

THAILAND

18 May – 6 June 2019

Media Monitoring report # 206

LAND AND PROPERTY

[Karen Groups Aim to Strengthen Customary Land Management System in KNU Areas](#)

Karen News, 4 June 2019

Hundreds of Karen representatives from 56 different groups gathered to strengthen Karen customary land management systems at a seminar held at Lay Wah, Karen State from May 29 to 30, 2019.



The Kaw Customary Land Seminar was attended by 519 people including representatives from local community and civil society, donors, INGOs, political parties, and officers of the Karen National Union.

The post seminar statement said, Kaw is the Karen customary land management system. This is land which is collectively used, managed, conserved and governed. These practices are based on the conservation of land, forest, water, and other natural resources, and emerge from a combination of traditional value systems and traditional/customary law.

Presentations at the seminar said there are 198 Kaw customary land systems in Kawthoolei (Karen areas under KNU administrations) and these customary land management systems successfully provided land protection and sustainable livelihoods, and are still relevant and applicable to the current situation.

Padoh Saw Nay Tha Blay, head of the Karen Agricultural Department said Kaw principle can be linked to federalism.

“Kaw management system allows regional self-determination over territory and we want to strengthen this and make more people aware of this system.”

The seminar statement explained the Kaw system “contradicts the Myanmar government’s land laws, as it allows for collective participation in political decision-making. Suppressing such customary systems hinders the peace building process, preventing the establishment of federalism. The Myanmar government’s land laws therefore must be abolished and accordingly rewritten.”

The KNU and Karen environmental groups vowed to continue to strengthen and implement the Kaw customary land governance systems in line with the KNU’s land and forest policies within its administrative territories.

<https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/karen-groups-aim-strengthen-customary-land-management-system-knu-areas>

[Myanmar Announces National Environment and Climate Change Policies](#)

Mizzima, 6 June 2019

The Government of Myanmar yesterday announced its vision for the country’s environmental

traffic congestion and cost of commodities flow, to promote the investment of private sector and to create job opportunities as well as to substitute import with the export.

At present, there are sand and pebble production industries, rice and bean warehouses in the proposed site of the dry project.

<https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/ygn-govt-forms-investigation-team-to-solve-land-dispute>

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

New Inter-Village Tar Road in Ayeyawady Cuts Travel Time and Costs to Residents

The Global New Light of Myanmar, 27 May 2019

An inter-village tar road was opened in Kyonbyaw Township, Ayeyawady Region, yesterday, as part of the rural roads, bridges, rural economic and transport development project.

Undertaken by the Department of Rural Road Development (DRRD), with aid provided by the World Bank under the emergency rehabilitation program against floods and landslides, the tar road connecting the villages of Shan Zu-Chaung Zauk-Hle Zeik-Moe Gyo Pyit was commissioned by dignitaries, including Manh Win Khaing Than, the Speaker of Ayotha Hluttaw.



Speaking on the occasion, Speaker Manh Win Khaing Than said, “Under the emergency rehabilitation program, DRRD of the Ministry of Construction has been rebuilding and upgrading rural roads destroyed by natural disasters in Magway, Sagaing, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions, with an interest-free loan of US\$ 70 million disbursed by the World Bank.” The emergency rehabilitation program also deals with standardizing rural transport facilities.

The 14-kilometer long Shan Zu-Chaung Zauk-Hle Zeik-Moe Gyo Pyit village-to-village tar road directly benefits 10,627 persons of 2487 households of 17 villages in and around Kyonbyaw Township. Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw also gave a speech, saying that under the agreement signed with the World Bank, the global financial body would provide US\$ 70 million as an interest-free loan to rebuild over 189 miles of rural roads and 29 bridges, destroyed by a certain kinds of unforeseen and uncontrollable natural forces in 2015, in 43 townships of Magway, Sagaing, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions.

As the task of building, upgrading and repairing rural roads and bridges was enormous, the Ministry of Construction had been working hand in hand with the relevant ministries and development partners, he said.

