

THAILAND

1 – 17 July 2018

MEDIA MONITORING REPORT # 186

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

Panglong opens; leaders call for peace process to move forward

Myanmar Times, 12 July 2018

The third round of the 21st Century Panglong Conference began on Wednesday, with the ruling party chair and Tatmadaw (military) chief both calling for the peace process to move forward and urging all armed ethnic groups to sign the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) soon.



Inviting all the groups to sign the NCA, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who also chairs the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre, said the NCA is not an end but a starting point for stakeholders in the peace process.

“For ending armed conflict, it is important to have a political agreement or a pact acceptable to all the different elements,” she added.

After being postponed five times, the third round of the conference finally began Wednesday, though it will take up only those

topics that could easily be agreed by the negotiators, while avoiding points of contention, mostly on political matters.

“The guns will become silent if all the groups with a true wish for peace observe the agreement. All must control their own men, instead of giving groundless reasons for conflict,” Senior General Min Aung Hlaing said.

Pado Saw Kwe Htoo Win, vice chair of the KNU, said the military chief’s comment was like a “warning” to armed ethnic groups.

“Whether groups are powerful or not does not matter in building peace for Myanmar. The main point is that it is only the inclusiveness of all armed ethnic groups that will make the peace process successful,” he said.

The NLD government also aims to amend the constitution according to the agreements reached at the 21st Century Panglong Conference. During the second round of the conference last year, 37 points were signed as the first part of the Union Peace Accord.

Link: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/panglong-opens-leaders-call-peace-process-move-forward.html>

Ethnic groups challenge Tatmadaw chief’s Panglong opening speech

Frontier Myanmar, 12 July 2018

Ethnic groups have challenged Commander-in-Chief Min Aung Hlaing’s claim in his opening

speech at peace talks in Nay Pyi Taw today that they have unnecessarily delayed negotiations instead of seeking a resolution to the conflict.

“We have a lot of work to do for the State and the public. We just shouldn’t talk the talk. We will reach nowhere just by choosing the best words for arguments. All the national people are responsible for it. We all must be aware of the instigations to lessen our united strength,” Min Aung Hlaing said.

“If you really love your country and your race, I would like to urge you to wipe out the civil armed conflicts that hinder the development of the country.”



Speaking to Frontier today, General Sumlut Gun Maw, the leader of the non-signatory Kachin Independence Organisation delegation, said the commander-in-chief should understand why discussions and meetings were delayed and should also know which party is responsible for delaying peace talks.

“We have to study his speech in detail. The reasons for delays to the peace process are important. He should not consider one person or organisation responsible for the delays. We accept his speech generally but there are a lot of controversies,” he said.

Colonel Khun Okkar, patron of the Pa-O National Liberation Organisation, which has signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, said that the groups who want the best results from the peace talks will take time with their discussions and they should not be accused of delaying the process.

“The military doesn’t want to delay but they also don’t want to get the best result. The ethnic armed groups and the government have never accused anyone of delaying the peace process. I don’t understand why he said that,” he said.

Link: <https://frontiermyanmar.net/en/ethnic-groups-challenge-tatmadaw-chiefs-panglong-opening-speech>

Two ethnic Mon parties merge for 2020 election

Myanmar Times, 3 July 2018

The all Mon Region Democracy Party (AMDP) and Mon National Party (MNP) will merge as a new political party for the 2020 general elections, a party official confirmed.



The merger was about 80 percent complete, and the new name will be decided soon after hearing suggestions from the public, said Nai San Tin, spokesperson of the ANDP.

Both parties have discussed the process of sharing responsibilities and choosing the new name. The framework of the new party has been set up, and the public’s desire to merge the two Mon parties will come true on July 21, said Nai Layi Tama, general secretary of MNP.

The final meeting on merging the two parties will be held at the AMDP head office in Mawlamyine Township, Mon State. After choosing the new name, the party will be registered with the Union Elections Commission (UEC) to contest in the 2020 elections.

The AMDP won 35 seats and the MNP won 53 seats in the 2015 regional parliamentary elections.

Link: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/two-ethnic-mon-parties-merge-2020-election.html>

KNU and Tatmadaw will again discuss building a road in Hpapun District

Mizzima, 7 July 2018

Tatmadaw (military) representative at Joint Monitoring Committee-Union (JMC-U), Col. Wunna Aung, said that they will discuss again with the Karen National Union (KNU) the plan for building a road in Hpapun, Karen State which was suspended by the military, in the coming open season.

