
POLITICAL MONITOR NO. 27

OFFICIAL MEDIA

PRESIDENT U THEIN SEIN'S MESSAGE TO BURMA'S PARLIAMENTS

On 30 September, President U Thein Sein sent a message to Burma's Parliaments (Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw). Stating that his government will undertake good governance, clean government, as well as the burgeoning of democratic practices coupled with economic and environmental conservation as the back bone in bringing about changes to the country, Burma's new President has taken a bold and yet controversial political move. The government, with the aim of bringing peace and stability, has offered an olive branch to the ethnic armed groups for peace negotiations. As an elected government, it is important to address the concerns of the people and furthermore to respect the will of the people, and to that the end, the government, with a view of promoting and maintaining good relations, will coordinate with the Chinese government in finding an amicable solution to the Myitsone Dam project without undermining cordial relations. *(Please find the full Text of the President's message below in Appendix A).*

UNION MINISTER U AUNG KYI MEETS DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI

Union Minister for Labour and for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Aung Kyi met with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at Seinle Kantha State House on 30 September. After the meeting, the two briefed local and foreign correspondents on the outcome of their meeting and issued the following press release:

At the invitation of the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi called on Union Minister U Aung Kyi at Seinle Kantha State House from on 30 September 2011. They discussed steps being taken by the President to grant amnesty, as well as means and ways to promote bilateral cooperation in conservation of the Ayeyawady River, endeavours of the government to build eternal peace with armed groups within the framework of law and cooperation in ensuring community peace and prevalence of law and order. They also reached an agreement to continue their meetings.¹

BURMA, POLAND TO PROMOTE BILATERAL COOPERATION

Deputy Foreign Ministers from Burma and Poland held talks at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the new capital Nay Pyi Taw on 25 September. The visiting Polish delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister and Development Cooperation of Poland Mr. Krzysztof Stanowski took part in the meeting while the Burmese delegation was led by Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Maung Myint. During the meeting, the two sides discussed matters including strengthening bilateral relations, promoting bilateral cooperation and exchanged views on progress in both countries.²

¹Union Minister U Aung Kyi meets Daw Aung San Suu Kyi – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-10-01.pdf> (NLM) 1 October 2011 (p. 10)

²Myanmar, Poland to promote bilateral cooperation – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-09-26.pdf> (NLM) 26 September 2011 (p. 2)

LOWER HOUSE SPEAKER RECEIVES VICE-CHAIRMAN OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF THE PEOPLE'S NATIONAL CONGRESS OF CHINA ZHENG SILIN

Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann received the Vice-Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the People's National Congress Hon. Mr. Zheng Silin and party at the Pyithu Hluttaw Building on 23 September. Also present were Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Nanda Kyaw Swa, Chairmen of Pyithu Hluttaw Committees U T Khun Myat, U Thurein Zaw, U Win Sein, U Hla Myint Oo and Secretary Dr Soe Yin. The visiting delegation was accompanied by the Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Li Junhua. The two sides exchanged views on promoting bilateral relations and cooperation between the parliamentary assemblies of the two countries.³

LOWER HOUSE SPEAKER RECEIVES JAPANESE REP KOZO YAMAMOTO AND DELEGATION

Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann received a Japanese parliamentary delegation led by Member of the House of Representatives of Japan Mr. Kozo Yamamoto at the Pyithu Hluttaw Building on 23rd September in Nay Pyi Taw. Also present at the meeting were the Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Nanda Kyaw Swa as well as committee members of the Hluttaw. The visiting Japanese delegation discussed matters on promotion of relations between the two parliaments.⁴

