

## POLITICAL MONITOR NO. 21

### OFFICIAL MEDIA

#### **BURMESE LEADERS RECEIVES PRESIDENT OF ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY/ SPEAKER OF INDONESIAN HOUSE REPRESENTATIVES**

The President of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) and Speaker of Indonesia's House of Representatives Dr. Marzuki Alie met President U Thein Sein in Nay Pyi Taw on 29 June. The two Presidents held cordial discussions on further strengthening cooperation between Indonesia and Burma, as well as the promotion of bilateral ties between the parliamentary assemblies. Dr. Alie also met the Speakers of the both Upper and Lower Houses and discussed matters to enhance cooperation between AIPA and ASEAN as well as ways to strengthen ties between Indonesia and Burma.<sup>1</sup>

#### **HLUTTAW SESSIONS – Highlights**

##### **Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) sessions**

The 4<sup>th</sup> regular session of the First Pyithu Hluttaw was held for the 1<sup>st</sup> day at Pyithu Hluttaw Complex in Nay Pyi Taw and attended by Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann and 417 Pyithu Hluttaw representatives. 3 new Hluttaw representatives of the 37 MPs elected to the Pyithu Hluttaw in 1 April election who had not taken oath and one newly appointed Defence Services personnel Hluttaw representative took affirmation, 3 questions were answered, the Hluttaw's functions recorded, 1 proposal and 1 bill were submitted.

The three questions raised were:

1. U Aung Thein Lin of South Okkalapa constituency (USDP) asked **when the new ward administrators will be re-elected under the Ward Administrators Election Law** issued by the government
2. Dr. Than Win of North Okkalapa Constituency (NDF) asked **whether there is a plan to reconstitute or dissolve the existing Civil Services Central Institutes** as they are no longer in conformity with the current situation of the country
3. U Tun Aung Khaing of Pauktaw Constituency (RDNP) asked **whether the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries has plans not to auction the use of rivers and creeks for fishing in Pauktaw township, Rakhine State**

**A proposal for the Union government to set standards for different sectors and fields and to officially legitimate those standards accordingly** was made by U Aye Mauk of Mahlaing Constituency (USDP).

**A University Education Bill 2012 was submitted by the Chairman of the Education Promotion Committee and Minister for Education Dr Chan Nyein.**<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> President U Thein Sein receives President of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly Speaker of House of Representatives of Indonesia –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-30.pdf> (NLM) 30 June 2012 (p. 1) /

Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw receives President of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly. Speaker of House of Representatives of Indonesia –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-30.pdf> (NLM) 30 June 2012 (p. 2) /

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives President of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) and Speaker of the House of Representatives of Indonesia –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-06-30.pdf> (NLM) 30 June 2012 (p. 7)

<sup>2</sup> Fourth regular session of First Pyithu Hluttaw convenes for first day / Affirmation taken, three questions answered, Hluttaw's functions recorded, one proposal and one bill submitted –

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-07-05.pdf> (NLM) 5 July 2012 (p. 16 & 8)

### **Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House) sessions**

The 4<sup>th</sup> regular session of the first Amyotha Hluttaw commenced for the 1<sup>st</sup> day at Amyotha Hluttaw Hall of Hluttaw Building and was attended by Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Khin Aung Myint (USDP) and 214 Amyotha Hluttaw representatives. At the 1<sup>st</sup> day session, 3 questions were raised and answered and 1 bill submitted.

The questions raised were:

- U Maung Aye Tun of Rakhine State Constituency No (9) (USDP) asked **“whether there is plan to open a basic education primary school equipped with teachers in Awrama village-tract in Buthidaung Township of Rakhine State”**
- U Kyaw Tun Aung of Rakhine State Constituency No (5) (RNDP) **“whether there is plan to erect an extended school building in Myintga village in Pauktaw Township, Rakhine State” and if there are “plans to upgrade the primary school Kyauktaung village in Pauktaw Township to middle school status”**

An **“Anti-Bribery Bill”** was submitted by the Chairman of Financial and Legal Affairs Commission U Aung Tun of Magway Region Constituency No (11) (USDP)<sup>3</sup>

### **Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Hluttaw) Sessions**

The 4<sup>th</sup> regular session of First Pyidaungsu Hluttaw commenced at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Hall in Hluttaw Building on and was attended by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker U Khin Aung Myint (USDP), Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann (USDP) and 626 Pyidaungsu Hluttaw representatives. At the session, messages were put on record, a proposal was submitted to approve the announcement of a state of emergency in the Rakhine State, the establishment of diplomatic relations explained, an announcement on election of new Vice-President made and a new proposal submitted.