“We suspended the building of this road during the monsoon season and we will discuss restarting the building of this road in the coming open season,” Col. Wunna Aung said.

The Tatmadaw entered the area between Khaypu and Lwemupalaw villages, Hpapun District, Karen State starting March 4, 2018 offering the reason of building the road in this area.

Since the Tatmadaw entered the KNU controlled area, there was tension between the two forces and then about 2,000 people from 14 villages fled their homes in fear of eruption of new conflict.



Col. Wunna Aung said that the building of road was for area development and for the purpose of administrative work of the Tatmadaw.

KNU top leaders led by Chairman Saw Muti Sae Poe and Tatmadaw C-in-C Min Aung Hlaing met in Nay Pyi Taw on May 17 and they agreed on the suspension of the building of this road.

Link: <http://www.mizzima.com/news-domestic/knu-and-tatmadaw-will-again-discuss-building-road-hpapun-district>

Mon National Representative Party postpones official registration

Burma News International, 11 July 2018



The Mon National Representative Party have temporarily postponed the plan to officially register with the Election Commission, the 21-member organization committee's leader Nai Ta La Nyi confirmed to Hinthar Media.

The party originally planned to submit the registration to the commission on the second week

of July but it has postponed the plan as it is working on merging all Mon political parties.

“The party registration issue has been postponed. We haven’t decided when we will submit it,” said Nai Ta La Nyi.

The committee made this decision after meeting with the merger delegation of the Mon National Party and the All Mon Region Democracy Party at the Royal Hinthar Hotel in Mawlamyine on July 6.

In response to the Hinthar Media’s question on when the Mon State will hear the good news about the merger of all Mon political parties, Nai Ta La Nyi said it is still under discussion so he cannot talk about it in details.

Link: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/mon-national-representative-party-postpones-official-registration>

Kachin leader hopes to reopen the dialogue

Burma News International, 11 July 2018

The Kachin Independence Organization (KIO)’s vice-chair Gen. Gun Maw said he is attending the third session of the 21st Century Panglong Conference to reopen bilateral dialogue. He said so to the media on July 10, during his arrival in Naypyidaw to join the conference.

“I believe re-establishing our communications is more important than our discussion in this conference,” he said.

Gen Gun Maw is leading the KIO delegation in the third session of the 21st Century Panglong Conference.

Representatives of the Federal Political Negotiation and Consultative Committee (FPNCC) are attending the conference with assistance from China. They flew from Kunming to Naypyidaw together with Mr Sun Guoxing, the Special Envoy for Asian Affairs of China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and other senior Chinese officials.



The government invited the leaders to attend the conference via the Chinese embassy.

The third session of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong will be held for six days from July 11 to 16.

Link: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/kachin-leader-hopes-reopen-dialogue>

National solidarity should be built through equality, not military pressure – KNU says



Burma News International, 12 July 2018

National solidarity should be built in the union through freedom, equality, and justice between the ethnic people and not through military pressure and force, said the Karen National Union (KNU) chair General Mutu Say Poe in his speech on the first day of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong held at

MCC-2 Hall in Naypyidaw on Wednesday (July 11).

“National solidarity cannot be built through force and military pressure. National solidarity must be built through the elements of independence, equality, and justice. It must be built through trust, understanding, and goodwill,” General Mutu Say Poe said on behalf of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) signatories.

He said the peace process is like climbing a greasy pole and urged everyone to prevent it from declining from the current stage.

The President, the State Counsellor, leaders of ethnic armed organizations, the Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief, international organizations, and ethnic representatives attended the opening ceremony of the third session of the 21st Century Panglong, which kicked off at 10 am on July 11.

Link: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/national-solidarity-should-be-built-through-equality-not-military-pressure-knu-says>

Aung San Suu Kyi, Military Chief Discuss Peace Process with Ethnic Armies

Radio Free Asia, 12 July 2018

Myanmar State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi met on Thursday with the leaders of a northern coalition of ethnic armed groups that have not signed the government’s nationwide peace accord on the side-lines of the third round of the government’s key peace conference.

