

THAILAND

1 – 19 September 2018

MEDIA MONITORING REPORT # 190

OTHERS

[Mudslide in Mae Hong Son Refugee Camp Leaves 1 Dead, 7 Missing](#)

The Irrawaddy, 18 September 2018

Yangon — one person died and seven were reported missing after a mudslide at a Myanmar refugee camp in Thailand's Mae Hong Son Province on Sunday night, the Karen Refugee Committee (KRC) confirmed to The Irrawaddy.



The torrent of earth and rocks, caused by heavy rain, poured down the hill and into the refugee camp around 6:30 pm in Mae La Oon in Mae Sariang, near the Thailand-Myanmar border.

“It rained heavily yesterday. That creek usually dries up in summer. So, no one was

aware [of the swollen creek] when it rained. Then the torrent came down and eight people were swept away. We've only found one body,” KRC chairman Saw Robert Htwe told The Irrawaddy on Monday.

The Bangkok Post, citing a report by the provincial governor, said the fatality was a 2-year-old girl.

The mudslide destroyed 13 houses in the refugee camp and also injured 16 people. Thirteen of them are still in treatment, Saw Robert Htwe said.

“Some were swept away along with their houses. Authorities and non-governmental organizations are carrying out rescue operations,” Saw Pwe, who lives in Mae Sariang, told The Irrawaddy.

The mudslide is the worst to hit Mae La Oon refugee camp, he said.

The refugee camp, opened in 2004, currently houses some 10,000 displaced people from Myanmar, most of them ethnic Karen, displaced by the fighting between the Myanmar Army and the Karen National Union (KNU) in Karen State.

Link: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/mudslide-mae-hong-son-refugee-camp-leaves-1-dead-7-missing.html>

[Health workers are still needed in KNU areas, KDHW says](#)

Karen Information Center, 5 September 2018

The Karen Department of Health and Welfare (KDHW), which is the health department of the Karen National Union (KNU), said health workers are still needed to provide healthcare service in KNU-controlled areas.

Saw Eh Phoe, in-charge of the KDHW Central Training, said the a medic training course is being given at Taw Naw Training Hospital in Kawkareik Township, Doopalaya District since September 3 to health workers who have passed the basic health level.



“A proportional number of health workers is currently still needed in the areas where we are providing our services so we are nurturing medics with this intention. The challenge we are facing is that former health workers have resigned due to various reasons. They are needed in the current situation so we still need to nurture them,” he told KIC News.

Basic health workers from the seven KNU districts – Thaton, Taungoo, Nyaunglebin, Myeik-Dawei, Mu Traw (Hpapun), Doopalaya, and Hpa-an – and health workers border health organizations, which are allied organizations of the KDHW, have been invited to attend the medic training course and 39 trainees are now attending the training after passing the entrance exam, he continued.

The 11-month training course will provide both theory lessons and practical training with teaching assistance from Hope 4 the World. Certificates will be issued to the medics after they have completed the training and they will be assigned to work in respective areas that are in need of healthcare, according to the KDHW.

Kawthoolei Medic Training has been given since 2010 and the seven batch of training is being given now.

Link: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/health-workers-are-still-needed-knu-areas-kdhw-says>

KCC to campaign for resumption of aids to border area

Karen Information Center, 6 September 2018

The Karen Community of Canada (KCC) will conduct international campaigns to resume aids to the refugees in Thai-Myanmar border and internally displaced persons (IDPs).



“There has been a great decline in aids for the refugee camps at the Thai border and also for local IDPs. We have decided to advocate for them and conduct international campaigns,” he said.

He continued that the KCC will submit to the Canadian government about the the military conflict in ethnic areas including the Karen (Kayin) State and human rights violations that have been committed against ethnic minorities and give more pressure for the international community to

take action against Myanmar government.

Since 2014, education, health, and social aids including food supplies and aids for camp management have been significantly reduced for the refugees living in nine Myanmar refugee camps along Thai-Myanmar border. International aids have also been cut for the local IDPs since 2017, according to the people who have been assisting the refugees and IDPs.

The KCC was established in 1998 to work for the affairs of the Karen nationals living in Canada. Canada is home to between 80,000 and 10,000 Karen people and most of them migrated to the country from the refugee camps at the Thai-Myanmar border under the UNHCR’s third country settlement program since 2006.

