

Thura NewsViews

Politics

173 refugees detained from boat

The Myanmar military has seized a boat carrying 173 Muslim refugees, officials announced. The boat was found off the coast of Tanintharyi Region, in Myanmar's southern peninsula. Twenty-two children were among the refugees on board. The refugees identify themselves as Rohingyas, a term not acknowledged officially in Myanmar.

"Our navy found them on a suspicious boat in the sea... The police will proceed according to the law," military spokesman Tun Tun Nyi told Reuters.

The incident came shortly after State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi defended Myanmar before the International Court of Justice against formal charges of genocide against that group. Since military "clearance operations" in 2017, more than 700,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled Myanmar, most simply crossing the border into Bangladesh, but some have been boarding boats to make the perilous journey to friendlier coasts such as Malaysia or Indonesia. It is unclear whether the detained passengers departed from Bangladesh or Myanmar.

The issue of illegal migration by sea predates the current crisis. An estimated 25,000 Muslim refugees crossed the Andaman Sea in 2015, with many dying of exposure or drowning in capsized boats. The situation climaxed with the so-called "boat people" crisis, in which thousands of Rohingyas, denied entry at foreign ports but also re-entry into Myanmar, found themselves adrift with no food or water.

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This Week's Highlights

Vietnam's PM visits NayPiTaw and Yangon ahead of crucial diplomatic year 2020 for the country.

Japan's NTT to lay a new submarine cable through a joint investment worth around \$400 million to handle surging demand.

Myanmar's trade through sea routes for current fiscal year reached over \$4.8 billion, a 10%+ increase YoY.

Myanmar Economics and Politics Weekly Newsletter



Where are we located?
 34 Miles 2'
 Yangon - Nay Pyi Taw Express Highway
 Bago Region
 1.5 Hours from Yangon

Send us a message via Facebook on the Swiss-Myanmar Orchards Page or call 09457193446

All our units have following features:

- Incredible lakeview
- Comfortable beds for two persons. We can add more mattresses if required
- Toilet and shower
- Own kitchen with gas stove, fridge, pans and plates
- Electricity
- Aircon (except Safari Lodge)
- Access to our restaurant
- Rent our bikes, kayaks or motorboat

Glamping Tents



Glamping stands for Glamorous Camping. We offer you an unforgettable experience in nature with all the comfort of staying at home.

Our two Glamping Tents are located on the hill with an incredible lakeview.

Hear the sounds of nature in the night from within your tent or gaze at the stars over a glass of wine.





Lakeview Lodges





Our two Lakeview Lodges are built just next to our lake on an elevated platform.

Read the book you always wanted to read on the veranda. Wake up when the sun rises over the lake.

Safari Lodge




Our Safari Lodge is inspired by the nature lodges in Africa. You sleep on an elevated platform without any walls and experience all the sounds and impressions of nature during the night and have an incredible view on the night sky.

Although you will not have an aircon, you have all the amenities you need, such as fridge, kitchen, toilet and shower. The retractable bridge gives you all the privacy you want.

■ Myanmar's Japan embassy hacked

Two email accounts of Myanmar's embassy in Japan were hacked, resulting in scam emails sent to Japanese companies. The Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar announced the hack on Facebook. Labourmyanmarembassy@gmail.com and labour.section.me.tokyo@gmail.com were the targets of the cyber scammers, who used the email accounts to ask Japanese companies for "additional charges."

"It is therefore announced that the Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar does not collect any fees from Japanese companies for the verification process of the Demand Letters," the announcement read.

Both emails were involved in managing Myanmar workers in Japan. The number of migrant workers from Myanmar increased this year after Japan signed a labor pact with Myanmar to host thousands of migrant workers in skilled industries such as construction, shipbuilding, fisheries and electrical work, among others. However, prospective workers have been paying steep fees to labor brokers, as high as USD 2800 per worker, the Myanmar Times reported in February, when the deal was announced.

The embassy hack suggests cyber criminals are trying to profit from the new arrangement. Whether or not the phony emails succeeded in scamming any companies hosting Myanmar workers remains unknown.

