POLITICAL MONITOR NO. 11

OFFICIAL MEDIA

PRESIDENT MAKES OFFICIAL VISIT TO JAPAN

President Thein Sein arrived in Tokyo on 19 April to attend the 4th Japan-Mekong Summit and for a goodwill visit to Japan.¹

The President met Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda for a Japan – Myanmar summit meeting on 21 April and discussed a range of bilateral and regional issues. PM Noda welcomed the measures taken by the Burmese leader towards democratization and working to achieve national reconciliation with the ethnic groups. He also praised his counterpart for successfully holding the 1 April by-elections well as the various political and economic reforms being undertaken in Burma and expressed Japan's commitment in continuing to support these efforts. PM Noda announced that the Government of Japan reviewed its assistance policy toward Burma and to restart new ODA loans for the sustainable economic development in Burma. The key areas in which Japan would provide economic cooperation would be focussed on improvement of people's livelihood (including assistance for ethnic minorities and poverty groups as well as agricultural and rural development), capacity building, development of systems and institutions to sustain economy and society (including those for promotion of democratization), and development of infrastructure and related systems necessary for the sustainable economic development". The Burmese President welcomed the commitment and support of the Japanese government and expressed his strong commitment in continuing these measures and to further strengthen bilateral relations between Japan and Burma.²

There was also an exchange of notes to provide grant aid to implement the "Project for Mangrove Rehabilitation for Enhancement of Disaster Prevention in Ayeyawady Delta" and the "Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship"), as well as a signing of a Memorandum of Intent for the Development of a Master Plan for Thilawa.³

Regarding Burma's Japanese debt, the two leaders adopted a conceptual approach as an adjustment of terms of past Official Development Assistance (ODA) and formally accepted to waive 303.5 billion Yen (\$3.72 billion) debt and overdue charges.⁴

Unofficial Media

The President's visit to Japan is seen as one to restore normalcy in relations between the two countries and it is his first to Japan since taking office in March 2011.⁵ President Thein Sein also had an audience with Japan's ruling monarch Emperor Akihto at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo on 20 April.⁶

¹ President U Thein Sein leaves for Japan to attend 4th Japan-Mekong Summit, to pay goodwill visit to Japan - <u>http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-04-21.pdf</u> (NLM) 21 April 2012 (p. 16)

² Joint Press Statement on Japan - Myanmar Summit Meeting -<u>http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/myanmar/thein_sein_1204/joint_press_statement_en.html</u> (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan) - 21 April 2012

³ Exchange of Notes for Grant Aid for the Republic of the Union of Myanmar ("Project for Mangrove Rehabilitation Plan for Enhancement of Disaster Prevention in Ayeyawady Delta" and "Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship") -<u>http://www.mofa.go.jp/ announce/announce/2012/4/0421 02.html</u> (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan) 21 April 2012 / Memorandum of Intent for the Development of a Master Plan for Thilawa -<u>http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/myanmar/thein sein 1204/pdfs/moi thilawa en.pdf</u> (Ministry of Foreign

<u>http://www.mora.go.jp/region/asia-paci/myanmar/thein_sein_1204/pdfs/mol_thilawa_en.pdf</u> (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan) ⁴ Addressing Myanmar's Debt Issues -

http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/myanmar/thein_sein_1204/myanmar_debt_issues_en.html (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan) 21 April 2012 /

Japan to write off Myanmar debt in thumbs-up for reform -

http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/04/21/us-myanmar-japan-debt-idUSBRE83K0AB20120421 (Reuters) 21 April 2012 Ibid.