Link: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/kcc-campaign-resumption-aids-border-area>

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

One Stop Centers will be opened in Thailand for Myanmar workers

Eleven Myanmar, 6 September 2018

For sending Myanmar workers to work at the fishery industry of Thailand, two One Stop Centers will be opened in Kawthaung and Ranaung according to Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population on September 5.

Thailand Minister for Labour visited Myanmar during August and invited more than 60,000 Myanmar workers to work at the fishery industry in Thailand legally.

According to that invitation, before working at the fishery industry in Thailand, training and aware courses will be given. Therefore two One Stop Centers will be opened in Kawthaung in Myanmar and Ranaung in Thailand.

“Both sides of countries are discussing giving courses to Myanmar workers to be worked in Thailand in fishing industries. After giving training, we’ll send them legally. In the past, Myanmar hadn’t sent workers legally to be worked in Thailand in fishery industry. Now, we’ll sign MOU. Thailand said that they want Myanmar workers. Therefore, we draw policy. Based on that policy, Minister for labour of Thailand and Myanmar will discuss. After discussing, we’ll send workers. Previously, Myanmar workers went Thailand illegally and when they faced problems, we were not able to help them. Now that we are sending them legally, they will get benefits on workers’ right, and their protection,” said Aye Aye Moe, director of Migrant Workers Division, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population.



Recruitment of Myanmar workers would be drawn up after the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the two countries on the protection of fishery workers. The government wants to ensure that Myanmar fishermen have legal protection before sending them to Thailand.

Currently, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population of Myanmar has principally agreed for sending Myanmar workers to Thailand.

Link: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/business/14925>

JICA to offer two-step loan to help SMEs

Mizzima, 6 September 2018



Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) will plan to offer two-step loan of 11.5 billion yen (about Ks151.6 billion) for next fiscal year 2018-2019, state media has reported.

At the 9th day meeting of the seven regular the session of Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw held on 22 February, 14.9 billion yen was approved for JICA SME two-step loan phase-2. The loan agreement was signed on 29 March.

To implement this phase-2, Myanmar Citizens Bank, Kanbawza, Myanmar Economic Bank, Myanmar Cooperative Bank, Ayeyawady Bank, Myanmar First Private Bank and United Amara Bank were selected as Participating Financial Institutions (PFIs), according to a working committee for loan access held on 2 August at the Ministry of Planning and Finance.

This month, 3 billion yen (about Ks36 billion) will be lent to the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) from respective regions and states through seven PFIs.

Link: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/jica-offer-two-step-loan-help-smes>

Over 40 business contractors establish K-6 billion public company for Mon state development

Eleven Myanmar, 11 September 2018

A total of 41 licensed contractors have formed the first public company in Mawlamyine, Mon State, with a starting capital of about K6 billion in their shares.

The launching ceremony of the public company for the development of Mon State took place at Silver Rain Hotel in Mawlamyine on September 9.

"We will mainly focus on construction tasks because most shareholders have experience in construction business. As we are a public company, we will work together to solve any problems when we carry out construction tasks. As chairman of the company, I will do my best for the success of our company," said Chairman Aung Moe Kyaw.

"Over 40 shareholders contributed K6 billion. We start with a public company. We will later start sharing for more knowledge. As we have township representatives, we will inform all the 10 townships about the matter. A share is worth K10, 000. For 10 shares, it will cost K100, 000. After we have received a company registration, we will sell our shares to the public. Then, our company will be bigger."

Each of 41 shareholders contributed an amount ranging between K3 million and K500 million for the establishment of a public company. Company setting-up was managed by Myanmar Licensed Contractors Federation.

Link: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/business/15008>

Dawei, Kyaukphyu SEZ projects to resume

Myanmar Times, 11 September 2018

Arrangements are being made for development of the Dawei Special Economic Zone (SEZ) and Kyaukphyu SEZ projects to resume, said U Khin Maung Cho, Minister for the Ministry of Industry, on behalf of the Ministry of Commerce at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

The government has been exploring ways to restart development of the US\$8 billion Dawei SEZ, which has been suspended since 2013. This came after developer Italian-Thai Development Company (ITD) withdrew from a 2008 agreement to develop Dawei SEZ due to financial constraints.