The country's de facto leader met with representatives from the Northern Alliance of ethnic armed groups based along the China-Myanmar border, which includes the United Wa State Army (UWSA), Kachin Independence Army (KIA), Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army (SSPP/SSA), and the Mongla National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA) to discuss military affairs and prospects for peace.



She held separate meetings with the Arakan Army (AA), the Kokang’s Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), and the Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), three other ethnic militias that have not signed the government’s nationwide cease-fire agreement (NCA), a pact that 10 ethnic armies have already inked.

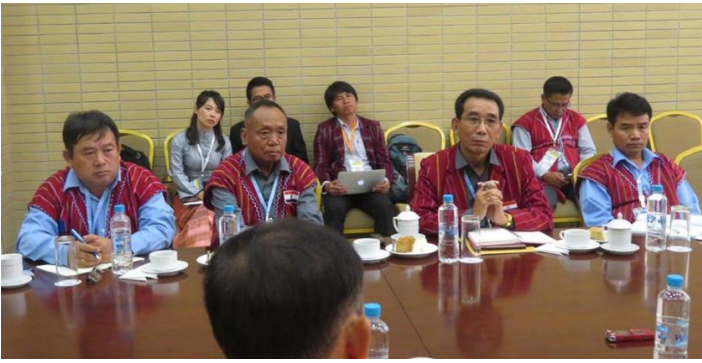
Delegates from the Northern Alliance met with Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, commander-in-chief of Myanmar’s defense services, on Wednesday, though they did not discuss the ongoing fighting in Kachin state between the KIA and Myanmar forces, Gwan Maw said.

Link: <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/aung-san-suu-kyi-military-chief-discuss-peace-process-with-ethnic-armies-07122018160118.html>

KNPP to hold another negotiation with Gov’t in August on signing the NCA

Myanmar Times, 16 July 2018

The Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) will meet with the government in August to discuss the signing of the nationwide ceasefire agreement (NCA), the KNPP’s general secretary Shwe Myo Thant said.



Although the KNPP negotiated with the Peace Commission in Naypyidaw on July 12, the plan for signing the NCA has been pushed back due to differences of opinion.

“We are still on the NCA path. We are still negotiating for the signing of the NCA,” said Shwe Myo Thant.

The KNPP will be close to signing the NCA if they are able to reach an agreement in the

negotiation.

The leaders of the seven-member Northern Alliance, namely United Wa State Army (UWSA), the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA), the Shan State Progress Party (SSPP), the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), the Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), and the Arakan Army (AA), attended the Union Peace Conference. The government and China have urged them to sign the NCA.

Link: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/knpp-hold-another-negotiation-govt-august-signing-nca>

Peace conference agrees on 14 points, skirts security issue

Myanmar Times, 17 July 2018

The 21st Century Panglong Conference ended its third round on Monday in Nay Pyi Taw, moving a step closer to the likely challenges the ruling NLD government will face during its remaining time in office.

The government, military, lawmakers, political parties, and armed ethnic groups that signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), endorsed a 14-point agreement on all issues, except security, as the second part of the Union Accord.

During the conference, participants had to agree on two points concerning political principles after facing strong arguments by military representatives. The points dealt with the name of the country and a minimum 30 percent participation by women in all sectors.

Commenting on the results of the conference at the closing ceremony on Monday, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said rather than taking the initiative, her government’s approach is facilitating and negotiating so that common ground can be reached between the military and NCA signatories.



Link: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/peace-conference-agrees-14-points-skirts-security-issue.html>

LAND AND PROPERTY

Farmer Union helps return over 18,000 acres of seized farmland

Eleven Myanmar, 2 July 2018

Myanmar Farmer Union (MFU) helped return over 18,000 acres of seized farmland over the past five years, according to Chairperson Su Su Nway.

"From 2012 to 2017, over 10,000 acres of farmland seized by the military were returned. Over 8,000 acres seized by companies and several other acres seized by authorities have also been reclaimed. This is the achievement our union has made," said Su Su Nway.

However, she said that they had some difficulty settling land disputes and helping return the seized farmland under this new government.

She claimed that "Till 2015, we were breaking grounds. We had to take time but the problems could be solved. But in 2016 when the new government took office, things changed. Honestly speaking, I don't know whether we are being oppressed only after the government we elected came into power. Some farmers even claimed they were officially told not to go to the farmer union to solve their problems."

