

MON LANGUAGE LEARNING UNDER THREAT AS GOVERNMENT FAILS TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH TEXTBOOKS



August 14, 2019

HURFOM: Government schools throughout Mudon Township, Mon State, have been permitted to conduct Mon language lessons for 45 minutes per day throughout the 2019–2020 academic year. However, teachers tasked to deliver such lessons report that the Mon State government has been unable to provide each student

with the accompanying Mon language textbook. As a result, teachers have resorted to writing the lessons on blackboards, thereby wasting the majority of the allotted 45 minutes.

“From grades one to three, there are hundreds of students learning Mon language, but not every student has their own textbook. In fact, less than half of all students have their own

book...Two or three students have to share one book. We have to write each lesson on the board. It takes up a lot of time, and we only have 45 minutes to deliver the lesson,” said Mi Ru Par, a teacher from Nyne Prine village.

Currently, there are 50 government schools that conduct Mon language lessons in Mudon Township, with 499 teachers delivering the curriculum.

“Because Mon language learning is a minor subject and students don’t need to sit for an exam, students are uninterested. Some students don’t even partake in the [Mon] language class. I think language textbooks should be provided to every single student, and that students should sit for a language exam. If they [students] had to sit for an exam, I believe interest would increase. Right now, we have very limited time to deliver each lesson, and the class is optional. This approach to language

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INTERVIEW WITH A YE TOWNSHIP FLOOD VICTIM



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BAW NAW HKEE VILLAGERS LOSE RIGHT TO VOTE FOR THREE CONSECUTIVE ELECTIONS



August 29, 2019

HURFOM: According to Mon State Election Sub-commission, villagers from Baw Naw Hkee village, Belin Township, Mon State will not be eligible to cast their votes in the upcoming 2020 general election due to security concerns.

“We can’t do anything (collect voters’ list) in Baw Naw Hkee even this year. The village has no administrator and we can’t collect population list. So, we can’t make voter list. The reason is security concern,” said U Hein Lin Htet, the Secretary of the Mon State Election Sub-commission.

In 2010 election, people from 6 village tracks from Belin Township and 3 village tracks from Kyaik Hto Township had lost their right to vote due to security concerns. However, in 2015, 8 of those 9 village tracks regained their right and cast their votes in the 2015 election.

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News

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KYAIKMAYAW TOWNSHIP CONFESS TO DRUG USE



September 23, 2019

HURFOM: According to the Principal of a High School in Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State, two students confessed to using illicit drugs.

On September 17, 2019, six Grade-9 students were asked if they had ever used betel nut or drank alcohol. Two students confessed they had used drugs.

“One of the classroom teachers reported that a student was sleeping during [lessons] last week. I called [the student] and asked (what was happening) but got no response. So I brought the parents [to the school] and this [led to a confession that the student and] 5 friends had smoked and drank alcohol. I summoned all of these students’ parents to the school and then two students admitted they had used illicit drugs three or four times [in the past.] We, teachers, did not know what kind of drugs they used,” stated the Principal of the school.

The Principal continued that if the two students wanted to overcome drug use, the school would provide them with a

long leave and re-accept them when they recovered from drug addiction.

“Children may make mistakes. There will be no student in this school if we dismiss all of them when they [do] something wrong. If they want to quit drugs, I will contact the Mawlamyine hospital and send them. That’s all we can do. As we [don’t have the medical means], we can’t stop [drug abuse],” said the Principal.

The Criminal Investigation Department organized an anti-drug talk and drug education showroom. The school has also organized a monthly essay writing contest relating to drug education and notifies parents when their children are absent from school.

“There has been a lot of students who are using drugs in my village. One of the students was sued for rape and drug use last year,” cited a local resident of Mudon Township.

According to the report published in 2017 by the Mon Youth Progressive Organization (MYPO), 70% of youth in Mon State have experience with drug use.

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INTERVIEW WITH A YE TOWNSHIP FLOOD VICTIM



September 26, 2019

HURFOM: On 23 September 2019, Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) interviewed Nai Oo Lay, a flood victim from Thiri Nandar Quarter in Ye Township.

Que: What was the impact of flooding in Ye?