There were also complaints from the local community regarding lack of adequate compensation for the construction and potential pollution and disruption caused as result of developing the SEZ. ITD withdrew from the concession agreement in 2015.

In 2015, Thailand offered Myanmar a soft loan of 4.5 billion baht at an interest rate of 0.1pc to upgrade a two-lane tarred road from Dawei SEZ to Htee Khee, near the Thai border. Construction work is currently under way, U Khin Maung Cho said.

“In regard to implementing the Dawei SEZ more quickly, negotiations are ongoing between the Myanmar SEZ Central Committee and Dawei SEZ Management Committee, U Khin Maung Cho said.

Meanwhile, discussions are being carried out to establish a framework agreement for Kyaukphyu SEZ with CITIC Company, the Chinese company that won the tender to develop the SEZ in Rakhine State. An agreement has already been reached in regard to the ownership ratio of the SEZ.

Link: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/dawei-kyaukphyu-sez-projects-resume.html>

President Requests Approval of \$298M Loan to Improve Electricity Network

The Irrawaddy, 12 September 2018

YANGON — President U Win Myint has asked Parliament to approve a \$298.9 million loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to be used to improve the electricity network in seven of the country’s states and regions.



Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy, U Tun Naing, told lawmakers during the parliamentary session on Tuesday that the loan is expected to fund a six-year project (2019-2025) that will be implemented in Yangon, Irrawaddy, Tanintharyi and Bago regions and Mon, Karen, and Rakhine states.

He said the project aims to meet an increasing level of power consumption, to

electrify rural areas, as well as to improve the existing system.

The project will include two parts: electricity transmission and electricity distribution, he explained, including a computerized electricity management and bill-collection system.

It will increase electricity distribution to 84,850 households in Irrawaddy Region, more than 151,000 households in Bago Region, 42,757 households in Mon State, 27,820 households in Karen State and 36,694 households in Rakhine State, U Tun Naing said.

The six-year project is estimated to cost a total of \$308.9 million, of which \$10 million will be funded by the state budget.

Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance, U Maung Maung Win, seconded the plan to loan \$298.9 million from the ADB.

Link: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/president-requests-approval-298m-loan-improve-electricity-network.html>

Employment association and govt meets to discuss sending MOU workers abroad

Eleven Myanmar, 12 September 2018

Ministries was held in Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population in Nay Pyi Taw on September 11.

In order to meet the demand for legal workers in Thailand’s fishing industry, a meeting was held between officials from Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population and Myanmar Overseas Employment Association at the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population in Nay Pyi Taw on September 11.

“We are going to implement a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in sending Myanmar workers legally to Thailand. We will practice the MOU in order to fully protect Myanmar workers so that they have unfettered access to their rights while working abroad. Therefore, we will be opening a One Stop Center in Kawthaung where majority of Myanmar migrant workers are located. For the implementation of the MOU, we have to connect with private agencies and so we have invited Myanmar overseas employment association and other groups,” said Union Minister Thein Swe of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population.



At present, about 41125 Myanmar migrant workers from Ayeyawaddy Region, Mon and Rakhine States are working as fishermen in Thailand while about 45400 are working in fishing and other related industries. Around 51741 workers are working in marine products factories.

Depending on the guarantee given by Thailand, Myanmar aims to send its workers to Thailand and hope to provide full rights for workers working in fishing industry and get full protection.

Link: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/business/15021>

Kyainseikgyi Township receives Ks 10,128 million for community driven development project

Karen Information Center, 13 September 2018

The Karen (Kayin) State’s Kyainseikgyi Township has received Ks 10,128 million for the community driven development (CDD) project, which has been carried out in joint cooperation between the World Bank, the



Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, and the Department of Rural Development within a period of four years, the project coordinator said to KIC News on September 12.

“A total of Ks 10,128 million has been received for the four-year project. Ten groups have submitted work schedules to start the final year project in 355 villages under 50 village groups. Financial support for eight village groups has already arrived

in Myanmar Economic Bank. The village residents don’t have to pay them back. The financial aids have been given to fill in the needs for basic infrastructures such as water, electricity, and roads,” said U Tun Tun Oo, supervisor in-charge of the project.

