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PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

Permitting non-NCA signatories to Union Peace Conference is a significant sign, says Nai Hongsar

Mizzima, 11 July 2016

It is a significant sign that the State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi ruled out the policy that the ethnic armed groups that did not sign the nationwide ceasefire agreement (NCA) are also free to participate in the Union Peace Conference. Such an important move is welcomed, according to Nai Hongsar, the vice-chairman of United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC).



“This is happy news for ethnic groups. This is because every ethnic group would like to have their representatives present at the 21st century Panglong Conference. The peace will only be achieved nationwide if everyone can participate,” said Nai Hongsar, who is also the vice-chairman of New Mon State Party (NMSP), in an interview with MNA.

On July 5, at the meeting of State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and preparatory committee for Union Peace Conference held at the Horizon Lake View in Nay Pyi Taw, the state counsellor ruled out the policy that all ethnic armed organizations, including the organizations that already inked the NCA and those that did not sign it, are able to participate in the Union Peace Conference.

Furthermore, the policy also granted that the political parties that did not win the 2015 elections and civil society organizations are also permitted to join the August’s conference.

Link: <http://www.mizzima.com/news-domestic/permitting-non-nca-signatories-union-peace-conference-significant-sign-says-nai>

Date Set for Ethnic Summit

Burma News International, 11 July 2016

Ethnic leaders have confirmed that they will organize the ethnic armed group summit which will be held in Maijyang; the second largest city controlled by the Kachin Independence Organization. The summit that will take on 29 July will be used to prepare for the 21st Century Panglong Conference expected to take place at the end of August.



Karen National Union (KNU) secretary Pado Saw Kwe Htoo Win told reporters: “There are two aims for holding this ethnic armed (group) summit in Maijyang. The first aim is to prepare for the Union Peace Conference (21st Century Panglong Conference). The second aim is to obtain common views and positions of the ethnic people in building a federal union.”

Karenni National Progress Party (KNPP)’s vice chairman Khu Oo Reh said: “We have formed two committees to prepare for the summit. We have formed the preparatory committee with eight members. The other committee is the summit organizing committee. It has been formed with ten members. We have decided to hold the summit with these two committees.”

Link: <http://www.bnionline.net/news/network-media-group/item/1961-date-set-for-ethnic-summit.html>

Govt speeds up peace process planning, appoints state counsellor to head rebranded peace centre

Myanmar Times, 13 July 2016

The state counsellor will chair the 11-member centre, which will be the central organ of the new government’s peace plan. The centre will draft the policy and a newly created peace commission, headed by National League for Democracy member U Tin Myo Win, will be tasked with implementing the plans, according to U Hla Maung Shwe, a member of the government peace team. President U Htin Kyaw announced the changes in state media yesterday.

At the request of the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC), Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will have her first meeting as head of the new centre during talks with leaders of the armed groups on July 17 in Yangon, government peace negotiators said.

At the meeting, the leaders of the UNFC, an armed ethnic bloc of nine groups that did not sign the nationwide ceasefire agreement (NCA), are slated to discuss the 21st-century Panglong Conference, U Hla Maung Shwe said.

Link: <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/nay-pyi-taw/21345-govt-speeds-up-peace-process-planning-appoints-state-counsellor-to-head-rebranded-peace-centre.html>

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi talks with non-signatory armed groups

The Global New Light of Myanmar, 18 July 2016

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi held talks with a delegation of the united nationalities Federation Council, led by its Chairman U N’ Ban la, on the country’s peace process at the national reconciliation and Peace Centre in Yangon yesterday.



During the landmark talks, the first of their type between the new government and non-signatory armed groups, they discussed matters of negotiations between both sides of the peace process to ensure inclusiveness for upcoming union Peace Conference —21st Century Panglong.

At the meeting, the two sides were able to build more trust, said U Hla Maung Shwe, Secretary of the preparatory committee, adding that the talks felt more like “a family-type discussion,”

During the meeting, the UNFC side questioned matters which were unclear to them over their participation in the upcoming union Peace Conference and exchanged their views with the State Counsellor, he added.

