

THAILAND

20 March – 3 April 2017

MEDIA MONITORING REPORT # 165

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

NCA signatories meet with DPN of UNFC in Chiang Mai

Eleven Myanmar, 20 March 2017

Leaders of eight Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) signatories met representatives of the Delegation of Peace Negotiation (DPN) of the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) in Chiang Mai on Sunday.

The UNFC was formed with ethnic armed groups that have not signed on to the NCA. The NCA has been signed by eight ethnic armed groups so far.

“We are now updating the UNFC status,” said Phado Saw Kywe Htoo Win, the secretary-general of Karen National Union (KNU), which signed an NCA with the government. “We discussed the current situation of the UNFC. Information arising from meetings of the work committee of national-level political dialogue is being shared.

The representatives of DPN of the UNFC met with the government peace commission on March 3. The commission agreed in principle on a nine-point proposal submitted by the UNFC.

“All peace negotiators have the responsibility to create a safe and sound environment for the general public,” said the leader of the DPN Khu Oo Ral. “We need to be magnanimous and to be tolerant in seeking ways to ensure eternal peace. We need mutual trust.

“I hope we’ll achieve a good result in the near future if we discuss all matters in a transparent manner.”

The proposal and general issues raised by the UNFC were discussed by the members of the Peace Commission and the DPN.

“We have discussed matters at least six times and I am pleased to see the observers from international organizations that monitored a press conference organized by the delegates from DPN yesterday,” said Dr Tin Myo Win, chairman of the peace commission.

Link: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/politics/8390>

Parties without parliament seats barred from peace conference

Eleven Myanmar, 20 March 2017

The Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) will create a list of the political parties who did not win any seats in the 2015 election and submit them to the Union Peace Conference.

Election losers were allowed to attend the peace conference in January 2015 under the Thein Sein administration. However, they were excluded from the second round of the peace conference in September, which was held by the National League for Democracy.

“It’s up to the government whether to invite all some 90 political parties. Former President U Thein Sein allowed every party to attend the conference even if they did not win any seats. But the government now invites only the parties that won a seat in Parliament. We keep telling the government [to think about parties without MPs], but the authorities won’t budge. So we’re collecting the ideas from all the parties for the peace conference,” said Manam Tuja, chairman of Kachin State Democracy Party and member of the UPDJC.

A total of 150 representatives from official parties can attend the conference, according to the nationwide ceasefire agreement’s political dialogue framework.

UPDJC members in February discussed results from national-level talks that were about politics, economy, social affairs, land, natural resources and security matters that would be considered at the peace conference.

The security agenda has two topics: state defense and consolidation of armed forces. The UPDJC has formed five working committees – each with 15 members – for five subjects: politics, social affairs, economy, security and land and environment.

Link: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/politics/8384>

Mon State Day celebrations hear call for peace effort

Eleven Myanmar, 20 March 2017

Aye San, the Chief Minister of Mon State, made an address and a message from President Htin Kyaw was read out by Min Kyi Win, the Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

As part of the activities, prizes were handed out and members of the Mon, Kayin and Pa-O ethnic groups entertained those present with folk dances.

Htin Kyaw said in his message that he hoped the Mon ethnic groups would actively participate in the peace process and the 21st Panglong Conference being implemented by the government.

Aye San said the government was making progress with political and economic reforms aimed at steering the country into a new era, adding that popularly elected lawmakers are trying to implement policies on issues including national reconciliation, peace and the constitution. These efforts will help the federal union to achieve higher standards of living,

“We hope that fundamental policies capable of establishing the democratic federal union we all long for will eventuate,” Aye San said. “If our brethren in the Mon ethnic groups, who are walking on the road to peace, work together with us on national reconciliation, internal peace and development, Mon State will see development and living standards will rise.

“We urge all present to join hands in attending the 21st Century Panglong Conference and unite in working towards peace.”

Link: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/politics/8392>

LAW AND GOVERNANCE

Walking the road to “Rule of Law”

The Myanmar Times, 9 March 2017

The legal profession is essential for rule of law in reforming Myanmar and for the people to live in full security in accordance with the laws



Myanmar has for many years been facing challenges with regards to the rule of law.

Under the present government led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi proclaiming an agenda to instill rule of law in the land, it is necessary for the people to abide by the laws. To do that, one needs to know and understand it.

There is now a great need for more legal professionals to educate and protect the people as to their legal rights and limits. The road to becoming a legal practitioner begins at law schools.