Financial aids have been given to respective village group based on the population and the local residents have to fill in the needs for schools, drinking water, electricity, roads, and other basic infrastructures on their own and businesses that would only benefit individuals and building of religious buildings have not been allowed, according to the official.

“We’ve been able to build school buildings, school toilets, wells, and school fence using the financial aids from the project. It’s convenient for us since we don’t have to pay them back. It’s not easy to do this with our own budget. If we submit to the government and the parliament, there would be delays and we would have to wait due to lack of budget. The village has received over Ks 100 million for four years’ worth of financial aids,” Saw Hla Moe, administrator of Taung Dee Village Group, said to KIC News.

Since the 2013-2014 fiscal year, the CDD project has been carried out in three least-developed townships across the country. Kyainseikgyi Township was selected within the Karen State in 2016. Financial aids will be provided to Kawkareik Township and Hlaingbwe Township for four years starting from 2018, according to the officials of the CDD project.

Link: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/kyainseikgyi-township-receives-ks-10128-million-community-driven-development-project>

Job Nation to offer thousands of vacancies

The Global New Light of Myanmar, 13 September 2018

The biggest 2018 job fair in Yangon, Job Nation, will offer thousands of job vacancies, according to www.jobnet.com.mm.

Job Nation will be hosted by www.com.mm, Myanmar number one job portal, at Novotel Hotels, on 22 September, from 9 am to 5 pm.

At the job fair, a thousands of job vacancies will be offered to job seekers by about 70 local and foreign companies from Myanmar. JobNet.com.mm expects that more tens of thousands to visit Job Nation.

65 companies, including PTTEP, Nestle, Ooredoo and Myanmar Japan Tobacco will be at the fair.

Most of the in-demand jobs are sales professionals, marketing and public relations, information technology, engineering, human resources, accounting, administration and manufacturing, according to a list of JobNet.com.mm.

The event will include a job fair, a seminar presented by experts from human resources, technology and engineering fields to share their knowledge.

Job Nation is the biggest job fair in 2018. This year, JobNet.com.mm has also held VR Job Fair, Sales and Marketing Career Conference, Myanmar-Singapore Biggest Job Fair, and Tech and Engineering Career Conference.

Among them, 30 per cent of the job opportunities are being offered for manager and director positions, over 55 per cent for tskilled workers and over 15 per cent for non-experienced worker positions.

Link: <http://www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com/job-nation-to-offer-thousands-of-vacancies/>



Kayin State to produce electricity through renewable energy

Eleven Myanmar, 13 September 2018

Kayin State government has signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with World Wildlife Fund-Myanmar (WWF-Myanmar) for renewable energy support in Kayin State on 10 September, according to WWF-Myanmar.

According to the MoA, WWF-Myanmar will conduct surveys to explore possible places to produce renewable energy, assist in connecting with investors to enter into renewable energy sector and in producing electricity at a lower price.

“The most needed thing in Kayin State is electricity. As Kayin State hasn’t got sufficient electricity and as a result, development in the state is very slow. We’ll welcome any kind of renewable energy if we get electricity,” said Nan Khin Htwe Myint, chief minister for Kayin State.

According to MoA, and concerning with renewable energy, a senior expert and an assistant will be appointed at the office of kayin State government and give necessary suggestions.

In its news release, WWF-Myanmar quoted 2014 census statistics and said over 1.5 million people live in Kayin State and only 26 percent had access to electricity.

To supply solar power electricity to over 200 houses in three villages, WWF-Myanmar sent five women from those villages to India for six months to learn solar technology, it is learnt.

Link: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/local/15038>

Mat weaving project aims to increase rural women's income in Pantanaw area

Karen Information Center, 13 September 2018

The Pantanaw Karen Youth (PKY) is carrying out a mat weaving project to increase the income of rural women in Pantanaw Township, Ayeyarwady Region with funding from an international non-governmental organization (INGO).



The PKY started the mat weaving project on July 1 with financial support from the Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT) and assistance from the GRET Myanmar, an INGO.

“We gave training from the other sector to build their capacities while they are working in the mat production industry. [The training is given] to teach them how to work in teams, draw up their own financial accounts, and do other livelihood businesses after generating

their income through this project,” Sa Ye Thurein Han from the PKY said to KIC News.

