

Myanmar Ethnic State News

Window of Myanmar



Peace Process Must Be Irreversible

It is promising news that President Thein Sein established a State-level peace implementation committee to pursue peace-building in the country. The committee's formation acknowledges the desire of ethnic nationality leaders and their organizations to arrange a dialogue through political means.

This is not Burma's first experience with political dialogue. From 1962 to 1963, Gen. Ne Win of the "Revolutionary Council", which seized power in 1962, called for peace talks with armed ethnic groups involved in combat. But when the ruling military regime pressured the armed group leaders to surrender, dialogue failed.

Later, in 1990, Burma's intelligence chief and the then Prime Minister of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), Gen. Khin Nyunt, called for ceasefire talks with different ethnic armed groups, many of whom signed the agreements. Some of the politically motivated armed groups demanded a political dialogue with the SPDC, but it was repeatedly denied. Gen. Khin Nyunt maintained that the groups had to wait and talk with the next elected government. Many armed groups waited for decades for political dialogue.

Before the 2010 elections, the ceasefire groups were pressured by the SPDC to transform themselves into border guard or militia forces. In response, ethnic armed groups planned to fight back against the government. Once again, the ceasefire attempts were thwarted.

Now, it is commendable that the government is trying to implement the "peace process" anew. However, the continuing conflict in Kachin State creates mistrust of the government by Burma's general public, ethnic peoples, and the international community. The government must stop the fighting in order to earn people's confidence. <http://monnews.org/?p=3898>

Commander Level Flag Meeting between Burma and Bangladesh resume



Commander level flag meetings between Burma and Bangladesh resumed in Maungdaw, a western border town of Burma, on the 6th of September 5 months after they were stopped.

The commander level flag meeting was usually every month between the two neighbors but it had been stopped since June 2012 due to the sectarian violence in Arakan state.

“Yes, the flag meeting resumed in Maungdaw on the 6th of September. 10 delegates from Bangladesh and 16 delegates from Myanmar attended the meeting,” said a government official said.

-<http://tinyurl.com/9699wxo>

Sittwe University Students Form Provisional Student Union in Arakan

Sittwe University students have formed a provisional student union in the regional Capital Sittwe in order to work to aid student affairs jointly with other student unions existing in other parts of Burma.



Ko Khin Maung Win, the secretary of the union, told Narinjara that the union of Arakanese students was provisionally formed with 30 students from Sittwe University, Computer University and other colleges in Sittwe.

“We initiated forming an organizing committee on the 27th of August, then we founded the Arakan University Student Union (interim) with the participation of students from Sittwe University, Computer University and the Technical University on the 31st of August”, said Ko Khin Maung Win.- <http://tinyurl.com/97bxm35>

Public Meeting to be Held in Arakan to Assist the Commission of Investigation

A public meeting will be held in Rathedaung in Arakan State with public representatives from all townships in the region with the aim of lending a hand to the commission of investigation that is going to be coming soon to probe recent violent unrests.

“The commission will know about the situation in our region and won’t need to investigate the people here if we publish our public statements and decisions after holding the meeting. We plan to hold this meeting mainly to assist the commission”, said U Ko Ko Maung, the spokesperson of the organizing committee of the meeting.

- <http://tinyurl.com/985j3mn>

Ex-Commander Maung Oo Dismissed from Arakan Land Commission



The former Home Minister as well as the commander of the western command, U Maung Oo, was dismissed from the position of in-charge of the Arakan Land Commission (which investigates confiscated arable lands in Arakan state) and replaced with another military representative reportedly after Arakanese parliamentarians protested against his appointment.- <http://tinyurl.com/9dzovwq>

Arakanese public company to form

An Arakanese (Rakhine) public company is being formed with starting capital of 500 million kyat (US\$ 573,723) from an initial investment by 50 shareholders, Than Maung, a shareholder, said in a meeting at the Arakan (Rakhine) Religious Hall in Rangoon on Sunday.