UNION PARLIAMENT SPEAKER U KHIN AUNG MYINT ATTENDS SECOND PLENARY SESSION OF 32ND AIPA

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Hluttaw) Speaker U Khin Aung Myint attended the second plenary session of the 32nd ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) in Phnom Penh of Cambodia on 23 September. Also present were the President of Senate of Cambodia Mr Samdech Akka Moha Thamma Pothisal Cheasim, the President of AIPA and President of Cambodian National Assembly, speakers of parliaments of AIPA member countries, Hluttaw representatives, leaders of special observer and observer countries, officials of AIPA and ASEAN and guests. Other members of the Burmese parliamentary delegation included Daw Win Maw Tun of Yenanchaung constituency (USDP), U Nyunt Tin of Rangoon Region 2 (USDP), Wunna Kyaw Htin U Htay Myint of Myeik constituency (USDP), Dr Khin Shwe of Rangoon Region 9 (USDP) and Dr Aye Maung of Rakhine constituency 1 (Rakhine Nationalities Development Party).⁵

UNION PARLIAMENT SPEAKER MEETS CAMBODIAN DEP PM & MINISTERS

While attending the 32nd ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) session in Cambodia, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Hluttaw) Speaker U Khin Aung Myint, accompanied by Hluttaw representatives, the Burmese Ambassador to Cambodia U Cho Tun Aung and officials, met the Vice Governor of National Bank of Cambodia Ms Neav Chan Thana, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Finance of Cambodia Mr Keat Chhon, Minister of Commerce of Cambodia Mr. Chom Prasith on 19 September, and the Minister of Culture and Fine Arts Mr Him Chhem on 21 September. The meetings focused on maintaining amicable relationship between two countries and matters for boosting cooperation.⁶

³ Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw receives Vice-Chairman of Foreign Affairs Committee of the People's National Congress of China – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-09-24.pdf> (NLM) 24 September 2011 (p. 1 & 7)

⁴ Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives Japanese delegation led by Member of Japan's House of Representatives – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-09-24.pdf> (NLM) 24 September 2011 (p.1 & 7)

⁵ Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint attends second Plenary session of 32nd AIPA – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-09-26.pdf> (NLM) 26 September 2011 (p. 1 & 8)

⁶ Pyidaungsu Hluttaw speaker meets Cambodian Dy PM, Ministers - <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-09-26.pdf> (NLM) 26 September 2011 (p. 7)

HLUTTAW SESSIONS (20th to 28th day) – Highlights

Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) session:

During the 20th to 28th day sessions of the Pyithu Hluttaw the following key issues were discussed:

- **Suspension of border trade in Myawady in Kayin State**⁷
- **Formation of Farmer’s Organisation**⁸
- **Burma acquiring nuclear weapons**⁹
- **Use of the word ‘Myanmar’**¹⁰

Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House) Session:

Similarly, at the Amyotha Hluttaw session the following questions were raised by the respective MPs in attendance:

- **Expanding the national energy grid in Rakhine State**¹¹
- **Dialogue between the government and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and ethnic groups on national reconciliation**¹²
- **Opening of border trading camp in Phayathonsu in Kayin State**¹³
- **Role of Burma in disarmament**¹⁴

⁷ Second regular session of first Pyithu Hluttaw continues for 20th day / Six questions answered, one proposal discussed and one bill approved -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-09-20.pdf> (NLM) 20 September 2011 (p. 8)

⁸ Second regular session of first Pyithu Hluttaw continues for 22nd day / Six questions answered, one bill submitted, one proposal discussed, one new proposal submitted -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-09-22.pdf> (NLM) 22 September 2011 (p. 16)

⁹ Second regular session of first Pyithu Hluttaw continues for 24th day / Seven questions answered, one proposal discussed, two new proposals submitted -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-09-24.pdf> (NLM) 24 September 2011 (p. 8)

¹⁰ Second regular session of first Pyithu Hluttaw continues for 27th day / Five questions answered, one proposal discussed, approval for yesterday’s bill continued -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-09-29.pdf> (NLM) 29 September 2011 (p. 8)

¹¹ Second regular session of first Amyotha Hluttaw continues for 20th day / Eleven questions answered, reports of respective committees submitted -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-09-20.pdf> (NLM) 20 September 2011 (p. 10)