Economy

■ Beach near Yangon slated for tourism development

The Yangon Region Government has added a beach just south of Yangon to Myanmar's growing list of coastal development projects. Sel Ein Tan coastal area, which includes Letkhokkon Beach, will receive upgraded infrastructure in a bid to attract more tourists to its beaches and mangrove forests, Yangon Region Tourism Minister Daw Naw Pan Thinzar Myo announced.

The site, a mere two hours drive from the city of Yangon, has always been a popular destination for local day-trippers, with a government-estimated 1500 visitors each week. However, infrastructure is relatively minimal, especially contrasted with destinations like Ngwe Saung and Ngapali Beach. The new plan aims to draw in more foreign and higher-end tourists.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and various state and regional ministries have been working to improve tourism development in coastal areas around the country, whose scenic beaches have relatively few quality roads, power connections and other basic infrastructure. The government is investing heavily in the airport and roadways in and around Dawei, in Tanintharyi Region, and has green-lit several new resorts along its coast. On the western shore, the government is planning an ambitious project called "The Orbit" that will establish hotels, restaurants and other tourism developments on an area of coastline stretching from Nga Yote Kaung, Ayeyarwaddy Region, to Gwa, Rakhine State. That project coincides with a new bridge that will connect Ayeyarwaddy with Rakhine State next year.

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/\$ = 1,503K/1\$ (19/12/19)

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The Big Questions

Dulwich College
 StarCity Campus
 Yangon

2nd February 2020

■ **Mandalay to upgrade street lights and signs**

The streets of Mandalay will soon be alight with thousands of new lights, and marked with new signs, city officials said. U Zaw Win, of the Mandalay City Development Committee (MCDC), said the city will install around 10,000 new street lights, which will cost MMK 1.7 billion. MMK 1 billion of that has come from donations by individuals and corporations, according to the Myanmar Times. This statement comes shortly after U Ye Lwin announced the installation of 15,000 new street signs, paid for with MMK 900 million in donations. Around 7200 lamp posts of the proposed 10,000 have already been installed, said MCDC. "Because of the lamp posts, the city has become more beautiful at night, generating more activity and livelihood opportunities for people," U Kyaw San Myint, another MCDC official, told the Myanmar Times.

The new lights and signs are the latest in a series of infrastructure improvements. In September, years of improvements in digitization and IT infrastructure helped Mandalay win the 2019 Smart City Award from the Asian-Oceanian Computing Industry Organization. These improvements seem to be boosting the economy. Property values in the city are on the rise, and this year the city saw more tourists than ever, most of them from China.

Companies and Investments

■ **European business is optimistic**

The 2019 EuroCham Myanmar Business Confidence Survey showed that confidence is relatively high among European firms in Myanmar. The European Chamber of Commerce, or EuroCham, calls its survey "one of the key references for current and prospective investors." This year, it showed that around one third of the 74 participating firms believe the Myanmar business environment had "improved" or "greatly improved," a 19 percent rise from the 2018 survey. Indeed, 82 percent of participants expected their businesses to grow in coming years.

The confidence might be an indication that investors from the West are warming up to the Myanmar business world after a period of uncertainty following the human rights crisis on the country's western border. The positive survey results come despite a UN call for a boycott of all military-affiliated business, renewed US sanctions against top military officials, and formal charges of genocide brought before the International Court of Justice against Myanmar.

■ **Genocide accusations threaten deal of Myanmar Beer partner**

Myanmar's global political woes have become a thorn in the side of a major foreign investor.

A bid by Japanese conglomerate Kirin International Holdings to buy an American beer brand has come under fire thanks to Kirin's stake in Myanmar Brewery, which it shares with the Myanmar-backed Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited. Kirin plans to acquire New Belgium, a notable American beer maker. But an open letter by two ethnic Karen refugee organizations has called for New Belgium employees to speak out against the deal.

"Most of us sought protection in the USA to escape from the Burmese army's campaigns of ethnic cleansing that targeted Karen and other ethnic minorities," says the letter, which was submitted by the Karen Community of North Carolina, the Karen Organization of America and Inclusive Development International. "The Burmese state and its key actors have committed genocide against the Rohingya people of Burma, and crimes against humanity against other ethnic minorities, including the Karen."