Myanmar Farmer Union was established in July 2012 with the aim of tackling land disputes and helping return seized farmland to owners.

Link: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/local/14258>

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Loikaw District IPRD upgrades library to community centre

The Global New Light of Myanmar, 2 July 2018

A ceremony to upgrade the Loikaw District Information and Public Relations Department library to a people-based community centre and the opening of a mobile library, both jointly organised by the Ministry of Information, Information and Public Relations Department (IPRD) and Daw Khin Kyi Foundation, was held at Loikaw District IPRD office yesterday morning.



For the development of Myanmar literature, Printing and Publishing Department is presenting the National Literature and Sarpay Beikman awards, arranging a paper reading and Book Street, and publishing 100 Myanmar books series and a Myanmar encyclopaedia. IPRD is increasing the works of establishing direct contact with the people. In addition to establishing children's reading rooms and small museums in IPRD offices and libraries, training courses, talks, discussions, meetings, paper reading circles are being conducted so the places are upgraded and become people-based community centres that are beneficial to the people, where people can gather. Daw Khin Kyi Foundation is also cooperating by setting up a mobile library.

Arrangements are being made to establish book clubs, youth clubs and woman's clubs at the community centres. More than a hundred public talks were held with the people so far, in line with the democratic practice, said the union minister.

Link: <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs24/GNLM2018-07-01-red.pdf>

260 apartments available for civil servants

The Global New Light of Myanmar, 2 July 2018

The Aung Myay Mandalay residential complex with 260 apartments that have been constructed with funds of Mandalay Regional government will provide accommodations for civil servants.

Staff and teachers who earn a low income in Mandalay Region will be prioritized at the Aung Myay Mandalay staff complex. "Since the construction of these apartments has been completed, civil servants will be able to move into the new apartments as soon as electric meter boxes are installed" said director U Thet Naing from the regional urban and housing development department.

There are over 1,000 applicants who wish to reside at the residential complex but the number of applicants will decrease because some civil servants have resigned, been transferred to a new location or have retired.

Now, there are 56,162 civil servants in Mandalay Region, however 3,030 apartments have been constructed so only 5.39 per cent of residential buildings have been constructed for civil servants in the Mandalay Region.

Link: <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs24/GNLM2018-07-01-red.pdf>

Anti-Corruption Commission signs joint statement with UMFCCL on fighting corruption

Mizzima, 3 July 2018

Myanmar's Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) signed a joint statement in Yangon Monday on cooperation in fighting corruption, Xinhua reported.

The signing is aimed at developing the country's economy and morality practice economically among private enterprises as well as curbing corruption.

UMFCCI Chairman U Zaw Min Win stressed that fighting against corruption can build a sound business environment that can attract more foreign investment on mutually beneficial basis.

He also disclosed that anti-corruption organizations are also being established in government departments as prevention against the crime with rules and regulations being drawn up.



Link: <http://www.mizzima.com/news-domestic/anti-corruption-commission-signs-joint-statement-umfcci-fighting-corruption>

Myanma Apex Bank gives loans to almost 700 farmers this harvesting season

Mizzima, 3 July 2018

A pilot project which provides loans to farmers spearheaded by Myanma Apex Bank (MAB) and Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) has supported almost 700 farmers for this harvesting season to date, according to the MRF.

U Ye Min Aung, MRF secretary, said that the MAB has provided medium-term loans to farms in agriculture, livestock and fishery sectors since June 2015. For this harvesting season, the MAB has offered a total of K1.6 billion for 690 farmers.

It gave those loans to the farmers on June 29.

The MAB aims to provide loans to farmers located in Ayeyarwaddy, Bago, Yangon, Rakhine, Mandalay, Sagaing, Kayin and Nay Pyi Taw regions.

Link: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/myanma-apex-bank-gives-loans-almost-700-farmers-harvesting-season.html>

UHM to give Ks 500 million for Karen State's regional development

Karen Information Center, 4 July 2018

UHM Company will give Ks 500 million for regional development when it signs a contract with the Karen (Kayin) State government to build an international shopping mall in the state's capital Hpa-an.



“In accordance with the tender rules and regulations, we proposed how we will make a deal with the government and what we will do for other regional development. As we have proposed to provide [a fund] for regional development, we will provide Ks 500 million,” U Tun Aung Shwe, managing director of UHM Company, told KIC News on July 3.