¹² Second regular session of first Amyotha Hluttaw continues for 24th day / Answers given to questions of Hluttaw representatives -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-09-24.pdf> (NLM) 24 September 2011 (p. 11)

¹³ Regular session of first Amyotha Hluttaw continues for 25th day / Seven questions replied, one of two bills decided to rehear, one bill approved, one proposal discussed, approved, three proposals submitted -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-09-27.pdf> (NLM) 27 September 2011 (p. 10)

¹⁴ Second regular session of first Amyotha Hluttaw continues for 27th day/ Five questions answered, one review approved and put on record, one new proposal submitted -

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-09-30.pdf> (NLM) 30 September 2011 (p. 11)

UNOFFICIAL MEDIA

POLISH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER MEETS DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI

A delegation led by the Deputy Foreign Minister and Development Cooperation of Poland Mr. Krzysztof Stanowski met opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on 28 September 2011, at her residence in Rangoon. Details of discussion were not disclosed. The delegation also met with National League for Democracy (NLD) Vice Chairman U Tin Oo, CEC members U Hla Pe, U Nyan Win, U Ohn Kyaing, Daw May Win Myint and U Win Myint at the headquarters of the NLD.¹⁵

BURMA'S RULING PARTY WANTS KAREN RECRUITS

The Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), Burma's ruling party began a recruitment drive to gain party members in Karen State, according to local residents. Local USDP members in Three Pagoda Pass area of Kyain Seikgyi Township in Karen State are campaigning in villages around the region to get more Karen nationals to join their party. In Chaung Sone village, the recruitment campaign is being headed by USDP organizer U Than Win from the Three Pagoda Pass area. Locals from Chaung Sone said that they [USDP] campaigned by promising that if people joined their party, they will be given business opportunities. They also said that they intended to form worker associations in Chaung Sone village but the campaign failed to gain support. Three Pagoda Pass township is a sub-township of Kyain Seikgyi where three candidates from three parties – U Saw Htunt Khaung Lwin (USDP), U Saw Kyi Aye (National Unity Party) and Saw Terry (Plao-Swaw Democratic Party) – competed for representation in the National and People Parliaments. In spite of the election commission declaration that the eventual winner was the USDP's U Saw Htunt Khaung Lwin, rumours about advance voting and votes buying clouded his election result. It was reported in August this year that an USDP official told Kawkareik Town residents that they will be giving out loans as an incentive to join the party with the aim of increasing membership of the USDP.¹⁶

MON STATE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO TALK PEACE THROUGH MEDIATORS

The Mon State regional government is planning to discuss peace with the New Mon State Party (NMSP), a Mon political armed group, with the help of honorary mediators. The five honorary arbitrators include a leader from the All Mon Region Democracy Party (AMDP), one from the Mon National Democratic Front (MNDF), a highly regarded Mon monk, a former NMSP Executive Committee leader, and the former NMSP Central Executive Committee (CEC) member, according to a middleman who has negotiated the peace talk committee. The source said that Mon State Chief Minister U Ohn Myint entrusted the task to the Minister of Electric Power and Industry Nai Lawi Oung (aka) Nai Myint Swe, a former NMSP major, to initiate peace talks with the NMSP. It is too early to share the committee's plans for peace talks, the source said. An executive committee member of NMSP said that the NMSP has not heard anything from the government-sponsored peace talk group yet. However, an advisor to NMSP who asked not to be identified said that recently Nai Lawi Oung had contacted the NMSP leadership. The ceasefire between the NMSP and the Burmese government was dissolved in September 2010 after NMSP refused to give up its arms and reform to become a Border Guard Force (BGF). The ceasefire began in 1995.¹⁷

¹⁵ Polish Deputy Foreign Minister meets Daw Aung San Suu Kyi – <http://www.nldburma.org/political-activity/88-headquarters/407-poland-deputy-foreign-minister-met-daw-aung-san-suu-kyi.html> (NLD News) 28 September 2011

