accusations of bias were based on the fact that almost no Rohingya, or Bengalis, had sought treatment at hospitals. The Myanmar Times witnessed 14 Rakhine people with gunshot and knife wounds arrive at Kyauktaw Township Hospital between 6pm and 9pm on October 25. One man, from Tinnamkay village, died shortly after arrival from a gunshot wound to the head, while another died while being brought from Taungbyo village to the hospital by boat. The body of another deceased man with a gunshot wound was brought to Kyauktaw Hospital early on October 26.

“The forces only shot in order to frighten and disperse mobs. But they continued to shoot when the mobs became bigger so there may have been deaths due to gunshot wounds,” U Win Myaing told reporters in Sittwe on October 26.

“I in the incident in Letaungkauk village, Kyauktaw township, some were shot by handmade firearms known as tumi. In the aftermath, some tumi were confiscated,” he said.

U Win Myaing said communal clashes were sparked by a domestic dispute in a Rohingya family in Minbya township, with violence spreading to Kyaukpyu, Mrauk Oo, Myeboon, Kyauktaw and Rathetaung townships.

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Constitutional courts: you need an impartial umpire

By Sandar Lwin

How important is constitutional review and the role of the Constitutional Tribunal in the democratisation process? 

Constitutional review is extremely important in the process of democratisation. It is perhaps the most important of all. If the judiciary is not independent, if there is pressure exerted on the judges, or if they fear for their security, or if they have strong incentives to favour one or another political party – those judges are no longer independent arbitrators. 

There is a lot of discussion about the need for rule of law in Myanmar. But how important will judicial independence be in the Myanmar situation? It is perhaps the most important of all. If the judiciary is not independent, if there is pressure exerted on the judges, or if they fear for their security, or if they have strong incentives to favour one or another political party – those judges are no longer independent arbitrators.

Professor Wojciech Sadurski, a Challis professor in jurisprudence at the University of Sydney, on the impeachment of the Constitutional Tribunal and its implications for the democratisation process 

March 28, 2012 (submission no. 1/2012). I cannot really comment on the substance of the matter decided concerns a rather fine point of constitutional interpretation, namely, whether the matter decided concerns an “unionised organisations” in the constitutional sense. This is, in my view, not a matter of absolutely central significance for the political life of Myanmar – but the interpretation provided by the Constitutional Tribunal is extremely important because it provides everyone with an authoritative reasoning about how to understand the constitution. The tribunal has engaged in an interpretation referring to the legislative provisions, which is perfectly understandable. I find the quality and the seriousness of the tribunal's reasoning admirable. 

They should be reasonably well paid (within the limits that the state budget (can afford) so that their temptations for corruption are minimised. The independence of constitutional courts should be assured – either for a defined term (with no possibility of reappointment) or permanently, until the retirement age. But the major wrong is that judges are less self-disciplined in the political culture on the part of judicial and legislative branches. Politicians should know that any attempt to influence an oceanic judge is absolutely inadmissible.

In terms of impeachment of members of the judiciary – what kind of process is that be and should it be used? 

Impeachment should be a method of the last resort – and use fairly in extreme circumstances. A procedure for impeachment should be such that a different political body initiates the process (for instance, the legislature or the executive) and a different political body (the constitutional tribunal or a court). In such a way, a possibility of using impeachment for political purposes or as vengeance is avoided.

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How should a democratising country like Myanmar go about encouraging an independent judiciary? 

Judges should be appointed in a way that minimises their dependency on the executive branch.
Govt warns of crackdown
Legal action will be taken against those inciting Rakhine violence ‘behind the scenes’

By Ei Ei Toe Lwin

THE government has warned of a planned crackdown against unnamed people and organisations it accuses of manipulating the violent incidents in Rakhine State “behind the scenes”.

A front-page statement in state media on October 26 threatened to expose those responsible and said “legal action will be taken against them”.

The statement, dated October 25, referred to recent rioting in Kyaukpyu, Minbya, Myeik and Mrauk U townships that has left 67 dead and 80 wounded, and caused widespread property damage. Following the riots in Rakhine State in May and June, in which about 80 people died, President U Thein Sein declared a state of emergency in the region.

The October riots began in Yaing Thal village, Minbya township.

“We don’t know exactly what the problem was, but the violence spread. Both communities (Rakhine and Muslim) clashed and set fire to each other’s houses,” said U Myo Thant, a communications officer of the Information and Records Committee of Rakhine State, told The Myanmar Times on October 25.

The committee was established on June 5 by the Rakhine State government and central government departments.

“We can’t say how many Rakhine people and how many Muslims died in the violence. Muslim houses suffered more damage than Rakhine houses. Only Rakhine injured came to the camps, but that doesn’t mean no Muslims were injured. The state government sent medical personnel to the Muslim villages, but we don’t have a list of casualties yet,” said U Myo Thant.

“As of last night the situation is stable,” he said on October 26, adding that state police and Tatmadaw and security forces had managed to restore order. Food and aid were being provided in camps and other locations.

“We’re living in fear,” said Mrauk U resident U Maung Shal. “There are more Muslims than Rakhine. The security forces are being blamed, but we have no evidence.”

The courts have been handed a bill of about 500,000 US dollars for damages.

On October 26, U Zaw Htay, director of the President’s office, announced on his Facebook page that every Myanmar citizen was equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess and practise religion subject to the other provisions of the Constitution.

“The government has allowed the festival to take place,” agreed Ko Mya Aye. “But we cannot say exactly what kind of problem will happen when and where they will appear. We need to pay close attention to ensure problems like this do not develop. Rule of law is very weak in our country.”

However, other 88 Generation leaders said they suspected there were “extreme” elements behind the latest outbreak, an oblique reference to some in Rakhine State’s Muslim community.

“It is a trap to make our country go backwards at a time when it is marching towards democracy. It is a transitional period, a very sensitive time for our country,” Ko Min Ko Naing said.

Ko Mya Aye said the government should solve the problems by following the law closely and without discrimination against either Rakhine or Muslim.

“In accordance to the state constitution, every citizen is equally entitled to freedom. We want to solve this issue within the framework of constitution. If one person commits a crime, the government must punish them according to the law,” Ko Mya Aye said.

On October 26, President U Thein Sein, during his speech to the nation, warned of a planned crackdown against unnamed people and organisations it accuses of manipulating the violent incidents in Rakhine State “behind the scenes”.

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from page 1

Rakhine violence

Mrauk-U towns, Northeast. According to local people and media reports, 72 injured, including 68 men and four women, including 10 children, and 229 homes destroyed. The town had been cleared of the situation by the Myanmar government two months before the violence erupted on October 21.

"Because we heard Bengalis could be possibly killed, we went there to confirm whether Rakhine violence has happened there," he said. "One security forces was shot down from a distance. A person died instantly. And I the situation was "calm" after security forces were deployed to the area."

"There are small Rakhine villages among the Bengalis' big villages . . . our locals depend on only the army for security because we have no permission to control the territory duty during curfew. We want the army to stay between the minority Rakhine and the villages of the majority Bengali, and if the situation does not improve, they must leave," he said. "The army is not on the robots stopped at around 1600 to 1700, the six violence hut transportations for Thae Chaung refugee camp on the morning of October 25, O Win Myaing said:"

He said the state government did not allow them to land and instead arranged for them to disembark at a temporary site on Sin Naaw Island in the Pha Yone Kar Archaeological on October 26.

"We have to accept any more [Rohingya] in Thae Chaung village among the minority Rakhine villages. . . . if the number is more than the million, a day on refugee camps in Rakhine State . . . our security forces are deployed as reinforcements."

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**NLD members in Pathein to resign**

By Kyaw Hsu Mon

UP to 500 National League for Democracy members from Ayeayarwady Region's Pathein township are expected to resign in the coming days over the selection of delegates for the party's upcoming national assembly, sources said last week.

U Nyunt Hlaing, who won a seat in Pathein in the 1990 election for the NLD, who resigned on October 10, told The Myanmar Times the members had decided to leave the party because the headquarter had chosen newer members to take part in organising the assembly, rather than those who had struggled for the party for decades.

He said about 290 members will resign on October 27 and expects this figure to increase to more than 500 in the coming days.

"We've been working for the NLD for more than two decades but the top leaders don't know how hard we worked at the community level. For example, we organised the campaign groups for all the candidates and were not included when the party organised the assembly commission (for Pathein township). The head office directly appointed people who are very close with the leaders," he said.

The election campaign team features 21 members, most of whom had been with the party since 1990.

"I thought it was not fair for us. We've been working hard for the party, that is why we won in the by-elections, but the head office doesn't care about us," he said.

The NLD plans to hold its first national assembly before the end of the year and has assigned the task of selecting delegates at the village and township level to the party's head office in some townships, including Pathein and Pyigyitagun township in Mandalay Region. (See related story above.)

"We want the top leaders to recognise what the ordinary members are doing for the party and not directly appoint new members who are close to them... it is not fair for us and that is why we will resign," U Nyunt Hlaing said.

He said the party's other representative for Pathein from 1990, Dr Than Htike, also planned to resign.

"We'll continue our social work for our local area independent of the party," he said, adding that there are about 1400 NLD members in the township.

Speaking at a meeting in Yangon on October 17, NLD co-founder and vice chairman U Tin Oo urged party members to resolve their grievances over the party's organisation of the upcoming national assembly "with unity''.

He said at a press conference in Yangon on October 17 that all levels of the party need to be united and problems should be solved within the party.

"There will be some errors because we have no experience (holding a party assembly). So I'd like to urge our party members to solve the controversies between each other with patience," U Tin Oo said.

U Nyan Win, the secretary of the coordination organising the assembly, told The Myanmar Times last week that those appointed to help organise the commission would not receive any permanent post and their responsibilities would end after the assembly.

"I'd like to request all party members to participate democratically," he said.

U Khin Maung Swe, a former NLD member and now chairman of the National Democratic Force, said NLD members had a responsibility to maintain the party's "good reputation" and status.

"They need to take this responsibility seriously... they should solve this problem internally through democratic means," he said.

"In my experience, there are many people who are just seeking a place in every party but there are also people who are working hard for their party. It's up to the leaders to work out who falls into which category."

**Daw Suu warns journalists about misuseing growing media influence**

By Phyo Wai Kyaw

NATIONAL League for Democracy members in Pyigyitagun township began a campaign to inform residents about the process of selecting delegates for a planned national assembly later this year.

The campaign comes after members met local residents in the township where the process to select delegates was undemocratic, a charge that the party's co-founder and vice chairman U Win Hlaing, who also joined the education campaign.

Among those who benefited from the information session was NLD member Ko Win Nyin, 29. He said before meeting U Ko Ko Aung's group, he didn't know much about how the assembly will work and how delegates will be chosen.

"We don't know much about the assembly process, so we came here to tell us about it. Today's activities gave us the information clearly. We understand now that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is managing the assembly in a democratic way that is designed to avoid injustice," the Htaine Kone ward resident said.

"We've been working hard for the national event. However, the election campaign team explains about the party's assembly to residents of Pyigyitagun's Htain Kone ward on October 23. Pic: Phyo Wai Kyaw"
Depayin Dhamma school overwhelmed by demand

By Khin Su Wai

ABOUT 500 children have enrolled at a private school in rural Depayin township, Sagaing Region, where Dhamma classes are taught in English.

Rahula Dhamma School was established in Sai Pyin Gyi village on August 24, in memory of the famous Ledi Sayadaw, who came from Sai Pyin Gyi.

The school still only operates from temporary huts and patron Sayadaw Dr Ashin Acara said he had been overwhelmed by demand for the classes.

"I thought it would be enough if I got about five or 10 children who wanted to learn about Buddhism in English. But unexpectedly more than 500 children are coming and attending classes – I got many children in a short time," he said last week.

"The reason I opened the school is so that children can learn both English and Dhamma (Buddhist teachings) at the same time," said Dr Ashin Acara, who is also head of the Pitika English Department at the State University of Sasana in Mandalay’s Aungmyaytharzan township.

Yahula Dhamma School offers classes in Primary I, Primary II, Secondary I, Secondary II, Intermediate on days when state schools are closed.

Another branch has already been established in Depayin’s Yin Yae village, near where Sayadaw Dr Ashin Acara, 41, grew up.

"Offering the Buddha Dhamma class to young generation is my ambition since I was 20. I will open more and more Rahula Dhamma schools in our country," he said.

He said that he also wanted to provide free education to children from villages that have only basic education schools and to establish monastic schools in villages where there is no state school.

The Sai Pyi Gyi school was established at a cost of K400 million. The project includes a water pump and electricity project, two hostels, a meals hall, two classrooms, a library and three buildings for monks.

Stone carving workshops wait on MCDC ahead of move

By Phyo Wai Kyaw

DESPITE a jade trader offering Mandalay’s stone carving workshops a new site in Amarapura township, most workshop owners are waiting for official word from Mandalay City Development Committee before committing to the move.

On August 9 MCDC ordered the businesses to shift from the Kyauksittan area of Mandalay to a new site within one month. Owners initially resisted, saying they couldn’t afford to move.

However, only 19 of about 50 businesses in Kyauksittan have so far accepted jade trader U Soe Naing’s offer of a 1.5 acre plot in rural Amarapura township.

"Most of the 19 business owners who plan to move to the new place are not included in MCDC’s list of those who need to move," said business owner Ko Hlaing. "If we can get an official site from MCDC it would be better so we are waiting and haven’t accepted the jade trader’s offer."

MCDC said the workshops had to move because they are too noisy, spread dust particles into the air and block traffic. Most of them are closed, while a few are still finishing final projects.

While MCDC said they had to move by September 9, it is yet to enforce the order.

"I helped [the workers] because I heard about their difficulties finding a workplace," U Soe Naing said on October 15. "I don’t expect anything in return. A jade market is also going to be built in the same area so the stone carvers will have the chance to expand to jade carving, and they can earn 10 times more money from jade."

"I also want stone carving workers from Myanmar to be able to compete with the Chinese businesses."
Medical students angry over fail rate

By Khin Su Wai

STUDENTS dismissed from Mandalay University of Medicine have called a press conference to complain about their expulsion on the grounds of insufficient attendance at classes.

They pointed to the much higher fail rate at Mandalay than comparable institutions, claiming that 49 students failed the first year of medical degrees at Mandalay, compared to two at Magwe Medical University and a total of 11 at the two medical universities in Yangon.

About 100 students fail each year across all courses at Mandalay University of Medicine, they said.

The main reason, students say, is that those who attend less than 75 percent of classes for a subject are not allowed to sit the exam. Those who fail an exam two or three times are expelled.

However, at the press conference students said the attendance requirement did not apply to “privileged students”. They also complained that class attendance records were inaccurate and that the attendance requirement dated from colonial era and was introduced to restrict access to education.

The October 15 press conference, at Mandalay's Bakinmya monastery in Chamayarthasi township, near Mahamuni Pagoda, was also attended by parents of the dismissed students.

"I am a teacher, earning about K100,000 [a month]," said Dow Swe Swe, aged about 45.

Dr Than Win, rector of Mandalay Medical University, said it was the students’ responsibility to ensure they attended classes.

"Students are admitted to the university based on their matriculation exam but students have to attend at least 75pc of classes or they are not allowed to sit their exams. This is the standard attendance requirement at international universities – some even require 80pc attendance. This is made clear to students and their parents when they enter the university,” he told The Myanmar Times.

The All Burma Federation of Student Unions (Upper Myanmar) issued a statement expressing sympathy for the dismissed students and complaining about what it calls government interference through education.

But Dr Than Win denied that there was mismanagement at the university and stressed that medical education required both theoretical and clinical practice, which could only take place in class.

We are not pleased at all that those students who got attended only 25pc or 30pc of classes say the system is unfair. Medical education is not like distance education; it includes clinical and practical training. They complained about university removed 190 students every year, but we have 3500 students,” Dr Than Win said.

MCDC sets new deadline for illegal residents to leave

By Phyo Wai Kyaw and Sithu Lwin

Mandalay City Development Committee has warned illegal residents in Pyigyitagon township's Kangyikone ward to leave their homes no later than November 15, the head of the Department of Land Records said last week.

MCDC staff created lists of families living illegally in Kangyikone ward from October 3 to 9, prompting some to speculate that residents would be allowed to stay. However, the pamphlets indicate that MCDC will not recognise the ownership claims of the illegal residents and the measure was just to gather evidence so as to take legal action against those who sold land in the area illegaly.

MCDC says in the pamphlet that we should sue those who sold us the land. That’s easy to say but hard to do in practice. It is also hard to find some of the original sellers and some plots were transferred many times. I believe it is not easy to get compensation again from them,” said Ma Le Le from Kangyikone.

She said her family settled in the ward in early 2009 after buying a 900-square-foot plot and 250,000 kyats. But he was dismissed because his attendance rate was too low,” said Daw Swe Swe, aged about 45.

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She said her family settled in the ward in early 2009 after buying a 900-square-foot plot K250,000. More recently, properties have been selling for up to K3 million for an 800-square-foot plot.

“We could move from here if MCDC arranges a new place for us. MCDC’s plan is irresponsible. We would be pleased if we could just get a small space, just enough for us to stay somewhere. We didn’t buy this land here to make a big profit, we just used all of our resources to buy this place so we had somewhere to live,” Ma Le Le said.