A mat bank has been established within the project period, which will end on December 31, and 20 women from the targeted villages have to weave mats that are worth at least Ks 45,000 per month.

Income is generated by selling these hand-woven mats and five women out of the 20 women have been selected as group leaders and the mat weavers have to work in groups after dividing duties among themselves such as treasurer, market finder, reed issuer, and mat receiver, according to the project officials.

Link: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/mat-weaving-project-aims-increase-rural-womens-income-pantanaw-area>

Government approves establishment of fish, prawn farming zones by MFF

The Global New Light of Myanmar, 16 September 2018

Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation has granted permission to establish fish and prawn farming zones after the Myanmar Fishery Federation (MFF) has submitted a proposal to the authorities, according to MFF. Union Minister Dr. Aung Thu announced the ministry's approval on the establishment of fish and prawn farming zones at the Union Minister's meeting with livestock entrepreneurs held at MFF office on 12 September, said U Win Kyaing, the secretary general of MFF.

"At the meeting, we are tasked with implementing the fish and prawn farming zones, and the government promised their support to us. If required, the Union Minister himself will conduct field inspection to make guidelines for the project," he added.

MFF has conducted feasibility study of the project areas and will execute the projects in the Yangon, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi, Bago and Mandalay regions as well as Rakhine, Mon and Kayin states and Nay Pyi Taw. This fish farming zone will encompass incubate camps, feeds factories, and cold storage factories.

If we have the chance to implement the project, it will create several job opportunities for the local people and help improve the GDP growth rate.

Link: <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs25/GNLM2018-09-16-red.pdf>

Yangon's new town plan expected to create about 900,000 job opportunities

Eleven Myanmar, 17 September 2018

The intended area for Yangon's new town plan will cover up to 168,000 acres, and 20,000 acres of which will be used for the first phase and it is expected to create about 900,000 job opportunities, accord to the Socio-Economic Mater Plan of New Yangon Development Company.

New Yangon Development Company (NYDC) hired top management firm McKinsey & Company to draft Socio-Economic Master Plan (SEMP). NYDC stated that the draft was finalized at the end of June. UK's Department for International Development (DFID) will provide financial aid for SEMP for the project which will create 2 million job opportunities. McKinsey has conducted a wide range of surveys and assessments and has consulted with stakeholders directly or indirectly, Myanmar Business Today said.

The huge job opportunity is the same as the currently-appointed employment in Yangon and it is a very gigantic expectation, the SEMP said.

In the first phase of Yangon's new town plant, it will provide 600,000 to 900,000 job opportunities. Initially, 400,000 to 600,000 job opportunities have been expected to be provided on an area of about 20,000 acres (80km). Employments will be available on mass production enterprises and construction in the early years.

Infrastructures must be first established. Industries and economic enterprises can move to Yangon's new town in the first batch. Job opportunities will be increasing in the later years.

Link: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/local/15092>

Myanmar to build its Highest Bridge near the Famous Goteik Viaduct

Myanmar Business Today, 17 September 2018

The Goteik Viaduct is a famous attraction both to locals and tourists in Naung Cho Township, Shan State. The viaduct is a railway trestle bridge built in 1899 by the Pennsylvania and Maryland Bridge Construction Company from the United States.

The Viaduct was opened in 1900, it stands at 335 feet tall (102 meters), is 2,260 feet long, and crosses a 300 foot deep gorge. Due to its technical and natural condition it is considered a masterpiece of world standards, and it is one of the most visited places by local and foreign tourists in Myanmar.



The Government is now planning on building a new bridge called Gotwin Bridge, which will become the highest one in Myanmar. It will be located almost a half mile away (0.43 miles or 696 meters) from the famous predecessor.

The Government will use \$120 million and K40 billion to build the new bridge which has the poles as high as 600 feet, U Kyaw Lin, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Construction, said at the session of Amyothar Hluttaw, upper house, held on September 5.

“The new bridge can be seen along with Goteik Viaduct attracting tourists. The design of the bridge is combination of balance cantilever and cable stayed designs, which have never been built in Myanmar,” he said.

