

THAILAND

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MEDIA MONITORING REPORT # 184

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Govt. to upgrade four sub-power stations in Yangon

Eleven Myanmar, 1 June 2018

Ministry of Electricity and Energy signed an agreement with Japanese firm Mitsubishi Corporation on May 29 to upgrade and maintain Ahlon, Ywarma, Hlawkar and Thaketa sub-power stations in Yangon region within 33-months time, according to the ministry.



Although the sub-power stations are currently fulfilling electricity needs for Yangon region, the ministry is constructing new sub-power stations to meet rising demand in the region. The ministry is implementing to upgrades to aged power stations and sub power stations, build new power stations, power lines and sub-power stations using state budget and overseas loans, said Win Khaing, Minister for Electricity and Energy.

The Ahlon, Ywarma, Hlawkar and Thaketa sub-power stations have been running for over 25 years making the capacity and performances low, leading the ministry to implement upgrading process with official development assistance loan from Japan.

The upgrading process of four sub-power stations will take about 33 months and it is included installing new transformers and upgrading of switchyards from AIS to GIS. It will make to send electricity to national grid securely and stably, according to the ministry.

Link: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/politics/14047>

Kayin State Chief Minister opens Phe Ka Ta Bridge

The Global New Light of Myanmar, 3 June 2018

The Phe Kat Ta Bridge opening ceremony was held in Phe Ka Ta Village, where Chief Minister Daw Nang Khin Htwe Myint, State Minister for Environment, Forestry and Road U Saw Pyi Thar, State Minister for Mon ethnic affairs U Min Tin Win and other officials cut the ceremonial ribbon to open the bridge and sprinkled scented waters on the stone pillar inscription commemorating the bridge opening.

The 100 ft. long, 18 ft. wide reinforced concrete Phe Kat Ta Bridge was constructed with technical support from the Ministry of Construction, Department of Rural Road Development. The total cost of the bridge was about Ks 72 million (Ks. 71,216,830), of which Ks 30 million was provided by the state government, Ks 20 million by donors and Ks 21,216,830 by the people.

Tayote Hla Village was on the bank of the Thanlwin River and river bank erosion was threatening the village.



Link: https://issuu.com/myanmarnewspaper/docs/3_june_18_gnlm

SME businessmen to get loans with lower inter

The Global New Light of Myanmar, 3 June 2018

The authorities are seeking to connect Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) businessmen with banks, in a bid to receive loans with lower interest rates, said Daw Nilar Kyaw, Yangon Region Minister of Electricity, Industry, Road and Communication.

The SME department has also provided technology training courses and educational discussions for the development of SMEs in Yangon region.

The Yangon region government has issued smart cards to 31,319 SMEs businessmen from 45 townships in the Yangon region to provide assistance. The SMEs Development Department is planning to form 28 SME clusters for Myanmar's SME businesses, in which individual clusters will share knowledge and assist in developing markets, said Daw Nilar Kyaw.

The Yangon region loans inspecting committee was formed with 17 members. Moreover, the government has formed an SME development committee, SME agency, SME funding management team and SME business reviewing and reporting team. The SME agency was formed with 11 members in Yangon region.

Link: https://issuu.com/myanmarnewspaper/docs/3_june_18_gnlm

Mandalay port development project to begin by end of year

Myanmar Times, 4 June 2018

Construction of the Mandalay port development project aimed at developing waterway trading in Mandalay Region will begin at the end of this year, said an official from the Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems.

The US\$38 million project is being conducted in cooperation with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The port project aims at transporting passengers and goods along the Ayeyarwady River across the country and will be built on 20 acres of land, one kilometre west of Mandalay city.

The project is part of the regional government's efforts to improve infrastructure and attract more foreign investments.

Link: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/mandalay-port-development-project-begin-end-year.html>

Programme aims to secure regular income for elderly in central dry zone

The Global New Light of Myanmar, 4 June 2018

HelpAge International, a global network of organisations working for the elderly, is implementing a social protection programme in Myanmar's central arid zone. As part of its efforts to reduce old age poverty, the social protection project aims to offer secure income to old people, provide long-term benefits and promote the well-being of both older men and women in the project areas.

To secure a regular income for older people, the organisation has embarked on a three-year project to expand social protection to vulnerable households in Myanmar's central dry zone.

The project seeks to strengthen the community and government's capacity to protect vulnerable groups such as the disabled and older people, and will deliver cash benefits to vulnerable households. As part of the project, HelpAge also seeks to enhance informal and community-based systems and practices that are already working to provide support and assistance in the dry zone. To inform about the project activities and discussions on social protection generally, a research was undertaken to investigate community-based mechanisms, structures, and practices in dry zone villages that could provide social protection to vulnerable people living in these communities.

