

THAILAND

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PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

Government Invites Wa, Mongla Groups to Peace Dialogue

The Irrawaddy, 23 December 2015

The government has invited leaders of the Wa and Mongla special regions to attend the Union Peace Conference scheduled to convene on Jan. 12, an invitation that de facto applies to the United Wa State Army (UWSA), Burma's largest ethnic armed group, and the National Democratic Alliance Army.



The UWSA is a non-signatory to Burma's so-called nationwide ceasefire agreement, which was signed by the government and eight non-state armed groups on Oct. 15.

Non-signatories have been offered the opportunity to attend with "observer" status, a senior member of the government-affiliated Myanmar Peace Center (MPC) told The Irrawaddy this week.

Link : <http://www.irrawaddy.com/burma/government-invites-wa-mongla-groups-to-peace-dialogue.html>

Suu Kyi hold talks with top officials from MPC

Eleven Media, 23 December 2015

Aung San Suu Kyi, chairperson of the National League for Democracy, held a discussion with the Myanmar Peace Center delegation led by Union Minister at the President's Office Aung Min, over the current peace processes and political dialogues, in Nay Pyi Taw on December 23.

The NLD delegation includes CEC members Win Htein and Dr Zaw Myint Maung, the Central Committee members Naing Ngan Lin and Phyo Zeyar Thaw and in-charge of the NLD chairperson office Dr. Tin Mar Aung. Union minister Aung Min was accompanied by Tin Maung Than, Hla Maung Shwe, Dr Min Zaw Oo, Dr Kyaw Yin Hlaing and Aung Naing Oo.



Link : <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/politics/suu-kyi-hold-talks-top-officials-mpc>

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets eight ceasefire signatories

Myanmar Times, 18 December 2015

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi yesterday reassured the eight ceasefire signatories that her party supports the peace process even if it didn't endorse the accord as a witness or send a representative to the signing ceremony.

The National League for Democracy leader met with representatives from eight ethnic armed groups at the hluttaw compound in Nay Pyi Taw.



In addition to the PLO, representatives from the Karen National Union, the KNU/KNLA Peace Council, the Restoration Council of Shan State, the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army, the Chin National Front, the Arakan Liberation Party and the All Burma Students' Democratic Front attended the meeting.

In its manifesto, the NLD said “national reconciliation” is its top priority, though the party has revealed few details so far of how it intends to pursue the peace process.

Link : <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/nay-pyi-taw/18200-daw-aung-san-su-ki-meets-eight-ceasefire-signatories.html>

Myanmar's Suu Kyi says peace talks will be priority

Bangkok post, 4 January 2016

Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi said Monday that bringing peace to the country's strife-wracked ethnic regions will be a priority for her government when it takes power.

"We have to build peace. Building peace is the first ever duty of a new government," she told supporters at the party's Rangoon headquarters on Monday, during a speech marking the country's Independence Day.

"We have to work to include everyone in a signed ceasefire agreement by holding a really effective peace conference," she added.

Suu Kyi has said her party supports a federal future and has made ethnic affairs and peace a central pillar of her party manifesto for Myanmar, where ethnic minority groups have fought decades-long wars for greater autonomy.



Link : <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/asean/815560/myanmar-suu-kyi-says-peace-talks-will-be-priority>

Non-ceasefire signatories to take reserved seats in political dialogue

The Global New Light of Myanmar, 4 January 2016

SEVEN non-ceasefire signatory groups and three others have been invited to attend the upcoming Union Peace Conference having being granted the status of special invitees for 50 seats in the country's first political dialogue, an official from Myanmar Peace Centre said yesterday.

"Fifty attendees representing seven non-signatories and three others that include the Wa National Organisation (WNO), the Lahu Democratic Union (LDU) and the Arakan National Council (ANC) are expected to be present at the conference", said U Hla Maung Shwe, senior adviser at the peace centre.

The meeting is set to have 150 seats for ceasefire signatories with 150 representatives from eight ethnic armed organisations who will attend the peace conference that will start on 12 January in Nay Pyi Taw, added the MPC's senior adviser.