Link: <https://www.mmbiztoday.com/articles/myanmar-build-its-highest-bridge-near-famous-goteik-viaduct>

Myanmar Govt Plans to Open Private Medical Universities

The Irrawaddy, 18 September 2018

YANGON — Myanmar has received proposals from foreign countries to open private medical and nursing universities in the country, Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe told the Upper House on Monday.



“We are planning to open private medical and nursing universities. Many (founders of medical schools) have come and spoken with us. We are ready. But there is still no related educational law. We can open them after the law is enacted,” said Dr. Myint Htwe.

India and Korea have made proposals, said the Union minister, adding that nursing assistants have good job prospects not only in Myanmar but also in foreign countries.

“Such schools will also create job opportunities for locals,” she added.

Dr. Myint Htwe revealed the plan in response to the question of lawmaker Dr. U Kywe Kywe, which urged the ministry to abolish the 50-50 quota system for male and female enrollees in public medical universities.

According to the minister, more than 60 percent of doctors working at public hospitals in Kachin, Karen, Chin, Rakhine, and northern Shan states are male doctors.

In order to improve the ratio of nurses at public hospitals, the health ministry, since 2015, appoints nursing graduates as civil servants on graduation day.

The ministry will recruit some 2,000 doctors and up to 3,600 nurses this year for public hospitals across the country as part of its annual recruitment. Previously, the ministry recruited around 1,800 nurses on average, the minister said during the peace talks of State Counselor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi with locals in Pakokku in August.

Myanmar has more than 1,100 public hospitals ranging from 16-bed to 2,000-bed hospitals, according to the Ministry of Health and Sports.

Link: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-govt-plans-open-private-medical-universities.html>

Paving road in Mawtaung in Myanmar-Thailand border 70 percent complete

Eleven Myanmar, 19 September 2018

Taninthayi- Road paving of Htonnkhar-Mawtaung road section is 70 percent completed and will be finished by December.

Htonnkhar-Mawtaung road section in Taninthayi Township is undertaken by Myeik Public Company and it will be complete in December according to the Company.

Currently, as it is still within the monsoon season, the road is inaccessible to locals as well as travelers, and transportation of commodities faced great difficulties.

“This road section is being constructed by our company. It will take only 3 months to complete the road. Next, the government is constructing Taninthayi Bridge and it will be completed in the coming year. As a result, Thailand is more interested in doing business with Myanmar and they are preparing to invest more in Myeik District,” said Hla Than, chair of Myeik Public Corporation.



From Htonnkhar village to Mawtaung, it is 48 miles long and Myeik Public Corporation is currently responsible for the road connecting the two. Myeik Public Corporation is jointly carrying out this project with Hua Hin Wood Co. Ltd, a Thailand based company, for paving road.

The road section constructed in 2017 by Myeik Public Corporation in BOT system is crucial to Myanmar-Thai border trade.

Mawtaung which is only 123 miles from Myeik in Myanmar-Thailand border. It takes 3 hours in open season but it takes more than 5 hours in rainy season.

Link: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/local/15107>

Rakhine State to build 15 schools with JICA's assistance

Narinjara, 19 September 2018

Fifteen schools will be built in the Rakhine State for the 2018-2019 academic year with assistance from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Four schools will be built in Sittwe Township and they are a sub-high school in Yay Tat, post-primary schools



Township - a high school in Tain Nyo and a post-elementary school in Inn Shay while two schools will be built in Minbya Township - No. (1) B.E.H.S Minbya and B.E.H.S Kanni.

A high school will be built in Loon Lon Pike in Myebon Township and a high school will be built in Zin Chang in Kyaukpyu Township.

“We have asked for school building case files in order to build the schools. It has been submitted to the Department of Basic Education. Now, JICA is carrying out a third party selection program for the tender. The tender will be invited after the third party has been selected. We will only know when it will invited after the third party has been selected,” said U Kyaw Naing, staff officer (finance) from the Rakhine State Education Office.

Schools that have been damaged by natural disaster such as flooding, and landslide have been selected.

Link: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/rakhine-state-build-15-schools-jicas-assistance>

LAW AND GOVERNANCE

Ethnic Political Parties Merge to Seek Stronger Representation in 2020 Election

The Irrawaddy, 11 September 2018

YANGON— Homegrown political parties in Myanmar’s ethnic areas have been merging together in the hope of winning a majority of seats in both national and regional parliaments in the upcoming 2020 general elections, a victory that would grant them more authority to improve their rights.