HelpAge International is a global network of organisations promoting the right of all older people to lead a dignified, healthy and secure life.

Link: https://issuu.com/myanmarnewspaper/docs/4_june_18_gnlm

Government must do a better job managing the impact of growth on Yangon

Myanmar Times, 4 June 2018

As Yangon's status as business and logistics hub of Myanmar grows, the regional government, expecting an influx of people and foreign direct investments, has unveiled grand plans to modernise and expand the city.



Yet, many of the projects announced have been criticised for being poorly executed and lacking in contingency planning. Despite being allocated the lion's share of the Union budget for development - K278 billion in 2017-18 - issues such as power outages, lack of affordable homes, traffic congestion and a shortage of basic transport infrastructure remain.

As such, the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) should focus on fixing the existing problems before launching new projects.

Since coming to power in 2016, U Phyo Min Thein, Chief Minister of Yangon, has launched a slew of

new projects intended to meet the needs of investors and create jobs for the locals. Since January, these have included a new industrial zone, an elevated ring road and an entire city slated for development across 1,500 sq km of land - twice the size of Singapore - located west of Yangon.

Meanwhile, investments are still flowing in as Yangon expands. According to documents from the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, 143 foreign businesses were permitted to invest in Yangon in 2017-18, while 45 Myanmar citizen businesses made investments over the same period.

That's also drawn residents from other states and regions to the city in search of jobs. "More than 8,000 new jobs were created from the new investments in 2017-18, many of which came from the garment manufacturing sector," regional planning and finance minister U Myint Thaung said this month.

Link: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/government-must-do-better-job-managing-impact-growth-yangon.html>

Yangon Govt Submits Plans for New Port, Industrial Zones

The Irrawaddy, 5 June 2018

The Yangon Region government is seeking approval for 11 new industrial zones on the city's outskirts and a new multipurpose port terminal near the mouth of the Yangon River to promote regional development, create jobs and attract foreign investment.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein first revealed plans for the new industrial zones last month on the sidelines of the Yangon Investment Forum 2018 as a way to address unequal development across the region.

On Tuesday, Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe submitted a report to the regional Parliament about the proposed zones, slated for the southern and northern fringes of the city. The proposed zones in Kun Chan Kone, Kawhmu, Twantay, Thanlyin, Kyauktan, Khayan, Thonegya, Taikgyi, Hmawbi, Hlegu and Htan Tabin townships are to be built on land ranging in size from 750 to 1,871 acre.



It is not clear whether the proposed zones are part of the New Yangon City project, as some of the townships listed to host some of them are in the project area.

"After Parliament's green light, the projects will be submitted to the Union government for further approval," the mayor said in Parliament.

Link: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/yangon-govt-submits-plans-new-port-industrial-zones.html>

Gov't plans to establish movie studio, film school, entertainment centre in Nay Pyi Taw

The Global New Light of Myanmar, 5 June 2018



A coordination meeting was held at the Ministry of Information yesterday on establishing a park for a movie studio and film schools, and a cinema-based entertainment city in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the meeting, Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint said arrangements are being made to establish a modern movie

park in Nay Pyi Taw with the aim of developing the Myanmar motion picture sector, to promote the country's image in film making and to develop Nay Pyi Taw. The move is aimed at presenting the traditions and culture of Myanmar in a more interesting way through the art of motion pictures, enabling the people of Myanmar to know more about their country and to take pride in their nation and their people.

“Dubbed in English, these movies will allow the world to learn about Myanmar and at the same time, the Myanmar motion picture sector, the image of the country and the national brand will develop”, said Dr. Pe Myint.

The Union Minister also urged the participants of the meeting to openly discuss what role the government is to play in implementing the task.

Link: https://issuu.com/myanmarnewspaper/docs/5_june_18_gnlm

Taninthayi region will have electricity from national grid: chief minister

Eleven Myanmar, 6 June 2018

National grid will be connected to Taninthayi region within two-year time and one unit of electricity will be ranged between Ks35 and 50, said the region chief minister Dr Le Le Maw on June 4.

At the present, the locals are paying over Ks400 per unit of electricity and the electricity bill is likely to be increased as fuel prices are hiked, sources said.

Locals questioned about the high rate of electricity bill and the region government clarified about the situation they are trying to reduce the rate.

“Ministry of Electricity and Energy is building a sub-power station in Mawlamyaing and it will take two year time,” said the chief minister.



Electricity rates are not the same in the region and the government charged over Ks200 per unit in Dawei, Ks405 per unit in Myeik, Ks430 per unit in Taninthayi, Ks515 per unit in Mawtaung and Ks900 per unit in Palantonlone village, Kawthoung respectively.

The chief minister pledged to locals to lower the electricity bill rate to under Ks100 per unit within five-year time of the region government term.