Ans: Yes! This time the flooding left a huge amount of destruction. As far as I know at least one house was lost — 3 to 5 lakh kyats. Some plantation owners who had stored rice and betel nut had to throw much of that away after it got soaked in water. That was another huge loss. If stored goods were not totally damaged, you can only get half the price for rice or betel nut after flood damage. Generally speaking, flood victims were able to get back only half of what they lost.

Que: How many houses were affected?

Ans: About 380 houses were affected in our Quarter (Thiri Nandar). There are about 3,000 houses in total that were flooded in (Ye). However, according to a government statement only 1,000 houses were affected. I think this is because they (the authorities) did not ask every house in our Quarter. So the list from the government could be wrong.

Que: How (many houses) were affected across Ye?

Ans: There are 10 Quarters in Ye and 8 were covered under water. Water had reached more than 3,000 houses. Each household lost at least 3 lakh kyats (in material goods). That estimate would be the most conservative or the least amount of loss, households suffered. There are a lot of losses still not fully accounted for. The shops on the river bank lost more than 100 lakh kyats. Shops selling electrical goods are estimated to have lost 1,000 lakh kyats in damages.

Que: How many houses were destroyed?

Ans: Local houses in the town did not get destroyed but some houses of migrant peoples were smashed. They do not own land so their houses were built on the alluvial lands which was quickly destroyed when flooded.

Que: How was the situation for the rescue team?

Ans: It was not bad. Migrants got more support than local people. Most of the Ye locals moved to their relative houses and did not go to rescue camps. Although some people lost more than a million kyat, they did not get any support. There are gaps in how the support has been administered.

Que: There have been many donors and charity groups making donations. So how was the situation for donors in Ye?

Ans: There has been a strong show of support from donors. We received rice and other foods. Mon and other ethnic groups from different areas came here. Also, those who had to stay in camps received support.

Que: How was the help from the government?

Ans: We just saw a one time donation from them. We got 20,000 kyats and 2 (kg) of rice. Just one time. Nothing else. Many charity groups donated countless times. Until now (they) still come to donate.

Que: How much do you estimate each house received in donations.

Ans: As I said before, migrants got more... perhaps about 10 lakh kyats. Some Mon groups donated 1 lakh or 1.5 lakh kyats to each house. The rest of the donations were in the form of rice and food.

Que: How difficult was the situation for flood victims?

Ans: It has been normal for Ye to get flooded. But this time was enormous. There has been a huge loss of material goods like, stored rice, betel nut and most electronic devices were destroyed. In other years, flood waters did not reach many homes, but this time the flood water covered the roofs of homes. The water remained for 3 days and nights so that has also caused a lot of destruction.



MON LANGUAGE LEARNING UNDER THREAT AS GOVERNMENT FAILS TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH TEXTBOOKS



teaching and learning simply isn't effective," said Mi Wood Mon, a teacher from Set The village.

The Mon State Parliament permitted government schools in Mon State to conduct Mon language courses beginning in the 2014–2015 academic year. Teachers who opt to

teach the language course receive 30,000 kyat (US \$19.88) in addition to their monthly salary. Though the teaching of Mon language courses is permitted, the priorities of individual school administrations means that some schools only provide such lessons once the school day has officially ended.

"I am aware that there is a shortage of Mon language textbooks, and I realize that the government cannot afford to provide the number of books needed because printing these books is so costly. As well, there are no funds allocated to Mon language teaching in the [Mon State] budget. I think the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs should meet with the Ministry of Education to determine how the needed funds can be procured. Next year, we must request more funds to ensure that each student receives a textbook, but we can't say if the government will choose to lend its support," said Nai Tun Shein, and member of Mon State's Ethnic Affairs Committee.

As of 2019, there are 1,265 teachers in government schools conducting mother-tongue language courses in Mon, Pa'O, and Karen languages throughout Mon State.

BAW NAW HKEE VILLAGERS LOSE RIGHT TO VOTE FOR THREE CONSECUTIVE ELECTIONS

News from page no.1



Union Election Commission met with Mon State Election Sub-commission, political parties and local CSO.

Now, Baw Naw Hkee is on the risk of exclusion in the 2020 general election.