If a student who has passed matriculation wants to be a legal professional, there are only two routes in Myanmar – either attending day universities or Distance University for five years majoring in law.

Law is one of the arts subjects taught in universities across Myanmar and only those who obtain total marks of over 300 in their matriculation exams are eligible to take law as a major subject. The exact entrance marks are not the same every year depending on the universities located in regions and states.

In this 2016-17 curriculum year, the entrance mark for day universities is set at 350, while that for distance learning is set at 300. There is no other pre-condition for a day student in a law major, but for a distance-learning student, he or she needs to get more than 50 marks for English in the matriculation exams.

In distance learning, a law student will have to do assignments and attend a 10-day intensive course every year but a law-major day student will have to learn the law subjects throughout the university semester.

There are 48 arts and science universities under the Ministry of Education in Myanmar. But law is only offered at 16 of them. Graduates who obtain more than 65 marks in all five subjects in the final year of the course will be entitled to continue their studies in the Masters course called LL.M. (Master of Law).

If a person is keen to learn about law, but not necessarily intent on practicing as a lawyer, there are two training courses that provide a “Diploma in Business Law”. One is the law training course jointly conducted by the Higher Education Department and Legal Affairs Department, and the other is a training course offered by the Human Resources Department.

“One extraordinary thing is that you can learn the law subject online only at Yangon Distance University where questions and answers [interactive teachings] are also conducted. One can learn the law subject as well as sit for exams via online,” said Sittwe University’s Deputy Head of Law Department U Kyaw Lwin.

“However, enrollment and paying books charges will have to be personally made at Yangon University of Distance Education.

“You can take exams online after asking for the questions. If you pass an online exam, you will obtain the degree.”

Yangon University and Mandalay University produce thousands of law graduates every year, but the number of law graduates from universities in other cities is small, said U Kyaw Lwin.

The total number of day law students and distance law students in Sittwe University in the 2016-17 academic year is only 76 students, while in Yangon University, there are 50 day law students and over 100 distance law students this year.

After getting an LL.B. (Bachelor of Law) degree, a law graduate will have to start working as an apprentice lawyer after submitting an application form to the Union Supreme Court.

“After getting a degree, we can work as legal interns at the chambers,” said second year law-major student Mg Aung Thu Hein.

A High Court lawyer, the highest ranked in Myanmar, can prosecute in all courts in the country.

The same holds true for lawyers from other countries who want to work in Myanmar, as they will need to register at the Union Supreme Court.

Work opportunities are plenty in Myanmar for law graduates. There are private law firms, or even jobs as legal advisors in companies, the media and high capital investment projects.

Universities across Myanmar are producing law graduates every year. There are over 40,000 advocates and over 11,000 high court lawyers now in Myanmar, according to statistics taken from advocate registration numbers and high court lawyer registration numbers.

The legal profession is essential for rule of law in reforming Myanmar and for the people to live in full security in accordance with the laws. Therefore, young people who will lead Myanmar in the future need to study the law, regardless of whether they are making a living with that profession or not.

<http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/special-features/educentre/25300-walking-the-road-to-rule-of-law.html>

NLD wins 9 seats out of 19 in by-election

Myanmar Times, 3 April 2017

The ruling party National League for Democracy (NLD) won 9 out of the 19 seats vacant in Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw, State and Region Hluttaw in April 1 by-election.

The NLD's secured 8 out of the 12 seats in Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw.

In Shan state, the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) won all six seats – two in the



Lower House and four in the state legislature - in Monghsu and Kyethi townships.

NLD only managed to win a state legislature seat in the Nyaung Shwe township. USDP also won a state legislature seat in Kengtung.

In Mon state's Chaungzone township, the recent NLD proposal to name a bridge connecting the township and the state capital, Mawlamyine after General Aung San, which sparked protests by locals, appeared to have cost NLD. The party lost the Pyithu Hluttaw seat to USDP.

In Kayah state's Hpruso township, the state legislature seat – the only seat NLD did not contest – went to All Nationals' Democracy Party (Kayah State) candidate U The Re.

In Rakhine state, the Arakan National Party won the Ann township's Pyithu Hluttaw seat, where USDP won the second highest votes, followed by NLD in third.

In Yangon, NLD won four Lower House seats (New Dagon (East), New Dagon (Seikkan), Hlaingtharyar and Kawhmu townships) and one Upper House seat (Htanglang Township in Chin state).

