

Thura NewsViews

Politics

■ EU asks Myanmar to investigate war crimes

The European Union has officially called on the Myanmar government to launch investigations into those suspected of war crimes in Rakhine State.

Less than one week after the International Court of Justice ordered Myanmar to protect its Rohingya minority, the EU requested “adequate follow-up investigations, in line with international standards” into the findings of the Commission of Inquiry set up by the NLD government in 2018. This commission investigated incidents reported during the mass exile of hundreds of thousands of Muslims from Rakhine State, who self-identify as Rohingyas, in 2016 and 2017.

“The EU welcomes these important first steps towards acknowledging the severity and scale of the violence that occurred, the gross violations of human rights and the disproportionate use of force by Myanmar’s military and security forces,” the statement said, adding: “The EU also welcomes and shares the expression of sympathy for all victims by the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. This now needs to be followed up with concrete actions.”

Although the EU statement comes shortly after the ICJ ruling, it does not affirm the Gambia’s accusations of genocide, nor even call on foreign investors to avoid military-linked businesses, as the UN Fact Finding Mission did in

Thura Swiss Ltd.
Economic Research
Shwe Hinthar B 307
6 1/2 Miles Pyay Road
11 Qtr. Hlaing Tsp.
Yangon, Myanmar

Phone +95 (0)1 654 730
Fax +95 (0)1 654 733
info@thuraswiss.com
www.thuraswiss.com

This Week’s Highlights

Myanmar Investment Commission: domestic investments top USD 500 million in current fiscal year.

2019 annual tourist arrivals totaled 4.36 million, +23% YoY, but Myanmar unlikely to hit its own target of 7 million by 2020.

For current FY, Myanmar’s maritime trade totaled USD 8 billion, an increase of over USD 1 billion YoY.

We are online and post our articles throughout the week. Visit us on:

newsviews.thuraswiss.com



Thura NewsViews

Myanmar’s most widely read newsletter on the country’s politics, economy and businesses brought to you by Thura Swiss

[Visit Thura Swiss Homepage](#)

- Companies & Investments
- Economy
- Politics
- Legal Box

We send Thura NewsViews as free weekly newsletter * indicates required

Email Address *

Subscribe

[Download latest PDF Newsletter](#)



Search ...



Companies & Investments

Hot news regarding investments in Myanmar



Japan grants major infrastructure loans

Jan 24, 2020
One week after China signed a batch of new trade deals with Myanmar, Japan announced that it will pr



KBZ Bank sues Yangon port for USD 220 million

Jan 24, 2020
KBZ Bank has filed suit against the owner of Myanmar Industrial Port over what could be the largest

Upcoming Events

TEDxYangon 2020: The Big Questions
February 2, 2020

3rd Emerging Asia E-commerce & Last Mile Logistics Summit 2020
February 18, 2020 - February 19, 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

International Conference on Computer Applications
February 27, 2020 - February 28, 2020

[More Events](#)

[Submit Event](#)

Highlights

August. An accusation before the ICJ, which Aung San Suu Kyi herself traveled to the Hague to defend against, was meant to politically and economically pressure Myanmar to action. However, it is possible that the fallout could be relatively light, with Myanmar continuing to deepen ties with China, Thailand and other Asian nations.

■ **New protest marks ongoing garment industry unrest**

Garment workers marched to Yangon City Hall on Tuesday in the latest episode of the labor rights saga within Myanmar’s garment industry.

The workers from three foreign-owned factories took to the streets after the sacking of workers union leaders, reported the Myanmar Times. The protesters demanded protections from their employers, as well as stricter enforcement of labor rights laws. Protesters also called for higher wages in anticipation of a meeting of the National Committee for Minimum Wage. Their demands have been common themes during a year of strikes and protests in Myanmar’s garment industry, especially in Patheingyi, the capital of Ayeyarwady Region, and Hlaingtharyar, an industrial suburb of Yangon. Workers have claimed their bosses unlawfully force them to work long hours in poor conditions, illegally terminating those who speak out.