Link: https://issuu.com/myanmarnewspaper/docs/18_july_16_gnlm

ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

Non-formal education program to expand

Myanmar Times, 11 July 2016

The free continuing education program provides an opportunity for children under 14 to attain a primary school education and those under 16 to complete middle school through non-formal training.

During a non-formal education workshop in Nay Pyi Taw last week, Union Education Minister U Myo Thein Gyi said K1 billion would be earmarked for the program.

As a pilot project, non-formal middle education will be launched this year in Yangon's Dala Township, Kachin's Myitkyina township, Kayah's Loikaw township and Rakhine's Sittwe township. According to a survey conducted by the ministry, 250 students in those four townships are eligible to resume middle-school education in the non-formal classrooms.



To prepare for the expansion, 36 teachers – nine for each of the townships – will be given a training course for the non-formal middle school program in July, according U Tun Kyi, a project manager for the program.

Link: <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/nay-pyi-taw/21310-non-formal-education-program-to-expand.html>

Karen Youth Organization Elects Totally New Central Committee To Run it

Karen News, 12 July 2016

An 11-member new central executive committee was voted in at the 5th Karen Youth Organization congress held on June 29 at Lay Wah (Law Khee Lar), Pa-an district in Karen State.



The new elected central executive members include Saw Ler Ner as chairman, Saw Eh Soe as vice-chairman, Saw Lar Set Wah as general secretary, Saw Thoo Lei as joint secretary (1) and Naw Hser Hser as joint secretary (2). They were elected by over 90 delegates based from the central level, district level and from refugee camps who attended the congress.

Saw Ler Ner, the newly elected chairman spoke to Karen News.

"All leaders elected at the 5th Congress are new people. No leaders who served in the previous committee are in this new committee. Therefore,

there may be some difficulty at the beginning for us."

Under the previous KYO constitution, the congress is to be held every four years, according to an amendment, the new committee will hold office for five years.

Link: <http://karennews.org/2016/07/karen-youth-organization-elects-totally-new-central-committee-to-run-it.html/>

World Bank-supported project to provide financial support to all schools in Myanmar

The Global New Light of Myanmar, 14 July 2016

BASIC education schools and monastic education schools in Myanmar will receive financial support through a World Bank-supported project according to an official from the Ministry of Education yesterday.

There will be different amounts of funding depending on the number of students in the national schools and monastic education school, said Deputy Director U Toe Win of Basic Education Department of the ministry, adding that all schools will receive grants.

Under the school grants program, a school with 50 students will receive K400,000 while K800,000 is set for a school with 100 students, K1 million for a school with 200 students, K1.2 million for a schools with 300 students, K1.4 m for a school with 400 students, K1.6m for a school with 500 students, K1.8m for a school with 700 students, K2.2 m for a school with 900 students, K2.6 m for a school with 1,100 students, K3 m for a school with 1,500 students, K3.4 m for a school with 2,000 students and K3.8 m for a school with 2,500 students. The project set to run for four years and was started during the 2014-2015 academic year, said the Basic Education Department.



Link: https://issuu.com/myanmarnewspaper/docs/14_july_16_gnlm_8e52b5652d9f27

Second Myanmar-Thai Bridge will be completed in august

The Global New Light of Myanmar, 16 July 2016

CONSTRUCTION of the second Friendship Bridge between Myanmar and Thailand will be completed in August. The bridge will link Myawaddy and Mae Sot, said a deputy director-general from Thailand's Highway Road Department.

A Myanmar team led by Deputy Director-General U Aung Myat Oo of the Ministry of Construction met with 28 officials from Thailand's Highway Roads Department at Tak district on 1 July. The approaching roads of the second bridge are expected to be completed in 2017. When the bridge is completed, trade between Thailand and Myanmar will double.

The friendship bridge was mainly constructed by engineers from Thailand. The fourth meeting is slated to be held at the last week of July in Thailand.

Link: https://issuu.com/myanmarnewspaper/docs/16_july_16_gnlm

Myanmar To Get US\$200 Mln Aid From World Bank For Post-disaster Relief

Bernama.com, 18 July 2016

Myanmar will get US\$200 million aid from the World Bank for post-disaster relief for the year 2015 under Flood and Landslide Emergency Recovery project, China's Xinhua news agency reported, citing official media Monday.