Link: <http://www.mmmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/25551-nld-wins-9-seats-out-of-19-in-by-election.html>

ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Electricity Supply: China-Myanmar Electric Power Project

MITV News, 20 March 2017

The China Three Gorges Corporation signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Electric Power since 2010 to promote more electric power development in Myanmar.



The China Three Gorges Corporation was established in 1993. It is a Chinese state-owned power company and it is strategically positioned as a clean energy group focusing on large-scale hydropower development and operation, as well as wind and solar power.

CTG also cooperate with Ministry of Electric Power signed to develop electric power project in Hydro, wind and solar power in Chin

and Rakhine States, as well as Ayeyawaddy, Sagaing, and Yangon Regions.

Chief Representative , China Three Gorges International Cooperation (Myanmar) , Shan Haichao: “Actually, Myanmar is a very good country because we are neighbors and Myanmar electricity is a very high because company if you want for the economic development, electricity is a first priority so we are very willing to do something for Myanmar because it's a win-win situation.”

China also provides assistance for human resources and invests in energy sector about 4 million USD for the Myanmar National grids plan.

Chief Representative , China Three Gorges International Cooperation , Shan Haichao : “actually we are very interesting about the Myanmar, very nice resources because Myanmar an electricity is very high willing to cooperate with Myanmar to explore more electricity so for the first one is wind now is just the one small of pilot if this project compete develop project successfully so we will develop the more win projects in cooperated areas and decide the win the project we are also interesting about the solar “

CTG prioritize the development of wind power to enhance energy organizations and to fulfill the electricity demand in Myanmar.

Link: <http://www.myanmarinternational.tv/news/electricity-supply-china-myanmar-electric-power-project>

Loikaw, Mae Hong Son sign sister-city deal to foster cooperation

Burma News International, 18 March 2017

Loikaw has a new sister city across the border with Thailand. The Kayah (Karenni) State capital signed an agreement with Mae Hong Son on March 9.

Kayah State and Mae Hong Son Province officials said the new pact will help both sides to boost tourism, trade and rural development projects.

“Agriculture is the backbone of our country. In our state, we still have a lot of difficulties with the land. We need investments to help improve [the farming sector],” said Kayah State Chief Minister L Paung Sho. “Now that we have already signed the MoU [memorandum of understanding] we will work together to improve agriculture.”



The two neighbors already signed an agreement for a border training center in Mae Sariang, Thailand in October 2016.

To take bilateral trade a step further, officials from both countries met in Nay Pyi Taw in the second week of January, laying the foundations for the MoU.

“We will work toward having our staff members exchange information directly between the two countries in a friendly way which will be eased by not having to first inform the respective [government] departments,” Suebsak Eaimvijarn, the governor of Mae Hong Son, said after the March 9 MoU signing event in Loikaw.

Myanmar and Thailand signed their first tourism cooperation agreement in 1998.

Link: <http://www.bnionline.net/news/karenni-state/item/2842-loikaw-mae-hong-son-sign-sister-city-deal-to-foster-cooperation.html>

Lighting Festival: Till April 30 At People’s Park

MITV News, 20 March 2017



Myint Win attended the opening ceremony.

The very first Myanmar International Lighting Festival organized by DN Development Group started at People's Park on Sunday.

Hello! Everyone, the 1st Myanmar International Lighting Festival is being held at People's Park with the aim of celebrating Myanmar New Year with an extravagant lighting festival.

Regional Security and Border Affairs Minister Col. Tin Aung Tun, Rakhine Ethnic Affairs Minister U Zaw Aye Maung and President of UMFCCI U Zaw

Project Manager, DN Development Group, Hein Htet: We got the idea from Singapore's Lighting Festival during the last Christmas. In January, we discussed with the Yangon Region Chief Minister on holding such an event and he agreed. Now it is a good time after exams and before Thingyan, our new year. So, we are holding this event to help the people have fun and relax. The electricity consumption of this festival is the same as a house with 3 rooms. We are now making preparations to hold such events across the country.

Myanmar International Lighting Festival 2017 features over 60 lighting utilizing 70 million LED lights.

Models of Eiffel tower of Paris, Mount Fuji of Japan, cartoon characters and animals are created with the LED lights – a light tunnel is also included.