MCDC said in its Mandalay daily newspaper on September 15 that about 1180 huts and houses had been built illegally on municipal land in parts of Myayi Nandar ward in Chamayarthasi township, Kangyikone ward, Zooke and Ywarthit Kalay villages in Pyigyitagon township and Nat Yekan village in Amarapura township.

MCDC warned the trespassers to leave no later than September 16 and demolished illegal homes in Myayi Nandar ward on September 17.
Govt needs to act on land, says NGO

By Tim McLaughlin

A NEW report has urged the government to act on growing concerns over housing, land, and property rights in Myanmar and warned new land legislation is "wholly inadequate." The report says Myanmar faces an unprecedented scale of structural landlessness in rural areas, increasing displacement threats to farmers as a result of growing investment interest by both national and international firms, expanding speculation in land to create insecure housing conditions facing significant sections of both the urban and rural population," the report says.

The report includes a lengthy list of Myanmar's land-grabs, speculation, and displacement threats. It urges the government to do more to protect small-scale farmers. "The Farmland Law, adopted on March 30, 2012, is widely perceived to be pro-business and lacking sufficient protection for smallholders," the report says.

A man and woman stand behind a fence in Shwe Pyi Thar township that was erected by the military after a dispute with residents in April. Pic: Boothee

"Myanmar can show the world that housing, land and property rights can be taken seriously," Mr Leckie said. He added the HLP rights of small landholding farmers. The specific deficits in this single piece of legislation are symptomatic of broad deficits in Myanmar's overall HLP legislative scheme.

"While much has been made about the positive lessons Myanmar can learn from its more developed ASEAN neighbours, Mr Leckie said Cambodia is a prime example of how an inability or unwillingness to address HLP rights can have detrimental results on a country's population. The report makes four recommendations to the government about the HLP rights of small-scale farmers.

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NAY PYI TAW – Myanmar has no choice but to accept foreign aid for Muslims hit by recent sectarian violence or it will face an international backlash, President U Thein Sein said last week.

His comments on October 21 follow a series of protests by Buddhists in Myanmar against efforts by a world Islamic body to help Muslims affected by the violence in Rakhine State.

Dozens were killed in the Buddhist-Muslim clashes and tens of thousands displaced on both sides.

“We need humanitarian assistance. If we reject the humanitarian assistance, the international community will not accept us,” U Thein Sein told reporters in his first domestic press conference since taking office 18 months ago.

“We have to feed the people. It costs US$10,000 a day,” he said of the Rakhine State camps.

“Our government cannot afford it. We are not in a situation to feed the people in the camps with the help of ordinary citizens so we have to accept humanitarian assistance from the international community. If we do not accept the humanitarian assistance they will say we are not human.”

More than 50,000 Muslims, mainly Rohingya, are housed in several camps in Rakhine and unable to go home. – AFP

LAND disputes will be resolved according to the law if negotiations fail to bring about a settlement, President U Thein Sein said last week.

Over the past 18 months, land has become a volatile issue, with many farmers complaining they have lost their fields to private and state organisations. Greater freedom to protest and publish articles about the issues has also seen long-dormant disputes enter the public spotlight.

Speaking at a press conference in Nay Pyi Taw on October 21, the president said in response to a question from The Myanmar Times that a negotiated settlement was preferable to arbitration in the courts.

“In some cases, it will have to be settled between four sides: the relevant ministry, the courts, the farmers and the plaintiffs. If not settled through negotiation, they will have to proceed according to the law,” he said.

When pressed on whether farmers who, under existing laws, had illegally occupied land could expect any support from the government, the president said: “Though I am the president, I am not in a position to intervene in the disputes or to give advice on them. It just needs to be negotiated until an agreement is reached between the two sides. If not, they will be dealt with according to the law.”

The press conference was the president’s first in Myanmar and attracted 128 journalists. It lasted about two hours and more than 20 journalists raised about 30 questions.

Topics discussed included land disputes, peace for Kachin State, the Rakhine conflict, whether the president would stand for a second term, amending the constitution, education, the future of the Myitsone dam, military cooperation with the United States and whether the democratic process could be reversed.

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President U Thein Sein speaks to the media during a press conference at the presidential residence in Nay Pyi Taw on October 21. U Thein Sein held his first news conference inside Myanmar since taking power last year and ushering in a period of sweeping reforms. Pic: AFP
Prominent academic warns of ‘cowboy’ education providers

By Tim McLaughlin

A PROMINENT British academic has applauded the strong desire for further education among Myanmar’s youth but also cautioned against opportunistic establishments looking to take advantage of an emerging market.

Dr John Quelch, dean, vice president and distinguished professor of international management at the China Europe International Business School (CEIBS) in Shanghai, visited Myanmar last week in his role as board member of multinational advertising and public relations firm WPP. A New York-based subsidiary of WPP, Ogilvy & Mather, bought a stake in Myanmar company Today Advertising in May.

Dr Quelch said during his visit he had been encouraged by the number of young people eager to further their education through tertiary study.

“I am a great believer – although there are cultural differences – that 95 percent of our genetic code is wired the same way wherever we come from in the world and young people have the same aspirations and the same needs and challenges. It is important to set up the enabling environment that enables the natural energy and entrepreneurship and spirit of young people to flourish,” Dr Quelch said.

Like all markets, the education sector is seeing an influx of new players as Myanmar begins to re-engage economically and politically with the international community. While reputable institutions, such as the US-based Johns Hopkins University, have begun the process of redeveloping academic connections with Myanmar and facilitating Myanmar students to study abroad, schools with dubious credentials are looking to cash in quickly.

“The opening up of this market is going to put a lot of young people at risk of being bamboozled into signing up for degrees that have no value in the serious market,” Dr Quelch said. “It is very important that young people be protected from these ‘cowboys’.”

Dr Quelch said the Ministry of Education, along with international organisations such as the World Bank and US Agency for International Development, should regulate the private education sector, adding that there is no shortage of countries willing to participate in joint educational development in Myanmar.

In an address to Myanmar business representatives during his “Building Brand” presentation, Dr Quelch announced that CEIBS will actively work to sign up Myanmar students to its multiple post-graduate and executive business education programs.

The school offers a full-time MBA program, and part-time executive MBAs and executive development courses but in its 18 years of operation CEIBS is yet to have any students from Myanmar, a fact that Dr Quelch said he is hoping to quickly change.

“In the full-time English MBA program, we have had students from every ASEAN country except Myanmar. Hopefully we can broaden our reach to include Myanmar,” he said.

A major hurdle for Myanmar students hoping to study abroad is the cost, including tuition and travel expenses. A full-time MBA course at CEIBS cost US$56,800 in 2012, while the Executive MBA course carried a hefty price tag of $85,864.

Dr Quelch said he is confident CEIBS will be able to provide substantial financial assistance to bring courses within reach of qualified Myanmar students who may not have the finances to afford them on their own.

“We have a significant merit-based scholarship program. Students who apply, if they are qualified, would receive significant financial support,” Dr Quelch said.

CEIBS was founded in 1994 as a joint venture agreement between the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation and the European Commission.

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State media cautions over Chinese pills

STATE media earlier this month issued a public health warning urging consumers to avoid a popular traditional Chinese rheumatism medication.

A Food and Drug Administration (FDA) laboratory analysis cited an article in the state-run New Light of Myanmar newspaper on October 18 said Lin Chee Tan contains dexamethasone, which has a number of harmful side effects.

The Lin Chee Tan pill is illegal and has no FDA registration number but is widely available in Myanmar. The traditional Chinese medicine is produced by Kung Chew Drugworks, the newspaper said.

Side effects from dexamethasone include stomach upsets, weight gain and a puffy face, increased vulnerability to fungal infection, osteoporosis, cataract and glaucoma. These pills should not be taken without a doctor’s recommendation, said Dr Kyaw Win, a general practitioner from Insein township.

“Can’t stop many illegal and low-quality drugs entering the market because we are too short-staffed. ... Most illegal products come from China, Thailand and India,” said FDA director Dr Zaw Win. – Shwe Yee Saw Myint
Drug resistance looms large in Myanmar

Migrant workers face high malaria risk

Programs need to target migrant worker communities to consolidate gains made in fight against malaria

By Yamon Phu Thit

MIGRANT workers are more vulnerable to contracting malaria than other segments of the population and should be targeted in malaria-prevention programs and control activities, an official from the Ministry of Health says.

A growing awareness about the risks of malaria, he said, has led to a drop in mortality rates among the general public, said Dr Saw Lwin, deputy director general of the Ministry’s Department of Health.

However, the susceptibility of migrant workers to malaria remains an area of concern and more effort is needed to be made to control their high risk of infection, he added.

Dr Saw Lwin said forest areas, such as the Bago Yoma in central Myanmar and Rakhine Yoma to the west, had much less medical staff outreach than in lowland areas. Increasing the number of community health workers is a critical step towards tackling the issue, he said, as it would enable malaria control services to be brought in to these remote areas.

While the number of infections has fallen in villages where there are enough community health workers, the World Health Organisation says resistance develops more quickly.

WHO recommends the combination therapy because it is more effective, not only to contain drug resistance but also to combat the disease, said Dr Phyo Min Swe, public health analyst from the Three Diseases Fund.

Scientists believe self-prescribing antimalarial drugs might also be a factor contributing to resistance. A spokesperson from the Myanmar Medical Association’s malaria project told The Myanmar Times this was a problem in Myanmar, despite some modest behavioural changes.

Mr Howlett said education was needed to combat the practice of self-prescribing malaria medication.

“Rather than going to see a trained physician, malaria patients sometimes buy medicine from the nearest shop. And they don’t complete the dose once they start feeling better,” he said, adding that he was also concerned about the prevalence of counterfeit drugs, another possible contributor to artemisinin resistance.

“Some of the fake drugs are manufactured in neighbouring countries. It’s hard to pinpoint where exactly, but the border is porous and there is no way to guarantee the efficacy of these drugs,” he said.

While the monitoring of medication and its use is important in the fight against drug-resistant malaria, prevention is also a priority. In Myanmar, Tanintharyi and Bago regions and Mon and Kayin states are among the nation’s priority areas for these programs.

World Concern Myanmar is implementing community-based malaria prevention and control programs in Bilin, Thata and Kyakto townships in Mon State with funding from the Three Diseases Fund. The programs have seen health volunteers trained and health education programs carried out in 46 villages in the three townships.

In the past, the public wasn’t well educated about the disease, they visit the doctor for a diagnosis as soon as they catch a fever,” Daw Than Nwe, a village health worker in Win Kan village told The Myanmar Times on 28 August.

“There have been fewer cases of malaria this monsoon season. Far more people used to die of it 10 years ago than is the case now.”

Dr Lwin said many of the villages in the three townships are still remote and the public is usually busy with work. As a result, they rely on the near-by shops for medicine.

WHO reports that about 68 percent of Myanmar’s population are reported having cases of malaria, and another 14 percent are at risk of the disease. Many cases go unreported, however, because the symptoms are similar to those of other diseases.

“While the number of infections has decreased in villages where there are sufficient numbers of community health workers, no such training is provided within migrant worker populations.”

Malaria is transmitted to humans by female mosquitoes of the *Anopheles* genus and the infectious disease is endemic in 284 out of 330 townships in Myanmar.

The number of reported malaria cases and fatalities in 2010 was 420,808 and 788 respectively. In 2011 there were a slightly higher number of cases but fewer deaths, with 421,000 and 664 respectively.

Dr Saw Lwin said that labourers engaged in gem mining, logging, agriculture and construction work are typically most at risk.

“People go into the forest for work and become infected. It’s as though the malaria parasite is being carried from forests to villages, he said following his recovery earlier this year. The headache and muscle pain were terrible,” he said.

While working in the forest, Ms San Win has a habit of sleeping without a bed, which is an important form of protection against malaria-carrying mosquitoes.

“I hate bed nets – I can’t breathe properly,” Ms San Win said.

Ms San Win lives in an area where re-infection looms large due to growing resistance to artemisinin, a drug used to treat falciparum malaria, the most dangerous of the five parasites that cause malaria.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) report, malaria is the most significant public health challenge in Myanmar. There are an estimated 4.2 million malaria cases every year, accounting for about 20 percent of all deaths from all causes, a total figure in Southeast Asia.

About 69 percent of Myanmar’s population live in areas where there are large numbers of mosquitoes, the WHO said. About 40 percent of the population live in areas where malaria is endemic or prevalent.

The prevalence of malaria is the greatest challenge when it comes to implementing community-based malaria prevention and control programs. About 69 percent of Myanmar’s population live in areas where there are large numbers of mosquitoes, the WHO said. About 40 percent of the population live in areas where malaria is endemic or prevalent.

The Myanmar Times

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Foreign direct investment: clearing the infrastructure bottlenecks

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw’s enactment of approval of the right strategy and the amendments to the foreign investment law in the coming weeks will mark a new milestone in the opening up of the Myanmar economy. If there is one clear message of the experience of the East Asian economies over the past 30 years is that foreign investment can be a strong catalyst both for economic growth and social development – if the process of investment inflows is well managed. Foreign investment should not only be seen as a means of helping to promote a more holistic development of the economy and society. A well thought out strategy to attract and support the right kinds of foreign investment and to manage their impact is needed to help achieve these broader objectives.

Importantly, such a strategy does not require intrusive planning and direction on the part of the bureaucrats. Other East Asian economies have shown that it is possible for such a strategy to be market-based without distorting the incentives for foreign investors. A certain amount of tradeoff between short-term and long-term gains is necessary for the government to attract and support foreign investors in order to realise the government’s broader objectives and to achieve a win-win outcome for both the government and foreign investors. Other East Asian economies have demonstrated that with the right kind of policy clarity and the right policy incentives, such tradeoffs are possible without compromising the commercial principles of foreign investors.

A key role for the government in engaging foreign investors is to be an effective facilitator of investment flows. Transparency of policy, both in terms of policy intent and execution, could greatly help to facilitate investment flows at this stage of Myanmar’s development. For example, foreign investors want to understand the amendments to the laws that the government propose. More than that, they are looking for a clear roadmap for sustainable economic development in the medium years, medium term (5-10 years) and long term (3-5 years) goals. At each stage of the process there should be a meaningful role for foreign investment.

An area where policy clarity is urgently needed is how the Myanmar government intends to tackle the challenges arising from the lack of adequate infrastructure – both soft and hard, physical infrastructure. Bottlenecks to investment are painfully evident in areas such as low agriculture productivity, unpredictable energy, lack of basic telecommunication and information facilities, poor transportation, inefficient distribution networks for producers and consumers, an inefficient banking system, and inadequate human resources capacity in both the public and private sectors to manage economic growth and development. Unless there are active efforts to remove these infrastructure bottlenecks, foreign investment inflows may not accelerate. A clear statement on how the government intends to tackle this issue and how foreign investors can be helped in this process will go a long way in assuring the latter of the soundness of their investment decisions.

To its credit, the government of President Thein Sein has been hard at work in this area. Recognising the considerable financial constraints it faces in building up the infrastructure, the government has been actively seeking external resources for this purpose. Already, the efforts are yielding results. Japan provides a shining example in this regard. Japan is one of the first countries that President U Thein Sein visited after assuming office. The success of his visit has helped achieve strategic and technical assistance from these multilateral financial institutions.

Japan is also actively helping to promote special economic zones involvement is not the only success story. The various initiatives launched by President U Thein Sein in the past one year have helped convince many other countries of Myanmar’s commitment to open up its economy. Since the beginning of 2012, Myanmar has made progress in the unification of foreign exchange rates, granted permission to private banks to conduct foreign exchange transactions, reduced tariffs for used cars, revised foreign investment laws, simplified immigration procedures and abolished pre-publication censorship. These changes have encouraged many countries to step up their development assistance programs and as a result significantly expanded and diversified the sources of development assistance available to Myanmar.

As the Myanmar government works to secure more official assistance to help develop infrastructure, it should also make greater efforts to enlist the help of foreign investors. Other East Asian countries have shown that – when suitably incentivised – foreign investors from the private sector can make a huge contribution to infrastructure development too. A group of dedicated experts from both the public and private sectors could be assembled to help work out a suitable strategy. The experiences of the dynamic
Preparing for a ‘miracle’: rectify, diversify, multiply

By Dr Min Min Thaw

THERE is great anticipation both inside and outside Myanmar over amendments to the foreign investment law that are being finalised in the parliament. This is understandable; many countries have greatly benefited from foreign direct investment (FDI), which often creates jobs, results in improved infrastructure, generates tax revenues, and provides services for workers and ultimately promotes economic growth and increases the standard of living for citizens of the recipient country.

Likewise, companies that make the investments can potentially make tremendous profits from the country’s relatively cheap, but working and flexible labour and abundant natural resources. However, the amendments to the law will need to ensure investment creates a win-win scenario and is relatively fair to both sides.

As the government begins to ‘open’ up, the mindset of many of the common misconceptions is that FDI will miraculously and instantly solve all economic problems, particularly in reducing the high unemployment rate.

It is important to realise that multinational companies are not responsible for and have little interest in helping to develop physical infrastructure, such as electricity and telecommunications and transport. They may improve or extend some of the existing infrastructure that pertains to their profit incentives.

