

Thura NewsViews

Politics

■ Hostage situation in Rakhine State

A hostage standoff between the Arakan Army (AA) and Tatmadaw ended with at least 14 dead, including an unknown number of captives.

Arakan Army, an armed ethnic group in Rakhine State, captured a passenger ferry carrying 168 passengers, including dozens of military personnel. AA soldiers shortly released 110 hostages, mostly women and children, claiming that they were only interested in the suspected soldiers. The remaining hostages were loaded onto three boats, two of which were soon sunk by military attack helicopters. At the time of writing, specific details concerning the death toll have yet to be released. Both sides blame the other for the deaths. The Myanmar army claims the AA used the hostages as human shields, while the AA claims they were merely transporting the prisoners to a safe place for questioning.

In early 2019, renewed conflict broke out between the Tatmadaw and AA, and recently the AA has carried out similar abductions. Indeed, at the time of writing the group is holding 31 hostages it captured in a previous operation.

The conflict with the AA is not Myanmar's only ethnic conflict in Rakhine State. The Myanmar army has also skirmished with the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), as a consequence of which more than 750,000 Rohingya Muslims were fled across the border to Bangladesh. In the past, AA has assisted the Myanmar army in operations against the ARSA. These conflicts

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This Week's Highlights

Ministry of Construction blacklists 50 construction companies that will be prevented to bid for public tenders.

Ministry to conduct interim census in November 2019 ahead of 2024 full census. Results expected to be released in June 2020.

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Companies & Investments

Hot news regarding investments in Myanmar



KBZ app sees USD 1.8 million in transfers

Oct 25, 2019
KBZPay, the new digital payment platform from Kanbawza Bank (KBZ), is off to a strong start with ove



Starbucks postpones Myanmar entry

Oct 24, 2019
Starbucks's long-anticipated entry into the Myanmar market has been postponed once again. The

International Conference on Mechanical and Aeronautics Engineering
November 1, 2019 - November 2, 2019

International Conference on Sustainable Water Management
November 1, 2019 - November 2, 2019

International Conference on Wireless Communications and Sensor Networks
November 1, 2019 - November 2, 2019

Myanmar Plas Print Pack
November 1, 2019 - November 4, 2019

Oil & Gas Myanmar
November 6, 2019 - November 7, 2019

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Highlights

continue to harm the Myanmar economy by driving away tourists and foreign investors.

■ **YCDC claims hundreds of Yangon apartments**

The Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) has taken over nearly 500 disputed Yangon apartments this year and will raise rent by 10 percent, according to Yangon mayor U Maung Maung Soe.

Disputed ownership claims, often caused by the deaths of landlords with no available next of kin, are the precedent for the YCDC seizures. Of the 496 units seized, 238 will be leased to government employees next year, according to a report by Myanmar Business Today. YCDC will also raise rental fees by 10 percent to MMK 40 per square foot for Kyauktada and Pabedan townships, the most valuable neighborhoods. Fees in other townships will increase to MMK 32 or MMK 24 per square foot, depending on the area.

Yangon regional MP Daw Kyipyar said: "Despite the raise, the rate of MMK 30 per square foot in Kyauktada and Pabedan Townships equals about MMK 20,000 per month, while the market rate in those areas is around MMK 200,000 -250,000 per month. There is clearly a big price gap between the market rates and YCDC's fees."

Acquiring ownerships of disputed apartments and raising rental fees is not a new practice for YCDC. The department raised rental fees by the same amount in 2018.

Economy

■ **Magway cattle prices drop**

Falling demand from Chinese buyers has sent Magway region cattle prices into a slump.

Cattle farmers at Magway's Myothit cattle market have reported a price drop of as much as MMK 300,000 per animal, with fewer buyers than ever, reported Mizzima magazine. Normally farmers can sell their cattle for MMK 1.3 to 1.5 million, but this year farmers are selling their animals for as little as MMK 1 million each.

Magway's cattle market is affected by the change in seasons, with foreign buyers most active during the summer months, the Mizzima report pointed out. During the fall and winter months, farmers trade livestock among themselves as often as they sell to foreign buyers. But current prices are low even for the season. "Cattle trading is mostly not good as the cattle prices are sluggish and Chinese buyers barely come at present. Dairy cows are traded more at present rather than draft animals," one farmer, Kyaw Htoo from Magway's Myothit Township, told Mizzima.

Despite the lack of Chinese buyers in the Magway market, Chinese demand for beef overall seems to be holding steady. Chinese imports of cattle from the United States has remained steady despite the ongoing trade war between those two countries, according to a recent report by Reuters. This development makes Magway beef an unusual case in Myanmar's agriculture industry. For other agricultural products, the trade war has led to even greater demand from China. The Myanmar Rice Federation, for example, recently signed an MOU with China to export 250,000 tonnes of rice.

