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Myanmar Highlights

12 November 2013

- The Ministry of Electric Power and Thailand's Green Earth Co. have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding in relation to the construction of a 50MW solar energy plant in Minbu, Magwe Division which is scheduled for completion in 2015. The Ministry is also in negotiations with the ACO Investment Group in relation to the construction of a 250MW power plant in the Myingyan District which is scheduled for completion in 2016. Officials noted that solar power and other alternative energy supplies will alleviate current power shortages, which cause serious problems for industry at a time when demand for reliable power is increasing. (From *The New Light of Myanmar*, 28 October 2013)
- Construction of a glass-import substitution facility in the Kyaukse Industrial Zone ("KIZ") is close to completion. The facility which will supply the construction and manufacturing industries is set to open in January 2014. The project will create local job opportunities and will lead to foreign exchange savings. Construction at KIZ commenced on 21 May 2009. China's CAMCE Co., Ltd together with other heavy industry and manufacturing businesses will operate within the industrial zone. (From *The New Light of Myanmar*, 27 October 2013)
- Shwe Taung Co. (**Shwe Taung**) has won a tender to partner with the Yangon City Development Committee to develop an open air market area in Yangon. The development will include a multi-million dollar five star hotel. Shwe Taung will partner with The Pan Pacific Hotels Group (**Pan Pacific**) to develop the hotel. Pan Pacific will hold a 20% interest in the joint venture with Shwe Taung taking 60%. City Square Pte Ltd will take a 20% stake. The project will be developed over two phases, and also entails the construction of an office tower, an apartment complex, and shopping center. The project will be located near Bogyoke Aung San Street and will be designed by DP Architects of Singapore. It is estimated that the project will create more than 2000 jobs and boost Myanmar's tourism sector. (From *The New Light of Myanmar*, 30 October 2013)
- The pipeline carrying Myanmar produced natural gas to China is now operating at full capacity. A spokesperson of the Southeast Asia Gas Pipeline said the 2000-kilometer pipeline was fully operational as of 20 October. The pipeline is designed to carry 12 billion cubic meters of natural gas a year. The pipeline extends across Rakhine State, and the Magwe and Mandalay regions, through northern Shan State to Muse on the Chinese border, with unloading points at Kyaukpyu in Rakhine State, Yenangyaung in Magwe and Thaungtha in Mandalay. Myanmar will receive 2.5 billion cubic meters of gas a year from the deal, which will generate income of US\$30 billion over the next 30 years. (From *Myanmar Times*, 28 October 2013)
- Anticipating increasing visitor numbers, Yangon's Sedona Hotel is building a new US\$80 million, 29-storey tower. Groundbreaking took place on 22 October. The new tower will be one of the tallest structures in Yangon and will contain about 420 rooms. It is scheduled for completion in 2016. (From *Myanmar Times*, 28 October 2013)
- Golden Myanmar Airlines (**GMA**) will expand its domestic and international routes this November. Since January 2013 the airline has operated daily Yangon-Singapore/Yangon - Bangkok routes using its XY-AGS A-320 Airbus. GMA took delivery of a new XY-AGT A-320 Airbus on 16 October. From 15 November the new plane will be used on a new Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw route (Monday to Friday). The service will be expanded to accommodate demand during the forthcoming SEA-Games. GMA has also announced the commencement of charter services from Mandalay to Imphal for the Manipur-

Sangai Festival (21 – 30 November). Details of a regularly scheduled service will be announced thereafter. (From *The New Light of Myanmar*, 3 November 2013)

- 2013 has seen a surge in trade between Myanmar and India. There has been an increase in demand for rice, beans, pulses, teak and other local products. An industry spokesman reported that from 1 April - 25 October 2013, 707, 162 metric tons of beans and pulses were exported to India, Singapore, Vietnam and EU countries, achieving export earnings of US\$473 million. According to the Myanmar Pulses, Beans & Sesame Seeds Merchants Association India accounted for 70% of total pulse and bean exports. (From *The New Light of Myanmar*, 3 November 2013)



- CB Bank recently launched Myanmar's first-ever electronic payment system. Hotels, airlines and retailers can now sell their goods and services online using CB Bank's payment system. Online retail will become even more accessible after the Immigration Department implements its e-visa system in cooperation with CB Bank. According to U Kyaw Lin, CB Bank's Executive Vice- Chairman and CEO the system will make it easier for MasterCard holders around the world to make online payments in Myanmar. (From *The New Light of Myanmar*, 4 November 2013)

- U Khin Maung Han, President of the Myanmar Mining Association ("**Association**") has said that Myanmar's new mining law must adopt international standards. The Association is currently reviewing the current draft of the new Mining Law.

It believes the new Mining Law must take a long-term view to ensure Myanmar's mineral resources are protected and that foreign investors are comfortable making investments in Myanmar. (From *The Trade Times*, 2 November 2013)

- On 30 October U Khin Maung Soe, Minister for Electric Power told the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw that a proposed loan of US\$60 million could help bring more reliable electricity supplies to rural areas. President U Thein Sein proposed that the loan, from the Asian Development Bank (**ADB**), be accepted. ADB representatives have suggested that the loan should be spent on projects located outside the country's four highest energy consumption regions of Yangon, Mandalay, Magwe and Sagaing. (From *Myanmar Times*, 4 November 2013)

- Mrs. Quentin Bryce, the Governor General of Australia and Myanmar President, Thein Sein have jointly announced a scholarship program aimed at Myanmar students who wish to study in Australia. Streamlined visa procedures and the possibility of a post-graduation two year work visa are two of the reasons why Australia is the most popular destination for Myanmar students pursuing higher education overseas. (From *Myanmar Times*, 4 November 2013)

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