The garment industry is Myanmar’s largest manufacturing sector and therefore a frequent flashpoint for labor rights disputes. Garment workers led the fight for Myanmar’s minimum wage, which was introduced in 2015 and now stands at MMK 4800 per day. Likewise, garment industry leaders led the fight against it, claiming that higher wages would force them to cut back on housing, overtime and other benefits for workers, as well as drive away foreign investment. Their predictions proved incorrect: Myanmar’s garment industry only grew since the minimum wage was passed, and continues to grow despite the recent unrest. The Myanmar Garment Entrepreneurs Association recently estimated that garment exports will increase to USD 10 billion by 2024.

Economy

■ **Coronavirus scare hits Myanmar tourism**

The coronavirus outbreak that has infected more than 4000 people in China is driving tourists away from Asia, and Myanmar is no exception.

Although no official release has been made that the virus has reached Myanmar, apparently the crisis in its largest neighbor has been enough to ward away visitors from both China and beyond. Tour operators are reporting mass cancellations. One operator interviewed by the Myanmar Times said their clients had dropped as high as 20 percent.

Meanwhile, the Myanmar government appears to be even more nervous than Myanmar’s tourists. The Ministry of Health and Sports has requested that all tour operators and airlines report visitors that they suspect of showing signs of the virus, especially from Wuhan, China, where the virus seems to have originated. Additionally, Yangon International Airport and Mandalay International Airport have suspended all flights from Wuhan until February 29.

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/\$ = 1,465K/1\$ (30/01/20)

For advertising with Thura Swiss please contact us by email

info@thuraswiss.com

or by phone

+95 (0)1-654 730

Please note that our advertisement contracts are based on a subscription of a minimum of 4 weeks.

Outside Myanmar, several other Asian countries are experiencing a dip in tourism, especially from China. French news agency France 24 observed that the trend resembles the 2002 SARS outbreak, quoting a spokesperson from business research firm Capital Economics: “If they fell by a similar amount again, it would knock around 1.5-2.0 percentage points from (gross domestic product) in the most vulnerable countries.”

Myanmar has relied on China for a recent boom in its tourism industry. Last year, several airlines expanded their fleets and schedules specifically to cater to Chinese visitors. Chinese tourists also made 2019 the most successful year to date for Mandalay tourism. Unfortunately, those high numbers also means a higher chance of the virus spreading to Myanmar.

- **Vietnam trade office warns exporters to Myanmar**

Potential exporters should beware of Myanmar, the Vietnam Trade Office in Myanmar has warned.

In a recent statement, it urged those enticed by Myanmar’s demand for imported goods to be careful of what it characterized as inefficient, unreliable and unforgiving trade infrastructure. The statement, summarized in English by the Viet Nam News, described a difficult and slow customs process with goods seized and auctioned by authorities if they fail to clear within 60 days. It warned potential investors about the pitfalls of working with Myanmar partners and advised them to carefully review Myanmar trade laws.

The Trade Office’s warning did not stop at laws and trade policy. It also argued that demand for high quality Vietnamese goods would be low, as Myanmar’s population is still relatively poor and more interested in cheap, low quality products from partners like China.

The warning comes after a decade of increased trade between Myanmar and Vietnam, which has more than quadrupled since 2010 to USD 860 million in 2019, Viet Nam News reported. Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc and a high-ranking delegation of Vietnam visited Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon just last December 16, 2019.

Despite its slow and unreliable customs process, exporters from around Asia have been attracted by Myanmar’s relatively low barrier of entry for foreign goods. China, Japan and Thailand have all made recent steps to boost trade with Myanmar as well as open manufacturing centers in the country’s industrial zones and special economic zones.

However, inefficient and unreliable bureaucracy has always been a thorn in Myanmar’s side when it comes to attracting foreign-owned factories. High-end brands from developed countries have been warded away by Myanmar’s underdeveloped infrastructure—despite promises from officials to build new roads, power lines and other necessary facilities.