Myanmar, for example, lacks human capital, has an overvalued real estate market in its larger cities and possesses low-skilled workers. In addition, Myanmar lacks the supply chain required for many large manufacturing companies to consider relocating their production.

On the other hand, timing may be on Myanmar’s side given recent dramatic increases in the price of raw materials and nationalism in China. To capitalise on these changes, Myanmar has to make sincere efforts to implement efficient policies for building much-needed infrastructure while employing the highest levels of transparency and accountability.

Effective and sustainable growth could see Myanmar attract sufficient foreign investment to create thousands of jobs in manufacturing. In the short and medium terms, an effectively monitored and designed basic package, in conjunction with increased physical infrastructure, is essential to create jobs and improve the economic welfare of citizens.

Myanmar’s existing infrastructure needs to be rebuilt or upgraded urgently. Increased spending on infrastructure should come not only from non-government organisations and foreign governments, but also from the private sector. Increased spending on basic infrastructure relative to GDP needs to be balanced initially, while improving transparency and accountability at the same time.

For example, detailed information about infrastructure projects, such as their size and terms of funding, bidding for a project, detailed cost structure of the winning company, the projected timeframe for completion and the projects published in local newspapers and on a dedicated website. An independent watchdog is needed to enforce and oversee projects to make sure that they are being delivered as promised and to the highest quality.

It is imperative to make development policies able to withstand high volume of tourists will lead to the creation of many small businesses. Promoting small and medium businesses will also create a solid foundation for financial institutions and investors to compete with regular savings and loan banks. Some small and medium businesses may fail but many will thrive, and medium-sized businesses may eventually become part of the supply chain rather than attract large multinational manufacturers to Myanmar.

Having a strong network of small and medium businesses will also create a solid foundation for financial institutions and investors to compete with regular savings and loan banks. Some small and medium businesses may fail but many will thrive, and medium-sized businesses may eventually become part of the supply chain rather than attract large multinational manufacturers to Myanmar.

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A commuter on a women-only bus in Yangon. Pic: Seng Mai

"Children learn about sex informally from the internet or videos," Daw Hla Su said. "This also happens in other countries, but it's more of an issue here because we don't have the right approach to teaching sex education at school."

"It is hard to teach people when they're older. You need to start when they are young … [so] we should adopt both an accurate and relevant approach to sex education," she said.

U Thida Kyawing from Phoenix, a local non-government organisation that works on HIV prevention, said, "We must be patient and careful in our approach to teaching sex education, but is more of an issue here because we don't have the right approach to teaching sex education at school."

Daw Hla Su, a teacher from Tarmwe township, said she believes the lack of sex education in schools is a major factor behind sexual assaults.

While some health-related non-government organisations have called for the introduction of sex education in schools, Daw Hla Su said, "We have a lot of work to do; Whistle for Help is just a tool to respond to individual cases of sexual harassment and not a solution to the problem."

"We must be patient and careful in our approach to teaching sex education, but is more of an issue here because we don't have the right approach to teaching sex education at school."

"It is very rare in Myanmar to meddle in other's affairs, especially if there is an element of risk involved. For example, when a pickpocket puts their hand in someone else's bag, normally nobody will dare to stop them, even the conductor or driver, because they are afraid," he said.

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UNFC reps expected to meet govt peace team

By El Et Lwin

MEMBERS of the Chiang Mai-based United Nationalities Federal Council are expected to meet U Aung Min, the head of the government’s peace negotiation team, before the end of the year, a facilitator for peace discussions said last week.

The council has 11 members, including the Kachin Independence Organization, the Karen National Union, and was established in February 2011. While many of its members have had initial ceasefire agreements with the new government, those agreements are considered fragile, with much more needed to be done to consolidate the peace process.

“We proposed to the two sides to meet, discuss and negotiate about the peace process. Both sides didn’t say no. The plan is for them to meet in December but we can’t say exactly when and where they will meet and what will they discuss,” U Nyo Ohn Myint, the government’s peace negotiation team, told The Myanmar Times on October 25.

U Nyo Ohn Myint is a former head of foreign affairs for the National League for Democracy-Myanmar. He was elected to parliament in the May 2012 elections and is an American citizen and was recently removed from the government’s travel blacklist.

Members of the UNFC, which aims to establish a federal union in Myanmar, met U Aung Min in Thailand in March for informal talks on the peace process.

However, the UNFC has also threatened that its members could withdraw if the initial ceasefire agreements are already reached with the U Thein Sein government unless it can be ensured that the Kachin Independence Army are not suspended.

Moreover, in a May 10 statement the group’s members said it was important for the UNFC to discuss with President U Thein Sein’s government the possibility of an armed ethnic groups to set up political parties, contest elections and join the parliament according to majority decision, so that it would be able to compromises its members’ negotiations with the government.

U Nyo Ohn Myint said the government’s peace negotiation team was willing to meet UNFC members in November to implement the president’s “all-inclusive peace process.”

“We think that ethnic armed groups are also our national brethren [so] they should meet. And also we believe that President Tha Tha is also willing and interested to meet the UNFC members,” U Nyo Ohn Myint said.

The council is formed of 11 members of the Kachin Independence Army, the Karen National Army, the Karen National Union, the Karen National Liberation Army and the Karen National Progressive Party.

The October 18 reopening of a clinic in Sittwe for health, government officials and community officials to reopen the clinic.

“MSF is independent of any government or institution. We make our own decisions and provide healthcare to those who need it most,” Ms Hawkins said.

She said local health conditions had deteriorated since the outbreak of violence and it was important to get the clinic operating again as soon as possible.

“We have about 350 HIV patients in the community, and residents are very supportive.”

The report said Myanmar’s average annual loss was close to 0.9pc of its GDP, compared to nearly 0.8pc in the Philippines and Vietnam.

The report also said Myanmar, the Philippines, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam faced average annual bill in excess of 0.5pc of total potential GDP on disasters.

“Out of shared challenges in Asia and the Pacific is the increasing rate of exposure and rising economic, social and environmental risks. Rising exposure of disasters to hazards has multiplied as urban centres grow and people and economic activities expand into increasingly hazardous areas. Rising exposure to hazards has multiplied as urban centres grow and people and economic activities expand into increasingly hazardous areas,” ESCAP said in a press release.

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Sayadaw help patients in Putao regain vision

By Zon Pann Pwint

VILLAGERS in remote areas of northern Kachin State flocked to Putao to receive free eye treatment from the Sitagu International Buddhist Missionary Association earlier this month.

The program was launched in Putao in November and this year a team of four eye specialists treated about 1074 patients for eye ailments at Putao District Hospital between October 15-17, conducting 148 operations.

U Tone Pho Yin, 72, trekked for two days from his home in Nognmung township to Putao District Hospital — a journey of more than 112 kilometres (70 miles) — for his checkup. After suffering blurred vision all his life, he received treatment from the association’s doctors.

“I learned that I was suffering from cataract. The cataract in my left eye was removed last year. When I heard that Sitagu (centre) with an elderly woman (second right) who received eye treatment at Putao District Hospital in Kachin State earlier this month. Pic: Boothee

UMTA election scrapped, new vote planned for December 2

By Yu Yu Maw

THE Union of Myanmar Travel Association announced last week that it will hold another election for executive committee members on December 2 after the results of an earlier election in October were annulled.

The association announced on October 22 that a chair, two vice chairs, general secretary, two assistant secretaries, treasurer and 22 executive members would be selected at the vote.

An election at the association’s annual general meeting on October 7 ran five hours overtime because many participants took the opportunity to express frustration over what they perceived was a lack of action from the UMTA leadership on soaring hotel room rates.

Representatives from 70 travel companies also protested the association’s self-nomination system and the new executive committee was only finalised after two additional representatives were selected by their peers. Originally scheduled for 9am to 2pm, the meeting finished at 5pm, participants said.

Twenty-nine executive committee members were sworn in, with Dr Aung Myat Kyaw taking over as chairman from U Mg Mg Swe, who will continue as an EC member.

However, the results were annulled because fewer than 50 percent of members voted.

It is the first time that the UMTA has called a re-election since it was established in April 2002.

“I have been hoping to see a real democratic election (within the UMTA) for a long time. We did not get a chance to change the self-nomination system but we expect this re-election will see the best people selected,” said a UME tourism company, who asked not to be named.

An official from another travel firm said: “Now all members will have the chance to vote for the person they like. I hoped for this day … I think it is the right step when the country is going on the democratic way.”

The election committee was formed with five members and is led by U Khin Maung Win, vice chairman of the Myanmar Chamber of Travel and Tourism, who is under section 505(b) for wrongful restraint and criminal intimidation respectively.

But after 37 court hearings, he formally apologised to Ma Aye Aye Kyi on October 25 and paid K37 million to social welfare organisations, including monasteries and schools for the disabled, the Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation and Myanmar Migrant Women’s Welfare Association, and K3 million went to Orchard Hotel for its legal fees.

“I know I was wrong in this case so I apologised. I am so sorry this happened while I was on my business trip to Myanmar,” Mr Takashi said at a press conference on October 25.

But Ma Aye Aye Kyi, who was 25 when the incident occurred, said she agreed to the settlement out of sympathy for Mr Takashi’s family.

“I apologised to me and said that he has an 80-year-old mother and a daughter who is going to get married this year. I was touched by tears when he told me that. I was very sad that time,” she said.

The main thing I want to say to him is, ‘Go back to your family and arrange your daughter’s wedding,'” she said.

Ma Aye Aye Kyi’s lawyer, Daw San Thida Aye, said the final hearing in the case is due to be held on October 29. “We will negotiate to wind up the lawsuit as that is what both side’s wish,” she said.

Ma Aye Aye Kyi told The Myanmar Times she was ‘satisfied’ with the apology and had been “under pressure to drop the charges.”

“Our Myanmar women grow up under the orders of our parents and under the message of the country. We want to take opportunities from that. We usually say ‘yin bar deh’ or ‘arnar par deh’ so some people take opportunities for granted,” she said.

“I am very ashamed about this case. I didn’t want to show up in front of the people [in court] but I faced it. I faced this problem bravely because of the encouragement of many Myanmar people here and abroad. Now I’m satisfied with the result.”

Japanese man says sorry over slap abuse charges

By Yu Yu Maw

A JAPANESE man is expected to avoid a conviction for allegedly hitting and verbally abusing a manager of Yangon’s Orchard Hotel, after he agreed to apologise and pay K37 million to social welfare organisations, including monasteries and schools for the disabled, the Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation and Myanmar Migrant Women’s Welfare Association, and K3 million went to Orchard Hotel for its legal fees.

Mr Okahashi Takashi was a guest at Orchid Hotel when he allegedly slapped and abused front office manager, Ma Aye Aye Kyi, at about 1.30pm on October 23 after she warned him not to break the hotel rules.

He was charged with obscenity, hurt and “assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty,” under Penal Code sections 294, 323 and 354 respectively. Mr Takashi countersued Ma Aye Aye Kyi under section 505(b) of the Penal Code.

But after 37 court hearings, he formally apologised to Ma Aye Aye Kyi on October 25 and paid K37 million to social welfare organisations, including monasteries and schools for the disabled, the Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation and Myanmar Migrant Women’s Welfare Association, and K3 million went to Orchard Hotel for its legal fees.

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The 2400-hectare zone, which was announced in January 2011, is about 25 kilometres south of Yangon along the Yangon River in Thaketa and Kyauktan townships. It incorporates the Myanmar International Terminals Thilawa – a deepsea port facility built in the mid 1990s.

Major Japanese companies reportedly involved in the project include Mitsubishi, Marubeni and Sumitomo corporations.

Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Dr Kan Zaw said the zone is the first step towards building an attractive business environment for investors – and a keystone of economic reforms intended to create the investor-friendly environment in Myanmar.

Deputy Minister for the National Planning and Economic Development U Set Aung said potential investors are required to accomplish a number of tasks before beginning projects.

“Investing companies must register their companies first,” he said.

“We have already simplified the registration process, which can be done in three hours, where it used to up to one year. Even when there is a delay it should take only a day to register,” U Set Aung said.

Interested companies must also register their planned projects with the Myanmar Investment Commission. Each economic zone will have a one-stop service centre to assist companies interested in investing, he said.

“The special economic zones would be classified as either free zones or promotion zones,” he said.

He said the special economic zones would be classified as either free zones or promotion zones. He said companies that focused on exports would be encouraged to work in the free zones.

“If they distribute goods to the domestic market from the free zones they will be required to pay taxes. And residential houses will not be allowed to be built in the free zones,” he said.

Shoppers centres, hospitals, education centres, banks and insurance companies will be placed in the promotion zone, where companies focused on the domestic market would be based.

“From the promotion zone, they can distribute to the domestic market freely but they have to pay tax on products, importing raw materials and instruments when they export the products to other countries from the promotion zone,” U Set Aung said.

Woodside buys into Daewoo AD-7 block

AUSTRALIAN energy firm Woodside Petroleum Ltd bought a 40 percent stake in Daewoo’s AD-7 offshore exploration block in the Rakhine Basin, the company said in a statement to the Australian stock exchange on October 19.

The farm in offer pertains to the South Korean company’s Production Sharing Contract and is subject to “fully-termed agreements, completion of due diligence, and necessary government and other approvals”, the statement said, adding that Daewoo would retain the operator.

The companies will undertake a 3D seismic exploration program during 2013-14. The transaction also provides the option to drill an exploration well in a subsequent exploration period, the statement said.

Woodside chief executive officer Peter Coleman said the block was part of an “exciting” exploration area, and the agreement showed the company’s commitment to secure international growth opportunities emerging basins that matched its “core capabilities”, especially in deepwater exploration.

“The Rakhine deepwater basin is an exciting frontier exploration area and block AD-7 is adjacent to the Daewoo-operated Shwe field development. We are looking forward to finalising this opportunity and building a partnership with Daewoo,” he said.

— Staff Reporter
MATRADE aims to boost role in Myanmar

Mr Dato' Mah Siew Keong and Mr Zulkepli Mohd Perai – the chairman and director of Malaysia’s trade promotion agency – talk about the country’s plans for Myanmar on the sidelines of the Showcase Malaysia trade show in Yangon.

How many companies are involved in the show?
Mr Dato' Mah Siew Keong: We have 51 companies showcasing their products and services at this event. Responses from people have been very good and most exhibitors are finding potential partners. We hoped to increase the level of cooperation between our two countries because we see big potential in Myanmar. There are many business opportunities as increasing incomes of the people will lead to more demand for consumer goods.

Malaysia is organising many delegations to visit – representatives from the manufacturing federation were here only days ago and we have more than 50 delegates here for business matching. This is our first time showcase in Myanmar.

Mr Zulkepli Mohd Perai and Mr Dato' Mah Siew Keong in Yangon last week. Pic: Yadnar

It has been successful and we are looking forward to more programs in Myanmar.

Malaysian products are cost competitive and we believe our pricing is good.

What is the role of the MATRADE and what kinds of business does it promote?
Mr Zulkepli Mohd Perai: Our function is basically to promote the export of Malaysia’s products and services. We focus on promoting business sectors, such as trade fairs and exhibitions, and organise trade missions and specialised marketing missions, which we have done several times in Myanmar. This has been our first major trade exhibition in Myanmar.

What kinds of products does Malaysia export to Myanmar?
Mr Dato' Mah Siew Keong: Generally, the emphasis is on training services. Our exports are focused on palm oil and rubber.

What’s your perspective on Malaysia’s economic situation?
Mr Dato’ Mah Siew Keong: I am sure that our potential partners. We will work for Malaysian businesses.

Mr Zulkepli Mohd Perai: We are already invested and gained trust from Myanmar (State-owned oil company) already has a history of sharing technology and knowhow with local companies. So in that sense, that 50-50 joint ventures will work for Malaysian businesses.

What kind of businesses is interested in investing in Myanmar? And what kinds of companies are already operating?
Mr Zulkepli Mohd Perai: We are already invested. The Myanmar government has already been looking to its oil resources in southern Myanmar. And that’s why we have an oil distribution centre for other markets, such as India and China. But, we need to work under the investment laws too.

If you set up the palm oil plantations here, what kinds of companies would you invite to come to communities nearby?
Mr Zulkepli Mohd Perai: Palm oil plantations can provide jobs for many people and also give resources to finish the oil too.

If you set up palm oil plantations here and export to other countries, what will be the main challenges?
Mr Dato’ Mah Siew Keong: I am sure that our companies want to work with local partners – it’s in everybody’s best interest. Malaysian companies investing overseas have many benefits, risk management, business interruption and loss works.

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Battle brews in Bago Region over fisheries

By Soe Sandar Oo and Myat Nyein Aye

MYANMAR Fisheries Federation recently backed a plan to ensure sufficient fishing grounds are left open to villagers in Ayeyarwady and Tanintharyi regions.

Former fisheries minister U Aung Zaw Win, the head of the federation, said at a workshop from October 12-16 that there was a need to make the fishing grounds more available.

"We won't give up on this issue. We will continue to talk about this issue to the parliament. It was necessary to make common fishing grounds more available," he said.

U Han Tun said MFF would begin conducting research trips to help regional governments to identify common fishing grounds.