So far, apart from the ruling National League for Democracy (NLD) party, political parties in four out of eight of Myanmar’s major ethnic groups have merged.

The results of the 2015 general election were a major lesson for the ethnic parties; disunity among them and the stunning NLD victory resulted in their holding a mere 11 percent of seats in the national legislature.

In 2015, 91 political parties contested for seats out of which 64 percent, or 59 parties, represented ethnic minority parties. Most major ethnic groups—the Shan, Kachin, Kayah, Chin, Mon and Karen—were represented by at least two parties each.

Because of splitting votes, there was a decline of 4 percent in seats held by members of ethnic parties compared to the 2010 election, which was held under the military regime.



Instead of competing against each other, many of the smaller ethnic parties have decided to amalgamate in a bid to win more seats in the 2020 general election. In fact, they ultimately aim to triumph over the NLD as they believe the party doesn't bring satisfactory development or improvements in their respective ethnic states.

The merging process started after the NLD came to power, but initially proved difficult due to the many different political views and ambitions at the core of the different parties. When ethnic people became dissatisfied with the NLD's efforts in the peace process and forming a federal system however, they put more pressure on their homegrown political parties to combine.

Link: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/politics/ethnic-political-parties-merge-to-seek-stronger-representation-in-2020-election.html>

Lawmaker Asks Govt to Let Minority Language Teachers Don Traditional Dress

The Irrawaddy, 14 September 2018

Mon State — an ethnic Karen lawmaker is asking the Education Ministry to let ethnic language teachers in government schools wear their traditional dress.



Nang Moe Moe Htwe, who represents Karen State's Hlaingbwe Township in the Upper House of the national Parliament, sent a letter to Education Minister U Myo Thein Gyi on Thursday on behalf of some of the ethnic Karen teachers in her constituency.

She said the intent was to encourage Karen youth to appreciate and know how to wear their traditional garb.

In her letter, she asks the Education Ministry to let all ethnic Karen teachers in Karen State wear traditional dress.

"It was not only ethnic Karen teachers from my township who wanted to wear their traditional dress. Other ethnic Karen teachers in Karen State also wanted to wear their traditional dress for sure," the letter says.

Nai Rot Ga Kao, program coordinator for research and advocacy from the Mon National Education Department, said Mon language teachers in Mon State started wearing traditional dress when the democratic reforms began but had to stop last year, when the government introduced a minority language teaching curriculum, made the teachers civil servants and required them to adhere to the standard uniform.

"The government should even allow ethnic [minority] students to wear their traditional dress as in Thailand, where students are allowed to wear their own traditional ethnic dress one day a week," he said.

Link: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/lawmaker-asks-govt-let-minority-language-teachers-don-traditional-dress.html>

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

Roundtable discussion on reviewing framework for political dialogue continues, role of secretariat group to be reviewed

The Global New Light of Myanmar, 1 September 2018

A roundtable discussion on reviewing the framework for political dialogue with Government, Hluttaw and Tatmadaw groups continued at the National Reconciliation and Peace Center in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

“When we reviewed the number of agreements gained at the second and third Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong, it was found that the secretariat group strongly cooperated in the second session but their cooperation was weak in the third session. So, we all agreed to review the role of the secretariat group and to amend its organizational setup,” said U Zaw Htay, Secretary of the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee.



The discussion of the group of the Government, Hluttaw and the Tatmadaw focused on situation of political dialogue, organizational setup and framework for political dialogue, reviewing current political process and obstacles.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi gave instruction to the peace makers to draw an effective framework taking experiences and lessons gained at the second and third sessions of the conference, according to U Zaw Htay.

In accordance with the instruction, political parties, ethnic armed organizations and the groups of the Government, the Tatmadaw and the Hluttaw are reviewing the framework for political dialogues, organizational setup, Terms of Reference (TOR) and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

The participants of the group discussion also agreed to make the Terms of Reference and Standard Operating Procedure more effective.