- **A proposal on exposing and investigating the confiscation of farmlands and dealing with it in a just and fair manner to avoid grievances of farmers was submitted** by U Tin Htut of Zalun Constituency (USDP)<sup>4</sup>

### **PRESIDENT ADDRESSES PEACE-MAKING CENTRAL COMMITTEE**

Union Peace-making Central Committee Chairman President Thein Sein delivered a speech at first meeting of the Central Committee in Nay Pyi Taw on Tuesday 3 July. The President emphasized the importance in observing and implementing the ‘Fundamental Rights and Duties of the Citizens’ of the 2008 Constitution, that all ethnic national races own Burma, and that equal treatment and opportunities should be given regardless of race and culture. He went on to add that the government was formed as the people’s representatives elected by the people and therefore is obligated to serve and fulfill the interests of the public. In doing so, it is crucial to convert from the old system to a new one while at the same time carrying out political and economic changes as part of the reforms with the rule of law prevailing accordingly. Regarding the ethnic issues, he said that the continued armed ethnic clashes are hindering economic development of the country and therefore it is crucial to end these conflicts. Therefore, efforts to end the conflicts and achieving national reconciliation are key to the on-going political reforms that the government is undertaking.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> First day fourth regular session of First Amyotha Hluttaw held / Three questions answered, one bill submitted – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-07-05.pdf> (NLM) 5 July 2012 (p. 16 & 9)

<sup>4</sup> First day’s Fourth Regular Session of First Pyidaungsu Hluttaw convened / Messages put on record, proposal submitted to approve announcement of state of emergency, establishment of diplomatic relations explained, announcement on election of new Vice-President made, one new proposal submitted – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-07-05.pdf> (NLM) 5 July 2012 (p. 1)

<sup>5</sup> In implementing political and economic reforms, ease of ethnic conflicts needs to be considered / Only when such reforms are carried out, will national reconciliation be achieved and ethnic conflicts ended – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-07-04.pdf> (NLM) 4 July 2012 (p. 1 & 8)

## **BURMESE PRESIDENT GRANTS AMNESTY**

Under a presidential decree and in accordance with Section 204 (a) of the State constitution, 44 prisoners – 37 men and 9 women – were given amnesty with a view “to ensuring the stability of the State and making eternal peace, national reconciliation, enabling all to participate in political process.” In addition, 34 foreign prisoners were also freed and deported under the amnesty.<sup>6</sup> *(Please see Annex A for the full text.)*

## **DPTY FM ATTENDS 6<sup>TH</sup> BANGLADESH-BURMA FOREIGN OFFICE CONSULTATIONS**

Burmese Deputy Foreign Minister U Maung Myint led a delegation to the 6<sup>th</sup> Bilateral Foreign Office Consultations between Bangladesh and Burma from 1 - 2 July 2012 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. A wide range of issues of mutual interest to further strengthen the existing relations and cooperation between Burma and Bangladesh were discussed. The Deputy FM also paid a courtesy call on the Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dr. Dipu Moni during the visit.<sup>7</sup>

## **ACTION TAKEN AGAINST THOSE INVOLVED IN RAKHINE STATE UNREST**

A 16-member investigation team was formed under Notification No. 43/2012 of the Ministry of Home Affairs on 6 June 2012 with Deputy Home Affairs Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Zan Myint as chairman. It was assigned to expose the killing of Ma Thida Htway (daughter of U Hla Tin, of Thabyechaung Village, Kyauknimaw Village-tract, Yanbye Township) by three youths that occurred on 28 May, the killing of ten persons aboard Yomathitsa Bus in Taungup by a mob that occurred on 3 June, and the attack of No.1 Police Station of Sittway by a mob that occurred on 3 June and take action against those involved in the incidents in accordance with the law.

The investigation team visited the places where the unrest occurred including Sittway, Thandwe, Taungup, Kyaukphu Townships and Kyauknimaw Village in Yanbye Township from 7 to 25 June. The three involved in the killing of Ma Thida Htway were arrested on 29 May, however one of the three suspects committed suicide on 9 June while being detained in Kyaukphyu Prison. The remaining two suspects were sentenced to death by Kyaukphu District Court on 18 June.