⁶ Emperor meets with 5 Mekong leaders - <u>http://english.kyodonews.jp/news/2012/04/153931.html</u> (Kyodo News) 20 April 2012

KACHIN ARMED GROUPS UPDATE

State media announced that 42 members from the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) have fled their bases and surrendered to local authorities on 16 and 17 April 2012. The first group of 35 KIA member led by Corporal Kyaw Hsan from Brigade-5 laid down their arms on 16 April to the authorities in Talawgyi Station, Myitkyina the Kachin State capital. Similarly, 7 other KIA members exchanged arms for peace in Myitkyina and Talawgyi military camps on 17 April. In order to conclude cease-fire agreements with the various ethnic armed groups, Nay Pyi Taw government has conducted 3 sets of peace talks with the Kachin Independence Organisation/Kachin Independence Army (KIO/KIA) in November 2011 and in January and March 2012.⁷

Unofficial Media

Brig-Gen Sumlut Gun Maw, Vice Chief of Staff of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) has disputed government claims that 42 KIA soldiers recently deserted to the Burma army. Gun Maw said that the men were from the KIA supported village defense force known in Kachin as *Mungshawa Hpyen Hpung* or *People's Army* and not in fact regular KIA soldiers as claimed by the government. It is believed that the men were serving under the command of the People's Army in an area controlled by the KIA's Brigade 5. Gun Maw said the KIA would continue to investigate the events. An official from the KIA's Brigade 5 stated that the villagers felt they had to surrender to the authorities after government troops threatened to burn their homes in Talawgyi and arrest their family members. Tthe fate of the 42 individuals who surrendered to the Burmese army remains unknown.⁸

ELECTION COMMISSION ISSUES ANNOUCEMENTS ON THE APPOINTMENT OF DEFENCE SERVICES HLUTTAW REPRESENTATIVES

The Union Election Commission (UEC) issued Notifications Nos. 22/2012 and 23/2012 on the appointment of Defence Services Personnel Hluttaw representatives for the Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw respectively. The newly appointed representatives have been nominated officially by the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services and are replacing those who had been initially appointed after the first multiparty elections held in November 2010.⁹ *Please see Annex A and Annex B for the Notifications.*

UNOFFICIAL MEDIA

NLD MAY BOYCOTT PARLIAMENT OVER 'OATH', SUU KYI MEETS PRESIDENT

Members of Aung San Suu Kyi's party the National League for Democracy (NLD) elected in the recent by-elections on 1 April 2012 could boycott the up-coming parliamentary session on 23 April. According to an NLD member, the row is centered around newly-elected MPs refusing to take the constitutional oath at the parliament session - "The government has amended the wording in the election law to 'respect the constitution' – that's why we accepted the amendment and took part in the election. But the wording hasn't changed yet in the constitution."¹⁰

⁷ 42 KIA members exchange arms for peace -

http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-04-21.pdf (NLM) 21 April 2012 (p. 8) ⁸ KIA says deserters were from village defense group -

http://www.kachinnews.com/news/2275-kia-says-deserters-were-from-village-defense-group.html (KNG) 20 April 2012 ⁹ 39 Defence Services Personnel Pyithu Hluttaw Representatives substituted -

http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-04-23.pdf (NLM) 23 April 2012 (p.1 & 2) / 20 Defence Services Personnel Amyotha Hluttaw Representatives substituted -

http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-04-23.pdf (NLM) 23 April 2012 (p. 1) ¹⁰ NLD may boycott parliament over 'oath' -

http://www.dvb.no/news/nld-may-boycott-parliament-over-%E2%80%98oath%E2%80%99/21536 (DVB) 16 April 2012

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On 11 April, Suu Kyi met President Thein Sein in Nay Pyi Taw, however she declined to reveal the details of the meeting and made no further comments. The NLD secured 43 of the 44 seats it contested in the by-elections held on 1 April, becoming the main opposition force in a national parliament that remains dominated by the military and its political allies.¹¹

The international community has largely praised the election as a step towards democracy and western nations have begun to lift sanctions as a reward for the reforms.¹²

KARENNI REBELS REACH OUT TO LOCALS OVER PEACE TALKS

The Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) has been travelling within their territory in the Karenni State to talk with locals about the on-going peace talks prior to holding further discussions with the government's Union-level Peace-Making Group. Three delegations traveled to Loikaw, Demoso and Hpruso townships to gather public feedback on the initial ceasefire agreement brokered with the government on 7 March in the capital Loikaw. Under the preliminary agreement reached, the group would lay down their arms, open liaison offices in seven townships in Karenni (Kayah) State and hold future union-level talks.