The issue of access to fishing grounds became hot news following the killing of two villagers by police in Ayeyarwady Region's Kyenpyaw township on September 29. That incident was discussed at a workshop in Ayeyarwady Region's Thanatbin township on October 21.

"We're not giving up on this issue. We will continue to talk about this issue to the parliament," he said.

But this year the department has not sent any police. They should protect our businesses according to the law because now doing this business is a three-year jail term and a K100,000 fine," he said.

However, U Aye Myint, a lawyer who represents a number of farmers in Bago Region said all parties in the dispute were violating the law. He said the Department of Fisheries needs to clarify the ownership status of the ponds and then ensure that the law is taken against people found to be stealing fish or pond owners found illegally tampering with their enclosures.

"As a result, there are few fish in the streams and farmers have little choice but to fish the ponds instead," he said.

Fisheries body approves common use fishing grounds plan

By Soe Sandar Oo and Myat Nyein Aye

FISHPOND owners in Bago Region say they are fighting a losing battle against villagers who steal fish from ponds they are using.

Villagers near the Hla Blue Nate hempbunt and Kyenpyaw areas in Bago Region's Thanatbin township are allegedly fishing at ponds leased from the regional government, said U Maung Maung Naing, owner of Kyite Mae Moe Khaing Blue Natebanpout and another pond nearby.

"I'm facing heavy losses this year because people are catching about K50,000 worth of fish a day from my ponds," he said.

He added that many of the people illegally fishing at his ponds practise illegal electronic-shock fishing using batteries.

The Department of Fisheries said the pond owners are too small and are facing losses for things beyond their control. They think the pond owners can't protect us.

We've reported the thefts to the Department of Fisheries in Thanatbin township and township authorities but they have not taken action," he said.

"Another fish pond owner, U Hla Ohn, said the problems with theft of fish in Bago is related to a similar situation in Ayeyarwady Region on September 29 when he found 50 villagers fishing in police shooting dead two villagers.

"If we have people stealing our fish last year we reported the matter to the Department of Fisheries and they sent one or two police to solve the problem," he said.

"But this year the department has not sent any police. They should protect our businesses according to the law because now doing this business is a three-year jail term and a K100,000 fine," he said.

However, U Aye Myint, a lawyer who represents a number of farmers in Bago Region said all parties in the dispute were violating the law. He said the Department of Fisheries needs to clarify the ownership status of the ponds and then ensure that the law is taken against people found to be stealing fish or pond owners found illegally tampering with their enclosures.

"As a result, there are few fish in the streams and farmers have little choice but to fish the ponds instead," he said.

"According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation it's illegal for anybody to place poles or barricades in streams and rivers, but some fish ponds owners are colluding with fisheries officials to enlarge their ponds and divert water and fish into their enclosures," he said.

"In a similar situation in Thanatbin township, people illegally fishing at ponds leased from the regional government are taken action against villagers who steal fish," he said.

U Aung Zaw Win, the spokesperson of Thanatbin township's branch of the Department of Fisheries, said that the department would move to solve the problem soon.

"Our difficulty is that the area is four hours away by boat and we can't get there when water levels are low," he said.

However, U Aye Myint, a lawyer who represents a number of farmers in Bago Region said all parties in the dispute were violating the law. He said the Department of Fisheries needs to clarify the ownership status of the ponds and then ensure that the law is taken against people found to be stealing fish or pond owners found illegally tampering with their enclosures.

"As a result, there are few fish in the streams and farmers have little choice but to fish the ponds instead," he said.

Fisheries body approves common use fishing grounds plan

By Soe Sandar Oo and Myat Nyein Aye

FISHPOND owners in Bago Region say they are fighting a losing battle against villagers who steal fish from ponds they are using.

Villagers near the Hla Blue Nate hempbunt and Kyenpyaw areas in Bago Region's Thanatbin township are allegedly fishing at ponds leased from the regional government, said U Maung Maung Naing, owner of Kyite Mae Moe Khaing Blue Natebanpout and another pond nearby.

"I'm facing heavy losses this year because people are catching about K50,000 worth of fish a day from my ponds," he said.

He added that many of the people illegally fishing at his ponds practise illegal electronic-shock fishing using batteries.

The Department of Fisheries said the pond owners are too small and are facing losses for things beyond their control. They think the pond owners can't protect us.

We've reported the thefts to the Department of Fisheries in Thanatbin township and township authorities but they have not taken action," he said.

"Another fish pond owner, U Hla Ohn, said the problems with theft of fish in Bago is related to a similar situation in Ayeyarwady Region on September 29 when he found 50 villagers fishing in police shooting dead two villagers.

"If we have people stealing our fish last year we reported the matter to the Department of Fisheries and they sent one or two police to solve the problem," he said.

"But this year the department has not sent any police. They should protect our businesses according to the law because now doing this business is a three-year jail term and a K100,000 fine," he said.

However, U Aye Myint, a lawyer who represents a number of farmers in Bago Region said all parties in the dispute were violating the law. He said the Department of Fisheries needs to clarify the ownership status of the ponds and then ensure that the law is taken against people found to be stealing fish or pond owners found illegally tampering with their enclosures.

"As a result, there are few fish in the streams and farmers have little choice but to fish the ponds instead," he said.

"According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation it's illegal for anybody to place poles or barricades in streams and rivers, but some fish ponds owners are colluding with fisheries officials to enlarge their ponds and divert water and fish into their enclosures," he said.

"In a similar situation in Thanatbin township, people illegally fishing at ponds leased from the regional government are taken action against villagers who steal fish," he said.

U Aung Zaw Win, the spokesperson of Thanatbin township's branch of the Department of Fisheries, said that the department would move to solve the problem soon.

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BP to revisit Arctic after Rosneft deal finalised

London – British energy giant BP was set to return money to shareholders and could reach plans to extract Arctic oil, following a high-level strategic deal agreed with Russian state oil firm Rosneft on October 22, analysts said.

BP, seeking to reposition itself after the Gulf of Mexico oil spill disaster in 2010, has agreed to sell its half of Russian venture TNK-BP to Rosneft for US$1.1 billion plus a 22.4 percent share of the company, completing its exit from the market, BP said.

BP added it would spend $8.4 billion of the proceeds to buy another 10 percent of Russia’s Rosneft, raising its stake in the Russian government, bringing its total stake in the Russian company to 19.75pc. BP currently owns 1.25pc of Rosneft.

“We see potential for a special dividend” after the October 22 announcement, said Stuart Joyner, analyst at Investec financial group. “The deal will be viewed positively as it halves exposure to Russia whilst uplifting BP’s partnership and reinvigorating hopes of an Arctic entry,” he added.

BP’s head of Russia David Peattie told Dow Jones News Service that the group was nulling a share buyback with part of the proceeds, in order to offset the dilution of the group’s value.

The October 22 events end an often tumultuous but highly profitable TNK-BP joint venture. In Moscow, Rosneft announced it had also bought the other 50 percent in TNK-BP from key Russian investors for $29 billion.

Tensions over the venture reached breaking point after BP’s initial share of the deal, in April, 2013. It had bought the other 50 percent in TNK-BP from key Russian investors for $29 billion.

But BP’s chairman Carl-Henric Svanberg said on October 22 that its company would not have a fifth stake in Rosneft. He said his annual earnings from rice cultivation have soared by more than half to $780,000 (US$25,000) since signing up, according to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), which expects the world’s population to reach 9.7 billion by 2050, less than half the world’s population. Last year, the world’s population reached 7 billion.

The longer the government holds on to the stocks, the bigger the drain on the public finances. Yet experts say if Thailand abandons the scheme, it risks damaging the competitiveness of Thai rice, which are expected to almost halve in 2012.

“Thailand has about 10 million tonnes of stock in storage. The USDA predicts the country will have stocks of about 9.4 million tonnes at the end of 2012 and 12.1 million tonnes in 2013. China and India also have large stockpiles but their production and domestic consumption is much higher.

While the scheme is putting strains on Thailand’s government finances, it has been welcomed by many farmers, whose support helped sweep Yingluck from a landslide election victory last year.

Their brother Thaksin Shinawatra, who was ousted as prime minister by royalist military coup in 2006, is now hugely popular with Thailand’s rural poor thanks to his populist policies while in power.

I want the government scheme to continue because at the very least, it helps farmers sell their rice at a high price,” said Supaj Jopusia, who has 9.6 hectares (24 acres) of rice paddy in Chachoengsao province.

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ADB studies show way forward in Myanmar

By Aye Thidar Kyaw

THE Asian Development Bank has revealed more details about its future engagement with Myanmar announcing it will assist to develop 11 sectors within the country, including energy, transportation, urban development, telecommunications, health, education and agriculture.

The bank released multiple press statements and studies last week outlining weaknesses within the 11 sectors in Myanmar, and detailing what it would provide.

A report on Myanmar’s “fragmented and under-resourced transport sector” says it needs a “top-to-bottom overhaul” to meet expected demand for quality roads, railways, airports and transport services in coming years.

“For the benefits of Myanmar’s anticipated growth to truly reach people in all corners of the country, its network of roads, railways, inland waterways and airports will need a coordinated path to improvement,” said James Lynch, director of the Transport and Communications Division in the Southeast Asia Department at ADB. “This is vital not only for the country’s development, from the cities to the remote rural areas, but also to transform the country into a land bridge linking Southeast Asia and South Asia.”

ADB began to re-engage with Myanmar this year. Following a wave of reforms beginning in 2011, an interim country partnership strategy was agreed to October 26 by the government and ADB. It is designed to navigate the process of re-engagement between 2012 and 2014.

“ADB will formulate an investment program and funding targets for the country once the government has settled its outstanding arrears with ADB,” the bank said in a press release.

According to a 2012 ADB study, Myanmar could triple its per capita growth rate if it can “surmount substantial development challenges by further implementing across-the-board reforms”, the ADB’s website states.

A separate press release said the Australian government will provide Myanmar with US$870,000 pegged for education.

ADB is giving Myanmar $249.80 in technical assistance, while Australia is providing $770,000, stated an ADB press release on October 25.

“As Myanmar embarks on dramatic socioeconomic transformations, education must play a critical role in promoting poverty reduction,” said Christian Spohr, a senior education economist from ADB’s Southeast Asia Department.

He said the funds will help the country to move into higher value-added sectors and increase its competitiveness in regional and global markets.

The assistance will be distributed at all educational levels other than primary and pre-school and aims to prepare Myanmar for the “opportunities created by ongoing democratic and financial reforms”, ADB’s website states.

Economist U Khine Htun said last week that Myanmar must effectively use its energy resources. He said that although Myanmar is among the region’s top five energy exporters, the domestic market is largely unable to access the country’s energy sources due to inadequate planning and management.

He said if Myanmar’s energy was not used productively at home, its benefits would only be felt abroad.

“Resources extracted from under the ground need to be used to change resources on the ground, such as roads, factories and schools. If this happens then manufacturing and the services sector are likely to progress and Myanmar’s investment ratio will rebalance from the existing situation, where most investment is made in the extractives and energy sectors, he said.

The Bank Information Centre (BIC) states that Myanmar has one of the lowest per-capita energy consumption levels in Southeast Asia. BIC is a non-government organisation that seeks to ensure the operations of the World Bank and regional banks such as ADB are transparent and publicly accountable.

Investment in Myanmar’s energy sector amounted more than $33 billion by June 2012, Myanmar Investment Commission statistics show, with $19 billion invested in power generation and $14 billion in oil and gas projects.

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Phone: 372416
Dated: 29th October, 2012

Asian Development Bank says Myanmar’s under-resourced transport infrastructure needs to be overhauled. Pic: Christopher Davy

trade mark caution
MGW plans nation’s tallest building

By Kyaw Hsu Mon

MANDALAY Golden Wings Construction company last week unveiled plans to build the country’s tallest building in Yangon’s Mayangone township.

The company has started work on the US$60-million, 34-storey Diamond Inya Palace building on a 2-acre block near Inya Lake, and expects to finish by the end of 2015, a Mandalay Golden Wings spokesperson said last week.

The spokesperson said the project would be funded entirely by Myanmar investors.

“This site will be wholly owned by MGW Construction and we expect work will be finished in December 2015,” said Ma Khin Ohnmar Tun, the company’s senior sales and marketing manager.

“We’re expecting to sell rooms to both locals and foreigners,” she added.

The building will occupy a block that was formerly part of the Ministry of Industry’s Htun Nyein Street, near the Inya Lake Hotel. Ma Khin Ohnmar Tun said MGW bought the site through a recent government privatisation auction but she would not reveal how much the company paid for the block.

The building will have an “L” shaped design and will include 406 residential apartments, six floors of car parking, a spa, gym, mini theatre, mini market and a swimming pool. There will also be four penthouses on the top floor of each building that will have panoramic views of Yangon.

Residential rooms will measure from 850-3000 square feet and sales have begun; the company is also offering hire purchase agreements through participating private banks, Ma Khin Ohnmar Tun said.

“The building is near Inya Lake so we spent months conducting soil tests to make sure the ground can support the weight. We will use a pile foundation,” said U Chit Swi Nyunt, chief engineer for the project.

He said Thailand-based firm Prima Marang had drafted the design and an expert from the Asian Institute of Technology will be on hand to monitor quality control during the construction.

He added that the building will be able to withstands winds of up to 120 mph (192 kilometres) an hour, and survive earthquakes up to 8.5 on the Richter scale. The development will include CCTV cameras and 14 elevators.

“We’ll prepare for fires with smoke alarms, smoke detector, fire extinguishers and every room will have a fire escape,” he said.

Also, it will also be a 340,000 gallon water tank,” he added.

MGW Construction is the developer of Yadanaon Diamond Plaza, the biggest shopping mall in upper Myanmar.

Rental market hot: agents

BY NOE NOE AUNG

BUDDHIST Lent is coming to an end at the end of October but real estate agents say the rental market is already running strong, with incoming foreigners seeking accommodation and the offices.

“Most people are looking for condominiums is particularly strong because hotels are clearing out spaces they used to rent as offices and the companies are looking for new premises,” he added.

Ko Thant Sin, from New Moon real estate agency, said high property prices and tax increases in August had muted sales interest. “But residential and office rentals are picking up fast as the end of Lent approaches,” he said.

“The demand for condominiums is particularly strong because hotels are clearing out spaces they used to rent as offices and the companies are looking for new premises,” he added.

Ko Thant Sin said the recent influx of foreigners is also affecting the market because people who might otherwise stay in hotels or serviced apartments are unable to do so – and are looking for apartments instead.

“Most people are looking for condominiums in the downtown area, especially at Sakura Tower and Seikantar Condo, as well as at Shwe Hin Thar Condo on Pyay Road and Pearl Condo corner on Kabar Aye Pagoda Road,” he added.

“House and apartments along Pyay Road are in demand,” Ko Thant Sin said. However, he would not reveal rental prices.

He added that it’s a difficult time for Myanmar people looking to find new rental accommodation.

“Rental prices are up by more than one-third against the same time last year. In October or November you could find a nice apartment for a middle-class family relatively easily for K1 million but this year it’s closer to K1.5 million and it’s not easy to find a nice place,” he added.

“And if people cannot afford the rents being asked they have no choice but to move further away from downtown, to townships such as Hlaing,” he added.

Ko Thant Sin said apartment and condo rentals in Kyauktada, Pabedan, Latha, Botataung, Paraukauk, Lamanaung and Dagon township, as well as houses along Pyay Road had increased significantly this year.

Ko Min Min Soe said office rentals and incoming foreignersOUNTOWN residents were cashing in on the increased values of their condos and apartments and moving elsewhere.

However, he added he picked Ablone and Sanchaung townships as the hottest neighbourhoods in Yangon.

“But a lot of people can’t afford the increased rental fees and have had no choice but to move further out or in other areas such as Hlaing or Kyaungmyintha townships,” he said.

He picked Ablone and Sanchaung townships as the hottest neighbourhoods in Yangon.

However, he said some downtown residents were cashing in on the increased values of their condos and apartments and moving elsewhere.

Ko Min Min Soe said office rentals and incoming foreigners amounted to about a third of the company’s business.

“It’s unusual for people to move house during the Lenten months but there’s usually a rush at the end. But this year a lot of people are looking to find new rental accommodation and apartments in central Yangon are just trying to stay where they are because prices are usually a rush at the end. But this year a lot of people are looking to find new rental accommodation and apartments in central Yangon are just trying to stay where they are because prices are

Pic: Myanmar Times Archive/Aye Zaw Myo

Pearl Condominium on Kabar Aye Pagoda Road has become a hotspot for newly arrived foreigners in Yangon. Pic: Myanmar Times Archive/Aye Zaw Myo

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BEYOND THE BRICK AND MORTAR: A NEW CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

BY KAYAW HSU MON

A Mandalay Golden Wings Construction employee stands next to a model of the company’s Diamond Inya Palace development last week. Pic: Ko Taik

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By David M Levitt

NEW YORK – A Beijing-based developer took control of an apartment building containing more than 200 units of housing near New York’s Brooklyn waterfront, a deal that Chinese buyers are making in the US.

Xinyuan Real Estate last month bought the 2-acre (0.8-hectare) parcel at 421 Kent Avenue in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn for US$42.2 million, said Omer Ozden, who advised the company on the purchase. Under chief executive officer Yang Zang, Xinyuan has built more than 11 million square feet (2 million square metres) of housing in China, including Beijing, Shanghai and Chengdu, said the company’s website.