"If the region that (is) excluded from the election is dominated by (non-Burmese) an ethnic population, it will make a bad impact on the (non-

Burmese) ethnic candidates," said Nai Layi Tama, Joint Secretary of the Mon Unity Party – MUP.

Baw Naw Hkee village track includes 5 villages and it is under the control of the Karen National Liberation Army – KNLA Brigade #1 and #5.

During 2015 election, 10 villages and 16 wards out of 76 village tracks in Kyarinnseikyi Township, Karen State were excluded from that years election due to security concerns.

We can't do anything (collect voters' list) in Baw Naw Hkee even this year. The village has no administrator and we can't collect population list. So, we can't make voter list. The reason is security concern

News

MON STATE ANNOUNCES REHABILITATION PLANS FOR LANDSLIDE SURVIVORS IN PAUNG



August 29, 2019

HURFOM: On August 9, 2019, heavy rains contributed to a landslide, that resulted in the death of 72 people and destroyed 27 homes in Ye Pyar Gone village in Paung Township.

According to the Mon State government office, the government has a plan to rebuild homes lost during the disaster and the Ministry of Social, Welfare, Relief and Resettlement will provide a “life compensation” payment to those who have lost family members.

According to the State Government Office Director, U Myint Than Win, Mon State will provide 300,000 Kyat for each deceased person and the Ministry of Social, Welfare, Relief and Resettlement will provide the same amount to each survivor.

Rebuilding homes that were damaged or destroyed and issuing the life compensation payments faces some challenges. U Myint Than Win explained, **“As it’s a rehabilitation program, it’s a long-term one. We first have to find the government-owned land, for example, grazing land. The kind of land must (also) not be low land.”**

He added, **“In some cases, whole family were killed. So to whom can we pay a life compensation? Can we pay the compensation to the relatives of the husband or the wife?”**

The government rehabilitation project will collect inputs from survivors, to see if they want to move to a new location or if they wish to remain in the same area. According to the Office Director, approval to remain in the same locations would only be possible following an investigation of the landslide to determine the future safety for residents. The State government is preparing a long-term plan with other relevant government departments, authorities and the survivors.

The government has authorized the use of nearby grazing lands for the rehabilitation program, but some survivors are not willing to move because these lands are as much as 7 furlongs away from their old village.

“We heard that (the government) will give us (land plots) at a grazing land. We don’t want that kind of place. We want to stay at our original place. We want our land. If our original village is dangerous, (the government should)

pay compensation that will help us to move in a new place. If not, the government should manage to make our original place safe. (If our original place is safe,) we want to stay there,” said Ma Chaw Su, a landslide survivor from Ye Pyar Gone village.

U Tin Shwe, the Chairperson of the National League for Democracy – NLD of Thel Phyu Gone village track said, **“If the government can support everything they lost during the landslide, it becomes a better rehabilitation program.”**

169 people lived in the 27 houses which were damaged during the landslide but only 104 persons survived. Among the 72 deceased victims, 65 people were residents and 7 were travelers, according to Daw Aye Thidar, a clerk with the General Administration Department of Ye Pyar Gone village.

There is no rehabilitation camp for the landslide survivors, many had to take shelter at relatives’ homes. According to the Mon State government office, as of August 22, 2019, losses attributed to the flooding and landslide totaled more than 1,200 million Kyats.

News

MON STATE RESIDENTS WORRY THEY CAN NO LONGER AFFORD ELECTRICITY AFTER MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY HIKES RATES

