

THAILAND

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PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

Benevolent' DKBA to seek peace with government

Democratic Voice of Burma, 25 April 2016

The Democratic Karen Benevolent Army, a breakaway faction of the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, said last week that it would work with the new National League for Democracy-led government to bring peace to Karen State.



“Currently, the new government has the highest power. The old government has transferred power to them, so we will work with them to establish peace. We will go the way of peace,” the group’s new vice chief of staff, Saw Steel, told DVB on Friday.

The group, sometimes called DKBA-5, or Brigade 5, held an emergency meeting at its Klo Htoo Ba headquarters from 19 to 22 April to officially approve General Moshe Myint as its new chief of staff following the death last month of its

former leader, Saw Lah Pwe.

At the meeting, the group’s new leadership also discussed development in the area under its control, public relations, and business matters, according to DKBA Myawaddy liaison officer Saw Soe Myint.

Link: <http://www.dvb.no/news/benevolent-dkba-to-seek-peace-with-government/62223>

Rebel groups meet in Thailand

Eleven Myanmar, 30 April 2016

Leaders of the Karen National Union (KNU) and Restoration Council for Shan State (RCSS) met in Chiang Mai on April 30 for peace negotiations, according to Major-General Zaw Izzat Foe of the KNU.

KNU’s delegation was led by its chairman General Saw Mutu Say Poe and RCSS’s delegation was led by its chairman, Lieutenant-General Yawd Serk.

Zaw Izzat Foe said: “We held a workshop on federal issues and discussed peace.”

The RCSS was unavailable for comment.

The eight armed groups which signed last October’s nationwide ceasefire agreement set up a steering team in March and appointed Saw Mutu Say Poe as its leader and Yawd Serk as its deputy.

The team was established to meet non-signatories and the government, while providing directions

when urgent decisions were made, said Salai Lian Mone, vice chairman of Chin National Front.

RCSS has said it would work with all other armed groups and political parties to solve current disputes in a peaceful way and establish a federation.

Link: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/politics/rebel-groups-meet-thailand>

KNU, RCSS Meet to Ready for 'Second Panglong' Summit

The Irrawaddy, 2 May 2016

The Karen National Union (KNU) and Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS) held private talks here over the weekend about a second “Panglong-style” peace conference, an idea proposed by State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi last week.

“As the state counselor focuses on federalism, we are discussing what this Panglong conference should include, as well as the country’s current political landscape,” KNU Maj-Gen Saw Issac Po told reporters in the northern Thai city.

Suu Kyi called for a “Panglong-style” summit to be held within two months, when she addressed the Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee (JMC) in Naypyidaw on Wednesday, a meeting that included representatives from signatories to the so-called nationwide ceasefire agreement (NCA). That accord was signed on Oct. 15 under Burma’s previous quasi-civilian government.



KNU chairman Gen. Mutu Say Poe is the EAO-PPST leader, RCSS chairman Lt-Gen Yawd Serk serves as deputy leader, and other leaders of the NCA signatory groups are team members.

Link: <http://www.irrawaddy.com/burma/knu-rcss-meet-to-ready-for-second-panglong-summit.html>

MPC to Be Renamed 'National Reconciliation and Peace Center'

The Irrawaddy, 28 April 2016

Aung San Suu Kyi, Burma’s state counselor and de facto leader of the new National League for Democracy (NLD) government, has proposed renaming the Myanmar Peace Center (MPC) as the National Reconciliation and Peace Center (NRPC).



The suggestion came as she met with the Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee (JMC), which includes members of the Burma Army, on Wednesday in Naypyidaw, Gen. Saw Issac Po, vice-chairman of the JMC, told The Irrawaddy.

Suu Kyi’s personal physician, Dr. Tin Myo Win, has been tipped to lead the renamed organization. State media on Thursday would concede only that the doctor will assume

a prominent role in Burma’s peace process: Suu Kyi “announced the appointment of Dr. Tin Myo Win as the peace negotiator for the nationwide ceasefire agreement” at her meeting with the JMC on Wednesday, the

Global New Light of Myanmar reported.

“At present, we have to work to maintain the current stability based on the understanding and relationships of leaders from both sides,” he said. “When there are leadership changes, we have to start from very beginning again.”

Suu Kyi said she would seek international assistance to fund the NRPC and would make sure those funds were used properly, according to Shwe Kha, secretary of the JMC.

“A separate meeting will be held to discuss who should be included in the re-organized MPC. She [Suu Kyi] will make the decision. We’ll invite ethnic [representatives] and officials from JMC to the meeting,” added Saw Issac Po.

Link: <http://www.irrawaddy.com/burma/mpc-to-be-renamed-national-reconciliation-and-peace-center.html>

LAW AND GOVERNANCE

Government vows to end forced labour, enforce child labour laws

Mizzima , 2 May 2016

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population issued a statement yesterday, International Workers’ Day, stating its commitment to promoting and protecting labour rights, including ending forced labour and stronger enforcement of child labour laws, the Global New Light of Myanmar reported on 2 May.

In its statement, the ministry invited all interested partners to join with the government in its efforts to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue on labour-related issues.