“Xinyuan’s acquisition as China’s government lines up for overseas purchases, was the first by a Chinese company of a US apartment building for more than a few units, showed data from the National Association of Realtors. “There’s a massive opportunity here,” said Paul Asensio, who advises Xinyuan, which plans to market the units as condominiums, considering several projects in the New York area before making the Brooklyn purchase, said Tom Gurnee, the company’s president.

“Brooklyn isuring its strength as New York and Sam Zell’s Equity Residential Company, the global commercial property-trust giant, is no joke. Many Chinese real estate developers are looking overseas almost as a training ground for the people to bring back best practices back home.”

“According to internal Countrywide documents, the goals of the Hustle were high, said Preet Bharara, the US attorney in New York City, said the Washington Post. “This lawsuit should send another clear message that reckless lending will not be tolerated.”

“US government sues BoA for $1b over bad mortgages”

By By Paul Handley

WASHINGTON – The United States sues Bank of America on October 24 for at least US$1 billion for allegedly dumping dodgy mortgages on state-controlled mortgage financiers Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

The government charged that Countrywide Financial and Bank of America, which took over Countrywide in 2008, ran a program to process mortgages and ship them to Fannie and Freddie as fast as possible with little effort spent on ensuring the loans were viable.

“The 2007-09 program, nicknamed “Hustle”, was run even as the US housing sector was melting down, and caused over $1 billion in losses and countless foreclosures”, the Justice Department said.

“Speeding up the generation of new home loans and their sale to Fannie and Freddie, “Countrywide eliminated independent review of quality and compensated its loan quality team with financial incentives”, the Justice Department said.

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“After defaults began to soar in the loans, the charged says, Countrywide and Bank of America refused to buy them back or compensate the losses. “The fraudulent conduct alleged in today’s complaint was spectacularly brazen in scope,” Preet Bharara, the US attorney in New York City, said in a statement. “Countrywide and Bank of America made disastrously bad loans and stock them afloat, and estimates are that it resold most of its home loans to Fannie and Freddie, which fund more than half of the home mortgages in the country. “All the housing data has taken a turn for the better. Clearly mortgage rates at such low level and what appears to be an increase in banks’ lending activity has boosted activity off the lows”, said Steve Eichner at Minnco Securities.

The Commerce Department reported the median sales price of a new home was US$242,400, up 12pc from a year ago.

Sal Guatieri at BMO Capital Markets said the gains in the new-home sales rate is rooted in the requirements that buyers significantly reduce any of the loans they rate to investment grade to sell to the two state firms. “The case said Bank of America is responsible because it knowingly approved of “All the housing data has taken a turn for the better. “The fraudulent conduct alleged in today’s complaint was spectacularly brazen in scope.”

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Countrywide initiated Hustle in 2007 just as loan default rates were rising and Fannie and Freddie were tightening their loan purchasing requirements to reduce risk, the Justice Department said. “According to internal Countrywide documents, the goals of the Hustle were high and high volume, where loans ‘move forward, never backward’ in the origination process, the department said.

“Accomplish these goals, the Hustle removed necessary quality control ‘sell gates’ that could slow down the origination process.”

“Countrywide and later Bank of America knowingly originated loans with escalating levels of fraud and other serious loan defects and sold them” to Fannie and Freddie, it said. – AFP

US new-home sales rose in September

WASHINGTON – Sales of new US homes rose 5.7 percent in September from every significant checkpoint on development to a huge 11pc US housing market, its biggest gain in 11pc.

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Countrywide initiated Hustle in 2007 just as loan default rates were rising and Fannie and Freddie were tightening their loan purchasing requirements to reduce risk, the Justice Department said. “According to internal Countrywide documents, the goals of the Hustle were high and high volume, where loans ‘move forward, never backward’ in the origination process, the department said.

“Accomplish these goals, the Hustle removed necessary quality control ‘sell gates’ that could slow down the origination process.”

“Countrywide and later Bank of America knowingly originated loans with escalating levels of fraud and other serious loan defects and sold them” to Fannie and Freddie, it said. – AFP

By By Paul Handley

WASHINGTON – The United States sues Bank of America on October 24 for at least US$1 billion for allegedly dumping dodgy mortgages on state-controlled mortgage financiers Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

The government charged that Countrywide Financial and Bank of America, which took over Countrywide in 2008, ran a program to process mortgages and ship them to Fannie and Freddie as fast as possible with little effort spent on ensuring the loans were viable.

“The 2007-09 program, nicknamed “Hustle”, was run even as the US housing market was 27pc higher than a year ago, the housing market

shows steady improvement more than six years after prices collapsed from a huge 11pc US housing market, its biggest gain in 11pc.

The all the housing data has turned a turn for the better. Clearly mortgage rates at such low level and what appears to be an increase in banks’ lending activity has boosted activity off the lows”, said Steve Eichner at Minnco Securities.

The Commerce Department reported the median sales price of a new home was US$242,400, up 12pc from a year ago.

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SAN JOSE, California – Apple introduced the iPad mini on October 23, in what a smaller version of its beloved tablet computer will try to do for sales in Australia what it has in the US, vowing that the company will sell for $659. Like later versions will sell for $459. US$329, while a 16GB model with Wi-Fi connectivity costs $299, just that the original iPad, the new Apple tablet also features rear- and front-facing cameras. "That is very cool," Cook said of the iPad mini. Customers can begin pre-ordering the iPad mini on October 26 and Wi-Fi versions were set to begin shipping on November 2 to about three dozen countries in Asia and Europe in addition to the United States. Schiller said the iPad mini weighs half a pound, less than half the original; and is 7.2mm thick – thinner than a pen. Apple also unveiled a fourth generation of the original iPad for the same price of $499 for a 16GB model with Wi-Fi connectivity. Cook said Apple sold over 100 million iPads in two and a half years. Apple set the tablet computer market a blaze with the first iPad in early 2010 and stuck with its 9.7-inch screen while rivals introduced lower-priced tablets with screens closer to seven inches. Amazon's seven-inch Kindle Fire proved popular last year and a new version was launched last month. Meanwhile, a Google Nexus 7 powered by Android software has since joined the Samsung Galaxy in the seven-inch tablet market. While the cheapest iPad mini costs $299, just that the original iPad, the device is still considerably more expensive than the seven-inch tablets from Amazon, Google and Samsung – which start at $199. Independent technology analyst Jeff Kagan said the new, smaller iPad was a gamble for Apple in that it risked cutting into sales of the original iPad. "Yet this will cannibalise some of the iPad, but pull the camera back and you can see how it will increase the size of the preorder customer base," Kagan said. – AFP
**Way cleared for Bo’s prosecution**

BEIJING – Disgraced Chinese politician Bo Xilai has been expelled from the Communist Party and stripped of his legal immunity, clearing the way for his prosecution, state media said on October 26.

The announcement follows intense speculation on the fate of the former party boss of the southwestern city of Chongqing, who had led the city to a once-in-a-decade local congress and the congress of the Communist Party to begin on November 8.

State news agency Xinhua said the Standing Committee of the 11th National People’s Congress (NPC) removed Bo from his post in late September, but made the announcement ahead of the NPC meeting last week, at a bi-monthly session.

“According to the law on the deputies to NPC and to local people’s congresses, his post was terminated,” Xinhua said, quoting a statement from the standing committee at the end of a four-day meeting.

The focus will now shift to Bo’s trial. The military tribunal will first hear the case of alleged crimes, with the court case of the Communist Party Congress in November. The court case will be after the NPC meeting.

“Cases coming from the NPC after Bo came from the NPC will be dealt with separately,” the court case will be after the Communist Party Congress in November. The court case will be after the NPC meeting last week, hundreds of Bo’s supporters signed in an online petition procedures that are not lawful,” the letter on the leftist Red China website said.

There were more than 500 signatories and the campaign said it had championed a “red revival” before his downfall.

The Communist Party had hoped for a smooth build-up to a congress that is tightly scripted to underline its claim to be the only legitimate party capable of ruling the world’s most populous nation.

But the party has instead been rocked by the Bo case and the details of murder, million-dollar business deals and the trial of the Communist Party power elite that has been made public.

A New York Times investigation published on October 25 alleged that the party’s top boss of the former boss of the Chongqing and other Chinese politicians had invested in assets worth at least US$1.7 billion from 1992-2012, according to corporate and regulatory records.

Bo’s trial typically lasts about one week, and ends with a political analyst said the trial will not result in a conviction. The court case will be after the NPC meeting.

**WikiLeaks publishes military documents**

LONDON – Julian Assange’s Wikileaks website on October 25 started publishing more than 100,000 US Department of Defence, including the first prisoner treatment manual for Guantanamo Bay.

The latest release by the website comes as the Quaid government, which faces charges of rape and sexual assault in Sweden, remains held up in the Ecuadoran embassy embassy to London with what Quito says are health problems. Assange, 41, walked into the Ecuadoran embassy in London with what Quito says are health problems. Assange has so far failed to do so in the face of deep opposition in Congress is now in the hands of the mainland, and several people accused of involvement in the 9/11 trials are on trial at the camp.

**US Navy to guard ‘freedom of navigation’ in Asia**

An artist’s reconstruction of the first feathered dinosaur to be found in the Americas, based on fossils discovered in Alberta, Canada. The new species, a small and a primitive creature, was published in Science journal on October 25.

JOHANNESBURG – Striking South African **Briefly**

Japan’s Akihiko Hoshide, Yuri Malenchenko and Sunita Williams, Russia’s mission control said. The on October 25, Russian gold miners have signed a union agreement, it said, to carry forth the banner of the region is so we can

Tokyo – Higher-than-normal radiation levels found in fish caught off Japan’s east coast more than a year after the Fukushima nuclear disaster could indicate the country’s main mining company’s ship, the U.S. carrier that said was the first time in the region is so we can

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Pussy Riot pair taken to remote camps: lawyer

MOSCOW – The jailed Pussy Riot punk, Nadezhda Tolokonnikova and Maria Alyokhina have arrived at prison camps in remote Russian regions, a defence lawyer said on October 24.

“Tolokonnikova has arrived at camp 63 in Kirov and Alyokhina has arrived at camp 52 in Perm,” lawyer Violetta Volkova told the Interfax news agency.

“We do not have official information. I found out from my sources, they checked it,” Volkova added.

The Russian prison service is obliged to inform the women’s relatives of their location within 10 days of their arrival.

The Mordovia camp is known for its harsh conditions. It is where lawyer Svetlana Bakhmina, the only woman convicted for the Yusak oil case that saw the jailing of Russia’s former richest man Mikhail Khodorkovsky, served time from 2006 until October 2008.

The Perm camp is seen as a more pleasant option since it is in a city, although Perm is about 1400 kilometres from Moscow where Alyokhina’s young son lives.

The two women were sentenced to two years for hooliganism motivated by religious hatred after they performed a “punk prayer” in a Moscow cathedral. Bandmate Yekaterina Samutsevich was released on appeal with a suspended sentence because guards grabbed her before she had time to wash.

Bakhmina, 43, told New Times opposition magazine that Camp No 14 had no hot water and the only way to wash was once a week in a Turkish-style bath.

While Bakhmina was convicted of the financial crime of embezzlement, she said she had slept in a section including murderers.

If Volkova is correct, Tolokonnikova will be in the same camp as Yevgenia Khahis, the partner of a nationalist activist who shot a rights lawyer and a journalist in broad daylight in Moscow in 2009. Khahis was sentenced to 18 years for complicity in the murders.

In a separate development, a Russian opposition activist has claimed he was abducted in Ukraine and tortured to confess to an anti-Vladimir Putin plot.

Leonid Razvozzhayev, who is being held in a Moscow prison after investigators said he freely confessed, told visiting rights activists that he was tortured and his family threatened.

“Razvozzhayev was allegedly named as a suspect in a probe based on claims that high-profile protestors were plotting an uprising across the Russian border and in Minsk on October 18,” Volkova said after visiting Razvozzhayev in Moscow’s Lefortovo jail.

Razvozzhayev, 39, claimed he was bundled into a van by masked men in Kiev, where he had been seeking asylum, on October 18.

Razvozzhayev said he was taken across the Russian border and interrogated in a cell.

“They told me if you don’t answer our questions, your children will be killed,” he said.

He said he confessed to the allegations after the men said they would otherwise inject him with a “truth serum” that could leave him permanently disabled. – AFP

TRADE MARK CAUTION

NOTICE is hereby given that The Procter & Gamble Company of One Procter & Gamble Plaza, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202, United States of America is the Owner and Sole Proprietor of the following trademarks:

(PROCTER & GAMBLE)

(P)G

The above three trademarks are in respect of:

“Lip moisturizers and conditioners, liquid and powder foundation, make-up base, skin moisturizing creams, eye creams, lotions and gels, skin and body massage creams, soaps, perfumeries, essential oils, dentifrices, skin and body care preparations, hair styling preparations, hair coloring preparations.”

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 The Procter & Gamble Company

P.O. Box No. 26, Yangon.

Phone: 372416  Dated: 29 October, 2012

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Libya suspect killed in Cairo: police

CAIRO – A gunman killed during a police raid on an apartment in the Al-Haram area of the city of Benghazi, police said on October 25.

Various media reports said the victim, who died in the October 24 raid, was the brother of a fighter who is believed to be a member of the Al-Qaeda militant group in the eastern Libyan city.

Piracy down, says maritime watchdog

PARIS – Sea piracy has fallen to its lowest level since a maritime watchdog said on October 25.

There were 233 acts of piracy in the first nine months of the year, the lowest figure for the period since 2008, the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) said in a report.

It said attacks by Somali pirates had fallen to their lowest level since 2005, when they were first recorded in the first nine months of the year, compared with 100 for the same period in 2011.

Obama lampoons Donald Trump

BURLINGTON, California – US President Barack Obama said on October 24 that Donald Trump’s war of words on arms deals with “countries that have been bad to us,” was not very good and reflected the right-wing conspiracy theories of the president was not born in the United States.

Obama took the comments back to when we were growing up together in Kenya,” Obama joked.

“We had constant run-ins on the soccer field. He wasn’t very good and he was okay,” Obama said about his former friend who was born in Hawaii.

Birdie theory on shark discovery

LOS ANGELES – Things don’t always land where they are supposed to on the links, but the live shark that mysteriously appeared on the 12th hole of a California golf course seems like a good example of the result of a birdie.

The 60-centimetre (24-inch) great white shark is thought to have been picked up by the tide near the mouth of a stream that runs off the nearby Pacific coast and dropped as the bird flew over the San Juan Hills Golf Club south of Los Angeles, club officials said on October 25.

A year after liberation, Kadafi bastion seized

BANI WALID – Libyan government forces on October 24 seized control of Bani Walid, one of the last bastions of former Libyan leader Muammar Kadafi’s ousted regime.

Hundreds of fighters, mostly former rebels, fought with government forces after they converged on the centre of Bani Walid, firing rockets to celebrate and hoisting the Libyan flag on abandoned government buildings.

Several rebel chiefs, including Bilal al-Mangouch, officially announced the end of all military operations in the town, despite some pockets of resistance.

Mangouch told a news conference this morning that the spirit of his troops was on a manhunt to track down several fighters who had fled towards the desert.

Government spokesman Youssef al-Manaa said a meanwhile that about 100 suspects were arrested in Bani Walid and in other areas with crimes committed under Kadafi.

Speaking at a news conference, Manaa also gave a death toll of 50 government forces killed and said hundreds were wounded in the battles with “well-trained” soldiers in Bani Walid who was accused of harbouring modern weapons.

Local government minister Mohamed al-Hajri also told reporters more than 10,000 families fled the fighting in Bani Walid and were on their way to refugee camps.

Mursals decorate a wall in Libyan capital, Tripoli, last week as part of an exhibition to celebrate the first anniversary of the ousting of the regime of Moammar Kadafi. The transitional authorities declared the country’s liberation on October 23, 2011, three days after Kadafi was captured and killed in his hometown.

The subsequent chaos resulted in the difficulties of achieving national reconciliation.

Sudan blames Israel for deadly air strike

KHARTOUM – Israeli missiles struck a military factory in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum last week, an official said last month, months after allegations a similar raid by the Israeli state.

Sudan’s foreign information Minister Ahmed Bilal Osman said four radar-guided rocket attacks occurred midnight on October 23 on the Yarmouk military manufacturing factory in the south of the capital.

Evidence pointing to Israel’s involvement in the attack was firm and overwhelming, he told a news conference on October 24.

“We think Israel did the bombing,” Osman said.

The military and foreign ministry in Israel, which has long accused Khartoum of being a base for members of the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, refused to comment.

Sudan took its case to the UN Security Council on October 24 with envoy Daffa-Alia Elhag Ali Osman calling on the council to condemn Israel.

The move was a response to the UN Security Council on October 24 with envoy Daffa-Alia Elhag Ali Osman calling on the council to condemn Israel.

The envoy also accused Israel of arming militants in the southern region of the UN says at least 300,000 people have been killed in the past decade.

A rocket barrage brings warning to militants

GAZA CITY, Palestinian Territories – Israel vowed on October 24 to punish Hamas militants after scores of rockets fired from Gaza seriously injured two people, provoking air strikes that killed four Palestinian militants.