<http://www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com/new-inter-village-tar-road-in-ayeyawady-cuts-travel-time-and-costs-to-residents/>

Affordable Housing Units for Low-Income Buyers to be sold by Instalment

The Global New Light of Myanmar, 18 May 2019



The low-cost and affordable housing estates in Dagon Seikkan and Hlinethaya townships will be sold to people in the low-income group under a long-term instalment plan, said an official from the Urban and Housing Development Department under the Ministry of Construction.

The real estate projects are being implemented with the help of Japan’s Official Development Assistance

(ODA) program. Long-term home loans will be offered under the program, he added.

People wanting to purchase flats in the housing projects are required to open a savings account with the Construction, Housing, and Infrastructure Development Bank (CHID).

Some of the clients of the bank have deposited enough money to purchase the apartments, and they can apply for purchasing flats in Phases 1 and 2 of the Yuzana housing estate project and the Kanaung housing estate project in Dagon Seikkan Township, and Phases 2 and 3 of the Shwe Lin Ban housing estate project, and the Htihlaingshin housing estate project in Hlinethaya Township. The CHID Bank announced the list of applicants who can purchase the apartments on 10 May at its head office, located on Bogyoke Aung San Road, Botahtaung Township, and Yangon. A total of 3,042 people have been approved for purchasing low-cost and affordable flats in Dagon Seikkan and Hlinethaya townships.

Those who have been approved to purchase flats are required to register themselves between 13 and 17 May. The Urban and Housing Development Department will announce the names of those who will draw lots on 20 May.

<http://www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com/affordable-housing-units-for-low-income-buyers-to-be-sold-by-instalment/>

1,300 Villages to Receive Solar-Generated Electricity in FY2019-20

The Irrawaddy, 27 May 2019

MANDALAY—Over 1,300 villages in rural areas of five regions will get access to electricity through solar power in fiscal 2019-20 as part of the National Electrification Project (NEP), according to the Ministry of Electricity and Energy.

The ministry will team up with the Rural Development Department overseen by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation to supply solar power, according to the deputy permanent secretary of the Electricity and Energy Ministry, U Htay Aung.

He said fees collected from villagers will cover 20 percent of the cost, with the government financing the rest from the proceeds of solar-power generation.



The 1,300 targeted villages are located in Mandalay, Magwe, Bago, Irrawaddy and Tanintharyi regions. All are more than 10 miles from the national grid and unlikely to be connected in the next 10 years, U Htay Aung said.

The NEP, which is being implemented with support from the World Bank as of 2016-17, aims to provide access to electricity to all households in Myanmar by 2030.

With a loan of US\$400 million (612.76 billion kyats) from the World Bank, the project targets supplying electricity to nearly 700,000 households in over 8,000 villages by 2021.

The ministry will spend US\$310 million on the grid extension; the Rural Development Department will spend US\$90 million on off-grid electrification.

The first phase of the NEP aims to provide electricity access to over 620,000 households in some 5,000 villages within a 2-mile radius of the national grid across the country. It is scheduled to complete this work in June next year.

In the second phase of the project, which is scheduled for completion in September 2021, electricity will be supplied to villages within a 5-mile radius of the grid.

<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/1300-villages-receive-solar-generated-electricity-fy2019-20.html>

Govt Launches New Payment System for Injured Workers

Myanmar Times, 29 May 2019

The Labour Ministry has streamlined the process of making social security payments in a bid to better serve registered workers and employers, said the head of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population.



The new system is being tested in Hlaing Tharyar Township in Yangon Region and Pyigyitagun Township in Mandalay, where most of the country’s factories are located. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and non-governmental group Vision Zero Funds (VSF) are providing support for the pilot programme.

The ministry launched the pilot project over the weekend.

U Maung Maung Aye said there were about 58 processes in providing payments to workers who are injured at

work, but it had cut them to 25 processes.

Under the new system, registered workers who suffer injuries at work can go for treatment at their nearest clinics and hospitals.

“This pilot project will last for about six months. We will implement the new system in other townships if all goes well,” U Myo Aung said.

<https://www.mmtimes.com/news/govt-launches-new-payment-system-injured-workers.html>

Cotton, Textile, Weaving Courses to be offered in Hpa-An Town

The Global New Light of Myanmar, 30 May 2019

The Weaving and Vocational Training School in Hpa-an Township, Kayin State, will offer a year-long course on cotton and textiles and a six-month course on weaving. The cotton and textile course has 20 seats, while the weaving course has 10 seats.