¹⁶ Burma's ruling party wants Karen recruits – <http://karennews.org/2011/09/burma%E2%80%99s-ruling-party-want-karen-recruits.html/> (Karen News) 21 September 2011

¹⁷ Mon State government plans to talk peace through mediators – <http://monnews.org/?p=3541> (Mon News Agency) 22 September 2011

ANALYSIS

The news of President U Thein Sein suspending the Myitsone Dam project in Kachin State has taken both optimists and skeptics by surprise. The President has indeed taken a bold and yet controversial political move. While his actions may win praise from those opposing the Myitsone Dam project, it will push the special 'Pauk-phaw' Sino-Burma relations into unprecedented territory. In the past, many believed that Burma was dancing to Beijing's tune and Burma is often referred to as China's backyard. These turn of events say otherwise. They will also shed further light on the fragile relationship existing between the "reformists group" and "hardliners" within the new government in Nay Pyi Taw. While personal rivalries and nepotism have characterized past administrations, the recent turn of events could bring to a head conflicts of interest and reveal the true nature of the new leadership. With the news of the dam project making headlines, the on-going parliamentary sessions have quietly but steadily progressed. MPs have raised questions on Burma's nuclear programme, the formation of farmer's organisations, and the role of opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in the national reconciliation process. As Burma strives to foster democratic changes and bring the country forward, key questions which need to be answered are: how much support does the President have? Will his reforms hold or will there be a strong backlash?

APPENDICES

Other important announcements and news

Appendix A:

PRESIDENT U THEIN SEIN'S MESSAGE TO THE PARLIAMENTS

**The government is elected by the people, and it has to respect people's will
It has the responsibility to address public concerns in all seriousness**

**There are some parties and elements forcing government into tight corner and undermining peace
and stability**

NAY PYI TAW, 30 Sept—*President of the Republic of Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein has sent a message to second regular sessions of the first Pyithu Hluttaw and the first Amyotha Hluttaw being convened today with addresses to speakers of respective Hluttaws. The translation of the message is as follows:*¹⁸

To:

Speaker

Pyithu Hluttaw/Amyotha Hluttaw

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Subject: Sending message

1. I wish the Speakers of Pyithu Hluttaw/Amyotha Hluttaw and all representatives who are putting all their energies into serving the people's interests at the second regular sessions of the first Pyithu Hluttaw/Amyotha Hluttaw physical and mental well-being.
2. **The Union government, and region and state governments also are harmoniously placing emphasis on emergence of good governance, clean government, burgeoning of democratic practices, prevalence of law and order, economic reforms and environmental conservation.**

¹⁸ The government is elected by the people, and it has to respect people's will / It has the responsibility to address public concerns in all seriousness / There are some parties and elements forcing government into tight corner and undermining peace and stability –
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/NLM2011-10-01.pdf> (NLM) 1 October 2011 (p. 1 & 7)