The Israelis said the rocket attack, which hit an area near the southern border of the Gaza Strip, was the result of Kadhafi loyalists, cast a pall over celebrations for the first anniversary last week of the overthrow of his regime in a bloody conflict.

The fighting followed old tensions and underscored the difficulties of achieving national reconciliation.

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Geneva – Two Nepalese men were rescued from prison-like conditions in Haiti after 11 months at the mercy of human traffickers who had promised them jobs in the United States, the International Organisation for Migration said on October 23.

The men, in their 30s, had been recruited in their native Nepal by a human smuggling network that had charged them an unsecured fee for legal immigration and work in the US, Jumbe Omari Jumbe, a spokesman for the Geneva-based organisation told reporters.

Since starting their journey last November, the men had been shuttled through Singapore, China, Brazil, Panama and finally to Haiti – supposedly their last stop before reaching the US – and had been provided official visas for each country in which they stopped. “It reads like a detective story,” Jumbe said, adding that the smugglers must have had a massive network since they “actually obtained visas from all these countries.”

“They must have paid thousands of dollars,” he added.

Before the men had been smuggled into Haiti, the head of Italy’s Civil Protection’s seismic risk unit, Stefano Albarello, who heads a unit of the EU’s emergency response unit, had warned that the global science community was warning of a big mistake. “It was very hard finding the area, because these men were in prison. They didn’t see where they were. But finally through hard work they found them and they were rescued,” Jumbe said.

A Briton who had travelled to some 200 human trafficking victims since it began working on the issue said he had transported the two men back to Nepal, he said.

“Woe confirms that Haiti is a country of origin, transit and destination for human trafficking and other crimes,” he said.

“The criminal networks at work in Haiti are national and international,” he added. – AFP

Earthquake jail sentences slammed as ‘big mistake’

ROME – The head of Italy’s top disaster body quit in protest on October 23 after seven of its members were sentenced to jail over a devastating earthquake shock ruling that the global science community was warning of a disastrous blow to scientific freedom.

Luciano Maiami, the head of the Major Risks Committee, and several top scientists resigned after seven of the body’s members were found guilty on October 22 of manslaughter for failing to prevent the March 31, 2009 magnitude quake that devastated the L’Aquila region, killing 309 people in 2009.

Maiami, one of Italy’s top physicists, described the verdict as “a big mistake.”

The verdict has provoked deep anger and concern in the global science community, with experts warning of the repercussions and saying their colleagues had been used as scapegoats.

The seven defendants are appealing against the ruling by the court in the medieval town of L’Aquila in central Italy. Under the Italian justice system, they remain free until they have exhausted two avenues of appeal.

All seven defendants were members of the Major Risks Committee which met in L’Aquila on March 31, 2009 – six days before the 6.3 magnitude quake devastated the region, killing 309 people and leaving thousands homeless.

One of the seven, Mauro Dole, resigned as head of the Civil Protection’s seismic risk office on October 23, and the rest of the committee were preparing to follow suit, said Maiami.

The appeal hearings are due to take place later this year, said Marcello Molinari, lawyer for Enzo Bosci, the head of Italy’s national geophysics institute (INGV) at the time of the quake.

“I am still in prison due to a decision of judge Marco Belli’s to give the scientists an even harsher sentence than the four years called for by the prosecutor,” said Anna Bonomi, spokesperson for a survivors’ group which has campaigned for justice.

“They may convince Italians (that the trial was unfair) but they will not convince us residents: they have lied to people with people’s lives,” she said.

Maiami said that rather than blame the scientists, prosecutors should be going after the architects and builders who put up poorly built apartments, “It is simply wrong that there is no investigation into an even harsher sentence in a seismic zone in such an inadequate fashion,” he said.

Geophysicist Dario Albarello, who herein 2010 a project into short-term quake forecasts for the INGV, said “it is not earthquakes that kill, it’s badly built buildings that collapse,” and described the trial as “a witch hunt.” – AFP

TRAFFICKED NEPALESE PAIR’S ODYSSEY ‘LIKE A DETECTIVE STORY’

GENEVA – Two Nepalese men were rescued from prison-like conditions in Haiti after 11 months at the mercy of human traffickers who had promised them jobs in the United States, the International Organisation for Migration said on October 23.

The men, in their 30s, had been recruited in their native Nepal by a human smuggling network that had charged them an unsecured fee for legal immigration and work in the US, Jumbe Omari Jumbe, a spokesman for the Geneva-based organisation told reporters.

Since starting their journey last November, the men had been shuttled through Singapore, China, Brazil, Panama and finally to Haiti – supposedly their last stop before reaching the US – and had been provided official visas for each country in which they stopped. “It reads like a detective story,” Jumbe said, adding that the smugglers must have had a massive network since they “actually obtained visas from all these countries.”

“They must have paid thousands of dollars,” he added.

Before the men had been smuggled into Haiti, the head of Italy’s Civil Protection’s seismic risk unit, Stefano Albarello, who heads a unit of the EU’s emergency response unit, had warned that the global science community was warning of a big mistake. “It was very hard finding the area, because these men were in prison. They didn’t see where they were. But finally through hard work they found them and they were rescued,” Jumbe said.

A Briton who had travelled to some 200 human trafficking victims since it began working on the issue said he had transported the two men back to Nepal, he said.

“Woe confirms that Haiti is a country of origin, transit and destination for human trafficking and other crimes,” he said.

“The criminal networks at work in Haiti are national and international,” he added. – AFP

-trafficked-nehalese-pair’s-odyssey-like-a-detective-story-
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Cultivating peace to live in harmony

MECCA, Saudi Arabia — Nods, smiles, frowns, and hand gestures speak volumes in the holy city of Mecca, where Muslims from around the world converge each year for the annual pilgrimage — the hajj. The movement to promote peace and cooperation are gaining ground as more people realise their futures are intertwined.

The presence of a million pilgrims is a source of much bitterness for Palestinians who want to see the holy city as the capital of their promised state.

But not for those living in Kibbet Zakariya, who say they are happy to accept any help if it will secure them a rare permit from the military to build much-needed homes.

"We are shocked because we usually get harassed or attacked," said a US pilgrim of Nigerian origin. — AFP

PEACE BETWEEN US IS MANDATORY

"Peace between us is mandatory," said Patchenik, a rabbi’s son, he was born in a refugee camp. He has about 1700 members, of which 500,000 settlers living in the West Bank and east Jerusalem. Eretz Shalom has about 1700 members, including 150 Palestinians. Many in the settler community consider Eretz Shalom to be utopian dreamers at best, traitors at worst.

But for those living in Kibbet Zakariya, who say they are happy to accept any help if it will secure them a rare permit from the military to build much-needed homes.

"We are condemned to make peace," — AFP

Signs bridge language divide in Mecca during hajj

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"We are condemned to make peace," — AFP

Signs bridge language divide in Mecca during hajj
Children’s survey forecasts a landslide for Barack Obama

WASHINGTON – The Youngsters of Peace, a New York-based group of fourth-graders, released the results of their Mock Election: in an avalanche of votes, 98% were for Barack Obama, with only 2% for Mitt Romney. The votes of 2,700 students, aged 9 to 12, were counted in the last student poll before the actual vote.

The mock vote was held in 170 schools in 12 states, including California, New York, and Ohio. The students were asked to cast a ballot for their favorite political candidate, and they voted overwhelmingly in favor of Obama. The results were announced in a ceremony at a school in Los Angeles, with the students shouting “Get out the vote!”

The survey was conducted by the Youngsters of Peace, a nonprofit organization that aims to educate young people about the political process. The mock election was part of their ongoing effort to engage students in the democratic process.

The survey results are likely to be similar to the actual election, as the Youngsters of Peace have been accurate in their past mock elections. In the past, their predictions have been within a few percentage points of the actual vote.

The Youngsters of Peace is a bipartisan group, and they have been successful in predicting the outcome of past elections. In 2008, their mock election predicted an Obama victory by a margin of 7%, which was very close to the actual result.

The group’s success is due to its ability to engage students in the democratic process. They hold mock elections in schools across the country, and the students are encouraged to learn about the candidates and the issues. The students are also encouraged to vote in the actual election, and the Youngsters of Peace offers resources to help them register to vote.

The Youngsters of Peace has been successful in engaging young people in the political process, and their mock election results are likely to be accurate. The group is working on expanding its reach and increasing its impact, and they are likely to continue to be a valuable resource for students and educators.

The Youngsters of Peace is a great example of how young people can be engaged in the political process. They have shown that with the right resources and encouragement, young people can be successful in predicting the outcome of elections. The Youngsters of Peace is a model for other organizations that want to engage young people in the democratic process.
India a partner, not a rival: Beijing

China chides Obama, Romney over tough rhetoric in debate

US politicians…should do more for China-US mutual trust and cooperation.

BANGKOK – An upmarket hotel chain in Thailand has begun selling coffee made from beans digested and excreted by elephants.

The Black Ivory blend, sold by Anantara Hotels, costs $50 for two cups, said the hotel’s general manager. Anantara is selling the brew at its properties from Vietnam to Thailand to Africa.

“Research indicates that during digestion, the enzymes of the elephant breakdown coffee proteins, which are then excreted by the elephants’ dung,” Anantara’s marketing manager said.

“Coffee beans are processed, and a process called ‘wet method’ is used where coffee berries are fermented in water. This makes the coffee taste smooth and rich. However, the coffee beans are usually thrown away. This is where the application of an elephant comes into play,” he said.

“Elephant dung contains enzymes that break down the tough husk of coffee beans, yet it’s so small and soft that it’s no longer worth picking up in our forests. The elephant dung contains coffee beans that are ready for processing,” he said.

“An elephant stomach can hold up to 100 kg of coffee beans at once. It’s too much for the elephant to digest in one go, so the beans are naturally broken down and eliminated in the form of dung,” he said.

“Coffee is a major part of the diet of elephants in the wild. In the wild, they may eat around 15 kg of coffee beans at a time. In captivity, the amount of coffee beans that an elephant may eat every day would vary from species to species and age to age. Elephants in captivity may eat about 1.5 kg of coffee beans daily,” he said.

“An elephant can eat up to 22 kg of food a day, but most of it is fibrous material and very little is coffee beans. The coffee beans are excreted unaltered, which means that the coffee beans that get excreted by the elephant may be used in coffee processing,” he said.

B E I J I N G — Beijing urged the US presidential candidates on October 25 to refrain from inflaming tensions with China after President Barack Obama and challenger Mitt Romney vowed to get tough with the Asian giant.

Both men vowed to be tough on China in the final presidential debate in Florida the previous evening with Romney reeling off a list of alleged Chinese trade violations.

“US politicians no matter what party should view China’s development in an objective and rational light and should do more for China-US mutual trust and cooperation,” a foreign ministry spokesman Hong Lei said after the debate.

“The sound and steady development of China-US relations serve the fundamental interests of both countries and both peoples, it is also conducive to regional and world peace and stability and prosperity.”

During the debate, Romney repeated his promise to cut the US trade deficit with China and impose heavy taxes on Chinese products. Romney said that China is a trading partner, not a strategic partner.

US businessman Michael Hauge said that China’s annual trade surplus with the US was $200 billion last year.

“China’s an adversary and also a potential partner in the international community if it’s following the rules,” Obama said at the debate.

China’s state press lashed out at the anti-China tone of the discussions.

“Willing or not, Democratic or Republican, the next US president should have to face up to China’s rise, a once-in-a-generation opportunity for the US to regain its global leadership,” Xinhua news agency said in a commentary.

It added: “Both US presidential candidates vowed at their third and last debate… that they would press Beijing to ‘play by the rules’ in shaping their bilateral ties.

However, their definition of ‘rules of the road’ is primarily American.”

The US president was less strident than his Republican rival, who said Washington should “engage… with China as an equal.”

The US has refused to grant the non-market economy status to China.

The row comes at a difficult time for US-China relations.

Over the past few years, the two countries have been at loggerheads over trade, defence and currency.

For instance, the US has accused China of undervaluing its currency to give its exports a competitive edge in the US market.

China, on the other hand, has criticized the US for not doing enough to curb deficits.

China’s own rising economy and military capabilities have increased its clout in the region, particularly in East Asia.

China is the US’s most important trading partner, with two-way trade worth $502 billion in 2011.

China’s trade surplus with the US reached $315 billion in 2011, with the US running a USD87 billion deficit with China.

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Vietnam's PM admits errors in managing the economy

HANOI – Vietnam’s prime minister, Nguyen Tan Dung, last week said that his government had made mistakes in its stewardship of the state-owned economy, in the latest bout of self-recrimination by the secretive Communist regime.

Scandals, inefficiencies and major losses at state-run enterprises have dented public confidence, Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung told the opening session of the month-long National Assembly on October 22.

“I recognise my political responsibility and my faults,” he said, citing Vinashin by name. “We have learned our lesson.

He warned parliamentarians that such problems are likely to be just 5.2 percent for 2012 – the slowest rate in 13 years. The government had previously targeted growth of up to 6.5 percent for this year.

“Vietnam’s economy still has many limitations and weaknesses, with the latter economic situation is not good, inflation may rise again, toxic debts are increasing,” he said.

Dung, 62, had escaped punishment at a key Communist Party meeting the previous week over recent string of scandals that have touched the country’s leadership.

But in an attempt to defuse increasing online criticism, he said, Dung, a former central bank governor, is said to have become the country’s most powerful prime minister. Seen as a moderniser when first appointed, he pushed for rapid economic growth and kept inflation – which hit 21% in August last year but has since fallen to single digits – under control.

Dung took aim at online Reacting and bloggers that have published what he called “negative information” about the economic woes, calling for those who “take advantage of the internet to sabotage the country” to be punished.

PHINOM PENH – Cambodia’s landmark trial of three former Khmer Rouge leaders for systematic torture, murder and other crimes is to begin on October 24, 25, explaining funding woes would force it to hold fewer hearings each month.

The court cannot afford to replace “a significant number of key international legal and other staff”, judging said, in what is at least setback to a trial stalled by fears that its octogenarian, high-profile defendants will not live to see a verdict.

“Theatre is not a sufficient staff to support the work of the trial chamber, it cannot continue to sit for four days each week,” president judge Nil Nonn said in court, adding that hearings would be three times a week from November.

“This will lead inevitably to an extension of the time needed to conclude (the) case,” he said.

The move comes as the above three defendants, Nuon Chea, Brother Number Two, and Ieng Sary, co-accused, former minister Ieng Sary, 86, is currently in jail because of ailments, lending fresh urgency to proceedings that have already been hit by health-related delays.

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KHMER ROUGE TRIAL FACES MORE DELAYS, SAY JUDGES

The tribunal, which is funded by foreign donors, has often faced cash shortages since it was formed in 2006. It has sentenced 21 former Khmer Rouge leaders to life in prison; two million people who died during the 1975-1979 Khmer Rouge regime.

It has spent over $160 million so far and faces a shortfall of at least $4 million this year.

Jeng Sary, and co-accused “Brother Number Two” Nuon Chea, are among the state court of state Khieu Samphan deny charges including war crimes and crimes against humanity.

But given the age of the accused and the funding crisis, tribunal monitors believe this first “mini-trial” will last up to six months. The trio will likely never have to worry for the worst atrocities.

The trial has completed one full year of hearings, chief public prosecutor Long Ror, in jail for overseeing the deaths of some 15,000 people.

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S Korea irked by Japan indifference to ‘Gangnam Style’

SEOUL — While South Korean rapper Psy’s song “Gangnam Style” has taken the world by storm, it has largely fallen flat in Japan — an anomaly viewed with grave suspicion by some in the singer’s home country.

Korean K-pop music is huge in Japan, but for one reason or another Japanese music fans have remained relatively immune to the seductive powers of Psy and his horse-riding dance.

In South Korea there has been speculation that a bitter territorial dispute over contested islands may have caused Japanese fans to shun the song.

While the number has topped the UK charts and currently sits at number two on the US Billboard ranking, it has only scraped into the top 30 of the Japanese iTunes chart.

To make matters worse, various Japanese music blogs have suggested that the video’s success on YouTube — 336 million views and counting — was down to South Koreans using automated viewing programs known as “bots”.

Some even started playfully referring to the song as “TF Style” — a reference to the keyboard key used to refresh the window of an internet browser.

Last week the Korean Wave Research Institute (KWRI) — a non-profit body established in 2010 to “aggressively” promote Korean popular culture around the globe — hit back.

Denouncing the “conspiracy theories” of YouTube chart manipulation, KWRI president Han Koo-Hyun said the “outrageous” Japanese argument was “tantamount to doubting a world record in an Olympics marathon”.

Scepticism about the song’s worldwide popularity on YouTube “should be viewed as a primary school kid’s jealousy and envy”, Han said in a press release.

Not content with defending the success of “Gangnam Style”, Han launched a vitriolic attack on the only Japanese entry in YouTube’s chart of the 30 all-time, most-viewed videos.

Currently ranked 29th with more than 237 million views, the video shows a young Japanese woman engaging in the popular internet meme activity of dropping some Mentos candy in a bottle of diet coke so that it sprays soda everywhere.

Mocking what he described as the “most grotesque and preposterous content” on the entire chart, Han said it was “another low example showing the video-related preference of the Japanese”.