Link: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/politics/14074>

First foreign investment to start in Karen State

Burma News International, 6 June 2018

Precision Auto Engineering Company from India will start building a small-scale motor vehicle assembly plant at Myawaddy Border Trade Industrial Zone within this year as the first foreign investment that entered the Karen (Kayin) State within over two year's term of the existing government.



U Naing Win Toe, director of the Karen State Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, said job opportunities will be offered to over 200 workers from the state in May 2019.

The state investment commission allowed the investment on May 17 and the company will invest US\$ 1.4 million.

Construction of the assembly plant will be completed in 2019 and the company will

receive seven-year tax exemption. It will produce over 7,000 motorcycles, 600 three-wheel vehicles, and 1,200 eco-cars within a year.

The vehicles will be assembled for sale in the local market under Bajaj brand. A motorcycle will be sold for Ks 2.5 million, three-wheel vehicle for Ks 3.3 million, and eco-car for Ks 4 million.

Three foreign investments have been made in the Karen State between the 1990s to March this year.

Link: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/first-foreign-investment-start-karen-state>

Joint surveys for weather index-based crop insurance system to be conducted in five areas

The Global New Light of Myanmar, 6 June 2018

Myanmar Insurance is preparing to conduct joint surveys in five areas, including the Maubin Township in Ayeyawady Region and Shwebo Township in Sagaing Region, Pyay Township in Bago Region, Myingyan Township in Mandalay Region and Pakokku Township in Magway Region as pilot projects to implement the weather index-based crop insurance system.

To carry out the joint survey, Myanmar Insurance is negotiating to get technical assistance from foreign organisations such as Switzerland-based Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture-Agricultural Insurance Solutions (SFSA-AIS), which is currently running projects in Asia, said Daw Khin Moe Kywe, Deputy General Manager of Myanmar Insurance.



Crop insurance pays for liabilities, depending on the rate that both parties agreed to when Joint surveys for weather index-based crop insurance system to be conducted in five areas they bought the insurance. To set the premium rating, the insured amount (maximum amount payable) is calculated on risk factors such as the amount of rainfall, moisture content and the speed of the wind, which is measured by satellite, and issued by the Meteorology and Hydrology Department.

The joint survey will include an inspection of the weather conditions in each region, crop varieties, previous climate-related hazards and the number of farmers interested in availing crop insurance, said U Khin Maung Win, General Manager of Myanmar Insurance.

Link: https://issuu.com/myanmarnewspaper/docs/6_june_18_gnlm

Kayin State chief minister “ready” to start coal-fired power plant

Myanmar Now, 6 June 2018

The chief minister of Kayin State has said construction of a 1,280-megawatt coal-fired power plant in Hpa-an



Township will go ahead pending Union government approval, despite a statement from Myanmar’s energy minister in March that they would deny approval.

“We are trying to start the project immediately,” Chief Minister Nang Khin Htwe Myint told a press conference at the regional government on 29 May, claiming the Union government was still deliberating over the estimated US\$2 billion project.

On 14 March, Union Minister of Electricity and Energy U Win Khaing told a public seminar the project would not be green-lit, prompting cautious optimism among more than a hundred environmental and social groups that had campaigned strongly against it. However, the Union government has not followed up with any further statements on the fate of the power plant.

The project is backed by a joint venture, Toyo Thai Power Myanmar Co. Ltd., formed between Thailand’s Italian-Thai Development and Japan’s Toyo Engineering Corp.

Link: <http://www.myanmar-now.org/news/i/?id=48610128-3061-4019-b2c2-d0e2404b860e>

Dry Port projects will be completed in October

Eleven Myanmar, 7 June 2018

Construction of two Dry Ports being built on the plots owned by Myanma Railways in Ywathagyi, eastern Dagon Myothit Township, Yangon, will be completed in October, says the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

The dry ports projects are being implemented by KM Terminal & Logistics Limited and Resource Group Logistics Co; Ltd under Build, Operate and Transfer- BOT System. The two companies invested over US\$ 50 million in construction of two dry ports.

Each dry port has 40 acres of land and it was started in October last year.



When the two dry ports will be completed, the freight trains will be running from Thilawa-Ywathagyi to Myit Nge.

Link: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/local/14079>

Myanmar's insurance sector set for help from Japan

Nikkei Asian Review, 8 June 2018

Tokyo -- Myanmar will flesh out its insurance industry with Japanese guidance and personnel support on crafting rules and products, hoping to develop a potentially lucrative market.



On Thursday, Myanmar Deputy Planning and Finance Minister Maung Maung Win received a broad support plan, including advice on insurance regulations and practices, from Japanese Cabinet Office State Minister Takao Ochi during a visit to the island country.