လျှပ်စစ်ဓာတ်အားခနှုန်းထားများ ပြင်ဆင်သတ်မှတ်

ပြည်ထောင်စုသမ္မတမြန်မာနိုင်ငံတော်အစိုးရ
လျှပ်စစ်နှင့် စွမ်းအင်ဝန်ကြီးဌာန

ပြည်သူ့သို့အသိပေးကြေညာခြင်း

လျှပ်စစ်ဓာတ်အားခနှုန်းထားများ ပြင်ဆင်သတ်မှတ်ခြင်း

၁။ လျှပ်စစ်နှင့်စွမ်းအင်ဝန်ကြီးဌာနသည် လျှပ်စစ်ဓာတ်အား ထုတ်လုပ်ဖြန့်ဖြူးမှု ရေရှည်တိုးတက်ကောင်းမွန်စေရန် တိုးချဲ့ဆောင်ရွက်ရမည့် လုပ်ငန်းများအတွက်လည်းကောင်း၊ မဟာဓာတ်အားလိုင်းစနစ်မှ လျှပ်စစ်မရရှိသေးသောဒေသများ၊ လျှပ်စစ်ရရှိရန် ဆက်လက်ဆောင်ရွက်ရမည့် လုပ်ငန်းများအတွက်လည်းကောင်း၊ ဓာတ်အားထုတ်လုပ်မှုစွမ်းအား စဉ်ဆက်မပြတ်တိုးတက်အောင် ဆောင်ရွက်နိုင်ရန်လည်းကောင်း ပိုမိုကြိုးပမ်းဆောင်ရွက်နိုင်ရန်အလို့ငှာ သင့်လျော်သည့်ဓာတ်အားခနှုန်းထား ပြင်ဆင်သတ်မှတ်နိုင်ရေးကို လျှပ်စစ်မီးသုံးစွဲသူများကို ကိုယ်စားပြုသည့် နယ်ပယ်အသီးသီးမှ ကိုယ်စားလှယ်များနှင့် အဖွဲ့အစည်းများအား တွေ့ဆုံဆွေးနွေး၍ အကြံပြုချက်များ ရယူဆောင်ရွက်ခဲ့ပါသည်။

၂။ လျှပ်စစ်နှင့်စွမ်းအင်ဝန်ကြီးဌာနသည် ၂၀၁၄ ခုနှစ်၊ လျှပ်စစ်ဥပဒေပုဒ်မ ၄၁ နှင့်အညီ လျှပ်စစ်ဓာတ်အားခနှုန်းထား ပြင်ဆင်သတ်မှတ်ရန်ကိစ္စကို ပြည်ထောင်စုအစိုးရအဖွဲ့သို့ တင်ပြခဲ့ရာ ၂၀၁၉ ခုနှစ်၊ ဧပြီလ ၁၁ ရက်နေ့တွင် ကျင်းပပြုလုပ်သည့် ပြည်ထောင်စုအစိုးရအဖွဲ့အစည်းအဝေး အမှတ်စဉ် (၇/၂၀၁၉) ၏ သဘောတူညီချက်အရ ၂၀၁၉ ခုနှစ်၊ ဇူလိုင်လ၊ ၁ ရက်နေ့မှ စတင်၍ လျှပ်စစ်ဓာတ်အားခနှုန်းထားများကို အောက်ပါအတိုင်း ပြင်ဆင်သတ်မှတ်လိုက်သည်။

စဉ်	ဓာတ်အားသုံးစွဲသူ အမျိုးအစား	ဓာတ်အားခနှုန်းထား	
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July 17, 2019

On June 25th 2019, the Ministry of Electricity and Energy (MOEE) announced that beginning in July 2019, the cost of electricity per *kilowatt hour* (kWh) would increase throughout Burma. The decision to increase electricity rates has been met with criticism from Mon State residents given that households are now required to pay nearly three times what they paid for electricity prior to the rate increase.

"The cost of electricity was already increased once before, and if we now have to pay higher electricity bills we'll no longer be able to pay our bills with the money we earn. This is a great burden for those who use electricity," said Nai Shwe Win, a resident of Mawlamyine.

According to the MOEE, the decision to increase rates is not profit-driven but is being pursued to both bring electricity to rural areas that have yet to receive electrification, and to expand Burma's electrification infrastructure.

The cost per kWh with respect to residential electricity consumption prior to the July 2019 rate increase was 35 *kyat* (US \$0.02)per kWh when not exceeding 100 kWh; 40 *kyat* (US \$0.02)per kWh when not exceeding 200 kWh; and 50 *kyat* (US \$0.03) per kWh when in excess of 200 kWh in a single billing period.