The company will sign a contract with the state government within this month. It has been

clearing the land and fencing the land as part of the pre-project activities since July 1 and construction will start in August, he continued.

The Karen State government announced UHM Development Co., Ltd as the winner on June 21 and the Ks 11 billion shopping mall project will be built on 3.334 acres of land in the 9th Ward at the site of an old highway bus station.

Link: <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/uhm-give-ks-500-million-karen-states-regional-development>

Cooperatives set to receive K550 billion in funds

Myanmar Times, 4 July 2018

Funds for farmers and the agricultural sector totalling more than K550 billion are going to be provided to central cooperative associations on July 7, said Director U Myo Aung of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.

The funds will then be distributed to regional and state-level, which will then disburse the money to farmers as loans.

Under the program, K542.78 billion has been allocated to cover agricultural costs or as small capital loans, K1.7 billion loans to purchase agricultural equipment, K1.15 billion for seed production associations and K7.18 billion for the promotion of the agricultural sector, he said.

Link: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/cooperatives-set-receive-k550-billion-funds.html>

Myanmar to send workers to Japan to care for the elderly

Myanmar Times, 4 July 2018

Myanmar is planning to send workers to Japan to fill jobs involving the care of elderly people.

The workers will be sent via members of the Myanmar Overseas Employment Agencies Federation, according to officials of the federation and the Labour Ministry.

He said that agencies will begin sending workers to Japan next month when the Committee of Education, Health and Human Resource Development officially permits the sending of workers to Japan.

According to the ministry's regulations, those who seek to work in Japan caring for the elderly must be 18 or older, pass the N4-level for proficiency in the Japanese language, and have taken 320 hours of training in taking care of the elderly.



Link: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/myanmar-send-workers-japan-care-elderly.html>

Mandalay makes rural progress a top priority

Myanmar Times, 4 July 2018

Priority is being placed on development in rural areas of the region, said Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Zaw Myint Maung last week.

"The efforts of the local government have been focused on the development of rural areas. The primary areas that have received attention are the electrification of villages and improvement of roads," said the chief minister.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, K52 billion was allocated to provide access to water for 1286 projects in the region.

"The regional government utilises 30 percent of the budget provided for Mandalay Region to fund regional government departments, and much of the money goes toward addressing issues in rural areas," he said.

Link: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/mandalay-makes-rural-progress-top-priority.html>

World Bank vows to continue support for Myanmar's peace, reform process

Xinhua News, 4 July 2018

The World Bank vowed on Wednesday to continue its support to Myanmar government in building peace, economic reform, said a statement released by the international financial institution.

World Bank's Vice-Chairwoman for East Asia and Pacific Region Victoria Kwakwa will pay a visit to Myanmar to meet State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi and other government officials as well as development partners on July 8 to 10, the statement disclosed.

During the visit, development programs being implemented by Myanmar and the World Bank as well as the implementation of the programs to enhance social inclusion and foster peace in the country, especially in conflict areas will be focused in their discussions, the statement said.

Also, World Bank has pledged to build peaceful and prosperous communities across Myanmar including Rakhine state and to support Myanmar government in implementing the Memorandum of Understanding with UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UN Development Program (UNDP) and the recommendations of report on Rakhine state presented by the Advisory Commission, led by former UN Chief Kofi Annan.

Link: http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-07/04/c_137301399.htm

China, Myanmar Agree 15-Point MoU on Economic Corridor

The Irrawaddy, 6 July 2018

Chinese and Myanmar officials agreed a 15-point Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on building a China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, part of China's One Belt One Road Initiative, said U Min Zaw Oo, the director of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).



The corridor will run from China's Yunnan Province to Mandalay in central Myanmar, and then east to Yangon and west to the Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone (SEZ), according to DICA.

Under the MoU, the governments agree to collaborate on many sectors including basic infrastructure, construction, manufacturing, agriculture, transport, finance, human resources development, telecommunications, and research

and technology in order to develop the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, U Min Zaw Oo said.

China is Myanmar's largest investment partner. Between 1988 and May of this year it invested USD20.01 billion in the country, according to DICA.

Link: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/china-myanmar-agree-15-point-mou-economic-corridor.html>

Non-formal education programme extended to 5 border camps

Myanmar Times, 9 July 2018

The Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE) programme will be extended this academic year to five camps in Mae Sot on the Thai-Myanmar border, according to the project's manager.

