

The FACE OF CHANGE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw elects U Htin Kyaw President



THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw elected U Htin Kyaw president by vote yesterday while the other two candidates U Myint Swe and U Henry Van Thio were selected vice presidents. U Htin Kyaw, 70, submitted by the Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House), won the presidential election with the highest number of votes, 360, becoming the new president for the next five-year term, followed by U Myint Swe nominated by the representatives of the Tatmadaw with 213 votes and U Henry Van Thio from the Pyithu Hluttaw with 79 votes.

President U Thein Sein sent a message to U Htin Kyaw, expressing his delight on behalf of the State and the peoples, for being elected president by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw in accordance with the constitution, adding that arrangements have been made to hand over the duty of the Head of State to him. A total of 652 MPs from the two Houses cast their votes in the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, chaired by Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than. The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will continue its session on Thursday, and the president-elect will submit a proposal for the list of ministries and the number of ministers of the incoming cabinet, according to the agenda of the Thursday session released by the parliament. MPs are invited by the Speaker of the parliament to discuss the proposal the next day, according to the agenda.

Ref: The Global News light of Myanmar

NLD says it will cut number of ministries

The National League for Democracy (NLD) has said it will cut the number of ministries in Myanmar from 36 to 23 when it takes office at the end of this month, according to a report in Xinhua. However, the party said it would not cut the number of employees working in the public sector, as some ministries would be merged with others. The NLD also said that the chief ministers of all 14 states and regions will be NLD party members, a decision that could cause tension with some ethnic groups. The NLD won a resounding victory in the November election, but did not win an outright majority in Rakhine and Shan states. The Arakan National Party (ANP) and Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD), the parties to win the third and fourth highest amount of seats respectively in the election, have both called for their party members to be given the position of chief minister in their respective states. Reports say that NLD members will also make up 30 to 40 percent of government cabinet member positions. Some analysts believe the NLD will give some roles to members of the previous government, to ease relations with the military and to rely on their experience.

Outgoing government puts controversial projects on hold

The outgoing government has put 68 controversial projects on hold, according to a local report. The report said that the Ministry of Information announced that the projects, including a coal-fired power project in Myeik, Tanintharyi Region, would be reviewed by the new parliament before being given permission to go ahead. Other projects include a chemical treatment plant in Hmawbi, Yangon Region, and a special economic zone planned in Shan State. The announcement by the ministry came after MPs in the lower house of parliament approved a proposal to review projects before the new government begins on April 1. "We called for the Dagon City project to be stopped, but there are still many small projects that each ministry has agreed to without publicizing any of them," Thein Nyunt, a former lower house MP and chairman of the New National Democracy Party (NNDP), was quoted as saying, referring to the cancellation of development projects close to the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon in 2015.

Ref: Thura Swiss

ASEAN Free Trade and the Future of Local SMEs



The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), a common market with free flow of goods, services and labour across the 10 Southeast Asian nations, is set to pose daunting challenges for Myanmar's small and medium enterprises (SME), experts say.

AEC went into effect this January, however, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia are not going to join the trade bloc until 2018. These underdeveloped economies of the ASEAN were allowed the grace period to catch up with their developed counterparts. Still, the extra time may prove inadequate.

Some challenges the smaller businesses in Myanmar face include pricing and product quality compared with the companies in Thailand, Malaysia or Singapore. Economists say tough competitions may wipe out Myanmar's feeble SMEs.

"Myanmar should have analysed the conditions of local SMEs and their competitiveness before agreeing with the (AEC) system. Our local enterprises will not match the product quality (of others) and we will not be able to take significant market shares," U Tin Than Oo, an economist and law specialist, said.

The government has been trying to implement the Safeguard Law to control the trade procedures to reduce the number of obstacles for local SMEs that are trying to compete with large corporations.

According to that law, if the local SMEs could not compete in the market and their production significantly drops because of free trade, the import of the same product would be banned for a designated period of time.

"The owners of the enterprises could request us to do so by presenting facts and evidence showing that the import of certain product has increased tremendously and it will have an impact on local enterprises. The Ministry will investigate the product in question and ban the import if deemed necessary," Dr Maung Aung, advisor to the Ministry of Commerce, said.