Myanmar in Figures

GDP (PPP): \$330.88bn (2017)

GDP (official ex.rate): \$59.5bn (Jan 2018)

GDP growth rate: 6.2% (2018)

Population: 54.22 mn people (Apr 2019)

Inflation: 7.1% (2018)

Foreign trade: \$35.9bn (2017-2018)

FDI: \$80.9bn (30/06/2019)

International reserves: \$5.2bn (Jan 2018)

CBM rate Kyat/\$ = 1,525K/1\$ (31/10/19)

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- **Government seeks to boost mining with new foreign permits**

The Myanmar government will soon issue a wave of mining permits to foreign investors as it seeks to revitalize the industry. Starting in 2020, foreign firms will be allowed to explore and mine large-sized tracts of 500,000 acres, according to the Myanmar Times. The government will also issue permits for large, medium and small-size tracts to local companies.

Mining, especially for jade and gemstones, has been one of Myanmar's most lucrative but troubled industries. Under the military regime, it developed a reputation for corruption, with valuable sites passed off to crony capitalists in favor of kickbacks and favors to government officials. Even in the democratic era, the industry has been notorious for low wages, poor working conditions and employer-sanctioned drug addiction. Thus, Western investors have largely shied away. The vast majority of foreign investors in the mining industry are Asian, especially from China.

However, the Ministry of Resources and Environmental Conservation (MREC) is seeking to flip the script. In 2018, it lifted a 2016 freeze on new mining permits, and in 2020 two Australian companies will begin exploration activities. They have also offered to invest USD 3 million in social and environmental impact surveys, the Myanmar Times Reported.

Working with the new Western investors could be a step towards restoring the industry's image. In October, industry watchdog Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative praised Myanmar for "unprecedented disclosures of extractives data in a country with a nascent democratic process and recent history of economic liberalization." However, the body said Myanmar remains weak in transparency surrounding license allocations, the activities of state-owned enterprises and gemstone production figures.

Companies and Investments

- **General Electric eyes expansion in Myanmar**

US technology giant General Electric (GE) may soon expand its Myanmar presence. Wouter Van Versch, President and Chief Executive of GE Asia Pacific, told the Myanmar Times that the company is weighing further investments in power infrastructure as well as healthcare services through its subsidiary, GE Healthcare.

"Myanmar has huge potential in terms of revenue and orders for GE. Myanmar needs healthcare and a lot of electricity. There are good prospects in natural gas production and solar energy sector," Van Versch told the Times. "In the future, GE may come to Myanmar to invest in factories to support its expansion into healthcare and electricity production from natural gas," he added.

Any new GE projects would build on a robust existing portfolio in Myanmar. Following the lifting of US sanctions in 2012, GE supplied the state-owned Myanmar National Airlines with jet engines. The company has also sold equipment to several gas-fired power plants around the country. "The region needs much more infrastructure in aviation, energy and healthcare. In the next 20 years, we expect spending on aircraft, energy and healthcare facilities to rise two folds compared to now," Van Versch continued.

Van Versch told the Myanmar Times that GE also plans to supply more healthcare equipment to Myanmar hospitals. Currently, the Myanmar healthcare system uses the GE Revolution ACT, a high efficiency CT scanner, and the Lullaby phototherapy system, which helps detect signs of infant mortality and prevent it.

- **Thai developer to build USD 270 million industrial site**

Thai developer Amata Group will partner with the Ministry of Construction on a USD 270 million industrial center outside of Yangon.

The Myanmar Investment Commission approved the "Yangon Amata Smart Eco City" on October 21st. The site will cover around 800 hectares in Dagon Township, east of Yangon. It will include residential and commercial units, a hotel and resort and a vocational training center, the Myanmar Times reported. Amata Group, which has an 80 percent stake in the project, will be responsible for attracting companies to move into the site.

The industrial zone is one in a series of economic agreements between Thailand and Myanmar. Representatives from both countries cut the ribbon on a second Thailand-Myanmar Friendship Bridge, which aims to boost cross-

border trade. Also in October, Thailand and Myanmar agreed to speed up progress on the ambitious Dawei Special Economic Zone. For that project, Thailand will give Myanmar a MMK 220.6 billion loan for a new highway linking Dawei to Kanchanaburi, Thailand.

The Amata Group industrial site will fall within the Yangon Project Bank (YPB), a government initiative that oversees 80 high-priority development projects. These projects will be public-private partnerships totaling around USD 8 billion in investment and covering around 6500 hectares of land.

Events

Name	Details	Organizer/Ministries	Contact Information
International Conference on Mechanical and Aeronautics Engineering	Venue: Mandalay Date: 1-2 Nov 2019	SciencePlus	papers.scienceplus@gmail.com +91 8763630137
International Conference on Sustainable Water Management	Venue: Mandalay Date: 1-2 Nov 2019	SciencePlus	papers.scienceplus@gmail.com +91 8763630137
International Conference on Wireless Communications and Sensor Networks	Venue: Mandalay Date: 1-2 Nov 2019	SciencePlus	papers.scienceplus@gmail.com +91 8763630137
Myanmar Plas Print Pack	Venue: Yangon Convention Center, Yangon Date: 1-4 Nov 2019	Chan Chao Int'l Co., Ltd.	overseas@chanchao.com.tw +886-2-2659-6000
Oil & Gas Myanmar	Venue: Novotel Yangon Max, Yangon Date: 6-7 Nov 2019	Fireworks Myanmar	myanmar@asiafireworks.com +95-9-2501-75661
Myanmex Myanmar Marine Expo	Venue: Yangon Convention Center, Yangon Date: 7-8 Nov 2019	Fireworks Myanmar	myanmar@asiafireworks.com +95-9-2501-75661
ASEAN LPG Forum Series LPG Myanmar	Venue: Sedona Hotel, Yangon Date: 13-15 Nov 2019	Gas Academy	info@gasacademy.com.sg +65-6742-2485
Asia IoT Business Platform	Venue: Sedona Hotel, Yangon Date: 21-22 Nov 2019	Industry Platform Pte Ltd	irza@industry-platform.com +65-6733-1107
Myanbuild	Venue: Tatmadaw Hall, Yangon Date: 28-30 Nov 2019	AMB Tarsus Exhibitions Sdn Bhd	support@ambtarsus.com (603) 2692 6888