Visitor, Tin Tun: It is really an amazing night for us. Now, our young people created the 1st Lighting Festival and I'm proud of them. Today, I come with my family and we take the photos. And we will visit again and again because it is really interesting.

Visitor, DD Saw Thet: "Right now, I'm so really excited to be here because there is really proud of me, because there is the 1st time in Myanmar also. And you know, that is in my life, I have never seen just like this. So I'm really proud of being in Myanmar also."

Myanmar international Lighting Festival will be held till April 30th.

Link: <http://www.myanmarinternational.tv/news/lighting-festival-till-april-30-people%E2%80%99s-park>

Myanmar's basic education curriculum gets a makeover

The Myanmar Times , 9 March 2017

The duration for schooling was increased to be on par with international standards and the new curriculum was drawn up to develop students in five sectors.

Myanmar's basic education curriculum is about 30 years old, with the last amendment made in 1985. Widely considered to be out-of-date, Myanmar's education system is left behind compared with the international community.



Children grow up with less critical thinking skills under the by-heart learning system which no longer fits in with this age of technology.

Therefore, the Department of Education Research Bureau under the Education Department started drawing up a new curriculum in 2012. After three years, a new syllabus – the KG standard – was introduced in the 2016-17 academic year.

“The curriculum is changed in accordance with the National Education Law, to match international standards,” said Dr Khine Myae, former director general of the Department of Education Research Bureau.

The National Education Law was approved on September 30, 2014, with its amendments approved on June 25, 2015. This educational law was the very first of its kind in Myanmar.

According to National Education Law Chapter (5), section (16) (a), Basic Education is divided into three levels, namely Primary Education, Middle School Education and High School Education. Under the government curriculum, a student will have 12 years of education after the completion of kindergarten.

In the past, schooling begins at five, whereas other ASEAN countries begin at 6 years old, and a student will only have 11 years of formal schooling.

The duration for schooling was increased to be on par with international standards and the new curriculum was drawn up to develop five strengths – physical, intellectual, moral, friendship and wealth.

The curriculum will be changed in stages for students in the coming academic years, and the curriculum of Standard 2 students will be changed in the 2018-19 academic year, while the curriculum of Standard 3 students will be changed in the 2019-20 academic year. For Standard 4 and Standard 5 students, the curriculum will change in the 2020-21 and 2021-22 academic years respectively.

Middle and high school education’s curricula will continue to be drawn with the help of Asian Development Bank.

Link: <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/special-features/educentre/25297-myanmar-s-basic-education-curriculum-gets-a-makeover.html>

Drawing up a career as a graphic designer

The Myanmar Times, 9 March 2017



Having basic painting knowledge will enable a designer to learn up skills as he or she will be familiar with color theories, perspective, light and tone and composition.

Being a graphic designer is one of the most appropriate careers for young people who want to use computer software to bring life to their imagination and artistic skills.

For those who want to learn but have no idea where to start, the Art Bar Creative Studio, KMD Institute, Forever Group, Myanmar Media Development Centre, MCC Computer Training Centre and Assembler

Computer Centre which currently offer Graphic Design courses in Myanmar are the places to go.

First, before learning Graphic Designing, one should have prior basic knowledge of painting and English, which is the language used on software packages, self-study training e-videos, eBooks and online tutorials.

Having basic painting knowledge will enable a designer to learn up skills as he or she will be familiar with colour theories, perspective, light and tone and composition.

After attending those courses, one can then join a relevant firm to get an On-the-Job Training.

Estimated fees for graphic design courses are about K100,000 for basic level and about K250,000 for professional level. For those interested in learning 3D Software, fees range from K200,000 to K300,000.

Job opportunities for a professional graphic designer vary, and one can get a job with online shopping sites, printed media, online media, in the advertising line and in business webpage developing where good imagination will get one far. Moreover, with more and more emerging media agencies, job opportunities for graphic designers are increasing.

A professional graphic designer, after passing through different levels of training courses and schools, can work as an in-house designer in Myanmar, with a salary of around K500,000 and can reach US\$1000 if the job is in an agency.

In foreign countries, the average yearly salary of an Art Director can be up to \$75,000 and a Senior Designer can earn nearly as much as an Art Director. The salary for a Creative Director can be between \$100,000 and \$150,000 a year.

Link: <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/special-features/educentre/25290-drawing-up-a-career-as-a-graphic-designer.html>

Students and parents welcome new exam system

The Myanmar Times, 9 March 2017

In the new system, students have to take new approaches and methods to prepare for the exams.