The school will give a stipend of K30, 000 per month to trainees.

The courses will open on 1 July. Those who have finished middle school and are aged between 16 and 25 years can apply for the courses. The school will arrange the accommodation and other necessary aids for trainees.



Interested candidates can register for the courses by contacting 058-21607 and 09-253525348 by 29 June.

<http://www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com/cotton-textile-weaving-courses-to-be-offered-in-hpa-an-town/>

YRIC Permits 11 Foreign, Domestic Projects; to Create over 5,600 Jobs



The Global New Light of Myanmar, 30 May 2019

The Yangon Region Investment Committee gave the green light to eight foreign and three domestic projects with an estimated capital of US\$15.8 million and K6.2 billion, respectively, at a meeting held yesterday.

The projects are expected to create 5,630 jobs, according

to a press release issued by the YRIC.

During the 2017-2018 (August-March) fiscal year, the YRIC permitted 39 foreign and 9 domestic projects to invest in Yangon Region, with a capital of \$56.6 million and K23 billion, creating 22,481 jobs.

The manufacturing sector attracted the most foreign investments in Yangon Region, from enterprises engaged in the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals, vehicles, container boxes, and Cutting, Making, and Packing (CMP) garments.

Among the regions and states, Yangon Region absorbs 60 per cent of investments, while Mandalay attracts 30 per cent. The other regions and states got only a small share of investments, according to statistics released by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.

<http://www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com/yric-permits-11-foreign-domestic-projects-to-create-over-5600-jobs/>

Maw Taung Trade Post to be opened on Thai-Myanmar Border

Myanmar Business Today, 21 May 2019

Once the agreement between Myanmar and Thailand has been reached, Maw Taung border trade post will be officially opened at the border city Maung Taung, Tanintharyi Township. The new trade post will promote trade between the two countries.

The two countries are currently having discussions about the matter at the meetings for the Myanmar-Thailand Border Trade Joint Committee and Myanmar-Thailand Joint Commission as well as a high official meeting.

“Maw Taung Border Trade Post is next to Prachuap Khiri Khan Province. The border trade post was opened in May 2013 as a temporary check point, and currently operates with 28 staff members,” said U Aung Htoo, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Commerce.



Through the temporary check point at the Maw Taung Border Trade Post, the two countries traded \$2.5 million in the 2015-2016 Fiscal Year and \$13 million from October 2018 to May 3, 2018.

Along Myanmar’s borders there are seventeen trade posts including Maw Taung, the posts are all actively trading with neighboring countries.

According to the data from the Ministry of Commerce, the volume of trade through the border gates hit \$4.8 billion as of March 29, 2019 for the current fiscal year. During the period, Myanmar’s foreign trade reached \$17 billion in total, maritime trade amounted to \$12 billion accounting for the majority of Myanmar trade.

Myanmar is trying to push border trade by improving border areas, one method to improve cross border trade is by building border economic zones. There are talks to build economic zones in Kapaniktee in Kachin state, Mu-se in Chin State and Shwe Haw in Shan State. Efforts are being made to designate Mu-se Economic Zone as a priority zone.

<https://www.mmbiztoday.com/articles/maw-taung-trade-post-be-opened-thai-myanmar-border>

Schools Told Not to Enrol Students from Other Townships

Myanmar Times, 27 May 2018

Schools in Yangon have been instructed not to accept the enrolment of students from other townships during the coming school year, according to U Ko Lay Win, director general of the Department of Basic Education.

He said the same instruction was issued during last year’s enrolment but was not followed, so the department would be stricter in enforcing the regulation this year.

“There are parents who want to enrol their children at famous schools, and thus they pay teachers to get their



children accepted. Issues arise. The instruction aims to avoid corruption,” U Ko Lay Win said.

The department will inspect famous schools in Yangon and Mandalay.