In early 2012, the plan to start up the Arakanese public company was advertised in newspapers, but because of riots that began in Arakan State in early June, meetings to form the company were postponed, said Than Maung. The Sunday meeting was the first step to establish the company.- <http://tinyurl.com/c6o3mca>

Government to support yam plantation projects in Chin State

International and domestic financial assistance will be made available for elephant yam (locally called “Wa u”) plantations in areas specified by the Chin state government.

‘The Mirror’ newspaper of the former military government reported that on September 5, U Ohn Than, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, responded to questions from U Stephen Tha Bik of the Chin state constituency (4) regarding support for the elephant yam projects in Chin state. He affirmed that elephant yam special plantation zones are being implemented.

The report also said that the Environmental Conservation and Forestry Ministry have been distributing elephant yam seeds in Victoria National Park (‘Natmataung’ in local language) and its surrounding areas since 2010. Model project villages Okpo, Makyaukha, Zawyaung and Yelaungpan have now developed 50 acres of land for elephant yam plantations.-

<http://tinyurl.com/8jggbtm>

Chins denied right to practice Christianity: report

Chins in Burma are being denied the freedom to practice the Christian religion, said a new report by the Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) released this week.

“Chins continue to face religious persecution,” Salai Za Uk Ling, a programme director for CHRO, told IRIN, the UN humanitarian relief organization.

“Despite strong government reforms, these efforts have yet to be extended to religious freedom,” he said.

The report, titled ‘Threats to our Existence: Persecution of Ethnic Chin Christians in Burma, said the mainly Christian Chins are under pressure to convert to Buddhism as a result of state policy.

- <http://tinyurl.com/c3r78fh>

Matu cultural group wins dance competition in Matupi

A township-level cultural dance competition concluded on 1 September 2012 in Matupi, the second capital of Chin state in Burma.

The dance competition was held in Bungtla Hall and inaugurated by Colonel Han Tu, Tactical-II commander of southern Chin state, said a local from Matupi Town.

The event was organized by the Township administration department, and the winner will participate in a state-level contest.

-<http://tinyurl.com/8fk3vko>

CNF sets up 23-member peace talk committee

The Chin National Front (CNF) set up a peace talk committee comprising 23 party members to discuss stability and peace in Burma with President Thein Sein's government.

The committee was formed during the fifth Central Executive Committee (CEC) meeting between 24 and 31 August.

Pu Za Hlei Thang, Chairman of the Supreme Council of CNF, and Pu Zing Cung, the Secretary General, were selected as leaders of the committee. The other 21 members were selected from the CEC, Central Committee, Supreme Council, and leaders of the Chin National Army.

In a statement after the meeting, CNF said the committee was established to transition the ceasefire agreement to political dialogue with the Central government of Burma.

The CNF statement also said that the party discussed its approach to the second union-level peace talks with the Burmese government, including the venue and ways to invite observers and media personnel.-

<http://tinyurl.com/9j3cr4f>

KIO refuses NLD request to gather bodies from Hpakant battle-ground



A request made by representatives from Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) that they be allowed to collect the bodies left behind by a massive August 29 explosion at a mining compound in the jade rich Hpakant (also Hpakan, Phakant) mining district in western Kachin State, has been rejected by the armed wing of the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO).

Officials with the Kachin Independence Army's battalion 6 based in Hpakant were not impressed by the NLD's request that they be allowed to cross KIA lines and travel to the partially destroyed compound belonging to the Wai Aung Kaba company where as many as 140 Burmese soldiers are said to have died following a huge explosion at the site.

Major N'hkum Doi La, commander of KIA Battalion 6 told the Kachin News Group last week that he had personally refused the NLD request because no one including KIA personnel are allowed to enter the site..- <http://tinyurl.com/9r8vdu3>

140 Burma army troops killed in Hpakant blast on August 29



Officials with the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) claim that at as many as 140 soldiers from the Burmese military died on August 29 following a massive explosion at a mining compound that army forces were using as a temporary base in Kachin's state Hpakant (also Hpakan, Phakant) jade mining district.