"We need to cordially hear the public's feedback, their opinions and wishes as we look to union-level talks," explained Aung San Myint, Secretary-2 of the KNPP. "In the previous round of talks with the government, we proposed 20 points [to discuss at the next meeting] and we want to explain these to the local people in Karenni State, our political goals and plans." The 20-point list of issues includes removing the group's name from the unlawful association list within 15 days of reaching an official ceasefire, and accommodating nationwide, all-inclusive political talks within six months. "We will take the proposal back with us and prepare to discuss the issue during the coming week," Minister of Energy and delegate member Than Htay said after the last round of talks.

The Unlawful Association Act 1908 criminalizes a number of exiled organisations that are seen to interfere with "law and order" inside Burma, including the Karen National Union (KNU) and KNPP. After her recent meeting with KNU leaders, Aung San Suu Kyi called for the law to be repealed. The KNPP is the political wing of the Karenni Army (KA), which has fought a civil war against the Burmese army since 1951. A precarious ceasefire was negotiated in 1995 but crumbled only three months later.¹³

GOVERNMENT PEACE NEGOTIATOR TO MEET KNPP

Railways minister U Aung Min, one of the government's chief peace negotiators, plans to meet with leaders of the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) in northern Thailand according to sources from the ethnic armed group. The meeting is scheduled to take place in the Thai-Burmese border town of Mae Hong Son Khu Oo and will be in preparation for union-level talks expected to take place in the near future. KNPP's secretary 1 Khu Oo Reh said "The meeting is to strengthen our relationship. We are going to raise a number of issues that we want to discuss in detail during the upcoming union-level peace talks". He added that army chief Gen Bee Htoo and several KNPP executive committee members will also be involved in the meeting with the Burmese minister.

Aung Min first met with the KNPP in early February 2012 in Chiang Mai, Thailand, where the two sides discussed the terms of a bilateral ceasefire agreement, which included allowing the KNPP to open liaison offices, giving the group free movement in Burma, and rehabilitating internally displaced persons in Karenni State.¹⁴

¹¹ Suu Kyi Meets Thein Sein - <u>http://www.irrawaddy.org/archives/2358</u> (Irrawaddy) 11 April 2012

¹² EBO Daily News (April summary) - <u>http://euro-burma.eu/doc/2012 News - 4 - April.pdf</u>

 ¹³ Karenni rebels reach out to locals over peace-talks <u>http://www.dvb.no/news/karenni-rebels-to-consult-locals-on-peace-process/21555</u> (DVB) 18 April 2012
¹⁴ Govt peace negotiator to meet KNPP-

http://www.irrawaddy.org/?slide=govt-peace-negotiator-to-meet-knpp (Irrawaddy) 20 April 2012

ETHNIC ALLIANCE READY TO MEET GOVERNMENT NEGOTIATOR

According to a statement issued by the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC), the 11-member alliance is ready to meet with Nay Pyi Taw's chief negotiator U Aung Min. This is the official response to U Aung Min's offer made through him on 23 December 2011 in Bangkok, said the UNFC's Joint Secretary (2) and President of the Pa-O National Liberation Organization (PNLO) Hkun Okker. The UNFC is expected to present U Aung Min with a new peace roadmap. "The fact that some of our members have signed ceasefire agreements with the regime doesn't necessarily mean we agree with its proposed peace process." The five member organizations that have signed ceasefire agreements are the Chin National Front (CNF), the Karen National Union (KNU), the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and the Shan State Progress Party (SSPP). The 6 other members are the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), the Arakan National Council (ANC), the Lahu Democratic Union (LDU), the PaO National Liberation Organization (PNLO), the Palaung State Liberation Front (PSLF) and the Wa National Organization (WNO).