The collapse of a major deal for Kirin would be the first significant victory for the global boycott against army-linked businesses, recommended by the UN in August. For now, however, New Belgium plans to move forward with the deal. In a statement sent to The Coloradan, a publication in the state of Colorado, where New Belgium is based, the beer maker said that while the letter "gave [New Belgium] pause, we believe Kirin's commitment to human rights aligns with our mission and we remain fully committed to our core values and beliefs."

Major oil and gas block enters first development stage

An initial deal has been inked to exploit Myanmar's A-6 offshore block. The development stands to be ASEAN's first ultra-deepwater development, claims project partner MPRL E&P Operator Co.

Contracts were signed between the Myanmar Oil & Gas Enterprise (MOGE), MPRL E&P, Woodside Energy, Australia's largest natural gas producer, and Total SA, French oil and gas firm. The contracts established the financial infrastructure for extracting, transporting and refining liquid natural gas from 10 wells at depths between 2000 and 3000 meters. The Ministry of Electricity and Energy claims it can begin distributing gas produced at the site as early as 2023. In addition to the financial framework, the project has entered the early technical planning stages, a.k.a the "pre front end engineering and design" phase.

"The A-6 Development will generate a significant long-term revenue stream for the country and pay taxes and royalties to the Government of Myanmar," Woodside executive VP of development Meg O'Neill said in a statement.

The long-awaited development could be a much-needed windfall for Myanmar's energy needs. The government is relying on liquid natural gas to fill its short-term energy gaps, and recently awarded five emergency LNG tenders to Hong Kong supplier VPower Group. Industry experts criticized those tenders for their tough and steep penalties for not reaching them. However, a shortage of LNG may lead to widespread blackouts as Myanmar enters its hot season. In the long term, the country aims to supply 100 percent of its population with electricity by 2030, an endeavor that will require around USD 30 billion of investment.



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Companies & Investments

Hot news regarding investments in Myanmar



Major coal enterprise draws community pushback

Dec 12, 2019
A large-scale Thai coal operation in eastern Shan State has drawn the ire of local communities worri



Shareholders seek to dump largest bus operator

Dec 05, 2019
Investors in Yangon's largest public bus company want the government to buy back their shares.

Upcoming Events

International Conference on Economics and Finance Research
December 29, 2019 - December 30, 2019

Digital Learning Myanmar Conference 2020
January 19, 2020

TEDxYangon 2020: The Big Questions
February 2, 2020

Mobile Money & Financial Inclusion Summit
February 18, 2020 - February 19, 2020

International Conference on Future Computer and Communication
February 26, 2020 - February 28, 2020

More Events

Submit Event

Highlights

Events

Name	Details	Organizer/Ministries	Contact Information
International Conference on Economics and Finance Research	Venue: Best Western Chinatown Hotel, Yangon Date: 29–30 Dec 2019	Research World	info@researchworld.org
Digital Learning Myanmar Conference 2020	Venue: Chatrium Hotel Royal Lake, Yangon Date: 19 Jan 2020	Zabai Myanmar	Nyein.chan@zabai.no +959 794395606
TEDxYangon 2020	Venue: Dulwich College (Star City Campus), Yangon Date: 02 Feb 2020	TEDxYangon	tedxyangon@chilli.agency +95 (0)95096881 https://www.tedxyangon.org/
Mobile Money & Financial Inclusion Summit	Venue: Park Royal Hotel, Yangon Date: 18–19 Feb 2020	Magenta Global Pte Ltd	enquiry@magenta-global.com.sg +65 6846 2360
International Conference on Future Computer and Communication	Venue: Yangon Date: 26–28 Feb 2020	Science and Engineering Institute (SCIEI)	info@sciei.org
International Conference on Computer Applications	Venue: Novotel Yangon Max, Yangon, Myanmar Date: 27-28 Feb 2020	University of Computer Studies Myanmar	ucsy.admin@ucsy.edu.mm +95 01 610655
International Conference on Management, Economics & Social Science	Venue: Best Western Chinatown Hotel, Yangon Date: 28–29 Feb 2020	Researchfora	info@researchfora.com +91 8895 188531
Myanmar Franchise Expo	Venue: Myanmar Expo, Yangon Date: 6-8 Mar 2020	ALT Exhibitions SDN BHD	support@altexpo.my +60 1233 45696
International Hospital & Healthcare	Venue: Sedona Hotel Yangon, Yangon Date: 7-8 Mar 2020	Dagon Exhibitions	dagonexhibitions@gmail.com +959 450098008
Food & Hotel Myanmar	Venue: Myanmar Expo, Yangon Date: 3-5 Jun 2020	Informa Markets - Myanmar	informamarkets@informa.com