The new rates for residential use break down as follows: usage not exceeding 30 kWh will be billed at 35 *kyat* per kWh; usage between 31 and 50 kWh will be billed at 50 *kyat* per kWh; usage between 51 and 75 kWh will be billed

at 75 *kyat* (US \$0.04) per kWh; usage between 76 and 100 kWh will be billed at 90 *kyat* (US \$0.05) per kWh; usage between 101 and 150 kWh will be billed at 110 *kyat* (US \$0.07) per kWh; usage between 151 and 200 kWh will be billed at 120 *kyat* (US \$0.07) per kWh; and usage in excess of 200 kWh will be billed at 125 *kyat* (US \$0.08) per kWh.

"In the past, my house consumed approximately 80 to 90 kWh per month and I would pay about 3,000 *kyat* (US \$1.98). With the new rates, I'll now have to pay nearly 8,000 *kyat* (US \$5.30). That's almost three times as much. My house is just an ordinary house...For people that run a small business or shop out of their home and used to pay about 10,000 *kyat* (US \$6.62) per month, they'll have to start paying about 30,000 *kyat* (US \$19.88) per month," said Ko Ko Oo, a resident of Phel Doe village, Mudon Township.

"For those who use electricity provided by the self-reliant Village Electricity Providing Committee, they paid about 70 to 75 *kyat* per kWh in one billing period. If the committee decides to increase the rates like the government and collects 200 *kyat* (US \$0.13) per kWh, some villagers will be spending huge amounts of money on electricity every month," continued Ko Ko Oo.

After informing the Union Government that they would be increasing electricity rates in accordance with Section 41 of the [Myanmar Electricity Law](#), the Union Government approved the MOEE's decision to increase rates on April 11th 2019.

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News

2-YEAR PRISON SENTENCE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA POST SIGNALS RENEWED ATTACK ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN MON STATE

July 5, 2019

On July 1st 2019, U Aung San Oo, an activist and resident of Mote Tama town, Paung Township, Mon State, was sentenced to two years imprisonment with hard labor by the Paung Township Court on charges of defamation under **Section 66(D) of the Telecommunications Law**. The charges were brought against U Aung San Oo by U Zaw Zaw Htoo, a Paung Township lawmaker, in response to a social media (Facebook) post wherein U Aung San Oo referred to the lawmaker as a “mindless drunk” following an interpersonal conflict between the two.

Speaking to HURFOM on April 21st 2019, some 10 weeks before receiving his sentence, U Aung San Oo had the following to say: *“In my view, that people and the media are not allowed to criticize the government and other authorities is not democratic. Freedom of expression is central to democracy. It’s a matter of human rights...Every person has the right of freedom of expression.”*

The social media post that landed U Aung San Oo in prison is rooted in an October 2017 land survey and field investigation spearheaded by U Zaw Zaw Htoo in Paung Township’s Moe Nyne Ward. The survey and investigation, which were undertaken to determine land ownership and better understand the social and economic issues confronting residents of Moe Nyne Ward, required villagers to temporarily leave the land in question.

Upon completion of the survey and investigation, U Aung San Oo told local media that the lawmaker had failed to

do anything of value for locals, which prompted U Zaw Zaw Htoo to accuse the activist of exploiting residents for financial gain by collecting 20,000 *kyat* (US \$13.27) from each of the 286 households in Moe Nyne Ward under the guise of advocating on their behalf. It is unclear whether residents of Moe Nyne Ward have been allowed to reclaim their land.

In the weeks following this exchange, U Aung San Oo contacted the lawmaker several times to ask that he justify his accusations, though never received a reply. For this reason, U Aung San Oo took to social media to provoke a response, calling the lawmaker a “mindless drunk” in a public post.

On December 27th 2017, Mon State lawmaker U Zaw Zaw Htoo reported the post to the Paung Township Police Station and filed defamation charges against U Aung San Oo under section 66(D) of the Telecommunications Law.

“My criticism of U Zaw Zaw Htoo [that nothing came of the land survey and investigation] was ignored by the court, but the court decided that what I wrote on social media was defamatory. I want to ask the government [Mon State and Union-level] if the laws we have in place are there to protect innocent people or oppress them. The government watches in silence when innocent people don’t get a fair trial,” said U Aung San Oo.

Continuing, U Aung San Oo said that he would make every effort to appeal the decision to upper courts in his search for justice and pledged to stand in solidarity with all of those who have not received a fair trial.