NFPE is a free continuing education programme to provide an education for children who do not have access to schools.

The programme was initiated across the nation in the 2008-2009 academic year. In 2015-2016, the programme was set up in Mae Sot aimed at children aged 10 to 14 who did not have access to education. It sought to give them a second chance by helping them re-enrol in schools to finish their basic education.

“While collecting data at the schools for the coming year, we found a high number of children who are willing to learn, so we are expanding the programme to the five camps,” said U Tun Kyi, project manager for NFPE.

The programme is offered in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Myanmar Literacy Resource Centre, UNICEF, UNESCO and other donor organisations.

For the 2018-2019 academic year, classes for primary and middle education will open next week. Over 450 camps for primary education and 14 camps for middle education will open nationwide. About 8500 students are registered for the primary programme and 150 for the middle programme, U Tun Kyi added.

The middle education programme was started in the 2016-2017 academic year and is aimed at students aged 14 to 16. The three-year pilot programme will end in 2019 May.

Link: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/non-formal-education-programme-extended-5-border-camps.html>

Secretariat Office to become museum of martyrs

The Global New Light of Myanmar, 8 July 2018

Upon completion of renovations in the secretariat office, the office will become the museum of martyrs and opened to the public, said Dr. Maung Maung Thein, chairman of the Secretariats office renovation committee during a news conference.

The media conference, which is related to the preparation of the Martyrs’ Day, was held at the secretariat office, which is located on the Thein Phyu Road (middle block) in Yangon.

“Upon completion of renovations, we are going to keep the secretariat office as the museum of martyrs to honor the sacrifice of the martyrs. Also, we are going to give the name of Hluttaw, which is the first Hluttaw office, as the Hluttaw museum. Then, we are going to operate the gallery related to Myanmar culture, which will include ethnic dress and accessories. It will be a private museum and an entrance fee will be collected. We want local and foreigners to visit this secretariat office. We want them to know our country’s history and the martyrs’ history,” he added.



The secretariat office compound is 16 acres wide. Currently, the renovation of the secretariat office is 30 per cent completed. The renovation will be finished in March, 2019. The estimated cost for the project is more than US\$20 million. The type of building can be found only in Myanmar and India. Therefore, the building will be opened as the museum of martyrs in order to display the history for future generations, he added.

Link: <http://www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com/secretariat-office-to-become-museum-of-martyrs/>

Kayah State sees rising FDI, interest in agriculture sector

Myanmar Times, 12 July 2018

Investor interest in the agriculture and livestock sector in Kayah State has been on the rise in recent years, Daw May Myo Zaw, secretary of Kayah State Investment Committee, told The Myanmar Times.



But Kayah has also enjoyed foreign direct investments (FDI) over the period. Earlier this year, De Heus Myanmar, the Netherlands-headquartered animal feed company, opened its second facility in Kayah. Local investors have shown interest in the sector, too. U Ngwe Tun, founder of Genius Shan Highlands Coffee, which exports coffee, said he is planning to open a coffee plantation in Kayah State within a year.

The regional government has also upped efforts to draw FDI into other sectors of the Kayah economy, with promising results. After the Kayah Investment Forum was held in May, the state has received proposals from foreign investors for the construction of cinemas, marble

production, tourism, hotel development as well as in agriculture, said Daw May Myo Zaw.

The developments are new for Kayah State, which received FDI amounting to just \$2.5 million for a single project between January 1988 and August 2017, according to DICA.

Meanwhile, just three local companies have invested K181 billion in the state over the same period.

Link: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/kayah-state-sees-rising-fdi-interest-agriculture-sector.html>

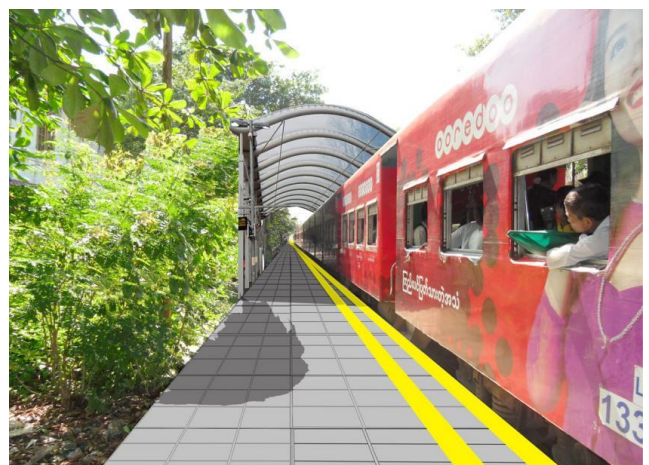
Japanese firm to build train station along Yangon Circular Railway