The plan includes advice on establishing regulations for insurance companies to have sufficient funds for payouts, as well as know-how in providing such products as auto and endowment insurance.

Link: <https://asia.nikkei.com/Economy/Myanmar-s-insurance-sector-set-for-help-from-Japan>

Britain continues to support a democratic and unified future for Myanmar, outgoing envoy says

Myanmar Times, 8 June 2018

Britain has spent the last two decades supporting Myanmar to have a unified, peaceful, prosperous and democratic future, and there is no reason to believe the UK has ditched this commitment, Britain's departing envoy said, urging people not to believe in unfounded conspiracy theories.

In a wide-ranging interview with The Myanmar Times, outgoing British Ambassador Andrew Patrick spoke at length about the challenges Myanmar faces regarding the Rakhine crisis, the work of UK Aid, economic reforms and how the UK will continue to support Myanmar's development. Given the change in mood and circumstances in this country since the humanitarian crisis broke out, the envoy also responded to conspiracy theories and dispelled the myths and misconceptions which have been all the rage of late.

The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) has been supporting various aid programmes in Myanmar, many of which focus on supporting the "software", such as financial inclusion, female empowerment and supporting people with leprosy and disabilities, among others.



Link: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/britain-continues-support-democratic-and-unified-future-myanmar-outgoing-envoy-says.html>

Officials optimistic about Kayah State tourism prospects

Myanmar Times, 8 June 2018

Tourism in Kayah State is booming and domestic travelers visiting the state increased by up to 97 percent while



the number of foreign travelers rose by 41 pc last year compared with the previous year, according to the 2018 Kayah State Investment Opportunity Survey.

In 2014, just over 11,000 domestic travellers and 2600 foreign tourists visited the state. It jumped to 33,000 local visitors and nearly 9000 foreign tourists last year, data from the state Statistics Department showed.

The recent data is still low, but more Thai tourists are expected to visit Kayah once the border gate opens between Me-se and Khum Yuam in Mae Hong Son, Thailand, U Nay Moe Aung, managing

director of 9 Generation Force, a Loikaw based travel and tours company, told The Myanmar Times.

“The four districts including Mae Hong Son that are connected to the border area with Kayah got seven million tourists last year. Most travellers went to ethnic minority villages that can be found on the Kayah side, too. That is why we hope to attract at least 50,000 to 100,000 tourists from Thailand when the border gate opens,” he said.

The Kayah government has opened community-based tourism in ethnic minority villages such as Hta Nee La Leh and Pan Pet in Dimawso Township and Htay Kho and Daw Tama Gyi in Hpruso Township.

Recently the Kayah government tried to open the border gate between Me-se and Khum Yuam for travellers between the two countries who want to stay at least six nights and seven days in Myanmar, U Nay Moe Aung said.

Link: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/officials-optimistic-about-kayah-state-tourism-prospects.html>

19 agreements worth over \$50 million signed for national power supply project

Eleven Myanmar, 8 June 2018

Nineteen agreements worth over US\$50 million have been signed for the national power supply project to be implemented with a World Bank loan, according to the Ministry of Electricity and Energy.

Thanks to the project, over 5,000 villages in 14 regions and states in Myanmar will enjoy electricity.

Purchasing contracts and consultancy service agreements were signed with the tender-winning companies on June 6.

On that day, a total of 19 agreements worth US\$50.036 million were signed including contract on purchase of insulators and related fittings worth US\$6.195 million, contract on purchase of transformer and line accessories worth US\$18.810 million, contract on purchase of steel parts and accessories worth US\$15.114 million, contract on purchase of concrete piles worth K6, 182 million and contracts on consultancy service s worth US\$3.859 million and K2, 035 million.

Link: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/business/14089>

SMIDB loans Ks-9.63 billion to SMEs

Eleven Myanmar, 10 June 2018

Small and Medium Industrial Development Bank (SMIDB) has granted Ks-9.63 billion to local small-and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) nationwide, said the SMIDB's CEO Dr Zeyar Nyunt.

The SMIDB grants loans to SMEs in two forms—collateral loans and non-collateral loans.

"The SMIDB granted a loan of Ks-630 million to 30 SMEs without collaterals and a loan of Ks-90 billion with collaterals," Dr Zeyar Nyunt added.

In the past, the SMIDB granted loans to industries, rice mills, oil mills, bottled water industry, garment industry, pharmaceutical industry, foodstuff industries and industrial looms.

According to the lists collected in December 2017, the SMIDB loaned Ks-8,499 million to 170 industries, over Ks-4,700 million to 136 rice mills, over Ks-1,300 million to 39 oil mills and Ks-900 million to 30 saw mills, Ks-675 million to eight bottled water industry, Ks-315 million to five garment industries, Ks-50 million to one pharmaceutical industry, over Ks-2,000 million to 20 personal good industries, over Ks-1,900 million to 32 foodstuff industries and Ks-305 million to 10 loom industries.