Link: <http://www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com/roundtable-discussion-on-reviewing-framework-for-political-dialogue-continues-role-of-secretariat-group-to-be-reviewed/>

Government meets with Northern Alliance groups for first time

Myanmar Times, 6 September 2018

The government’s Union Peace Commission and representatives of the Northern Alliance armed ethnic groups met in China on Wednesday to discuss the resumption of talks and to stop ongoing clashes, said Ta Phone Kyaw, spokesperson for the groups.

The meeting, held in Kunming, was the first between the commission and the alliance’s Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), Arakan Army (AA) and Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), he said.

“We talked with them to stop the fighting and to find a way to prevent more conflict with the government. We agreed to meet again next month,” Ta Phone Kyaw said. Also, the United Wa State Party (UWSA) and Kachin Independent Organisation (KIO) were at the meeting as observers.

He said the meeting is “a good step for the peace process.”

The TNLA, AA and MNDAA have refused to sign the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) initiated by the Tatmadaw (military). The military accused them of not wanting to disarm before joining the peace process. All members of both coalitions, however, attended the latest Panglong session as observers and met in separate groups on the sidelines of the conference with government and military leaders.

Link: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/government-meets-northern-alliance-groups-first-time.html>

Skirmishes still break out between Tatmadaw, KNLA, KNU says

Karen Information Center, 10 September 2018

Skirmishes have broken out between the Tatmadaw and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) in the KNU Brigade 5 area in the Karen (Kayin) State, Major Saw Ka Leh Doh from the KNU Brigade 5 said to KIC News on September 9.



Battalion.

Skirmishes resumed between the troops under the KNU Brigade 5 and the Tatmadaw since August 28 and tensions remain high and skirmishes are still breaking out up to now.

The KNU Brigade 5 sent a letter of objection to the commander of the Tatmadaw's South Eastern Command on August 29 after the Tatmadaw's 2nd Infantry Battalion (IB-2) under LID-44 exchanged fire with the KNU Brigade 5 in the area between Ein Kone Village and Noh Hta in Hpapun Township on August 28.

A skirmish also broke out between the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA splinter group) and the KNLA Brigade 5 in Ka Ma Maung Township on August 29 and a soldier from the KNLA was injured after he stepped on a landmine he had set up.

Less than five skirmishes have broken out between the government, the DKBA, and the KNU Brigade 5 since August and tensions may rise in the KNU Brigade 2 area, according to the KNU Brigade 5.

Over 200 local residents have fled to Myaing Gyi Ngu area due to the resume in fighting.

Link: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/skirmishes-still-break-out-between-tatmadaw-knla-knu-says>

EAO Summit ends

Mizzima, 12 September 2018

Ten ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) that have signed Myanmar's nationwide peace accord wrapped up their third summit in northern Thailand on Tuesday, agreeing that leaders from government, the national military, and ethnic armies should meet soon for talks to try to overcome obstacles to the country's peace process, RFA reported.

The 49 top officials from the 10 groups who attended the conference issued a statement on the final day of the summit in Chiang Mai, saying that they will continue efforts to engage in talks with the military and government about federal policies, such as holding further rounds of key peace negotiations.

They also said they will continue pushing for a federal democratic union in Myanmar, under which ethnic minority groups have rights equal to those of the Burman majority.

Link: <http://www.mizzima.com/news-domestic/eao-summit-ends>



Area settlement and amassing military power can be circumvented - JMC-U Chairman

Mizzima, 14 September 2018

During the 18th meeting of the Union-level Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC-U) held at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre (NRPC) in Yangon yesterday, JMC-U Chairman Lt-Gen Yar Pyae called for all sides to avoid area settlement and amassing military power so that armed conflicts can be circumvented while everyone is working to build trust among each other. The chairman said that these acts can breed suspicion and gave warnings to avoid any measures that can trigger conflicts, according to state media.



He urged avoiding armed conflicts as they bring negative consequences for the concerned organization and local residents Area settlement, amassing military power should be avoided to prevent armed conflicts while building trust: JMC-U Chairman involved.

He said the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) contains facts that military forces have agreed to follow to reduce armed conflicts. He said the representatives of the Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) are all aware of the mutually agreed upon facts and principles to reduce armed conflicts and it is up to everyone to ensure they are being followed.

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Link: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/area-settlement-and-amassing-military-power-can-be-circumvented-jmc-u-chairman>

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