Several reasons have been suggested for the lack of success for “Gangnam Style” in Japan, including the fact that Psy didn’t follow the path chosen by most K-pop stars of releasing a Japanese-language version.

Film to show Ayeyarwaddy lifestyle

The documentary film will show the lifestyle and culture of residents along the Ayeyarwaddy River from the source to its delta in southern Myanmar, and with less emphasis on the environmental issues,” he said.

The river is about 2010 kilometres (1240 miles) long, starting at the confluence of the Maykha and Malikha rivers in Kachin State and flowing down to the delta region west of Yangon.

Wera, the only Myanmar filmmaker to travel along the Ayeyarwaddy River.

The crew will consist of four filmmakers from Germany-based Along Mekong Productions, along with four locals, including director Wera.

Shooting for the documentary, titled Daily Life along the Ayeyarwaddy, is expected to start in mid-November and take two or three months to complete, said Wera, who wrote the script for the film.

She pointed out that she received her invitation only 20 days ahead of time, while other contestants were invited months in advance.

“I participated in this competition because I want to promote the culture of my country to the rest of the world, and show our culture and traditional clothing styles,” Nan Khin Zay Yar said.

“I didn’t expect to win anything because I didn’t have as much time as the others to get ready. Some of the other delegates even had surgery to prepare. But out people really supported me so I got these two awards,” she added.

She said that people from other countries even applauded her for the unity of her country.

“Someone even commented on the pageant’s website that the people of Myanmar show so much unity and pride. This person commented that he didn’t know whether Miss Myanmar was beautiful, but he applauded the support of Myanmar’s people,” she said.

Nan Khin Zay Yar said she planned to participate in social work in the future, to bless the people of Myanmar and repay them for supporting her at the pageant.

“While I was in Japan for the pageant we went to various forums about how to educate children and how to develop education. Then we each gave reports on what we learned,” she said.

“I invited President Han Koo-Hyun to visit Myanmar, and I said that if they came I would help as much as I could.”

She said her next plan was to travel to her hometown in the Pa-O region of Shan State to give an inspirational talk.

“My Pa-O people are not very well educated. As I’m a Pa-O girl, I will give a speech about the importance of education at the global level,” she said.

“I also plan to go to Taunggyi in Shan State to talk about the same thing. This will be the beginning of my social work for the people in Myanmar,” she added.

The overall title at the Miss International Beauty Pageant 2012 was won by Miss Ikumi Yoshimatsu of Japan.

The Myanmar Times October 29 - November 4, 2012

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Miss Myanmar nabs two awards in Japan

By Nuam Bawt

MISS Myanmar netted two awards at the Miss International Beauty Pageant 2012, which was held in Okinawa, Japan, on October 21.

After a 50 year absence from the annual pageant, Myanmar was represented this year by Nan Khin Zay Yar.

Although she did not make the shortlist for the main title, Nan Khin Zay Yar was given the People’s Choice Award, as well as the Miss Internet Award as the result of earning 21.5 million online votes.

“The internet connection is very slow in Myanmar, and only a small percentage of the population uses the internet here compared to other countries, the people of Myanmar cast the most ballots. I’m very proud of that,” Nan Khin Zay far said at a press conference in Yangon on October 24.

She said that even though she was not shortlisted for the main award, she was very happy to achieve what she did, against her own expectations.

By Zon Pann Pwint

SHORT films showing men chewing betel nut or young women rolling cheroots are suitable expressions of Myanmar culture and lifestyle.

But a team of local and foreign filmmakers is set to go one step farther by cooperating in the production of a three-hour documentary that will offer deeper, more detailed insights into the lifestyles of people living along the Ayeyarwaddy River.

The Myanmar Times

The river is about 2010 kilometres (1240 miles) long, starting at the confluence of the Maykha and Malikha rivers in Kachin State and flowing down to the delta region west of Yangon.

Wera, who previously made the documentaries Fishermen’s Friends: Ayeyarwaddy Dolphins and Floating Market and the Ayeyarwaddy Travelers, said he was contacted by filmmakers from Along Mekong Productions, who had read about him in an article on electric fishing posted on The Myanmar Times website.

He said the Ayeyarwaddy flows through two-thirds of the length of Myanmar, so a documentary about communities along the river “will truly represent the nature of Myanmar people, how they think and what they think about”, Wera said.

The film crew has already completed preliminary surveys of key sites along the river, including two visits each to Katha, Bhamo, Mandalay and Pyay. The team members are planning to return to Myanmar on October 21.

“We are now vision. For our own reason from the Ministry of Information. We will start filming as soon as we get permission, which we hope will be by mid-November,” Wera said.
New Aung San actor to be announced

By Nyen Ei Ei Htwe

A NEW actor will soon be named to play the lead role in a upcoming biopic about the life of General Aung San, following the resignation of one of the original cast members, a pickpocket, from the Bogyoke Aung San Film Executive Board last month.

After a lengthy audition process, they were named to play the role of Bogyoke Aung San in the film, according to a spokesperson for the board.

The new actor will be chosen from the shortlist of candidates who made the final round for the role of Aung San Suu Kyi on July 20, said U Zaw Thet Htwe, a member of the Film Executive Board.

"Members of the board have already selected the new actor but they are waiting for confirmation from Suu Kyi," U Zaw Thet Htwe said.

According to the state-run newspaper Kyaw Kyaw Hmone (The Mirror), Myanmar Motion Picture Organisation (MMPE) and the Myanmar Motion Picture Enterprise (MMPE) sent a letter to the Myanmar Motion Picture Organisation (MMPE) to request that the ceremony be moved to Yangon this year.

"To attend the awards in Nay Pyi Taw, people in the film industry need to waste at least a day and a half to arrive, and there is no way we can meet there without stress this year," said May Than Nuy, who has several Academy Awards for acting.

"This year I'm sure we'll have the best of all the film industry," U Zaw Thet Htwe said.

Actors contacted by The Myanmar Times said they were very pleased.

"This year I'm sure we'll have the film industry," U Zaw Thet Htwe said.

It's good that the awards are moving back to Yangon, we can go and see the film industry this year," U Thet Yin Aung, a drama teacher, said.

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LG
Life's Good
AT first glance, George Saunders' novella *The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil* (2005) seems to unfold with the simplicity of a children's fable: The language used by the author is whimsical, abstract shapes for bodies. The book is drawn in drawings interspersed throughout the book to help illustrate the story. What quickly becomes apparent, however, is the underlying humor and the motif of immigration hysteria. Saunders' narrative of Inner Horner, a country with a population of seven but only enough land to accommodate one person at any given time, is a satirical take on anti-immigration rhetoric.

In one speech Phil says to the Inner Hornerites: "How typical of the Inner Hornerites, whom his father had always said were "the dirt of the earth,"..." Phil also stages a coup and declares himself president of Outer Horner, saying: "I born myself president of Outer Horner."

The situation on the border of Inner and Outer Hornermen becomes more complex in the months leading up to the book's conclusion. The land area of Inner Horner, a country of Outer Horner. This system has been put in place for some time, and as the book opens, citizens of Inner Horner are being arrested and removed from the country. The book ends on a distinctly somber note, with the impending doom of the "foreigners".

"Visitors from the rest of Spain have got slightly fewer, but at the same time we are making up for it with foreigners," said Esteban Yebes from Colombia, one of the students working at the Basque Culinary University, "I have always loved cooking so I decided to come here."

The Basque Cultural Centre, located in San Sebastian, Spain, has been very interested in the world's first gastronomic university, Joxe Mari Aizaga, director general of the Basque Cultural Centre. "Gastronomy is a tourist attraction of growing importance", the director said, "we are looking to become part of the economic attraction."


**Ingredients**
- 12 ripe tomatoes
- 8 small green peppers
- 2 eggplants (cut into 3cm cubes)
- 1 big onion (diced)
- 1/3 cup of olive oil
- 5 fillets of anchovies
- 5 cloves of garlic (crushed)
- 5 teaspoons of oregano
- 5 teaspoons of thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon of cumin

**Preparation**
- Peel the eggplants and cut into 3cm cubes. Washed and soak in water. Drain just 1 or 2 minutes before you use them.
- Cut the tomatoes until the skin is broken. When they are cool, peel and cut them roughly.
- Sauté the diced onion in half of the olive oil with medium heat, using a saucenpan or heavy-base pot. When the onions are transparent, add the other half of the olive oil and the eggplants, and fry them for 5 minutes.
- Add the green peppers and zucchini into the pot and fry for 4 to 5 minutes. Add oregano, thyme leaves and garlic, and stir for 2 more minutes.
- Add the cut tomatoes and fry for 6 to 8 minutes.
- Add 1 cup of water and bring it to a gentle boil. Cover with a lid and simmer for 45 minutes. Salt for taste. Mix the garlic sichet into the vegetables. I prefer to serve the dish at room temperature when accompanied by bread, or a little warm with pasta and meat.

**Garlic sichet**
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- 4 cloves of garlic (crushed)

Sauté the garlic in heated oil until it turns golden yellow. Scoop the fried garlic out and set aside. When the oil cools down, mix in the garlic again. You can make 3 or 4 portions and keep leftovers in an airtight jar.

**Caramelised onions and anchovies**
Here's a recipe for spread to add to your favourite bread: sauté anchovies and sweet caramelised onions with the aroma of rosemary.

**Food review**

**House of Memories**
290 U Wisara Road, Kamaryut township, Yangon
Tel: 01-534-242, 01-525-195, 09-7319-1498

得分 Rating: 8/10

| Food: | 6 |
| Drink: | 8 |
| Atmosphere: | 9 |
| Service: | 8 |
| Value for Money: | 8 |

**Food & Drink**

**PHO Eagle Cooking Adventure**

**Ratatouille with a garlicky tang**

Food & Drink

**Red Wine**

Red Mountain Estate Sauvignon Blanc 2010

This light-yellow wine, generously Red Mountain’s top product, boasts a fresh flavour that is a bit fruiter than sauvignon blancs produced in other countries.

得分 Rating: 6/10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score BOX</th>
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**White Wine**

Red Mountain Estate Sauvignon Blanc 2010

A wine that possesses one of the most alluring settings for eating out in Yangon: a majestic colonial house more than 100 years old, with spacious downstairs and upstairs dining rooms, as well as outdoor seating.

得分 Rating: 7/10

<table>
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**Your Family’s Lifestyle Choice**

**FOOD & DRINK**

**October 29 - November 4, 2012**
October 29 - November 4, 2012

SoCi al i t e

44

the My an Mar times

Awn Seng
@ Giordano New Branch Opening

Phyu Phyu Kyaw Thein
@ Bone Health Talk by Arlene

U Aik Htun
@ Octagon Signing Ceremony

Thae Naw Zar
@ Canmake Tokyo Fashion Show

Mi Sandy
@ Canmake Tokyo Fashion Show

U Myit Thu Aung, model and San Toe Naing
@ Giordano New Branch Opening

Wint Yamone Hlaing, Sann Thit La and Okkar Htet
@ Giordano New Branch Opening

U Ye Min Soe, U Kyaw Kyar and U Kyaw Kyaw Htoo
@ Pyanmar Beer New Product Launch

U Aung Myet Min, U Kyaw Kyaw and U Ray Tun Oo
@ Pyanmar Beer New Product Launch

Phyu Phyu Kyaw Thein
@ Bone Health Talk by Arlene

Myint Thu Aung, Mr Henry Heng, Mr Prashant Pradhan
@ Bone Health Talk by Arlene

Mr Martin Lundstedt
@ Octagon Signing Ceremony

U Aung Myat Min, U Kyaw Kyar, U Thet Htoo Hlaing and U Nay Tun Oo
@ Myanmar Beer New Product Launch
It was another rollercoaster week of thrills, chills, and beer and wine spills — and subsequent dry-cleaning bills — for Socialite. On October 17 she attended a dinner hosted by Myanmar Brewery at Kandawgyi Palace Hotel, to announce the launch of exciting new products. The next day she swung by the opening ceremony for the new Giordano branch on Anawrahta Road in Kyauktada township, and on October 19 she checked out the new Bossini shop at Junction Square, as well as the signing ceremony between Octagon and Scania companies. On the same day, Socialite also deemed it worthwhile to attend Anlene’s talk about bone health. People! I cannot overemphasise the importance of bones: Without them we would all be flapping around on the floor like rag dolls. So take proper care of your skeletal system, from your skull all the way down to the phalanges of your feet! The weekend held more fashion fun, first at the Canmake Tokyo product show at Junction Square on October 20, followed by the I P Zone fashion corner opening at Sein Gay Har in Hledan township.
### Domestic Flight Schedules

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**NB:**
- UB-A1, UB-C1, UB-B1, UB-B2, UB-C2 are domestic flights operated by Myanmar National Airlines.
- The flights listed above are subject to change without notice.

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**Tourism Myanmar Update**

**Discover Mandalay**

The Myanmar Marketing Committee is producing a new publication titled Discover Mandalay, with the aim of providing focused information on the former royal capital, and to encourage visitors to stay longer in the city. For more information and details on advertising in Discover Mandalay, contact tourism@mmbt.org.mm or fax (95-1)-533-473.

---

**Domestic Airlines**

- **Air Bagan Ltd.**
  - 55th Street, Yezang Street, Bagan Town, 423090, Myanmar
  - Tel: 09-3652754, 09-3652757, Fax: 09-3652759

- **Air KBZ**
  - 22nd Street, Maha Bandoola Garden Street, Pansodan, Yangon, Myanmar
  - Tel: 09-3652096-8 (Air Bagan), Fax: 09-3652099

- **Yangon Airways**
  - 1A, Shandaw Road, Bahan, Yangon 11432, Myanmar
  - Fax: 095-1-266-342, 095-1-266-343

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**Travel Tips**

- **S H E walked into the reception counter dutifully explained the problem for a half day trip to Bodhitaung and Thankaddy Pagoda. The hotel's deluxe tuk-tuk could be hired for K12,000, or smaller tuk-tuks could easily be found outside for around K4000.**

- **By Douglas Long**

---

**Yangon to Heho**

- **K7 320**
  - 11:00 13:05

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**Yangon to Nyaung U**

- **K7 623**
  - 14:00 15:25

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**Yangon to Myanmar**

- **W9 205**
  - 06:00 08:10

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**Yangon to Nyalsa**

- **W9 143**
  - 09:20

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**Yangon to Nyaung Shwe**

- **W9 211**
  - 17:40 19:45

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**Yangon to Nyaung Oo**

- **W9 211**
  - 17:40 19:45

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**Yangon to Nyaung U**

- **W9 211**
  - 17:40 19:45
When tourists swindle locals

characters who prey on foreign visitors is a common occurrence in Myanmar, as illustrated by the grotesquely inflated room rates charged by venal hoteliers to tourists, often at a markup of 10-100 percent. A more subtle phenomenon, however, is the seeming tug at the heartstrings of some tourists. In Myanmar, this is often costed at US$8 for a pony cart tour, which normally takes less than two hours, cost US$5.

In Myanmar it is, of course, par for the course to bargain for a fair price. But these backpackers weren’t haggling in good faith; they were simply trying to swindle locals who weren’t exactly raking in the big money on a day-to-day basis. It was clear from the exchange that if the Australians continued to insist on their unreasonable fees, they would end up standing there all day. But I didn’t intervene.

Certain types of backpackers love to boast about the travels of their travels, about how they swindled package tours and easy destinations for packaged, off the beaten track exploration.

So I figured I was doing them a favour by helping make their trip a little easier. And they could go home and proudly tell their friends about how they hiked in to the tropical sun while the horse drivers wandered back into the shade, ignoring demands for an obscenely low-cost tour through Myanmar’s remarkable countryside.

Chinese city seeks to cash in on Mo Yan’s Nobel Prize win

BEIJING – A Chinese city hopes to cash in on the success of its most famous resident, Nobel Literature Prize winner Mo Yan, whose 400 million fans are reportedly expected to invest US$177 million in the tourist zone dedicated to the writer, Chinese media said last week.

Guangzhou, a city in eastern China’s Shandong province, is expected to invest US$177 million in the tourist zone dedicated to Mo Yan, who has set up most of his gritty stories of Chinese peasant life in the area, the Beijing News reported.

The city will build a Mo Yan Culture Experience Zone, with 650 hectares (1,600 acres) of red sorghum, a type of grain. Red Sorghum is the title of the author’s best-known work, a 1987 novella set amid the brutal violence that plagued the eastern Chinese countryside.

Local farmers once relied on sorghum but stopped growing it in the 1980s as it was seen as unprofitable, the paper said.

The report did not indicate whether the Guangzhou government approved the projects.

Mo Yan recently opposed plans to renovate his former residence in Gaomi because it would be funded by taxpayers’ money, the Modern Express newspaper reported.

“Mo has been supporting these efforts to renovate the house. The money should be spent on something else. He has said the government should invest in him,” said the brother of the writer.

Mo Yan is enjoying a boost in popularity with Chinese readers, who have emptied bookstore shelves in several cities in a rush to buy his novels, the China Daily reported.

Mo Yan, meaning “don’t speak”, is a pen name for the author, who was born Guan Moye.