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The government started giving out loans to prop up the local SMEs but the program has not been able to play any significant role. “The loan program of the government for SMEs lacks transparency and there’s favouritism in play. Before entering the ASEAN community, there were plenty of employment opportunities in Myanmar, but after entering there will surely be a great drain of skilled workers who will move abroad causing a shortage of skilled workers locally,” U Tin Than Oo said.

U Tin Khine, owner of Shwe Kyar Pwint, a small enterprise that produces slippers, also said that loans provided by the Union Government through the state and regional governments hasn’t been very effective.

“It has been published in the news and periodicals that loans have been given out to SMEs, but no one specified what kind of SMEs can receive loans,” he said.

“Shoes and slippers are now being imported from ASEAN countries such as Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand and they are affordable and of good quality. There are also cheap Chinese slippers that are imported mainly during the rainy season. Locally-made traditional slipper businesses may have to shut down if all these products flood the market.”

Dr Than Tun, chairperson of the Small and Medium Industrial Development Bank (SMIDB), said only 400 enterprises among the 40,000 registered enterprises and 40,000 non-registered enterprises received the loan from the bank.

“While giving loans to those SMEs, we need to carefully analyse so that there is no loss. We have appraisers to check loan applications. We evaluate the value of the collateral, which is different from region to region. Based on the evidence of the collateral, loan worth 20 to 40 percent of the value of the collateral is given,” Dr Than Tun said.

U Tin Than Oo said the government should collect statistics on the enterprises throughout the country, sector by sector, and link them with foreign enterprises to enable knowledge and technology transfer.

Recently consumer products, kitchen utensils, agricultural apparatus, livestock and fishery products from other ASEAN markets are being imported into Myanmar local market.

An official from Myanmar Fisheries Products and Exporters Association who wished to remain anonymous said that while the ASEAN free trade will pose obstacles to SMEs, the general public will have more access to better products at fair prices.

“Now imported meat and fish from neighbouring countries is available at City Mart shops with fair price. More competition will mean customers will have more choice and have to pay even less,” he said.

Kyat's Gain to Subside

Amid an unstable oil market and the changing political atmosphere in Myanmar, the Kyat has begun to gain some momentum on the US dollar, but the gains are expected to subside, experts said.

The local currency lost almost 30 percent of its value since April 2015, by dropping to 1,314 a dollar on December 24 from 1,026 on April 6. However, it recouped some of the loss since the beginning of February. Kyat was trading at 1,231 against the greenback on February 19, gaining 6.7 percent since December.

Some have been ringing alarm bells with the sudden rise of Kyat saying it might impact the economy adversely. Some local banks and currency exchange shops have even suspended dollar buying last week.

“World dollar prices are falling, oil and stock prices are falling too. In Myanmar, rumours are circulating about the political situation. There are supply and demand forces at play too.

“However, I see no reason for the Kyat to gain any further against the dollar,” U Than Lwin, senior advisor of the KBZ Bank, told Myanmar Business Today.

Experts say there would not be any noticeable effect on the economy because of the sudden gains, but the Central Bank should intervene and mediate in order not to let the exchange rate between the dollar and Kyat change too much.

“Businesspeople have been encountering this kind of situation for a long time. It has occurred in times. It has occurred in times of the previous government. Although the rate has fallen, import and export merchants do not suddenly lower the rate,” Dr Mg Mg Lay, vice chairman of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI), told Myanmar Business Today.

However, some traders said the rising value of the kyat makes buying and selling goods in the international market a bit more difficult.

“We find difficulties in buying goods due to the instability in the exchange rate. When we sell goods we get less money,” U Pinnt Ku, an international trader at the Tamuborder area, said.

In order not to let the local foreign exchange rate and inflation rate to increase noticeably, the Central Bank is selling \$5 million to the market daily, U Set Aung, Vice Chairman of the Central Bank, said at a meeting with hotel and tourism business people.

World Bank Bullish on Myanmar Growth

The World Bank said Myanmar's economy has the potential to grow rapidly, up to around 8 percent per year in real terms over the next five years.