The sentencing of U Aung San Oo on charges of defamation mirrors the case of U Aung Ko Ko Lwin, a private citizen who received a **one-year prison sentence from Mon State’s Thaton Township Court** in September 2018 under Section 10 of the Law Protecting the Privacy and Security of Citizens for a social media (Facebook) post criticizing Mon State Chief Minister Dr. Aye Zan.

“We speak truth. We monitor and criticize the government and they imprison us, so people no longer criticize the government...Now, in Thaton, people are too afraid to criticize the government. They’re afraid of ending up in prison like me. Is it even possible to seek the truth anymore? People are living in fear,” said U Aung Ko Ko Lwin, who is still carrying out his sentence.

Continuing, U Aung Ko Ko Lwin stated that rather than being angered or upset by the criticism they receive, the government and other authorities should listen to the voice of the people and work to address the problems they identify.

Together with the **2017 Law Protecting the Privacy and Security of Citizens**, Article 66(d) of the **2013 Telecommunications Law** has criminalized criticism of the government and the military, with journalists and private citizens regularly jailed on dubious defamation charges. Until the laws that imperil freedom of expression are amended to be brought in line with international human rights standards, or are altogether abolished, Burma’s transition to democracy will forever remain woefully incomplete.

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News

11 YEARS ON, THANBYUZAYAT RESIDENT STILL SEEKING JUSTICE FOR MILITARY LAND CONFISCATION

သို့
ဥက္ကဋ္ဌ
လယ်မြေနှင့်အခြားမြေများသိမ်းဆည်းခံရမှုများကြောင့် ပြည်သူများနစ်နာမှုမရှိစေရေးအတွက်
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ရက်စွဲ။ ၅ - ၈ - ၂၀၁၃။

အကြောင်းအရာ။ ။ မတရားသိမ်းဆည်းခံရသောရာဘာမြေကို ပြန်လည်ရရှိလိုခြင်း။

အထက်ပါအကြောင်းအရာနှင့်ပတ်သက်၍ မွန်ပြည်နယ်၊ သံဖြူဇရပ်မြို့နယ်၊ ပင်ကော့ရွာနေ (အဘ)ဦး နှစ်သားဖြစ်သူဦး နိုင်ငံသားစိစစ်ရေးကော်မရှင်အမှတ် (၁၀/သမရ(နိုင်)၀၉) ကိုင်ဆောင်သူပိုင်ဆိုင်သည့် ကျွန်တော်၏ရာဘာမြေဧက(၃. ၃၀)ဧက၊ ကွင်းအမှတ်(၉၄၃) အပိုင်းတွင် စိုက်ပျိုးထားသော ရာဘာအပင်(၇၅၀)ရှိပြီး ၂၀၀၄ခုနှစ်တွင် အမှတ်(၃၁၅) တပ်ရင်း၊ အမြောက်တပ်၊ တပ်ရင်းမှူး-ဒုဗိုလ်မှူးကြီးတင်နိုင်မှ အတင်းအဓမ္မ သိမ်းဆည်းခံရပါသည်။ ၂၀၀၅ခုနှစ်မှစ၍ (၃)နှစ် အစောလုံးခွင့်ကို အခကြေးငွေပေးပြီး လုံးခွင့်ရခဲ့ပါ သည်။ ၂၀၀၈ခုနှစ်မှစ၍ ယနေ့အထိ လုံးဝခံစားခွင့် မရသည့်အတွက် ကျွန်တော်၏မိသားစု စားဝတ်နေရေး အခက်အခဲများစွာ ကြုံတွေ့ခဲ့ရပါသည်။ သို့ဖြစ်ပါ၍ ၎င်းသိမ်းဆည်းခံရသော ရာဘာမြေအား ပြန်လည်ရရှိလိုပါသဖြင့် စုံစမ်းစစ်ကော်မရှင် လူကြီးမင်းများမှ ကူညီဆောင်ရွက်ပေးပါရန် လေးစားစွာ အသနားခံတင်ပြအပ်ပါသည်။

(ဦး)

၁၀/သမရ(နိုင်)၀၉
ပင်ကော့ရွာ၊ သံဖြူဇရပ်မြို့နယ်

မိတ္တူကို-

ဦးနိုင်ဦး - ပြည်နယ်လွှတ်တော်ကိုယ်စားလှယ်၊ သံဖြူဇရပ်မြို့။
ဥက္ကဋ္ဌ - မွန်ဒေသလုံးဆိုင်ရာဒီမိုကရေစီပါတီ၊ သံဖြူဇရပ်မြို့။
လက်ခံ

to get my land back, then I will try my best. I still want my land back,” said Nai P—.