- **Myanmar-China trade tops USD 1.3 billion**

Trade between Myanmar and China has reached USD 1.337 billion in the first two months of the fiscal year and the two countries deepen their trade partnership.

The data, which Eleven Media Group obtained from the Ministry of Commerce, shows USD 551 million in imports and USD 785 million in exports to China. The surging trade comes as China continues to develop the so-called China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, which calls for new border trade zones, highway and railway projects and other infrastructure primarily in Myanmar’s north. A recent visit from Chinese president Xi Jinping ended in the signing of 33 new trade agreements. China is a main purchaser of Myanmar agricultural goods, especially rice, as well as jade, ore and lumber. The China-Myanmar oil pipeline also carried more than 10 million tons of crude oil from Myanmar to China in 2019.

Some critics worry about China’s increasing economic leverage over its smaller, weaker neighbor. Ethnic organizations have also expressed concerns about Chinese political influence on Myanmar leaders. China has certainly

shown a desire for stability in northern Myanmar. After last year's outbreak of violence in Shan State endangered cross-border trade, Chinese diplomats met with parties on both sides of the conflict. China does have an interest in satisfying ethnic minority groups in addition to the Myanmar government, as it conducts unknown, but certainly high levels of trade with armed ethnic organizations along its border.

As China expands its Myanmar presence, other Asian countries scramble to catch up. South Korea, Japan and Thailand have also worked to establish their own investments around Yangon and in the south.

Companies and Investments

■ Singaporean and Norwegian firms latest to invest in Myanmar banking

Singaporean sovereign wealth firm GIC Pte and Norwegian firm Norfund AS will invest in Yoma Bank, becoming the latest to take advantage of new finance rules that allow foreign firms to buy stakes in Myanmar financial institutions.

GIC will buy 20 percent of Yoma Bank for USD 88.7 million, reported Bloomberg, and Norwegian firm Norfund AS will buy 10 percent. Yoma Bank Chief Executive Officer Dean Cleland told Bloomberg that the upcoming deal would make Yoma "the best capitalized local bank in Myanmar." He said the bank would benefit from the new partners' experience in international investing and familiarity with different business models.

Yoma Bank, founded by famous tycoon Serge Pun, is not Myanmar's largest bank, but it has gained a reputation for its relationships with international investors. Serge Pun himself has earned the nickname "Mr. Clean" because he managed to stay off of international sanctions lists during Myanmar's military era. That reputation is especially valuable as Myanmar's recent human rights controversies have made other banks unfashionable to Western investors. Another bank, for example, was forced to hire an American law firm after it was accused of financing operations linked to the Myanmar army in Rakhine State. More recently, Western Union announced that it would sever ties to the military-owned Myawaddy Bank.

Asian investors, however, have shown a willingness to take advantage of new rules introduced last year that allow foreign firms to buy into Myanmar banks. In a recent example, Thailand's KBank announced that it has submitted an application to buy 35 percent of Myanmar's Ayeyarwaddy Farmers Development Bank

Events

Name	Details	Organizer/Ministries	Contact Information
TEDxYangon 2020	Venue: Dulwich College (Star City Campus), Yangon Date: 2 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
3rd Emerging Asia E-commerce & Last Mile Logistics Summit 2020	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: Invitation for Open Tender

1. Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise under the Ministry of Electricity and Energy invites open tender for supply of the following respective items in MMK.

Sr No.	Tender No.	Description	Remarks
(a)	DMP/L-192 (19-20)	Electrical Accessories for Oil and Gas Field (1) Lot	MMK
(b)	DMP/L-193 (19-20)	Mud Chemicals (4) Items	MMK

2. The open tender forms including Description of Materials/ Qty with detailed specifications and tender form and conditions can be obtained during office hours commencing from **20th January, 2020** at the **Finance Department, Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise**.
3. The interested bidders should submit the technical specifications with original bid bond and commercial quotation in each separate sealed envelopes on which to be addressed to the Managing Director, Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise, and should reach in tender box of the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise not later than **02:00 p.m. on 20th February, 2020**.
4. Tender closing date and time is **20th February, 2020 at 02:00 p.m.**
5. Further information can be obtained at the office of Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise under the telephone number: +95-67-411206.