Tenders

■ Ministry of Electricity and Energy: Request for Proposal

1. Department of Hydropower Implementation is in the process of preparing the **consultancy services of the Upper Yeywa Hydropower Project (280 MW)** which is located on Myit Nge River, about 32 km south of Kyauk Me Township, Northern Shan State, Myanmar.
2. The employer requests for proposals to the qualified, well experienced in hydropower projects and eligible international consulting firms on the basis of open tender announcements in order to carry out the consultancy services of the project in MMK.
3. The RFP document can be obtained from the Department of Hydropower Implementation during office hours at **2nd December, 2019** by the authorized representative of the consultant firms upon submission of a written application in the name of the Department of Hydropower Implementation.
4. A consulting firm will be selected under Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) method and procedures as described in the RFP.
5. The proposals shall be submitted in six sets (one original and five duplicates) in two separate and sealed envelopes clearly marked "Technical Proposal" and "Financial Proposal" on or before the **15th January, 2020** not later than **10:00 a.m.** to Tender Receiving and Scrutinizing Committee, Department of Hydropower Implementation.
6. Only technical proposal will be opened on **15th January, 2020** at **10:00 a.m.** at the meeting room of Department of Hydropower Implementation, in the presence of authorized representatives of the firms who choose to be present. Absence of the representative of the firms shall not hinder the opening of the proposal.
7. A pre-proposal conference will be held at **10:00 a.m.** on **10th December, 2019** at the Department of Hydropower implementation, Ministry of Electricity and Energy.
8. Invitation letter and Request for Proposal documents with detailed information shall be available at the following address during the office hours.
9. The address referred to above is
Procurement Branch
Department of Hydropower Implementation
Ministry of Electricity and Energy
Office: Building No. 27, Nay Pyi Taw
Telephone: +95-67-8104189, +95-67-8104190
Email: dirpro.dhpi@moe.gov.mm

■ Ministry of Electricity and Energy: Request for Proposal

1. Department of Hydropower Implementation is in the process of preparing the **consultancy services of the Tha-htay Hydropower Project (111 MW)** which is located on Tha-htay Chaung River, about 19 km north-east of Thandwe Township, Rakhine State, Myanmar.
2. The employer requests for proposals to the qualified, well experienced in hydropower projects and eligible international consulting firms on the basis of open tender announcements in order to carry out the consultancy services of the project in MMK.
3. The RFP document can be obtained from the Department of Hydropower Implementation during office hours at **2nd December, 2019** by the authorized representative of the consultant firms upon submission of a written application in the name of the Department of Hydropower Implementation.
4. A consulting firm will be selected under Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) method and procedures as described in the RFP.

5. The proposals shall be submitted in six sets (one original and five duplicates) in two separate and sealed envelopes clearly marked “Technical Proposal” and “Financial Proposal” on or before the **16th January, 2020** not later than **01:00 p.m.** to Tender Receiving and Scrutinizing Committee, Department of Hydropower Implementation.
6. Only technical proposal will be opened on **16th January, 2020** at **01:00 p.m.** at the meeting room of Department of Hydropower Implementation, in the presence of authorized representatives of the firms who choose to be present. Absence of the representative of the firms shall not hinder the opening of the proposal.
7. A pre-proposal conference will be held at **02:00 p.m.** on **11th December, 2019** at the Department of Hydropower implementation, Ministry of Electricity and Energy.
8. Invitation letter and Request for Proposal documents with detailed information shall be available at the following address during the office hours.
9. The address referred to above is
Procurement Branch
Department of Hydropower Implementation
Ministry of Electricity and Energy
Office: Building No. 27, Nay Pyi Taw
Telephone: +95-67-8104189, +95-67-8104190
Email: dirpro.dhpi@moe.gov.mm