Ko Hein Latt, the father of a 2nd grade student in Bahan, said, “If they won’t accept extra-township enrolment, we want to ask them whether teaching is the same in all schools. Are the schools safe? If all schools were the same, parents won’t enrol their children at schools in other townships. They would rather enrol them in their own township.”

School enrolment across the nation is taking place from

now until Friday. School starts on June 3.

U Ko Lay Win said the inspection will be conducted without warning and at random.

But some said it will be difficult to detect the fraud, as parents fraudulently change their household registration to be able to enrol their children at famous schools.

<https://www.mmtimes.com/news/schools-told-not-enrol-students-other-townships.html>

Ministry to take Loan of 100 m USD for Pregnant Mothers and Children Cash Assistance

Eleven Myanmar, 1 June 2019

A proposal to take a loan of 100 million US dollars for the cash assistance program for pregnancy mothers and the children aged two, was submitted by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, at the 12th regular session of the Union Parliament on May 31.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and the Ministry of Planning and Finance explained it at the Union parliament.

The Social Welfare Department at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement will mainly be responsible for the project. This is the ministry’s first-ever overseas loan, said Set Aung, Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance.

In a bid to develop the nutritional behaviors and strengthen the national healthcare system, the ministry will extend the cash assistance program in Shan State and Ayeyawady Region.

In September, 2018, the EIA, the SIA and community participation program for the project were conducted with the technical assistance of the World Bank. The project will be implemented from 2019-2020 FY to 2022-2030 FY.

The loan taken under the IDA-18 program of the WB, is the concessional loan.

The term of loan is 30 years with the five-year suspension period and the 25-year repayment period. The loan interest rate is 1.25 per cent and service fee is 0.75 per cent.

<https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/ministry-to-take-loan-of-100-m-usd-for-pregnant-mothers-and-children-cash-assistance>

Myanmar Workers to gain Mechanic Skills in Japan

The Global New Light of Myanmar, 3 June 2019

Under the supervision of Myanmar-Japan SEDA, mechanics from Myanmar will be receiving internships in Japan.

“We signed a MoU concerning sending Myanmar service workers to work at the care centers for the aged in

Japan three months ago. Now, mechanics will be sent to Japan as soon as possible. We also have a plan to send other workers to Japan and provide training courses to Myanmar workers who want to be engaged in restaurant and hotel businesses”, said U Aye Min from Myanmar-Japan SEDA.



The Japanese government will allow some 500,000 blue collar workers from ASEAN countries to enter Japan, including from Myanmar, in order to work in 14 types of job. Those who wish to work in Japan must be fluent in the Japanese language, and overseas recruitment will cost US\$2,800, as per the set rate by the government. Japan also has a plan to offer loans for half of these expenses.

“We have heard that Japan wishes to hire Myanmar mechanics. This is a precious opportunity for Myanmar youth”, said U San Oo, principal of Progress Automotive Technical Trading School.

Yesterday, Myanmar-Japan SEDA and associates, including Japanese language schools, oversea job recruitment agencies and financial supporting groups, signed a MoU at Sedona Hotel to provide training to trainees and skilled mechanics and send them to Japan.

<http://www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com/myanmar-workers-to-gain-mechanic-skills-in-japan/>

KBZ Introduces Long-Term Construction Loan

Myanmar Business Today, 4 June 2019

KBZ Bank in collaboration with MYANMAR ART Construction & Development Co., Ltd and iMyanmarHouse.com, introduced a new product for individuals who want to build houses on their land, the new product offers 25-year home loan terms.



“KBZ bank will provide long-term loans at as much as 70 percent of the value of the home, this is for individuals who want to build a house on their own land. The loan terms will be considered based on the ownership and up to 25 years on a case by case,” said U Htay Aung, Head of Home Loan Department of KBZ Bank.

Moreover, KBZ will also provide loans for up to three years for those building hotels, motels, restaurants, boarding houses, factories, warehouses

and other types of buildings as well as renovation loans.

The terms of the loan will be determined based on the type of land ownership and the interest rate will be up 13 percent.

“iMyanmarHouse.com will take responsibility on marketing and promotion partnerships, while MYANMAR ART Construction & Development Co., Ltd, will provide financial and construction services. We want to make the dream of owning a house come true in accordance with our motto ‘Every Citizen Shall Own a House,” said U Nay Min Thu, Managing Director of iMyanmarHouse.com.