Link: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/business/14100>

Ministry, Japan launch one-year medical engineering diploma

Myanmar Times, 11 June 2018

The first batch of medical engineers to get a one-year diploma organised by the Ministry of Health and Sports in cooperation with Japan was recently selected.

The one-year diploma course will be conducted at the University of Medical Technology in Yangon with the technical support of Okayama University, the Japan Association for Clinical Engineers and Clinical Engineering Global Promotion Foundation.

The Human Resource Development of Medical Engineering course was launched on June 1, and 18 candidates were selected for the first batch of medical engineers to be turned out by the programme.

The government is making efforts so that students getting this medical engineering training are able to graduate with a medical engineering master's degree in Japan, said Health and Sports Minister Dr Myint Htwe at the launching of the course last Friday.

Upon completion of the course, the university will confer a diploma of medical engineering.

Link: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/ministry-japan-launch-one-year-medical-engineering-diploma.html>

Toungup Degree College to be upgraded to university level

Burma News International, 11 June 2018

The Ministry of Education is planning to upgrade Toungup Degree College to university level in the Rakhine State.

“[The ministry] is asking us to immediately submit the organization of Toungup University since Toungup Degree College will be upgraded as a university,” said U Myint Swe, headmaster of Toungup University College.

“It hasn’t been officially upgraded as a university. It will [be upgraded] soon. We need to submit the university organization that fully comprises university features. We can submit it on upcoming Monday. [The degree college] will only be announced as a university after this has been submitted,” said U Myint Swe.



The ministry instructed five degrees to submit their organizations in order to upgrade them to the university level. These degree colleges are Myeik Degree College, Yenangyang Degree College, Mandalay Degree College, Mohnyin Degree College, and Toungup Degree College.

Toungup College was opened on February 23, 2012. It was upgraded as a degree college on October 11, 2016.

Link: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/toungup-degree-college-be-upgraded-university-level>

New national agriculture strategy to drive growth, if properly implemented

Myanmar Times, 11 June 2018

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MOALI), with the help of Asia Development Bank (ADB),



United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund last Friday launched Myanmar’s Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS) for the next five years.

Building on the 2016 Agricultural Development Policy, MOALI, with the support of the Agricultural and Rural Development Coordination Group, drafted the five-year ADS with a corresponding investment plan.

Under the new ADS, significant production and productivity gains in agriculture and the natural resources sectors were identified as being

“immense.” However, Myanmar also faces challenges including limited infrastructure in the rural areas, complex land tenure issue, low agricultural productivity and low competitiveness of agri-food products.

As such, the aim of the ADS is to identify the investment priorities of the sector over the short, medium and long term.

The strategy also aims to accelerate growth in the sector through governance, productivity and competitiveness, driven by close cooperation between the government, farmers and businesses.

Link: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/new-national-agriculture-strategy-drive-growth-if-properly-implemented.html>

Karen Entrepreneurs Association to be established

Burma News International, 11 June 2018

The Karen Entrepreneurs Association will be established in July with the aim to develop Karen youth entrepreneurs, according to the Yangon Region Karen Literature and Culture Committee (KLCC), which is organizing the association.

Yangon Region KLCC's joint secretary – 1 Saw Bo Bo Wai Maung said the Karen Entrepreneurs Association will be established with Karen entrepreneurs from across the country and it will be established first in the Yangon Region with successful Karen entrepreneurs and Karen youth entrepreneurs running small and medium enterprises (SME) in the Yangon Region.



“This association will comprise entrepreneurs and youth entrepreneurs. There is a plan to establish the Karen Entrepreneurs Association across the country by joining these two types of entrepreneurs with the aim to develop Karen youth entrepreneurs. A plan is underway to establish [the association in Yangon] first by uniting the Karen entrepreneurs from Yangon,” he told KIC News on June 8.

The organizers said they are gathering Karen entrepreneurs who are successful in the fishery industry, agricultural industry, and other businesses to lead in the establishment of the Karen Entrepreneurs Association.

Economic sub-committees have been established in the township KLCCs in the Yangon Region and the regional KLCC aims to work together with Karen youth entrepreneurs group and the Karen Entrepreneurs Association in the future, according to officials from the regional KLCC.

Link: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/karen-entrepreneurs-association-be-established>

MOLIP sends over 23,000 labourers to nine countries last month

The Global New Light of Myanmar, 12 June 2018

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population (MOLIP) sent a total of 23,203 local people to nine countries— Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, Japan, the UAE, Jordan, Qatar and Macau in May.