The 3-stage process as announced by U Aung Min during his meeting with representatives from 5 armed movements in Chiang Rai on 19 November 2011 includes ceasefire, development and political dialogue leading to a (1947) Panglong-like conference.

During his speech to the Union Assembly on 1 March, President Thein Sein elaborated this further:

- *State level.* Stop all hostilities, stay only at agreed areas, not to hold any arms in other places except from those agreed areas, open liaison offices, and fix the venue, time and date for Union level dialogue
- Union level. Points to be discussed: not to secede from the Union, accept the Three Main National Causes, cooperate in economic development tasks, cooperate in elimination of narcotic drugs, take part in political process by setting up political parties, entering elections, discussing with other national races at the Parliament to amend the constitution, and coordinating existence of a single armed forces
- *Third step.* Agreement amending the constitution to be signed at the Parliament.

The UNFC, however, has a different proposal for the process:

- 1) Meeting of the UNFC Peace Delegation and the Union Government Peace Delegation (led by U Aung Min Delegation) as soon as possible;
- 2) Meeting of the UNFC Peace Delegation and the Union Government Peace Delegation as a preliminarystage political dialogue;
- 3) Holding of an Ethnic Nationalities Conference with non-UNFC ethnic forces;
- Convening a National Convention comprising all the nationalities, particularly with the participation of government, outside of the parliament, holding the results obtained from the Ethnic Nationalities Conference;
- 5) Obtaining a "National Accord", according to the majority decision, from the National Convention and the signing of it by all the forces;
- 6) Continuing work according to the provisions of the "National Accord".

Concerning the last point, the UNFC Vice President David Tharckabaw said he expected a new Nationwide Referendum to take place to approve the constitutional amendments. "We certainly cannot accept the government's Stage 2 about development," he argued. "Because, in our experience, with big development projects come big businesses that lay waste to the environment and the people's livelihood[s]. It should therefore be considered only after a political solution is reached." The proposal also calls for the political dialogue to take place outside the Parliament. "We may be taking a parallel position to that of The Lady," admitted Hkun Okker. The statement also urges the international community to continue relief and rehabilitation assistance to the refugees and IDPs displaced by war, as part of the peace process.¹⁵

¹⁵ Ethnic alliance ready to meet government negotiator -

http://www.english.panglong.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4605:ethnic-alliance-ready-to-meetgovernment-negotiator&catid=85:politics&Itemid=266 (Shan Herald) 20 April 2012

ANALYSIS

Restoring bilateral relations and attracting would-be Japanese investors to Burma may have been some of the goals behind President Thein Sein's recent visit to Japan. The measures taken by the President have struck a chord with Burma's long-time ally and he has been rewarded with Japan writing off Burma's debt, while at the same time extending new loans and grants. Japan undoubtedly also sees the trip of the Burmese President as an opportunity to promote trade between the two countries. In addition, Burma's Central Bank held discussions with the Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE) and the Japanese Daiwa Securities Group to set up a stock exchange in Burma by 2015.

While the President was taking his international tour, the country's political process hit a snag with the news that the National League for Democracy (NLD) was considering boycotting the parliamentary sessions scheduled to begin later in April. The row is centered on the newly-elected MPs objecting to taking the constitutional oath at the parliament session, and comes after the recent 1 April by-elections in which the NLD won a land-slide victory. Both the government and those concerned will need to seek ways in which to overcome and address the issue so as not to jeopardize the country's democratic transition.

APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Notification on appointment of 39 Defence Services Personnel Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) Representatives

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Union Election Commission Nay Pyi Taw

Notification No. 22/2012

2nd Waxing of Kason, 1374 ME

(22 April, 2012)

39 Defence Services Personnel Pyithu Hluttaw Representatives substituted

According to the request made in accord with Section 33 of the Pyithu Hluttaw Election Law to substitute 39 Defence Services Personnel Pyithu Hluttaw representatives nominated by the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services in first multiparty democracy general election held on 7 November 2010, the Union Election Commission scrutinized and substituted 39 Defence Services Personnel Pyithu Hluttaw representatives stated here under in Notification No. 1/2011 of the commission dated 20-1-2011 and Notification No. 5/2011 of the commission dated 29-1-2011 with personnel shown against them.¹⁶

Sr.	Defence Services Personnel Hluttaw Representative (OUTGOING)	BC Number	Defence Services Personnel Hluttaw Representative (INCOMING)	BC Number
1.	Major Win Moe Khaing	BC 26985	Brig-Gen Wai Linn	BC 14185
2.	Major Thet Win Aung	BC 26996	Brig-Gen Win Myint	BC 16413
3.	Major Khin Zaw Moe	BC 27004	Brig-Gen Tauk Tun	BC 17943
4.	Major Kyaw Linn	BC 27012	Brig-Gen Min Naung	BC 18280
5.	Major Win Aung	BC 30859	Col Aung Thiha	BC 17319
6.	Major Win Ko Ko	BC 33046	Col Aung Myint	BC 18029
7.	Major Yarzar Linn	BC 33057	Col Myint Han	BC 18701
8.	Major Thaw Zin Naing	BC 33062	Col Khin Maung Tun	BC 19307
9.	Major Tin Ko Linn	BC 33063	Col Saw Min	BC 19584
10.	Major Aung Aung	BC 33079	Col Than Htut Thein	BC 19642
11.	Major Than Soe Htaik	BC 33124	Col Than Tun Oo	BC 20205
12.	Major Zaw Aye Tun	BC 33129	Col Kyaw Shwe	BC 20255
13.	Major Yan Gyi Aung	BC 33135	Col Hla Myint Soe	BC 21915
14.	Major Kaung Htet San	BC 33138	Lt-Col Saw Shwe	BC 16617
15.	Major Win Min Thant	BC 33142	Lt-Col Ngwe Soe	BC 18074
16.	Major Aung Hsan Win	BC 33145	Lt-Col Kyaw Myint	BC 19001
17.	Major Myo Min Tun	BC 33147	Lt-Col Nyi Nyi Lwin	BC 20193
18.	Major Zaw Zaw Linn	BC 33160	Lt-Col Pe Kyaing	BC 20231
19.	Major Min Han Tun	BC 33178	Lt-Col Khin Maung Win	BC 20991
20.	Major Soe Thiha	BC 33180	Lt-Col Win Naing	BC 21470
21.	Major Aung Aung Latt	BC 33187	Lt-Col Thein Htut	BC 21880
22.	Major Kyaw Lin	BC 33193	Lt-Col Tin Moe	BC 21909
23.	Major Chan Min Latt	BC 33208	Lt-Col Hla Soe	BC 22100
24.	Major Aung Ko Latt	BC 33212	Lt-Col Win Zaw Htay	BC 22390
25.	Major Soe Min Aung	BC 33214	Lt-Col Thein Htay	BC 22403
26.	Major Kaung Myat	BC 33216	Lt-Col Tun Linn Oo	BC 22462
27.	Major Aung Teza Lwin	BC 33229	Lt-Col Ye Htut	BC 22613
28.	Major Sein Myint	BC 33231	Lt-Col Myat Khaing	BC 22983
29.	Major Hnine Khaing	BC 33253	Lt-Col Saw Myint Win Aung	BC 23001
30.	Major Soe Thura	BC 33313	Lt-Col Kyaw Aung	BC 23011
31.	Major Aung Kyaw Soe	BC 33326	Lt-Col Htin Kyaw Soe	BC 23174
32.	Major Kyaw Myo Tun	BC 33376	Lt-Col Aung Khaing	BC 24002

¹⁶ 39 Defence Services Personnel Pyithu Hluttaw Representatives substituted -<u>http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-04-23.pdf</u> (NLM) 23 April 2012 (p. 1 & 2)