With the right policy choices, Myanmar's growing economy can provide more jobs and higher income for the people, according to a series of new policy notes issued by the DC-based lender.

The policy notes discuss development opportunities and reform options for Myanmar, useful for policy-makers and all persons interested in the future of the country.

"Myanmar is at a historic milestone in its political and economic transition. The great opportunity for Myanmar is to turn continued strong economic growth into better lives for all the people of Myanmar," Ulrich Zachau, World Bank Country Director for Southeast Asia, said.

"Three policy directions will be key to help achieve such inclusive growth: the further opening and diversification of the economy, with a level playing field for the private sector and structural and labor intensive activities; nationwide programs to achieve, over time, universal access to basic education, health, and energy services of reliable quality; and transparency and accountability in the public sector."

World Bank said the policy notes aim to promote dialogue and generate ideas on critical development challenges and options for policies and reforms that can contribute to shared prosperity for the people of Myanmar.

The World Bank's Vice President for East Asia and Pacific Axel van Trotsenburg shared these policy notes with National League for Democracy Chairperson Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Minister of Finance U Win Shein, and Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint last week, highlighting six pathways to growth through access to social services, reducing rural poverty, private sector competitiveness, financial inclusion, energy and public sector governance.

The six interconnected groups of policy initiatives could together strengthen overall progress towards shared prosperity, the Bank said. Each policy note summarizes the context and opportunities for change, including recent reforms and developments.

"Myanmar has the potential to follow a similar path of inclusive growth as other Asian countries that enjoyed long periods of rapid income growth," said Abdoulaye Seck, World Bank Country Manager for Myanmar.

"The country faces a long road ahead in addressing continued challenges to close disparities across Myanmar's geography, ethnic communities and income groups. The World Bank Group looks forward to continuing to support the people of Myanmar in overcoming these challenges.

This Glass Disc Can Store 360 TB Your Photos for 13.8 Billion Years



If you back up your photos on optical disks or storage drives, there's a good chance your data won't last as long as you do due to things known as "disc rot" and "data rot". But what if you want to ensure that your precious photos live longer than you? Good news: a new "eternal" storage technology may be on the horizon.

Scientists have created nano structured glass discs that can storage digital data for billions of years.

Researchers at the university of Southampton announced this week that they've figured out how to store huge amounts of data on small glass discs using laser writing. They call it five dimensional (5D) digital data because in addition to the position of the data, the size and orientation plays a role too.

The glass storage discs can hold a whopping 360 terabytes each, are stable at temperatures up to 1,000°C (1,832°F), and are expected to keep the data intact for 13.8 billion years at room temperature (anything up to 190 °C, or 374 °F).

It's a discovery that "opens a new era of eternal data archiving" because the discs have "virtually unlimited lifetime," the university says, and museums, national archives, and libraries could benefit from having this eternal storage.

So far, scientists have preserved important documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Magna Carta, and Kings James Bible on individual discs that will likely survive the human race.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recorded on a 5D glass disc.

The researchers are now looking for companies to help bring this data storage technology to market. No word on when it will be available and affordable to ordinary photographers, but perhaps one day we'll be able to store our entire lifetime body of photos on a single disc that is guaranteed to survive us (and all our descendants).

Land Prices in Kyaukphyu SEZ Shoot Up

Strong demand from local businesspeople has seen the prices of land plots in Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone (SEZ) shot up, realtors from Rakhine state said.

Average price of farming land per acre until November 2015 ranged from K2–5 million, but now it ranges from K4–8 million, with most of the buyers being local businesspeople.

"The Kyaukphyu SEZ is supposed to start by the end of 2016. So, speculation has made the price go up, sometimes double the price two months ago, U Than Tun, one of the owners of Soe Khine Real Estate & Construction Co, told Myanmar Business Today.

He said if the authorities do not step in the prices will get higher than even the current level before the project starts.

"This price hike will also impact prices of farmlands. The Rakhine state government should have a close watch and take measures so that there is no instability in price," he added.

According to local residents, prices of real estate started getting higher when the Chinese-backed Shwe Natural Gas Project went online a couple of years ago.