—— AFP

Chinese city seeks to cash in on Mo Yan’s Nobel Prize win

What might be missed in Monywa: Thambodhay Pagoda. Pic: Douglas Long

Chinese city seeks to cash in on Mo Yan’s Nobel Prize win

Air Asia (FD)
55, Anlin Pya Pagoda Rd, Ground Fl, Parkroyal Hotel, Yangon. Tel: 325 865; Fax: 325 866

Air India (AI)
8 miles, Yangon, Myanmar.

Air China (CA)
Flr, Parkroyal Hotel, Yangon. Tel: 255491~6 Fax: 255223

Air Asia (FD)
8 miles, Yangon, Myanmar.

Flr, Parkroyal Hotel, Yangon. Tel: 255491~6 Fax: 255223

Bogyoke Aung San Rd, Kyauktada Tsp, Ygn.

Malaysia Airlines (MH)

Flr, Parkroyal Hotel, Yangon. Tel: 255491~6 Fax: 255223

Bogyoke Aung San Rd, Kyauktada Tsp, Ygn.

Thailand Airways (TG)

8 miles, Yangon, Myanmar.

Flr, Parkroyal Hotel, Yangon. Tel: 255491~6 Fax: 255223

Bogyoke Aung San Rd, Kyauktada Tsp, Ygn.

Vietnam Airlines (VN)

8 miles, Yangon, Myanmar.

Flr, Parkroyal Hotel, Yangon. Tel: 255491~6 Fax: 255223

Bogyoke Aung San Rd, Kyauktada Tsp, Ygn.

Silk Air (MI)

8 miles, Yangon, Myanmar.

Flr, Parkroyal Hotel, Yangon. Tel: 255491~6 Fax: 255223

Bogyoke Aung San Rd, Kyauktada Tsp, Ygn.

Bangkok Airways (PG)

8 miles, Yangon, Myanmar.

Flr, Parkroyal Hotel, Yangon. Tel: 255491~6 Fax: 255223

Bogyoke Aung San Rd, Kyauktada Tsp, Ygn.

International Airlines

International Flight Schedules

AUS TO YANGON

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Subject to change without notice


October 29 - November 4, 2012

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also given them more leverage to appeal directly — a wave of Malaysian women seen as the benefit of a friend who introduced them to YouTube. An artist for Christmas 2007. Video-sharing site’s featured artist Ko Saw Nyein will be performing 70 paintings of Myanmar traditional dancers created from 2009 to 2012, at Professional Art Gallery (Kaba Aye Pagoda Road, Yangon) from November 3 to 7.

Events Flash

Deepavali festival
A Deepavali Festival of Light celebration, featuring a performance by Indian idol season 3 top singer Ankit Mahira, will be held at the National Theatre in Yangon on November 3, starting at 6pm. Tickets are available at K10,000, K20,000 and K30,000. Contact 09-420-1998 (English/Myanmar) or 9-420-87374 (Myanmar only).

Gospel music
A Festival of Christian gospel music will be held at Myanmar Convention Centre (Min Dhamma Road, Mayangone Township, Yangon) from October 23 to 25. Performances will be held daily from 5pm to 9pm. Admission is free.

Lokanat show
The group exhibition “Di-rectivity: The creative work of three artists, will be held at Lokanat Gallery (4th Floor, First Street, First Street, Yangon) from October 23 to 29.

Book club revival
The 75th anniversary of the founding of the New Generation Nagan Book Club will be marked at the National Theatre in Yangon on November 4, from 4pm to 5pm. The book club existed from 1944 to 1969, during which time it published 70 books, mostly on anti-colonial politics. The ceremony will include the founding of the New Generation Nagan Book Club, which will also act as a publishing house. Cartoon competitions will also be held, and about 100 bookstores will offer discounts on their products.

IC concert
Iron Cross will perform with Yadanar Myint in Yangon on November 28. Tickets are K15,000 and K8000.

Triffate show
The life of well-known artist Ko Saw Nyein will be celebrated with his contemporary and traditional musicians at the French Institute, Yangon, on October 31 at 5pm.

Fashion week
Myanmar International Fashion Week 2012 will be held at Jangal Restaurant, Pyay Road, Yangon, from November 16 to 18. More than 80 models and actors will walk the ramp for local designers. Shows will be held from 6pm to 9pm on each night of the event.

Hole dance party
Hole Dance Club (4 U Tun Yaw Myint Street, Yangon) is hosting a dance party on November 1. There are two performances for the event: dinner and dance from 6pm to 11:30pm, K50,000; or with food prepared by the artist of Food of Burma, Claui Daws Lwin; or two free drinks and dance entrance (9:30pm to 11:30pm, K20,000). For more information, please contact Claudia (09-404-1172) or Than Zin (09-420-9098-1770).

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Dancers exhibit
Artist U Lun Gwey will celebrate his 83rd birthday by holding the “My Golden Dancers” exhibition, featuring 70 paintings of Myanmar traditional dancers created from 2009 to 2012, at Professional Art Gallery (Kaba Aye Pagoda Road, Yangon) from November 3 to 7.

Illustrator art show
Artist Kyaw Thaung will hold a solo exhibition titled “Illustrator” at ART Galley (143 Myanmar Gonyi Road, Mingalar Taung Nyunt Township, Yangon) from November 3 to 9.

Artfest for women
The Third Blue Wind Multimedia Art Festival for female artists will be held at 09-420-1034 from December 23 to 27, with highlights including a directing workshop led by Finnish cinematographer Pentti Kiiskinen: Venue TBA. Email bluewindmyanmar@gmail.com for info.

If you would like your event listed in Event Flash, please email editors myanmarexpress times.com.mm.

Social media empower female musicians
By Shannon Teoh
KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysian singer-songwriter Zee Avi’s path to fame in Malaysia began five years ago in her bedroom with a second-hand guitar and an old-fashioned video camera, before uploading her first video on YouTube. Now, her videos have been viewed by more than 5 million people online and she’s performed across the world, headlining two albums that charted on the American Billboard charts.

It was my birthday and I was out with friends for dinner. When I came back, I was like, why are there 3000 emails in my inbox?” Zee Avi, who has seen her career take off with the support of social media, said.

She only posted “Zee for the first time last week after she had missed her maiden public performance.

With a folk-soul sound resembling early Norah Jones, US singer Erykah Badu, and a name that sounds like “Zee,” the Malaysian singer - songwriter who has been performing in Malaysia for five years — has released a debut album, “They say.”

Malaysia has a history of music stars underlining their craft, with some of the early artists doing their pop and rock albums. But the new breed of performers is often seen as being less “commercial,” as they are more likely to appeal to an international audience.

This has not only helped them gain popularity but has also helped them garner leverage when it comes to the pressures and constraints faced by female singers and performers in their predominantly Muslim society, she says.

Another rising star is Yuna, a Muslim ethno-fusion singer who self-titled debut album this year peaked at number 29 on the Korean Billboard chart. Her album “Heartseekers” chart and has scenes of a young woman who is currently being New York.

Yuna — who swaddles her hair in a chic version of the Muslim hijab headscarf-wearing worn by many Malay women as a sign of modesty — has gained a fan, then 300, then 300,000” after uploading her first song on MySpace in 2006.

Yet at home they face criticism from religious authorities, online trolls and the mainstream media over what they wear, who they date and where they go.

Malaysia has been generally free to perform in small venues in the local music scene. But once they gain popularity, that’s when the problems start,” said Daryl O’Donis, said she was taken by the fact that, you know Grammys, an award that, you’ve got the dancers and the musicians and the singers, and they’ll be banned and they will be banned if they don’t wear a hijab. I want some scenes where she must walk a tightrope line to embrace what she is and what she’s doing, but from not fearing to be wrong. It is never too late to transform your superstitious beliefs into logical or modern scientific thoughts. The best confidence comes not from always being right, but from not fearing to be wrong. Because we don’t have to listen to any gossip as it will only harm your relationships with work colleagues. Do not consider humility to be a weakness, even in your relationship with your parents. Provoking situations. Success and failure are a part of life, so get used to losing if you wish to appreciate the sweet sense of victory.

Virgo Aug 23 - Sept 22
More about your lover. There may be unplumbed depths yet to explore. Sexual pleasures are waiting for you but do not distract you from higher pursuits. Your positive attitude toward work will propel you forward.

Libra Sept 23 - Oct 22
Do not consider humility to be a weakness, even in your relationship with your parents. Provoking situations. Success and failure are a part of life, so get used to losing if you wish to appreciate the sweet sense of victory.

Scorpio Oct 23 - Nov 21
Be respectful of your shared history and avoid indulging in mindreading for the sake of your pride. Avoid confrontation with your parents if possible. It’s better that you don’t listen to any gossip as it will only harm your relationships with work colleagues.

Sagittarius Nov 22 - Dec 21
Thoughts of inferiority could trouble you. Be careful not to let your pride get in the way of your success. Social media such as Twitter or Facebook can make you more powerful to give the thinking of the artist that “what to do and how to do it?”

Capricorn Dec 22 - Jan 19
Make more time for pursuits that you enjoy, and consider learning a simple thing that can be helpful in your work. Keep a healthy relationship with your social communication this week, as your thoughts about playing hardball in your negotiations.

For a personal reading contact Aung Myin Kyaw, 4th Floor, 113 Thamian Bayar Road, Tamwe Township, Yangon, Tel: 09/33513954, Email: williamgates@msn.com.

Tauruses April 20 - May 20
Take action to reduce your stress level, and know that patience and harmony are two ingredients for success. Accept challenges to your way of thinking, and the tensions will dissipate. Try not to listen to any gossip as it will only harm your relationships with work colleagues.

Gemini May 21 - June 20
Your hypochondria might be the result of a nervous disorder caused a mental imbalance. Too much confidence. Self-pitying in the affections that are lauded upon you will help you remain fresh and green. Your successful relationship can make you happy and healthy.

Cancer June 22 - July 22
Consider taking a risk on a new business venture, and don’t be afraid to accept the advice of your love; it could be more helpful than you think. Love and hate are twin sisters who are at play in the field of your golden responsibilities.

Leo July 23 - Aug 22
Avoid travelling this week if possible, otherwise your personal safety could be jeopardised. Romantic fantasies might be great fun but they are hardly good for improving your present situation. Success and failure are a part of life, so get used to losing if you wish to appreciate the sweet sense of victory.

Virgo Aug 23 - Sept 22
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The United Nations Postgraduate Programme Office on Drugs & Crime (UNODC) is seeking Regional Coordinators in Narcotics & Firearms.

For more information and to apply, visit www.unodc.org.
PARIS - As doping-disgraced Lance Armstrong cycles into the sunset of sporting infamy, Britain’s Bradley Wiggins and a new generation of pedal pushers must try to make people care about a forever-tainted sport.

That’s the challenge moving ahead after the International Cycling Union (UCI) upheld a lifetime ban for Armstrong, the striping of his seven Tour de France titles based on a mountain of evidence from the US Anti-Doping Agency.

Where Armstrong had been king cast as champion of the world’s most famous cycling race from 1999-2005, there is no winner named, organizers choosing not to move up other riders into the top spot, symbolic of a MeToo movement.

Another former Armstrong teammate, Norwegian Thor Hushovd, admitted on October 23 that he took the banned blood booster erythropoietin (EPO).

With already-outed winner Floyd Landis also among confessed Tour dope cheats and an entrenched banned performance-enhancing system around Armstrong, Rabobank dropped its team sponsorship, declaring the sport was too far gone.

Wiggins, this year’s Tour de France winner with Team Sky, also provided a offer of support to 11-time champion Cadel Evans of Australia are among the stars who must try and convince sponsors and supporters of cycling to stay faithful in the face of betrayal.

“Are we the ones picking up the pieces up?” Wiggins told Sky News. “For me it is about moving forward and not looking back any more to what happened 10, 15 years ago.”

“Are we one of the most successful sports for catching people? I don’t think that is relevant to what we are doing today. What we are doing today is setting the example for our sport.”

Sky said it will ask all team members to sign a pledge vowing they have never been involved with doping and never will be - or face firing.

“We want a team in which riders are free of the risks of doping and in which fans new and old can believe without any doubt or hesitation,” Sky said.

Michael Ashenden, a blood doping expert who worked for UCI until April, said Sky’s pledge must have effective oversight and standards to be meaningful.

“Do Sky intend to actively investigate what (team) leader David Brailsford calls reputational risks and act on what they find if there are grounds to suspect someone has been associated with doping?” he asked.

“It’s a really important issue because unless they can qualify their position, their statement isn’t worth the paper it’s written on. If they intend only to act when a cyclist is sanctioned, they’re being disingenuous to their fans.”

“We’re talking about millions of fans being deceived and tens of millions of dollars being fraudulently earned by Armstrong. Lessons have to be learned.”

Brailsford said slower Tour times in recent years show the doping era is over.

“We’ve got slower and slower, which contrasts the remarkable improvements we’ve seen in the years when all athletes were competing.”

“However, that opens a can of worms. We’re the ones picking up the pieces up.”

“Darren would emotionally make a great captain and it’s personally being able to relate to 12 very individual players in a team.”

And McDowell hinted that maybe the European Tour’s players committee, which will announce the next captain at the Abu Dhabi Championship in January, could decide a few captains in advance.

“There should be a pecking order of guys who are next in line, and Paul McGinley really has stood his ground. He’s not looking back any more.”

“McDowell explained that, in his view, the captaining role is not just about past playing success.

“It should boil down to pure playing credentials, of course Darren would win hands down as the next captain.”

“However, that opens a can of worms on the Ryder Cup captaining debate because are we looking at Ryder Cup captains who will be great captains?”

“You’ve got to look at what makes a great captain and it’s personally being able to relate to 12 very individual players in a team.”

“The victorious European team of last month reunited last week, with only Sergio Garcia from Chicago -- McGinley and Luke Donald have backed him in the Seve Trophy and the Abu Dhabi Championship, where he added.

“Darren would emotionally make a great captain and it’s personally being able to relate to 12 very individual players in a team.”

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“There should be a pecking order of guys who are next in line, and Paul McGinley really has got enough credentials to be a Ryder Cup captain,” McDowell said.

“Darren... would make for a great captain in America as they love him over there. His personality suits America and they see him as the cigar-smoking, Guinness-drinking nice guy that he is.” – AFP

Northern Ireland’s Graeme McDowell, who has backed Paul McGinley to be the next Ryder Cup captain, chips onto the 7th green during round of the BMW Shanghai Masters at the Lake Malaren Golf Club in Shanghai on October 25. The European Ryder Cup team defeated the United States in a stunning comeback last month in Chicago. Pic: AFP
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The company is also certified the highest grade A1 as a General Builder by the Building and Construction Authority of Singapore and aspires to issue IPO in Singapore in 2013.
The company entered Myanmar in March 2011 and incorporated Qingjian International (Myanmar) Group Development Co., Ltd following Singapore's advanced managerial model.
Our core values: Honesty, Dedication, Creation of Excellence, Win-Win Cooperation, and Harmonious Development

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- Real Estate Development
- International Trade
- Financing & Investment
- Pre-casting
Tennis Federation of Myanmar serves up plan for growth

By Aung Si Hein

THE Tennis Federation of Myanmar (TFM) is undertaking ambitious projects with hopes of building a strong base of new tennis teachers and players.

The TFM took the first step towards widespread improvements late last year when it hired Robert Davis as head coach and technical expert for a period of two years after he was recommended by the International Tennis Federation.

Mr Davis has previously served as the head coach for the Thai, Indonesian, Peruvian and Panamanian national teams.

"In contracting Mr Davis our main task was to prepare our national teams for the upcoming 2013 Southeast Asian Games," U Aung Maw Thein, president of TFM, said.

"However, he is also tasked with developing tennis in general throughout the nation. Our goal at the TFM is to provide the necessary structure for the game to grow."

The main areas that they will be focused on during Mr Davis' tenure are coaching education, talent identification and development, officiating and attracting international tournaments to Myanmar.

From December 2nd - 8th, TFM will host the 1st Myanmar International Tennis Project at Thien Byu Tennis Centre.

"The objective of the Myanmar International Tennis Project is to bring together everyone in Myanmar that has an enthusiasm to play, teach or learn more about tennis," Mr Davis said.

"From school kids who have never played tennis, to the very successful adult league organised by L'Opera Restaurant, to established tennis coaches from the 14 states of Myanmar and to physical education teachers in the schools who want to offer tennis to their students. Everyone is welcome."

There will also be a tennis teacher's course directed by the Professional Tennis Registry and an officiating course conducted by the International Tennis Federation.

"We want to create a greater interest in tennis among adults and young children alike through a variety of activities that introduce new people to tennis," Mr Davis said of the program.

"In order to teach more students how to play tennis, we will need more people willing to learn to teach tennis. The idea that you have to be a good player to be a good teacher is false. What is needed is a good teacher first, and tennis ability second. We can easily help them acquire the necessary tools to play and teach tennis with.

Though these new programs are exciting, TFM has no illusions of instant gratification; they are fully aware that developing tennis players and improving infrastructure is a long process that requires quality education and enthusiastic sponsors.

"I am very excited about the opportunities here in Myanmar," Mr Davis said.

"I have worked for national associations all over the world, and like anything else, success starts at the top. And the president of the TFM is fully committed to planting seeds now for a sustained long term growth later."