Tenders

■ Ministry of Transport and Communications: Open Tender

1. Myanmar Railways under the Ministry of Transport and Communications invites open tender for supply of the following items in MMK or Euro.

Sr No.	Tender No.	Description
1.	12(T)9/MR (CME)/ Kyat	Procurement for Assembling and Manufacturing of (5) Nos of Microprocessor Controlled 1200 HP Complete Knocked-
2.	12(T)10/MR (CME)/Euro	Procurement of (5)Sets of Diesel Engine & Main Alternator Sets with Foundation Frame and Related Necessary Parts
3.	12(T)11/MR (RBE)/Euro	Wheel Steel Forged for RBE (240) Nos
4.	12(T)12/MR (ISN)/Euro	Wheel Monobloc for YDM 4 Locomotive (240) Nos
5.	12(T)13/MR (ISN)/Euro	Spare Parts for Alco Engine (100) Items
6.	12(T)14/MR (ISN)/Euro	Spare Parts of Caterpillar Engine (94) Items
7.	12(T)15/MR (ISN)/Euro	Spare Parts for DPMS (89) Items

2. The tender closing date and time is **10th December, 2019 at 2:30 p.m.**
3. Tender documents can be obtained at its office starting from **29th October, 2019** within office hours.
4. Further information can also be obtained by reaching to the Deputy General Manager, Supply Department, Myanmar Railways at the Corner of 51th Street and Merchant Street, Botahtaung Township, Yangon under the telephone numbers: +95-1-291985 and +95-1-291994.

■ Ministry of Health and Sports: Open Tender

1. The Department of Medical Services under the Ministry of Health and Sports invites sealed tenders for the supply of the Medical Equipment in the 2019-2020 Budget year.
2. Tender documents can be obtained during office hours at the Procurement and Supplying Division, Department of Medical Services at the office No. 4, Ministry of Health and Sports Commencing from **29th October, 2019.**
3. Sealed bids must be submitted to the office not later than **28th November, 2019 at 12:00 p.m.** No late bid will be accepted. No telegraph or telex proposal will be accepted.
4. Further information can be obtained at the Procurement and Supply Division Office, Department of Medical Services, Ministry of Health and Sports under the telephone numbers: +95-67-3411510 and +95-67-3411544.

■ Yangon City Development Committee: Invitation for Bids

1. The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received a loan from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) toward **the cost of Greater Yangon Water Supply Improvement Project (MY-P5), Lagunbyin WTP and Nyaunghnapin WTP No.1 & No.2.** Also need to include upgrading the existing dosing facilities of the Nyaunghnapin WTP No.1 & No.2. It is intended that part of the proceeds of the Contract for the Supply and Delivery of Poly Aluminium Chloride.
2. Bidding will be conducted through procedures in accordance with the applicable Guidelines for Procurement under Japanese ODA Loans, and is open to all Bidders from eligible source countries, as defined in the Loan Agreement.

3. The Yangon City Development Committee now invites sealed Bids from eligible and qualified Bidders for the procurement of the Supply and Delivery of Poly Aluminium Chloride (“the Goods”).
4. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from and inspect the Bidding Documents at the office of Engineering Department (Water and Sanitation) , Yangon City Development Committee at 12 1/2 Storey Office Building, No.390, Merchant Road, Yangon, Myanmar.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders on the submission of a written application to the address above, and upon payment of a non-refundable fee 50,000 Myanmar Kyats.
6. The provisions in the Instructions to Bidders and in the General Conditions of Contract are the provisions of the Standard Bidding Documents under Japanese ODA Loans for the Procurement of Goods.
7. Bids must be delivered to the above address at or before **2;00 p.m. on 5th December, 2019.**
8. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders’ representatives who choose to attend at **2:00 p.m. on 5th December, 2019** at the office of Engineering Department (Water and Sanitation), Yangon City Development Committee, 12 1/2 Storey Office Building, No.390, Merchant Road, Botahtaung Township, Yangon, Myanmar.
9. Detailed information can be obtained by reaching to
Mr. Myint Zaw Than
Head of Department
Engineering Department (Water and Sanitation)
Yangon City Development Committee
Office: 12 1/2 Storey Building, No. 390, Merchant Road, Botahtaung Township, Yangon, Myanmar.
Email: lagunbyin@gmail.com