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33.	Major Aung Myat Htay	BC 33450	Lt-Col Than Naing	BC 24850
34.	Major Oak Soe Hlaing	BC 34001	Lt-Col Thein Win	BC 24853
35.	Major Yazar Tun	BC 34024	Lt-Col Myo Tun	BC 24983
36.	Major Aung Naing Win	BC 34111	Lt-Col Myo Myint Oo	BC 25258
37.	Major Hein Htet Aung	BC 34126	Lt-Col Kyaw Thiha	BC 26839
38.	Major Soe Win Naing	BC 34135	Cdr Moe Hein	Navy 3686
39.	Major Kyaw Lwin Oo	BC 34136	Lt-Col Khin Myint	Air 1934

By order, (Win Ko) Secretary, Union Election Commission

Appendix B:

Notification on appointment of 20 Defence Services Personnel Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House) Representatives

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Union Election Commission

Nay Pyi Taw

Notification No. 23/2012

2nd Waxing of Kason, 1374 ME

(22 April, 2012)

20 Defence Services Personnel Amyotha Hluttaw Representatives substituted

According to the request made in accord with Section 33 of the Amyotha Hluttaw Election Law to substitute 20 Defence Services Personnel Amyotha Hluttaw representatives nominated by the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services in first multiparty democracy general election held on 7 November 2010, the Union Election Commission scrutinized and substituted 20 Defence Services Personnel Amyotha Hluttaw representatives stated hereunder in Notification No. 2/2011 of the commission dated 20-1-2011 with personnel shown against them.¹⁷

Sr.	Defence Services Personnel Hluttaw Representative (OUTGOING)	BC Number	Defence Services Personnel Hluttaw Representative (INCOMING)	BC Number
1.	Major Myint Naing Than	BC 24888	Brig-Gen Kyaw Oo Lwin	BC 13765
2.	Brig-Gen Min Thein Zan	BC 26982	Brig-Gen Min Thein Zan	BC 16736
3.	Major Thein Tun Tin	BC 26982	Brig-Gen Aung San Chit	BC 16736
4.	Major Sai Thura	BC 33061	Brig-Gen Myat Kyaw	BC 18959
5.	Major Pyae Phyo Kyaw	BC 33066	Col Khin Soe	BC 16601
6.	Major Nay Tun Lin	BC 33067	Col Aung Khin Zaw	BC 18020
7.	Major Soe Thiha Kyaw	BC 33068	Col Aung Kyaw	BC 19717
8.	Major Aung Aung	BC 33082	Col Thet Tun Aung	BC 20331
9.	Major Zaw Min Thant	BC 33099	Col Nay Myo Aung	BC 20808
10.	Major Lin Aung Kyaw Soe	BC 33108	Lt-Col San Win	BC 18032
11.	Major Nyan Myo Kyaw	BC 33121	Lt-Col Tun Lin Aung	BC 19499
12.	Major Sithu	BC 33125	Lt-Col Than Kyaw Soe	BC 21317
13.	Major Yan Naung Soe	BC 33127	Lt-Col Zaw Moe	BC 21503
14.	Major Zaw Thant Lwin	BC 33136	Lt-Col Zaw Moe Lwin	BC 23990
15.	Major Nay Lwin Phone Myint	BC 33155	Lt-Col Zaw Than Htaik	BC 24192
16.	Major Aung Zaw Oo	BC 33156	Lt-Col Ye Naing Oo	BC 24927
17.	Major Kyaw Swa Win Khaing	BC 33162	Lt-Col Hlaing Win	BC 25863
18.	Major Kyaw Lin	BC 33166	Lt-Col Kyaw Soe Oo	BC 26019
19.	Major Soe Hein Naung	BC 33205	Cdr Kyaw Kyaw Htoo	Navy 3606
20.	Major Nanda	BC 33341	Lt-Col Soe Lin	Air 2162
				By order

By order,

(Win Ko) Secretary, Union Election Commission

¹⁷ 20 Defence Services Personnel Amyotha Hluttaw Representatives substituted -<u>http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs13/NLM2012-04-23.pdf</u> (NLM) 23 April 2012 (p. 1)