Link : http://issuu.com/myanmarnewspaper/docs/3_jan_16_gnlm

Thein Sein government will hold political dialogue over five days

Mizzima News, 6 January 2016

The Thein Sein government will hold political dialogue with the eight ethnic armed organizations that signed nationwide ceasefire agreement (NCA) over five days, Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC)



Secretary Sai Kyaw Nyunt told Mizzima.

He further added that peace negotiator and Minister Aung Min had presented the programme for political dialogue between the incumbent government and the armed organizations at the UPDJC secretariat meeting held on January 5.

UPDJC secretariat is doing groundwork for the political dialogue and its secretariat meetings are being held at Myanmar Peace Centre (MPC) office in Yangon from January 5 to 7.

After the secretariat meetings, the resolutions of these meetings will be presented at the UPDJC meeting to be held in Naypyitaw from January 9 to 10 for approval and confirmation. The Union Peace Conference will be held in Naypyitaw from January 12 to 16.

Link : <http://www.mizzima.com/news-domestic/thein-sein-government-will-hold-political-dialogue-over-five-days>

Next on the agenda — Union Peace Conference to cover five topics

The Global New Light of Myanmar, 6 January 2016

THE secretaries of groups scheduled to attend the Union Peace Conference agreed to discuss five topics at the country's first political dialogue following a two-day preparatory meeting at the Myanmar Peace Centre (MPC) yesterday.

The five agenda items include political issues, economic issues and social issues, security and land and natural resources. The stakeholders used the two-day pre-meeting to prepare for the discussion, said U Aung Naing Oo, a programme director at the MPC.

According to U Aung Naing Oo, the topic of establishing a democratic federal Union is set to be discussed under political issues, while internally displaced persons will fall under social issues.



Link : http://issuu.com/myanmarnewspaper/docs/7_jan_16_gnlm

LAW AND GOVERNANCE

Aung San Suu Kyi's victorious NLD party will join parliament on February 1

South China Morning Post, 6 January 2016

Members of Aung San Suu Kyi's victorious pro-democracy party will take their seats in parliament on February 1, Myanmar's speaker said on Wednesday, beginning a new era for a nation under army rule for decades.



In a statement parliamentary speaker Shwe Mann announced that “all MPs [are] to start the new parliament at 10am on Monday February 1, 2016”.

But the new government will take office slowly under the complex political system – it can only be formed after current President Thein Sein steps down on March 31.

Link : <http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/1898412/aung-san-su-kyis-victorious-nld-party-will-join-parliament>

ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT

ADB-Japan project to help Mon State's entrepreneurs

Myanmar Times, 23 December 2015

The ADB will administer a US\$3 million grant from the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction. The project aims to increase incomes and employment opportunities for small businesses and entrepreneurs in four townships in Mon State – Chaungzon Island, Kyaikhto, Mawlamyaing and Mudon.

The project aims provide economic opportunities for 900 households across 12 villages in the four townships, the ADB said. Sixty percent of project beneficiaries will be women.

U Min New Soe said that female participation in the state's business community was lower than men's, and that the project will help draw more women into business.



Credit: Mizzima

The government and local communities, with ADB assistance, will provide support equivalent to about \$450,000. The project will run for about four years, and is expected to finish by the end of December 2019.

Link : <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/business/18267-adb-japan-project-to-help-mon-state-s-entrepreneurs.html>

OTHERS

South Korea receives first refugees in pilot programme

UNHCR, 23 December 2015

Having learned some Korean through books and television shows to assist in their rapid integration, a first group of 22 Myanmar refugees from Thailand's Mae La and Umpium camps landed in the Republic of Korea on Wednesday to a warm welcome and positive start to the country's three-year pilot resettlement programme.



The four families will start their lives in South Korea at the Immigration Reception Centre located in Incheon, where they will stay for six to 12 months taking basic courses in the Korean language, culture and occupational skills. The Justice Ministry said that they are likely to live around Gyeonggi Province, adjacent to the capital Seoul, as there is already an existing Myanmar community in the area.

"With time, UNHCR hopes that South Korea will expand its resettlement programme to refugees from other regions and major emergencies around the world," said Dirk Hebecker, UNHCR's representative in South Korea.

Link : <http://www.unhcr.org/567a73aa6.html>

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