The massive explosion that ripped through the compound belonging to the Wai Aung Kaba company near the Myauk Phyu jade mine reportedly caused what has been described as the single highest one day death toll for the government side during its 15-month Kachin offensive so far.

According to KIA sources the lethal blast was triggered by an initial smaller explosion planted by members of the Kachin resistance. When the first blast went off it caused the large stockpile of explosives used for mining which were stored at the site to explode shortly afterward, causing what was described as a huge explosion.- <http://tinyurl.com/d8r6xjg>

Kachin residents fear imminent war

The Burmese government has increased its military presence in Hpakant Township in Kachin State, and residents are worried that serious fighting will soon break out again.

Since August 1, the Burmese government has deployed soldiers in civilian clothes via the Myitkyina-Hpakant route, and 50 to 200 soldiers have been stationed in every Burmese base in the area, a Kachin Independence Army (KIA) military source said.

In addition, at least 200 soldiers armed with heavy weapons were deployed by helicopters on August 2. In response, KIA soldiers have been stationed along the Hpakant-Laukaung Road in upper Mogaung Township and are on alert, said a KIA source.

On August 29, dozens of Burmese soldiers were killed when a fuel warehouse of the Wai Aung Gabar Company exploded when hit by a mortar shell during fighting, the KIA said. The figure could not be confirmed. Meanwhile, many residents from Hpakant have fled to Myitkyina and Mogaung because they are worried that fighting will intensify.-

<http://tinyurl.com/cqc3krl>

KNU and Govt need more time to finalize ceasefire code of conduct



The Karen National Union announced in a media statement that its third round of ‘peace-talks’ with the Burmese Government was a success and the two sides will meet again later this year.

The KNU official statement was released on September 4 after the latest ‘peace-talks’ held in Hpa-An Town, two days ago.

Naw May Oo Mutraw, a spokesperson with the KNU negotiation team told Karen News.

“It is really important for Karen civilians to know the results of the ‘peace-talk’ negotiations. We will continue to release statements to inform Karen people.

Naw May Oo Mutraw said the KNU would try to negotiate in the ‘peace-talk’ in accordance with what Karen civilians want.

The KNU statement reported that both sides discussed in detail a ‘ceasefire code of conduct’, issues related to the security of civilians, organizing local ceasefire monitoring teams and the relocation of Burma army outposts. The statement acknowledged that both sides could not reach a final agreement on the ceasefire ‘code of conduct’ but agreed to discuss it again in the next round of ‘peace-talks’.

The KNU delegation was led by its general secretary, Naw Zipporah Sein, while the government side was led by U Aung Min, the Minister in the President’s office.- <http://tinyurl.com/8wepnh2>

ID card program begins in eastern Burma

Burma's Ministry of Immigration, working together with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), has issued 350 people living in the remote rural area of Hlaingbwe Township, Karen State with national identity cards.



The joint country project to distribute identity cards is known as the Moe Pwint program and is located in a monastery in Kwan Ta (Ta Waw Ta) village. The Moe Pwint program is a one stop service that will provide free ID cards to villagers from Kwan Ta Kone, Shan Ywa, Pan Tain Kone, Kyune Kone, Kan Par Ni, Kone Ka Lay, Htee Poe Khee and Ta Di Koh.

The Government's Immigration Minister, U Khin Yee confirmed to Karen News the details of the project.

“People born in the country should have ID cards and we will provide them. Under the law, ID card applicants must pay six kyat, but for now it is a free of charge because of our specific Moe Pwint program.”-

<http://tinyurl.com/9qyb4qc>

Danger With Every Step: Landmines Killing And Wounding In Karenni Area



A group of young people was cutting the grass in the compound of a Baptist Church on a Saturday evening in March, in Mountain Village, Mawchi Township, Kayah State.

Some used hoes and an edger but some youths used their hands to remove long grass. They were kidding each other and laughing. It was an idyllic scene.

The reverie halted abruptly, however, when an undetected landmine exploded in the midst of the young people, to everyone's surprise and horror. Soe Moe, a local villager, lost his right leg. He is 26 years old.