The project, which will focus on the worst-hit areas and villages in Ayeyawaddy, Sagaing, Magway, Bago, Yangon, Chin and Rakhine regions and states, will fund repairs to rural roads and help introduce disaster- and climate- resilient approaches in the road sector, C.

The transport sector was the worst hit, accounting for about 50 per cent of the total damage in the public domain.

Damage and loss in the agricultural sector have left a major impact on the people.

Link: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/wn/newsworld.php?id=1263933>

Mon State's new university offers Diploma in Buddhism

Burma News International, 22 July 2016



Ramannayarattha Buddhism University, a new university in Mon State, started offering its Diploma in Buddhism.

The program started on July 24, at the university in Myaingtharyar Quarter, Mawlamyine capital of Mon State, formerly known as Moulmein.

Priority is given to monks and nuns, with laypersons also accepted. The applicants must meet the course pre-requisites, but if they fail they will be provided with 4 months of English classes.

"If the students pass this year, we will offer them the diploma. Over the next two years, if we have enough students, we will start the bachelor program. However, if the students want to study in Thailand, we have partnered with three Thai universities. They are also welcoming new students from us," said Ashin Khemasara, of Ramannayarattha Buddhism University.

Link: <http://www.bnionline.net/news/mon-state/item/2021-mon-state-s-new-university-offers-diploma-in-buddhism.html>

US approves \$21m assistance to Myanmar

The Nation, 25 July 2015

YANGON - The United States will provide an additional US\$21 million (Bt730 million) in assistance to Myanmar, to promote economic growth and capacity building for long-term development in the country.

The initiative will support the government's goal of tripling exports in five years; strengthen the ability of the government and the legal system to provide accountable and transparent oversight; and help modernize the agriculture sector which will be the driver of employment over the next 10 years, said Ben Rhodes, US deputy national security adviser.

Rhodes was on his fifth visit to Myanmar last week.

Rhodes emphasized the US commitment to strengthen support for democratic consolidation, national reconciliation, and people-to-people engagement. The focus will be on helping President Htin Kyaw's administration to establish the rule of law and strengthen the agricultural sector.



Link: [http://www.nationmultimedia.com/business/US-approves-\\$21m-assistance-to-Myanmar-30291292.html](http://www.nationmultimedia.com/business/US-approves-$21m-assistance-to-Myanmar-30291292.html)

OTHERS

Kayin model IDP town short on government teachers

Myanmar Times, 13 July 2016

A Model village for war-displaced families in Kayin State is sorely short on teachers. With just seven government-assigned tutors in the newly formed Lay Kay Kaw town, each teacher would have to take on 100 pupils if all students attended the public classes.



“The ratio of teachers to students is not balanced,” Daw Bi Bi Air, a teacher in Lay Kay Kaw said in the first week of July. “So we have to hire teachers from outside for the children’s education. If we can get government-assigned teachers, we can save our funding.”

“Moreover, the teaching method is a bit different between government-assigned teachers and those hired from outside. The students who are taught by outside tutors will not do well if they have taken a government examination or transition into the classroom with government-assigned teachers and the government teaching method.”

There are nearly 700 students from the primary to higher education levels in Lay Kay Kaw, Kawkareik township. As the civil servant teachers are badly overwhelmed, locals and the Karen National Union (KNU) in Lay Kay Kaw have to pay the salaries for extra tutors, said U Htay Myint Aung, an administrator of the new town.

In the new town, there are 440 students at the primary level, 138 students at the middle education level and 98 students at the higher education level. Twenty-five teachers have been hired from outside the government curriculum, and the cost of their salaries amounts to nearly K3 million (US\$2544) per month, according to U Htay Myint Aung.

Assistant education head for Kayin State U Ngwe Soe said the Ministry of Education has been notified of the issue of the teacher shortage in Lay Kay Kaw Township through a letter detailing the situation.

Link: <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/21346-kayin-model-idp-town-short-on-government-teachers.html>

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