■ Ministry of Electricity and Energy: Invitation for Bids

1. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received financing from the World Bank towards the cost of the **National Electrification Project**, and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payment under the contract for **Installation of Distribution Lines and Transformers for Magway, Nay Pyi Taw, Rakhine and Chin**.
2. The Ministry of Electricity and Energy now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for **Installation of Distribution Lines and Transformers for Magway, Naypyitaw, Rakhine and Chin** in the following locations. The number and identification of lots comprising this bidding process is:

Lot No.	Name of the Region	No. of Village
Lot 1	Magway Region	60 Villages
Lot 2	Magway Region & Nay Pyi Taw	59 Villages
Lot 3	Magway Region & Rakhine State	63 Villages
Lot 4	Magway Region	66 Villages
Lot 5	Magway Region	55 Villages
Lot 6	Magway Region	41 Villages
Lot 7	Magway Region	40 Villages
Lot 8	Magway Region & Chin State	40 Villages

3. Bidding will be conducted through the National Competitive Bidding procedures as specified in the World Bank's Procurement Guidelines, and is open to all eligible bidders.
4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from Project Manager, Project Management Office (National Electrification Project) through nep.pmomoe@gmail.com, and inspect the bidding documents during office hours at the address given below.
5. A complete set of bidding documents in English may be obtained free of charge by interested eligible bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below. The Bidding Documents will be issued

through email only.

6. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before **18th February 2020**. Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the bidders' designated representatives and anyone who choose to attend at the address below.

7. All bids must be accompanied by "Bid-Security".

8. The address (es) referred to above is (are):

Attention: Project Manager

Project Management Office (National Electrification Project)

Office: Building No. 27, Ministry of Electricity and Energy, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Telephone: +95-67-3431175

Fax: +95-67-3431176

Email: nep.pmomoe@gmail.com

■ **Ministry of Construction: Invitation for Price Quotations**

1. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received financing from the International Development Association (IDA) towards the cost of the **Flood and Landslide Emergency Recovery Project (FLERP)**. The IDA number of the financing agreement is No. 5889-MM. The Department of Rural Road Development (DRRD) of the Ministry of Construction, in its role as implementing agency of the FLERP, intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of this financing towards eligible payments under the Purchase Order/Contract C2-DRRD-G02 for the supply of Laboratory Equipment. The Department of Rural Road Development now invites eligible suppliers to express their interest in supplying the following items:

Reference No.	Lot No.	Item No.	Description	Quantity
C2-DRRD-G02	01-09	1	Laboratory Equipment for the DRRD Regional Labs	Various Sets
C2-DRRD-G02	10-16	1	Laboratory Equipment for the DRRD Soil Test Lab	Various Sets

2. Expressions of Interest must be submitted in a written form to the email address below and clearly indicate the reference number above. Eligible suppliers having expressed interest will receive an Invitation To Quote (ITQ).

3. Sealed Quotations will be submitted to the address below at the latest at the dead line of **25th February, 2020** at **10:00 a.m.**, after which no quotations will be accepted.

4. Quotations will be evaluated on a Lot by Lot basis and contracts will be awarded to the quotation with the lowest evaluated price per Lot. Suppliers will be selected following the Shopping Method as per the "Guidelines for Procurement of Goods, Works and non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers" dated January 2011 and revised July 2014.

5. The address (es) referred to above is (are):

Daw Tin Moe Myint, Deputy Director General

Department of Rural Road Development, Ministry of Construction

Office: Yanaung (2) quarter, North of (200) Bedded Hospital, Pyinmana, Nay Pyi Taw

Telephone: +95-67-24821

Email: flerp.drrd@gmail.com, flercproject.drrd@gmail.com