Last month, a majority of Myanmar's migrants went to Thailand. Myanmar's migrant workers went to Malaysia, South Korea and Japan to work abroad legally.

The labour ministry also managed to create job opportunities through the online Labour Exchange Management System at labour offices. In May, over 13,096 job opportunities in all regions and states were created for citizens across the country, with 518 jobs in the government sector and 12,578 jobs in the private sector.

The labour ministry is also making efforts to create more jobs and send Myanmar migrants legally to foreign countries.

Link: https://issuu.com/myanmarnewspaper/docs/12_june_18_gnlm

Community empowerment grants to benefit people in Southeastern Myanmar

Mizzima, 15 June 2018

Four critical service grants have been awarded to project partners in Karen and Mon States as part of the USAID-supported advancing community empowerment in Southeastern Myanmar project, according to a statement. Grantees include the Karen Department of Health and Welfare and the Karen Ethnic Health Organization Consortium, Global Neighbors Thailand Foundation, Mae Tao Clinic, and Mon National Health Committee (MNHC). The advancing community empowerment project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).



These critical service grants focus on essential healthcare needs in vulnerable communities as well as internally displaced persons, pregnant women, and children under 5 years of age along the Thai-Burma border and in hard-to-reach communities.

These grants follow February's signing of four initial grant awardees in Loikaw, Kayah / Karenni State to support organizations addressing community development priorities in southeastern Myanmar. A total of eight critical service grants have been awarded, with an

estimated 500,000 people expected to benefit from interventions in the areas of health, education, livelihoods, and gender and youth.

The next request for applications under the project is expected to be released by July. This grant opportunity will support the provision of health and education services in ethnic-administered and mixed-authority areas in southeastern Myanmar. In addition to providing services, successful applicants will work with project consortium members to support increased responsiveness and accountability to communities, improve the inclusion of marginalized individuals / groups, and pursue options to ensure the continuity of education and health services.

The advancing community empowerment project is a five-year, \$ 48-million project funded by USAID and implemented by Pact in partnership with Community Partners International, Mercy Corps, and Save the Children International. The project will also partner with a wide range of local and regional organizations, service providers, and others to address community development priorities. The projected geographical reach of the project includes Kayah / Karenni, Kayin / Karen, Mon, Southern Shan, Eastern Bago, and Northern Tanintharyi Regions and States.

Link: <http://www.mizzima.com/news-domestic/community-empowerment-grants-benefit-people-southeastern-myanmar>

LAW AND GOVERNANCE

MP asks state gov't to issue household registrations, NRCs to ethnic people in Mon State

Mon News Agency, 1 June 2018

An MP from the Mon State Hluttaw said ethnic people are losing their rights in the Mon State due to lack of household registrations and national registration cards (NRCs).

“These children can only attend university and get job opportunities if they have NRCs. These children are facing many difficulties because their parents and grandparents didn’t have household registrations and NRCs,” said Daw Khine Khine Lei.

She explained that the education and health sectors need to become developed in the remote areas as the state becomes developed after obtaining peace. The children need birth records to attend school and they needed to be added to the household registrations in order to apply for NRCs.



In response to the question, the Mon State Minister of Planning, Finance, Immigration and Population U Wunna Kyaw said the state government is unable to issue NRCs without household registrations.

“In order to issue NRCs in our state, first of all, they need to have household registrations. NRCs can only be issued with household registrations. Our state cannot issue NRCs without them. We can only do it after respective law and procedures have been amended so only the union-level can decide on this,” said U Wunna Kyaw.

Link: <http://monnews.org/2018/06/01/mp-asks-state-govt-to-issue-household-registrations-nrcs-to-ethnic-people-in-mon-state/>

Parliament approves appointment of new planning and finance minister

Eleven Myanmar, 1 June 2018

The Union Parliament has approved the appointment of Soe Win, member of the National League for Democracy economics committee, as Union Minister for Planning and Finance.

The 80-year-old Soe Win was born in Mawlamyine, Mon State, in 1938.

He holds degrees in BA, BL and DMA and is working for Deloitte Touche Myanmar vigour Advisory Limited.

He served as deputy manager in Myanmar Economics Bank in 1961. He also used to work at Myanmar Foreign Trade Bank.

He severed as a Myanmar shareholder of the international consultant company Deloitte Touche. Expert in banking services, Soe Win has been working as a local and international consultant for many years.

Soe Win became a new minister as a replacement for Kyaw Win, who resigned on his own accord on May 25.

Link: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/politics/14048>

UEC announces applications for by-election observers

Mizzima, 7 June 2018



The Union Election Commission announced yesterday that election observers at home and abroad can apply to the UEC for the right to observe the 3 November by-elections for vacant parliamentary seats with effect from 6th June to 18th October, according to state media.