3. **The common goal of all the national people is to ensure peace and stability of the State and modernization of the nation. As the Union government offered an olive branch to national race armed groups staying outside the legal fold in accord with the wish of the national people for ensuring eternal peace, state level agreements have been reached with Special Region (2) "Wa" Group and Special Region (4) Group. At present, the Union level dialogues are in progress. Moreover, some groups have made contact with state governments concerned for peace negotiations.**
4. At the same time, as Myanmar citizens who were abroad due to various reasons are scrutinized with offer of return to their mother country and native places, some have arrived back. The release of prisoners will be conducted within the framework of powers entrusted in accord with the constitution. While the Union government is accelerating its service for the national interest, it is so regrettable to witness attempts of some parties and elements forcing the government into the tight corner and undermining peace and stability.
5. Utmost efforts are being made with the aim of industrializing the nation while raising momentum in improvement of agriculture sector in building a modern and developed nation. **Electricity is a sine qua non for becoming industrialized nation. Among the ways and means to generate electricity, nuclear energy, according to global incidents, is very risky; and moreover, such process is impossible for the nation due to financial constraints and political censure. In addition, all the representatives know that coal is not sufficient for electric power generation for the whole nation.**
6. Although natural gas can be produced from Myanmar territorial waters, the business is run with foreign investment and thus the country will only receive its share of gas from the production. As the country has made some investments in the business with loans from foreign nations, she will enjoy fruits in future, but currently, has to pay the interest in installments. The nation is exploring and producing onshore gas, but cannot produce enough even to fulfill domestic demand.
7. As the country has natural rivers and creeks to produce renewable energy, the Tatmadaw government made efforts to generate hydropower inviting foreign investments. Thanks to the efforts, the country has 23 more power stations with generating capacity of 2831 megawatts up from two hydropower plants and seven natural gas-fired power plants with total generating capacity of 529 megawatts.
8. **In accord with 30-year strategic plan for electricity, there has been greater potential to generate more electricity from 64 hydropower projects and three coal-fired power plants with total generating power of more than 40000 megawatts.** Those projects include eight projects at the upper reaches of Maykha and Malikha and Ayeyawady confluence in Kachin State.
9. While first phase of Ayeyawady Myitsone hydropower project was implemented with the investment from the People's Republic of China, we noted that there arise the following public concerns about the Myitsone project.
 - (a) **natural beauties of Myitsone the gift of nature and a landmark not only for Kachin State but also for Myanmar may disappear;**
 - (b) **possible loss of livelihood of national races villages due to inundation at the upstream of the river;**
 - (c) **commercially-grown rubber and teak plantations which are heavily invested by private entrepreneurs may be destroyed;**

(d) melting ice from snow-capped mountains at the far north triggered by climate change, torrential rains or severe earthquakes may destroy Myitsone dam, claiming lives and property of the people in towns and villages at the downstream of the dam; and

(e) there may be a devastating effect on the Ayeyawady River.

10. As our government is elected by the people, it is to respect the people's will. We have the responsibility to address public concerns in all seriousness. So construction of Myitsone Dam will be suspended in the time of our government. Other hydropower projects that pose no threat will be implemented through thorough survey for availability of electricity needed for the nation. I would like to inform the Hluttaws that coordination will be made with the neighboring friendly nation, the People's Republic of China, to accept the agreements regarding the project without undermining cordial relations.

Thein Sein

President

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Appendix B:

**CHIN STATE GOVERNMENT SUPPLEMENTED WITH MINISTRY, STATE MINISTER
RESHUFFLED, MINISTER APPOINTED**

NAY PYI TAW, 22 Sept—*The President Office of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar issued the Order No. 48/2011 today. The unofficial translation of the order is as follows:*¹⁹

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

President Office

Order No. 48/2011

10th Waning of Tawthalin, 1373 ME

22nd September, 2011

Chin State Government supplemented with ministry, state minister reshuffled, minister appointed

1. In accord with the Sub-Section (a) of Section 18 of the Union Government Law and Sub-Section (a) of Section 4 of the Region or State Government Law, Chin State government was supplemented with Ministry of Electric and Industry under the agreement of Chin State Hluttaw.
2. In accord with the Sub-Sections (e) and (f) of Section 262 of the constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Sub-Section (c) of Section 19 of the Union Government Law and Sub-Section (g) of Section 8 of the Region or State Government Law, Chin State Minister for Transport U Ciin Lyan Paung submitted by the Chin State Chief Minister was assigned as Chin State Minister for Electric and Industry.
3. In accord with the Sub-Sections (e) and (f) of Section 262 of the constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Sub-Section (b) of Section 18, Sub-Section (c) of Section 19 of the Union Government Law and Sub-Section (b) of Section 4 and Sub-Section (g) of Section 8 of the Region or State Government Law, U Ngun Hsan Aung, submitted by the Chin State Chief Minister, was assigned as Chin State Minister for Transport.

Sd/Thein Sein

President

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

¹⁹ Chin State government supplemented with ministry, state minister reshuffled, minister appointed – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs/12/NLM2011-09-23.pdf> (NLM) 23 September 2011