The final exams in all the basic education grades except the matriculation exam were previously evaluated by the school exam system, but it has been three years since the final exams of the fourth and eighth standards were changed to the government exam system.

In the previous school exam system, the basic education students including matriculation classes were ranked first, second, third and so on depending on the marks they scored.

But, in the academic year of 2015-16, most of the basic education schools switched from the numeric ranking system to the grading system using letters A, B, C and D. During the current academic year of 2016-17, all the basic education schools in Myanmar have been using this new grading system for exam results.



Previously, students from the fourth and eighth standards had to take their monthly and final exams according to the schedule of the individual schools, but in the new system, they take it in accordance with the government exam system. So, students have had to take new approaches and methods to prepare for the new exams.

Under the previous school exam system, students have to study only a few lessons taught in the class, but under the government exam system, students have to study more.

With the school exam system, the students (Basic Education Level except matriculation) have to answer the lessons taught from the end of December during the final exam. However, in the final exam of grade four and grade eight which was changed to government exam system, the students have to take an exam which covers all lessons from the beginning to the end of the academic year.

Most of the student's parents also like the change from school exam system to government exam system in fourth and eighth standards.

But there are also parents who criticise the use of "Grade" in exam results as it is difficult to be certain of a student's quality. In the past, the exam results of all basic education standards were announced with the actual marks that the student got in the exam.

Grade A is for marks between 80 and 100, Grade B for 60 to 79, Grade C for 40 to 59, and Grade D is for those who obtained less than 40 marks.

Link: <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/special-features/educentre/25292-students-and-parents-welcome-new-exam-system.html>

Ministry aims at 1 million housing units by 2030

The Myanmar Times, 10 March 2017

The Ministry of Construction has planned to implement one million units by 2030, according to the government's housing development plan.



The plan began in 2012 and it is intended to be implemented over the course of five years.

As the plan is reaching its first five-year marker, the government should be building an estimated 300,000 housing units every five years.

"However, during 2011 and 2016, they [construction] didn't reach the target", said U Thar Htay, chair of the Myanmar Construction Entrepreneur Association (MCEA).

"The Ministry of Construction announced that they would implement one million units by 2030 ... they didn't reach the target in the past five years. The ministry specifically used the budget from the Union Government for that [project], but they didn't reach the target," he said.

The project of housing development began in 2011, at the time of U Thein Sein's government. But now, the current government has a new strategy for the issue, said U Thar Htay.

Rental issue is a problem for many Yangon residents. The situation might change with the upcoming Real Estate Service Law, according to Daw Moh Moh Aung, secretary of Myanmar Real Estate Services Association (MRESA), which would like to see the property sector properly supervised and rental economy regulated.

Link: <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/business/property-news/25267-ministry-aims-at-1-million-housing-units-by-2030.html>

Heritage preservation potential boost for tourism

The Myanmar Times, 6 March 2017

On March 1, Yangon Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein posted a clip on Facebook saying that the regional government is preserving around 200 heritage buildings in Yangon.

"We are preserving heritage buildings in Yangon numbering about 200 buildings ... We also plan to preserve and renovate ... the old Ministry of Hotels and Tourism Office building and the Secretariat without doing any damage to [their] heritage value. It [the project] would be supervised directly by the regional government," the chief minister said.



Yangon Regional Government, in cooperation with Yangon Heritage Trust (YHT) and Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC), is heading the installation of blue plaques at buildings for preservation and commemoration.

Currently, 17 blue plaques have been installed at buildings, and plans to install about 100 more blue plaques are underway.

Furthermore, YHT has already submitted to Yangon Region Government a catalogue of heritage buildings which has listed about 160 buildings, and mostly state-owned buildings, for Yangon's heritage preservation, explained Daw Moe Moe Lwin, YHT director.

She added that now the old Ministry of Hotels and Tourism Office building is under the management of the Yangon Region government and the YHT is also trying to garner support from various organizations.

Back in 2012, industry experts told the Myanmar Times that tourism-related businesses represented an obvious use for many old buildings and that colonial landmarks should be saved to bolster the city's tourism potential. Preservation could be seen as an investment in Yangon's future.

With little details released, it remains to be seen whether the 200-building preservation plan would be an effective way to develop tourism, both in the short term and in the long run.