The UEC released dates and vacant constituencies for the by-elections on 8th May and time schedules for targeted working processes on 25 May.

The UEC announced Order 1/2016 for local observers and Order 2/2016 for international observers on 31 October 2016.

Link: <http://www.mizzima.com/news-domestic/uec-announces-applications-election-observers>

Mon State Hluttaw approves picture of golden hamsa on red background as Mon State flag

Mon News International, 8 June 2018

The Mon State approved a flag depicting a golden hamsa on red background without any text as the Mon Stateflag on June 8.

During the parliamentary session in the Mon State Hluttaw, the MPs discussed the issue based on the votes the public has made in the media.

The Mon State Chief Minister asked the parliament to approve the flag depicting a golden hamsa with red color background as the Mon State flag since it has been supported by the public.

He said he will take responsibility for all the pros and cons caused by the flag.



The approved flag is six feet long and four feet wide. The background color is red and a golden male hamsa is located in the center.

Link: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/mon-state-hluttaw-approves-picture-golden-hamsa-red-background-mon-state-flag>

Voter lists for Nov 3 by-election to be announced earlier next month

Eleven Myanmar, 11 June 2018

Voter lists for the upcoming by-election are set to be announced in the first week of July, Union Election Commission (UEC) member Myint Naing told the Daily Eleven.

Out of the 13 vacant constituencies across Myanmar, 12 have completed making voter lists except for Myingyan Township with over 200,000 eligible voters. According to figures in the 2015 general election, there were 211,043 voters in Myingyan, Mandalay Region.

UEC has announced that the by-election will be held on October 3 this year. Voter list compiling started on April 19.

The vacant constituencies for the by-election are Kanpatlat, Lecha, Tamway and Myingyan for the lower house of parliament, Myitkyina Constituency (2) for the upper house of parliament and Matupi, Tamu, Oattwin, Thabeikgyin, Yathedaung, Minbu, Seikkan and Shan ethnic constituency for region and state parliaments.

In the 2015 general election, there were 11,484 voters in Kanpatlat constituency, 35,165 in Lecha, 92,987 in Tamway, 178,579 in Kachin State Constituency (2), 16,445 in Tamu, 55,249 in Oattwin, 47,633 in Thabeikgyin, 39,599 in Shan ethnic constituency, 66,029 in Minbu and a few thousands in Seikkan.

Link: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/politics/14107>

LAND AND PROPERTY

KNU Agricultural Department Decide to Prioritize Measuring Land, Solving Land Disputes

Karen News, 4 June 2018

The Karen National Union's Agriculture Department will give priority to assist the public in obtaining their land ownership rights and solve land issues that rose up in the mixed controlled areas within this year.



The department made the decision during its 12th year-end meeting held at Kalo Yaw Hta under Hpa-an District on May 30.

Local residents from the KNU-controlled areas have been demanding the KNU to do required land measurements in order to obtain land grants.

Padoh Saw Lay Say, secretary of the KNU's Agriculture Department, said confrontations may arise between the government and the KNU over the land issues in areas of dual administrations between the government

and the KNU.

Most of the land issues occur in the KNU's Hpa-an, Doopalaya, and Thaton districts and land disputes are taking place between the local residents due to the land measurements carried out by the government. When the department tried to solve the issues, they were told that the government was following the order from above.

Since 2013, the KNU's Agriculture Department has been carrying out land registrations and measurements in the Karen State and other Karen areas within its reach.

Link: <http://karennews.org/2018/06/knu-agricultural-department-decide-to-prioritize-measuring-land-solving-land-disputes/>

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

Government, Tatmadaw, NCA-signatories meet on peace process problems

Myanmar Times, 31 May 2018

Civilian and military government leaders met with representatives of the 10 armed ethnic groups that have signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) in Nay Pyi Taw on Wednesday to resolve political issues related to the ongoing peace process, one of the leaders of the NCA-signatory groups said.

U Naing Hantha, vice chair of the New Mon State Party (NMSP), said the meeting was held to discuss the informal agreements reached during an informal meeting of the Peace Process Steering Team (PPST) in Chiang Mai earlier in the week. The team includes top leaders of NCA signatories.

“We found a solution among ourselves in the two-day meeting, and we will find the solution when we meet informally with the government and the Tatmadaw (military) representatives,” Naing Han Thar said.

Other issues that remain unresolved in the ongoing peace discussions are the disbandment of armed fighters, disarmament, and integration of the former armed fighters into the country’s security forces.

Wednesday’s meeting was aimed to pave the way for smooth discussions at the third session of the 21st Century Panglong Conference that is expected to be held next month or in July.