If you want to apply for the loan, you can get it by providing copies of land ownership certificate, income description, ID cards, family certificate and bank statements for the last six months.

<https://www.mmbiztoday.com/articles/kbz-introduces-long-term-construction-loans>

LAW AND GOVERNANCE

President Urges Faster Reforms to Build Federal Union

Myanmar Times, 28 May 2018

Officials in the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government need to speed up reforms to build a federal union, President U Win Myint said.

He made the comment in a meeting with senior staff of government agencies, legislators and judicial officials last week to underscore the need to speed up reforms.

“Some are worried about reforms so they are hesitant and frightened (to implement them). Actually, reform is a good friend of the country,” he said.

U Win Myint said reforms pose no threat and are a good way to develop the country and the people’s happiness.

He said civil servants can heed the example of independence hero Bogyoke Aung San’s short-lived administration, which was anchored in justice.



“I want an administration like the one set by our national and military leader, and independence architect, Bogyoke Aung San. I want institutions that have political, economic and social justice,” he said.

The president reminded the officials that they have sacrificed much to have the chance to implement reforms.

“We have sacrificed and felt pain throughout our lives to reach this moment. We have to dutifully perform our duties for the next generation,” he said.

U Win Myint urged them to remain loyal to the country despite the difficulties they face.

“I understand civil servants have trouble paying for food and housing, but I want them to persevere and understand this situation. Some are expecting something and some are giving certain information to others. I am not talking about rumours. I know what is going on,” he added.

He directed department officials to implement the projects in cooperation with local legislators.

<https://www.mmtimes.com/news/president-urges-faster-reforms-build-federal-union.html>

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

NSCN-K will not Sign NCA – Official

Mizzima, 4 June 2019

The National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang (NSCN-K) is firm on not signing the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) with the Myanmar Army (Tatmadaw) in spite of 'repeated aggression' by Naypidaw, News18 reported. According to NSCN-K, they want to continue their fight for 'sovereignty' of the Naga people.



Speaking to News18, the ministry of publicity (MIP) in-charge of NSCN (K) Joseph Lamkang, said, “Myanmar, in reality doesn’t care for the real aspiration of the Nagas. The seven years ceasefire only benefited them as it was one-sided. NSCN

started to feel that we were at the receiving end of Myanmar government’s operations. In last three years, they have been aggressively forcing us to sign the NCA. But, we did not do so. Then they became aggressive at the negotiating table, stopped all our supply routes and have applied their famous ‘four cuts’ policy.”

Lamkang added that Myanmar is well versed with the Naga issue, and they know that the subject is different from other ethnic issues. Lamkang remarked that Myanmar could have taken a different route rather than forcing the NCA on the Nagas.

<https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/nscn-k-will-not-sign-nca-official>

Ceasefire Groups Meet to Discuss Future of PPST

Shan Herald Agency for News, 6 June 2019

The 10 NCA-signatory groups are expected to decide on whether or not to dissolve the Peace Process Steering Team.

Representatives of 10 ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) that have signed Burma’s Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) are set to meet in Chiang Mai, Thailand, this week to decide on the future of the Peace Process Steering Team (PPST).

According to EAO sources, the gathering of NCA signatories will start today and continue until next Monday (June 5-10).

“Central executive committee members from 10 NCA-signatory EAOs are going to meet in Chiang Mai. One representative from each group will attend the meeting,” Khun Sai, an advisor to one of the groups, the Restoration Council of Shan State, told SHAN.

Khun Sai said that in addition to the issue of what to do about the PPST, the delegates will also discuss the NCA and whether to meet with members of the government’s National Reconciliation and Peace Center (NRPC), led by State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi.

The KNU first floated the idea of withdrawing from the Burma Army-recognized PPST and forming the PPCM during the first session of the fourth summit of NCA-signatory EAOs, held in Chiang Mai on May 14-18.

EAO leaders who attended that summit agreed to find common ground in their quest to overcome issues that have created a deadlock in the peace process.

<https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/ceasefire-groups-meet-discuss-future-ppst>



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