Link: <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/business/property-news/25199-heritage-preservation-potential-boost-for-tourism.html>

Primary school curriculum to include human rights subject

Myanmar Times, 27 March 2017

Education on human rights will be included in the new school curriculum for Grade 2 students next year, said a spokesperson for the Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education officials met the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) in July 2016 to discuss the inclusion of human rights education for primary schoolchildren.

The ministry implemented the basic education level kindergarten plus 12 (KG+12) education system in the 2016-17 academic year and introduced a new syllabus for the KG standard.

The new curriculum will be implemented for Grade 1 students in the 2017-18 academic year and for Grade 2 the following year.

“We are planning to design a new curriculum for Grade 2. We haven’t started on it yet,” said Dr Khine Myai.

The subject on human rights will be jointly drawn up by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) with MNHRC.

“If a person knows about human values and rights from young, they can live the right way. Their thinking skills and consideration will be right,” U Sit Myaing, MNHRC vice president explained why human rights education is important.

He said MNHRC has collected data on the subject for the curriculum for students in Grades 2, 3 and 4.

“We have already drafted the curriculum and need to meet with the ministry officials. And we have to negotiate on what should be taught,” said U Sit Myaing.

The draft of the curriculum for students in Grades 2, 3 and 4 was completed in August 2016.

Link: <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/25465-primary-school-curriculum-to-include-human-rights-subject.html>

OTHERS

Karen IDPs ask KNU leadership to reject hydropower dams

Burma News International, 20 March 2017



As the Karen National Union prepares to elect a new leadership body this week, displaced Karen families joined a local environmental group in lobbying for the next chairperson to reject hydropower proposals.

On March 14, International Day of Action for Rivers, Karen Rivers Watch held a demonstration

on the bank of the Salween. Members of the Ee Tu Htat and Uweklo internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps attended the event, which was held near Uweklo village.

“We want the elders of the KNU who will be elected at the 16th congress to reject dam projects. If the new Karen leaders change their minds [to allow the dams] the decision will neglect the needs of the local people and leave us very worried,” said Sa Tu Tu Sten, one of the event leaders.

“We’d like to demand the soon-to-be elected Karen leaders to decisively defend the local people and take responsibility to rule out the dam projects,” said Naw The Nae, chair of the Karen Women’s Organization chapter in the Ee Tu Hta IDP camp.

Lieutenant General Saw Baw Kyaw Heh, vice commander-in-chief of the Karen National Liberation Army – the KNU’s armed wing, said last year that a pragmatic approach must be taken toward hydropower dams.

“I cannot demand myself that the dam projects do not go ahead. But as we are an organization to protect the Karen people, we must proceed in activities that are in accordance with the wishes of the Karen people,” he said.

Link: <http://www.bnionline.net/news/karen-state/item/2846-karen-idps-ask-knu-leadership-to-reject-hydropower-dams.html>

Kayin passport offices hit with application frenzy

Karen News, 25 March 2017

Hundreds of people have been swarming the passport issuing office in the Kayin State capital on a daily basis, according to a police chief.

He attributed the demand, which increased at the beginning of this year, to a lack of jobs in Myanmar as most of the passport applicants are headed to Thailand or Korea in search of work.

“The migrant workers who have held temporary passports since 2015 are also coming to re-apply for passports. So these three types of applicants [those headed to Thailand, those going to Korea and those seeking to switch from a temporary passport] come each day,” said Police Chief Thant Zin Linn, at the state-level passport issuing office in Hpa-An.



He estimated that the Hpa-An office has received 100 to 300 passport applications on a daily basis starting from the beginning of the year until now.

“According to Thai labor law, we are able to gain full labor rights and benefits only if we are employed legally. The conditions were not good when I went to work there illegally. But I was able to get a pink card [a form of temporary ID], as well as other documents. But even then I had to pay fees to the police, and rented a room secretly,” he said. “Now [with a passport] I do not have to worry so much as the Thai employer takes care of everything.”

According to records from Kayin (Karen) State's Passport Issuance Department, in 2016 it issued over 21,000 passports. Now just shy of three months into 2017, the department has already issued over 16,000 passports.

Link: <http://karennews.org/2017/03/kayin-passport-offices-hit-with-application-frenzy.html/>

The content of the UNHCR Thailand Media Monitoring Reports does not reflect the official view or opinion of the UNHCR.

Links: Thailand-Myanmar Cross Border Web Portal: www.commonservice.info

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