“There was to be a Christian service day on Sunday. They usually clean the church compound on Saturday but nobody ever stepped on a landmine. Nobody was ever hurt,” Htoo Reh told Kantarawaddy Times in a recent interview.

On March 3, the Burmese Army's Maj. Ko Ko Oo, Commander of IB 134, officially announced landmines were placed 30 yards away from their outposts at Htinshu Mountain (Fir mountain), Tawatainthar and Kyauk Taung, which is located very close to the church where the mine exploded on March 24th.

“Other youths attempted to carry him after the explosion. But, Burmese soldiers in the adjacent military compound shouted at them that there were many other landmines in the immediate area. So, the youths were afraid to carry him,” Htoo Reh said.

Ko Soe Moe, was sent to hospital in Mawchi after the explosion and to Hpar Saung Hospital the next day, according to Htoo Reh.

“They don’t need to place landmines in this area because no Karenni soldiers come here. The village is located inside Burma (not the border area). Only we villagers live here,” he added.

According to statistics from the organization Mine Risk Education (MRE), based on the Thai border, 55 civilians living in Karenni State and on the Thai-Karenni border, were killed or injured by landmines from 1978 to 2011.

“We have facts. We interviewed disabled people injured by landmines, and the relatives of people killed by landmines. We only record the cases with complete information. If we cannot get complete information, we don’t make a record of the incident,” MRE’s Lay Reh Soe explained.

Burmese soldiers use to place M-14 type landmines and touch landmines in Mawchi and the border area.

However, not only villagers were injured or killed. Cows and buffalos were killed and injured by landmines around the Htinshu Mountain area.

“Cows and buffalos from Kaw Tudoh, Bulaw Pel, Leh Lawhti, Lo Hkarlo, Maw Hser Khe villages in Mawchi Township use to step on landmines on every 2-3 days. Local people cannot do anything (to stop it),” the Mawchi resident said.

The Burmese Army regularly places landmines around their military camps and outposts, as well as around the base of electricity poles and towers, IDP hiding places, and areas used for the movement of Karenni troops.
[-http://tinyurl.com/99yb6nu](http://tinyurl.com/99yb6nu)

Kaw Goon cave in Karen State nominated as cultural zone



On September 1, the MRTV-4 (Myanmar Radio and Television) website announced that Kaw Goon Cave, located near Kaw Goon Village in Pa-an Township, Karen State, was nominated as a cultural zone in a speech given by an official from the Department of Archeology, National Museum and Library.

The historic Kaw Goon Cave is a natural limestone cave famous for its Mon cultural-style clay Buddha images and votive tablets.

“According to my studies, there are 23 lines of Mon language inscribed on the stone saffron robe of a standing-style Buddha image. After thorough reading, I speculate that the stone inscription could be from the sixth or seventh century AD. Now, the inscription can’t be read. It is too blurred. The Department of Archeology had made an earlier copy of the inscription, [and] I did my reading from that copy,” said Nai Maung Toe, a Mon historian and retired staff of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Culture.

The Mon inscription reads, “This Buddha image was built while I, the queen of Mote-ta-ma, was staying in the town of Duwop. All Buddha images in the town of Duwop and its rural regions were built by me and my fellows.”

Clay Buddha images line the natural limestone inner wall of Kaw Goon Cave, which is decorated with three-inch, three-and-half-inch, four-inch, six-inch, and eight-inch votive tablets of the Buddha image.-

<http://tinyurl.com/8j2akak>

New Perspective: Racial Harmony and Inclusive Democracy in Burma

By Nai Banya Hongsar, Mon Writer's Club – Cultural identity has been a key factor and influence in Burma for the past thousand years. The country's recent, violent clashes of differing religious and ethnic identities provide an important lesson about the need to further investigate the significance of this powerful force. Considering international human rights norms, including economic, social, civic, political and cultural rights, Burma / Myanmar is a long way from reaching these principled standards unless cultural integration policies and a new perspective on racial harmony are embraced.