The government has been reviewing domestic laws related to labour rights to be in line with international norms and labour rights practices. Myanmar’s parliament recently amended the country’s labour laws and passed new ones, the report said.

Link: <http://www.mizzima.com/news-domestic/government-vows-end-forced-labour-enforce-child-labour-laws>

ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT

Three Pagodas Pass upgrade sought

Bangkok Post, 23 April 2016

The head of the Immigration Bureau will propose that the government upgrade the Three Pagodas Pass in Kanchanaburi from a temporary border crossing to a permanent one to facilitate rapidly growing tourism and trade with Myanmar.

Pol Lt Gen Nathathorn Prousoontorn made the comment during a visit to the border pass in Sangkhla Buri district on Saturday.



He said the crossing had become more important because the value of border trade with Phaya Tong Su in Myanmar through the area was increasing steadily.

A large number of Thai and foreign tourists also like to cross the border to tour Phaya Tong Su, with Myanmar residents as their guides to attractions including local temples and markets, Pol Lt Gen Nathathorn said.

However, the border crossing is only open from 8am to 6pm, which limits tourist travel to short day trips. As well, shipments of goods must be diverted via other

permanent checkpoints, increasing costs to businesses and ultimately consumers.

Thailand currently has 37 permanent border checkpoints and 47 temporary ones. Three Pagodas is one of five crossings that the Thai Chamber of Commerce has identified as the priority for upgrades.

Link: <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/transport/944909/upgrade-sought-for-three-pagodas-pass>

Mon State's rural development projects open for tender

Mon News Agency, 1 May 2016

The Mon State's Department of Rural Development called for tenders on three rural development projects on Tuesday [April 26]. The projects will focus on roads, bridges and water distribution.

The road project includes construction of an 18/4.78 miles concrete road, 13/1.4 miles of tarred road, 4/4 miles of stone and 2/0.28 miles of dirt road. The bridge development project includes 11 cement-bridges (with 439 feet) and 1 wooden bridge with 40 feet. Additionally, a water-distribution project includes 12 shallow-wells, 20 deep-wells, 17 hand-dug wells and 8 lakes, according to an announcement by the state's Department of Rural Development calling for tenders from companies based in Mon State.

"In this 2016-2017 fiscal year, the projects that the Department of Rural Development would implement, with the aid of fundraising, would focus on roads, bridges and water-distribution. We are now opening the tender process. For transparency and public information, we've made the announcement in the newspapers," said U Myo Kyi, the director of Department of Rural Development.



U Myo Kyi continued that the tender committee will inform the respective state government departments and headquarters about the successful tender applicants.

The tender application forms are available from April 26 to May 26 at the Department of Rural Development, according to the Department of Rural Development Department.

Link: <http://monnews.org/2016/05/01/mon-states-rural-development-projects-open-tender/>

Thai investments promote tourism in Taninthayi

The Global New Light of Myanmar, 25 April 2016

THAI investments are expected to promote tourism in Taninthayi Region, according to Thai media.

A Thai company called Pongpipat has been building an international standard hotel in Taninthayi with an investment of US\$125 million in an effort to capitalize on the promising tourism industry in the region.

The hotel is being built on 50 acres of land and is slated to take five years. Pongpipat has conducted mining operations in the Heinda Mine since 1999.

Investment is now pouring into Taninthayi Region's tourism industry, mainly on Shidomel Island in Myeik District. Domel Island Development Co, with an investment of \$25 million, plans to enter the resort business there. The company has already received approval from the Myanmar Investment Commission.

"Thai investors are keen on investing in Taninthayi Region. Hotels and resorts might develop on the beaches and the islands in Myanmar," said U Maung Maung Swe, vice chairman of the Myanmar Tourism Federation.

Link: <http://globalnewlightofmyanmar.com/thai-investments-promote-tourism-in-taninthayi/>

200 additional teachers for primary schools in Mon State

Burma News International, 2May 2016

Approximately 200 teachers will be added to work as daily wage teachers in Mon State's primary schools during the 2016-2017 academic years, according to Mon State's Education Department.



"In Mon State, we have many educated people. Compared to other states, we do not need to increase the number of teachers. When we need to go with the system of 1 plus 4 (one head teacher and 4 assistants), we will need 191 teachers in our state and we are experiencing this now," said U Myo Tin Aung, Director of Mon State's Education Department.

The decision to change the education system for the 2016-2017 academic years was made during the last government's term. The Kindergarten Game – KG Plus program begins in June, 2016. In order to implement such a system, additional teachers are needed.

"We estimate the requirement will be 1 principal with 6 assistants (1 plus 6) for primary level in the 2016-2017 system. However, with the current situation, not to mention 1 plus 6, we are having difficulties to supply 1 plus 4," said U Myo Tin Aung.

The applicants for the primary teacher posts must hold a bachelor, master's degree or a Ph.D., according to the statement on the application form.

Link: <http://bnionline.net/news/mon-state/item/1623-200-additional-teachers-for-primary-schools-in-mon-state.html?tmpl=component&print=1>

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