The construction of the Kyaukphyu SEZ was approved by the Union Parliament in December 2015, with 424 votes in support of the project, 23 against and two neutral votes.

According to the Kyaukphyu Township General Administration Department, 98 acres of land at Minpyin, Chaungwa and Yaenantaung villages, situated in the special business zone, have been bought by local businesspeople.

"Those businesspeople bought the land plots because they expect the prices to go up when the project is implemented. There could be reselling of the land plots and instability in the prices. The buying spree has also caused rental prices to go up.

"Kyaukphyu will become a very developed area within one or two years and will also become a tourist attraction. Then, there will be continuous foreign investment," an official from Kyaukphyu Township GAD claimed.

"As the prices of land property are getting higher, discussion will be made with the local businesspeople not to make the prices unstable and we will work on regional development continually," U Hla Thein, chairperson of Rakhine State Government Public Relations and Information Committee, told Myanmar Business Today.

"The Rakhine State Government will control the price of land property so that there is stability of land prices in the area. For that, we will discuss with the local businesspeople. Our main focus should be regional development and the successful implementation of the Kyaukphyu SEZ."

Most of Kyaukphyu residents mainly earn their livelihoods from livestock and fisheries businesses and some from processing crude oil. It is expected that there would be more employment opportunities with the implementation of Kyaukphyu SEZ.

Ref: Myanmar Business Today

Never Stop Learning

As you got long term service you will feel you knew, understood and worked everything. Mr. John W. Gardner, secretary of American Government Ministry said that if you wished successive victories you should learn forever. The most influential speech was made on 10th Nov, 1990 at Global Advisory Company at Arizona. Bill Taylor, associate leader of Fast Company Magazine said that the speech known as "personal renewal" of Gardner became a most successful speech after distribution among business companies. Then Taylor said that to attain ever victory, Mr. Gardner's speech "**not to stop learning for respective business**" is the best lesson for him, Please notice; "learning is only for young man," is a false concept. If learning is stopped on today may lead to blindness on tomorrow, and every learning is for themselves. Mr. Gardner said to McKinsey Company that he applied a new job after his 70th birthday and still learning.

Although Mr. Gardner passed away in 2002, his teachings and speech are still alive. Here mentioned excerpts of his historical speech.

1. **Not to be interesting, be interested**

Minor objectives may be diminished before reaching the target. Therefore maintain dreams and eagerness and implement till die. Be careful most important for success is to take interest in what you doing. Do ever learning look for new ideas and ways. Be careful everything you are doing. Make adventures. Try till you got success.

2. **Don't Stop Learning**

Do learning for life. Get lessons from mistakes. Also get lessons from successes. Accept you are learning new lessons whenever you have faced a problem. By solving many problems may lead to improve your ability.

3. **Learn for not to downfall**

Everybody experienced downfall and not exempt from mistakes. When in the unsuccessful and down falling conditions; not to be dejected and go ahead. Many people are facing downfall. Study the way to protect downfall and challenge problems.

4. **Life is Endless**

Life has long time to attain as you wished. In the life time, you may come across unexpected conditions and solve the problems by born to be abilities. For best confrontation continue learning in addition to current proficient subjects.

5. **Men can change the World**

Everybody realize that it is impossible as their wishes. But if really strong minded with willingness and confidence can change the fortune (World). Believe it.

Ref: CEO Magazine



CENTRAL BANK OF MYANMAR

Reference Exchange Rate 16-03-2016

Country	Currency	Value	Rate
 United State Dollar	USD	1/-=K	1,218.0
 Euro	EUR	1/-=K	1,352.8
 Singapore Dollar	SGD	1/-=K	882.16
 Pound Sterling	GBP	1/-=K	1,723.3
 Swiss Franc	CHF	1/-=K	1,234.1
 Japanese Yen	JPY	100/-=K	1,075.9
 Australian Dollar	AUD	1/-=K	909.12
 Bangladesh Taka	BDT	1/-=K	15.535
 Brazilian Real	BRL	1/-=K	338.15
 Brunei Dollar	BND	1/-=K	882.48



Gold Price for Today

World Gold - 1233 USD/Oz

Myanmar Gold - 790,000 Kyats/Tical