For the Taungup incident that occurred on 3 June, 30 suspects were arrested and action was being taken against them according to the law. For the Sittway incident that occurred on 3 June, 19 of 24 suspects were arrested by Sittway Police and further investigation was under way. Efforts were also being made to arrest of the remaining five suspects. Further action will be taken against the arrested suspects in accordance with the laws to ensure community peace and prevalence of law and order.<sup>8</sup>

## **UNOFFICIAL MEDIA**

### **SHAN ARMY SENDS MESSAGE TO GOVERNMENT TO CEASE ON-GOING ATTACKS**

The Shan State Progress Party / Shan State Army (SSPP/SSA) (North) sent a message to President Thein Sein demanding that Burmese Army forces suspend hostilities and retire to their bases of origin. On 30 June, the SSA (North)'s Kawng Maihoong base in Monghsu township came under attack, while 2 other bases in Tangyan township, 7<sup>th</sup> Mile and Kawng Maizong, were also attacked by joint forces from Infantry Battalions (IBs) 33 and 136, and Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) 326. According to SSPP/SSA spokesman Maj Sai La. “So far, we are only defending our positions. But we'll be forced to take steps if the attack continues.” Meanwhile, U Aung Min, Nay Pyi Taw's chief negotiator declared on 1 July that the government is trying to start a conference similar to the 1947 conference that had brought Burma, Shan, Kachin and Chin together to form a Union.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Amnesty granted – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-07-03.pdf> (NLM) 3 July 2012 (p. 16)

<sup>7</sup> Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister attends Myanmar-Bangladesh Foreign Office Consultations – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-07-04.pdf> (NLM) 4 July 2012 (p. 9)

<sup>8</sup> Lawless acts occurred in Rakhine State in May, June exposed – <http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-07-02.pdf> (NLM) 2 July 2012 (p. 9)

<sup>9</sup> Shan army to Nay Pyi Taw: Stop attack or truce terminates – [http://www.english.panglong.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=4773:shan-army-to-naypyitaw-stop-attack-or-truce-terminates&catid=86:war&Itemid=284](http://www.english.panglong.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4773:shan-army-to-naypyitaw-stop-attack-or-truce-terminates&catid=86:war&Itemid=284) (Shan Herald) 4 July 2012

## **ANALYSIS**

At a time when President Thein Sein's government is proceeding with peace talks, military operations against ethnic armed groups on the ground are continuing. The military in carrying out attacks against the ethnic armed groups seem to be expressing opposition to the on-going reform process. The demands for ethnic armed forces to withdraw from their existing positions could fuel doubts about the true intentions and sincerity of the government's peace process. Other cease-fire groups may see the recent clashes in the Shan State as a warning and become reluctant to proceed further in negotiations with the government. If true reconciliation is to be achieved, the government needs to clarify its position with regard to the military operations being carried out by the Army. All stakeholders including villagers affected by the military operations and political parties active in the national and state parliaments need to be involved. But since peace-building is not a linear process, the possibility of drawbacks arising from time to time must be acknowledged. The key is the prompt addressing of these setbacks.

While the violence in Rakhine State is continuing, the authorities seem to be taking the correct legal measures to bring to justice those who perpetuated criminal acts and those who took the law into their own hands. However, persistent reports of continuing collusion by government forces to drive out Muslim villagers from northern Rakhine State and reports of arbitrary arrests and torture of community leaders are of concern.

## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix A:**

#### **AMNESTY GRANTED**

NAY PYI TAW, 3 July—The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in accordance with Section 204 (a) of the State constitution granted a general amnesty for 46 prisoners—37 men and 9 women—with a view to ensuring the stability of the State and making eternal peace, national reconciliation, enabling all to participate in political process; on humanitarian grounds; and turning them into citizens who could participate in nation-building endeavours in whatever way they can after realizing the magnanimity of the State; and deported 34 foreigner prisoners with a view to maintaining mutual friendship and friendly ties between the two countries and on social grounds starting from the Fullmoon Day of First Waso 1374 ME (3 July 2012) under Section 401 (1) of Code of Criminal Procedure.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Amnesty granted –  
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-07-03.pdf> (NLM) 3 July 2012 (p. 16)