Myanmar Times, 12 July 2018

Japan's Hello Communications has submitted a proposal to upgrade train stations along the Yangon Circular Railway to Myanmar Railways, which operates the line, U Arkar Min Thu, general manager of the economic department under Myanmar Railways, told The Myanmar Times on Tuesday.

It is the first time Myanmar Railways is receiving proposals from the private sector for upgrading works along the railway.

"We presented our plan for the Yangon Circular Railway in April for all 37 stations but received instructions that we should upgrade Thamine station first," said Kimio Shichida, chair of Hello Communications. Based on the company's estimates, all 37 stations will require an investment of about \$11 million.



The new Thamine platform will include construction of a ticket office, entrance gate, shelters and public amenities. It will also come with a modern coffee shop, convenience stores and advertising space to generate revenue.

Link: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/japanese-firm-build-train-station-along-yangon-circular-railway.html>

LAW AND GOVERNANCE

Corruption Prevention Units to be formed in government departments

The Global New Light of Myanmar, 3 July 2018

The Anti-Corruption Commission is planning to form Corruption Prevention Units (CPU) in government departments to prevent corruption, said U Aung Kyi, Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission at the Anti-Corruption Declaration Ceremony, held at the UMFCCL office yesterday.



The commission will conduct three activities to prevent corruption: the forming of CPUs, drawing up codes of conduct and implementing corruption risk assessments.

Moreover, the commission will conduct corruption risk assessments to scrutinize both government departments and private organizations. By conducting these activities, they can prevent a monopoly in organizations, reduce individual power play and encourage accountability, said U Aung Kyi.

Also, the commission will conduct awareness activities relating to public morality and include it as a subject in primary education. The Anti-Corruption Commission will carry out its objective more effectively in accordance with the President's guidance.

Link: <http://www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com/corruption-prevention-units-to-be-formed-in-government-departments/>

UEC drafts plan for 2020 general election

Mizzima, 4 July 2018

Myanmar's Union Election Commission (UEC) has drafted a strategic plan (2019-2022) for 2020 general election, seeking suggestions from civil service organizations (CSO) and political parties and cooperation with them in the electoral process for the general election, Xinhua reported quoting local media.

The strategic plan was drawn with 11 chapters taking into consideration the strong and weak points, advantages and challenges of the previous elections, UEC Chairman U Hla Thein told a coordination meeting with the CSOs and political parties in Nay Pyi Taw Monday.

U Hla Thein urged the CSOs to play an active role in the electoral process and to cooperate in compiling voting list and voting education, promoting inclusiveness as well as monitoring the election.



Link: <http://www.mizzima.com/news-domestic/uec-drafts-plan-2020-general-election>

After delay, Disability Rights rules and regulations published

Myanmar Times, 13 July 2018

The Social Welfare, Rescue and Resettlement Ministry last week released long-awaited regulations for the Disability Rights Law that was enacted in June 2015.

The rules and regulations were released by the ministry in December 2017, more than two years after the law was enacted. However, it took over six months more to release them in booklet form.

One of the topics, creating job opportunities for people with disabilities, describes how employers can use employment Form No. 7 from the township labour office to hire people with disabilities. The employer will have to inform the township labour office of the vacancy in a timely manner and will have to modify the working environment to be suitable for people with disabilities.

Each private company or government organisation with at least 50 employees will have to employ one person with a disability. If they fail to, a K100, 000 or K200, 000 monthly fine will be imposed, Director U Swan Yi Ya of the Vulnerable Group Section of the Rehabilitation Department told *The Myanmar Times*.

The rule booklet also includes chapters on registration, education, health, easy travel, living, access, politics, public affairs participation, care and rehabilitation, job opportunities, forming associations and registration, special private schools, special private vocational schools, private rehabilitation centres, appeals, funding, control and management, human rights, fundamental rights and equality.

Link: <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/after-delay-disability-rights-rules-and-regulations-published.html>

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