Under military rule, the gap widened between majority and minority cultures within Burma's ethnicities, due to the former's failure to institute assimilation policies. Now, there is a monumental opportunity for change in Burma / Myanmar. Racial harmony, civil rights, and inclusiveness in a democratic society must be the predominant agenda if the nation's diverse people hope for radical reform.

Monland, the place of my birth in lower Burma, has been home to Mon ethnic peoples for over four thousand years. The modern borders of Mon State encompass over two million people and varied populations representing more than ten ethnic groups and many non-Buddhist religions. This shared space and communal lifestyle represent the new era of human relationships. If the racial conflict is not solved, the prospects for democracy, development, and peace will not be enjoyed in our lifetimes.

[-http://monnews.org/?p=3969](http://monnews.org/?p=3969)

Latest ceasefire group slams news on state media



Some top members of the PaO National Liberation Organization (PNLO) that concluded a ceasefire agreement on 25 August at the Shan State capital Taunggyi have expressed disappointment with the news report that appeared on the Myanmar Alin daily two days later.

According to the paper, the PNLO delegation led by Khun Myint Tun and U Aung Min, Vice Chairman of the Union Peacemaking Work Committee (UPWC), following the signing of the ceasefire agreement at the state level, had held a Union level discussion and signed a Union level 8 point agreement.-<http://tinyurl.com/93xprk5>

Shan army releases Burmese officer

The Shan State Army (SSA) North ordered two Burma Army men, one a captain, after it was informed civilians taken by the Burma Army would be freed in return, said a senior SSA official yesterday.

The officer, who asked anonymity, identified the Burma Army officer as Captain Thet Soe from Laogai-based Light Infantry Battalion 322 (another meanwhile says it was Namtu-based LID 324). He was traveling from Lashio to Namtu with an unidentified private on 31 August, when they were stopped on the way and taken by a group of armed men before reaching Manzan, 30 miles west of Lashio.-<http://tinyurl.com/8h3s7k6>

No changes in the countryside



the border.

Continued influx of rural people from southern Shan State, more than half a year after ceasefire agreements were signed proves that the much vaunted reforms are only in urban areas but not in the countryside, according to aid workers on

“From Maehongson to Chiangmai and Chiangrai, at least 1,000 people each month are fleeing into Thailand,” said one of the aid workers on the Chiangmai border. “The number of people coming to where I work alone averages 250 people per month. It isn’t different from last year’s.” - <http://tinyurl.com/bpoe3nl>

Tightened Chinese border owes to planned party congress



Thanks to the meet-every-5-year congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) that will be held two months from now, Chinese authorities have increased security measures along its borders with its neighbors, including that with Burma, according to Chinese security sources.

“This time it is different from earlier screenings,” said a source on the Yunnan-Shan State border. “At that time, we only need to know whether or not you carry valid documents. But now we want to know who you are.” - <http://tinyurl.com/9tmyw4o>

Yilai: Another lieutenant of Naw Kham

One of the three prime suspects who are going on trial in China for the 5 October killing of 13 Chinese sailors on the Golden Triangle is Yilai or Yin Lang as the Chinese pronounce his name.

According to the former Mong Tai Army (MTA) fighters of the late Khun Sa (1934-2007), once dubbed “Lord of the Golden Triangle”, Yilai, age around 56-60, used to be the leader of the Nahai Long People’s Militia Force (PMF) in Mong Lane tract, Talerh sub-township, Tachilek district. - <http://tinyurl.com/8pu6nwt>

List of BNI member website address

Independent Mon News Agency

www.monnews.org



Kachin News Group

www.kachinnews.com



Kaladan Press Network

www.kaladanpress.org



Kandarawaddy Times

www.ktimes.org



Phophtaw News Association

www.phophtaw.org



Karen News

www.karennews.org



Khonumthung News Group

www.khonumthung.org



Mizzima

www.mizzima.com



Independent Arakanese News Agency

www.narinjara.com



Network Media Group

www.nmg-news.com



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