Link: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/government-tatmadaw-nca-signatories-meet-peace-process-problems.html>

Third session of 21st Century Panglong Conference will discuss security sector reform

Mizzima, 5 June 2018

Officials from Ethnic Armed Organizations (EOOs) said the forthcoming third session of 21st Century Panglong Conference would discuss security sector reform.

There are five main sectors on the agenda of the 21st Century Panglong Conference for discussion these are Political, Economics, Social, Security, and Land and Environment. Security sector reform was not discussed at the last session.

At the second session of the conference, Tatmadaw, EOAs group and Political Parties disagreed on security sector reform and further discussion was postponed.



Link: <http://www.mizzima.com/news-domestic/third-session-21st-century-panglong-conference-will-discuss-security-sector-reform>

Peace Process Entirely in Military's Hands, Karen Group Says

The Irrawaddy, 6 June 2018

Yangon — the civilian government has no power over the peace process, and all decisions affecting security in the country continue to depend entirely on the Myanmar military, a situation that undermines any efforts to end conflict, according to a group of Karen community leaders affiliated with the Karen National Union (KNU).



In its latest, four-page analysis of the peace process published at the end of May, the KNU Concerned Group highlights what it sees as the military (or Tatmadaw)'s control of the peace process, and asserts that State Counselor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her government do not have the power to work with ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) to achieve peace.

The group comprises current and former Karen National Union leaders but is not considered part of the organization. Led by former KNU general secretary Naw Zipporah Sein, it analyzes the peace process in Myanmar from the perspective of the KNU and its policies.

According to the analysis, the army's tight control over the peace process has allowed it to block progress and restrict political space in order to head off any challenges to its grip on power.

At the 13th Union-level Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee (JMC-U) meeting in Naypyitaw in November 2017, the army told the EAOs to disarm and form political parties in order to participate in elections so that they could fight for their ethnic rights in Parliament.

According to the KNU Concerned Group, the army's current actions threaten to derail the NCA, further destabilize the faltering peace process, and trigger a new cycle of conflict and destruction in Karen State.

Link: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/peace-process-entirely-militarys-hands-karen-group-says.html>

NCA-signatories hold UPDJC meeting in Yangon

Eleven Myanmar, 9 June 2018

Yangon- as a preparatory measure to hold the third 21st Century Panglong Conference (3rd Union Peace Conference), a meeting of Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) organized by ethnic armed groups that are Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) signatories was held at the Green Hill Hotel in Yangon on June 7th.

"Mainly, we aimed to fulfill the requirements for 21st Panglong Conference. We already approved discussion points," said Yebaw Myo Win.

During the meeting, attendees reported on discussions resulting from informal meetings



organized by government, military and NCA-signatories and Peace Process Steering Team (PPST).

They also reviewed the current political situation, sector-wise working committee and attending of delegates from NCA-signatories.

Aiming to hold the 3rd meeting of 21st Century Panglong Conference, the meeting of PPST of NCA-signatories will be on June 11th.

After they met, a proposed date for holding of UPDJC which may decide the date of the 3rd Panglong Conference may be announced.

The number of ethnic armed groups which already signed the NCA is now 10 in total and they are the KNU, RCSS, PNLO, CNF, ALP, the KNU/KNLA (PC), DKBA, ABSDF, NMSP and LDU.

Link: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/politics/14095>

OTHERS

Mawlamyine Industrial Zone's residents to protest against gov't for failing to solve foul odor emission from antimony refinery plants

Burma News International, 4 June 2018

Residents of Mawlamyine Industrial Zone will protest against the Mon State government for its failure to stop the antimony refinery plants from emitting foul odor at the industrial zone even though over 200 residents have complained to the Mon State Chief Minister in March and April.



“A complaint was submitted to the chief minister. He didn’t give any response. We are really suffering. We can’t stand it anymore. We can’t stand the odor. We will protest,” said Ko Zaw Naing Oo, who is running garment business in Mawlamyine Industrial Zone.

Local residents of the industrial zone said children, elderly people, and sick people from the surroundings have been more affected by the bad odor from the antimony refinery plants in the industrial

zone.

Daw Nyo Nyo Seint, a resident of the industrial zone, said antimony refinery plants should not be allowed to be built and run near residential areas since the bad odor harm public health.

Although ministers from the Mon State government, the state officer of the Mon State Department of Environmental Conservation and other government officials have inspected the industrial zone, they still have not been able to solve the issue up to now, according to local residents.

There are six antimony refinery plants in Mawlamyine Industrial Zone. The Mon State government allowed Myanmar Shin Shin Metal, Myanmar San Zaw, and Northeast Sin Phyu Taw antimony refinery plants to run on a trial-basis in December, 2017, according to the Mon State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Link: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/mawlamyine-industrial-zones-residents-protest-against-govt-failing-solve-foul-odor-emission>

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