Recently, on April 4th 2019, State Counselor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi met with victims of land confiscation during a brief visit to Mawlamyine.

“From the aspects of justice and economy, it’s correct to give back the land to the original owners. I think it’s also possible to do so. The [Union] government and the [Union] parliament have been making an attempt to give the land to the original owners as soon as possible. But I want to send a message to the public openly that there are challenges to do so,” remarked the State Counselor after having met with those who have had their lands confiscated by either the military or corporate interests.

“After my land was confiscated I had to work as a day laborer on other plantations. It’s been hand-to-mouth living since this time...My life is difficult. My family relied on my plantation for income. My wife had to run a small noodle shop to help bring in money. Our work and our income have been unstable ever since we lost our land,” continued Nai P—.

Some six years ago, on August 5th 2013, Nai P— filed a report about his stolen land with the Central Committee for Rescrutinising Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands, based in Naypidaw. However, when the committee visited Thanbyuzayat Township (date unknown), the committee did not meet with those whose lands had been confiscated. For this reason, Nai P— and others were unable to press for justice.

As previously reported by HURFOM, between 2001 and 2004 in Thanbyuzayat Township, more than 1,500 acres of plantation lands close to Sakhan Gyi village, approximately 1,000 acres of plantation lands surrounding Wae Kalee military base, and between 400 to 600 acres of plantation lands in close proximity to ARC No. 315 were seized by the military.

July 17, 2019

HURFOM: More than 11 years after his land was seized, Nai P—, a victim of land confiscation, has told HURFOM that he still hopes to one day have his land returned to him. The land in question was confiscated by Burma Artillery Regiment Command No. 315 (ARC No. 315), stationed west of Wae Kalee village, Thanbyuzayat Township, Mon State.

It was in 2008 when Lieutenant Colonel Tint Naing of ARC No. 315 confiscated plantation land adjacent to railroad tracks near Pa Nga village, Thanbyuzayat Township, that Nai P—’s lands, where he farmed 750 rubber trees, were seized.

“I had only worked on my plantation for a short while when the army seized it. Once they had taken it, they allowed me to tap my trees [collect latex from rubber trees] if I payed them a tax to access the land. I’ve been miserable since this time. After three years of being allowed to tap my trees, they completely confiscated the land and I wasn’t allowed to work on it anymore. They told me they were going to build a military base on the land, but they sold it to new owners. I watched it happen but there was nothing I could do. I reported the seizure to the authorities multiple times but nothing happened. After losing my plantation, my whole family has struggled. I lost my livelihood. If there is any possible way

News

HEAVY RAIN SUBMERGED 87,000 ACRES. OVER 14,000 ACRES OF FARMLAND DESTROYED IN MON STATE

August 30, 2019

HURFOM: In August, 2019, due to heavy rains throughout Mon State, 87,000 acres of farmland were submerged due to flood waters.

As of August 23, 2019, the Mon State Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation reported 14,310 acres were totally destroyed and 21,000 acres were partially destroyed.

“Kyaikmayaw Township is the worst. About 20,000 acres of farmland were submerged. Now, only 10,000 acres emerged from the water. As Kyaikmayaw is still (experiencing) floods, we can’t collect an exact number (of affected farmlands). We will (provide) farming technology ... and also provide paddy seeds to those affected,” said U Aung Zaw Nyne, the Chief Officer of the Mon State Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.

The table below provides a breakdown of farmland by townships that has been submerged in August of this year.

Township Acreage Submerged

Kyaikmayaw	20,000
Thanbyuzayat	17,000
Paung	15,000
Mudon	10,000
Ye	2,000
Chaungzone	5,000
Mawlamyine	5400
Belin	7,800

U Htein Win, a Mae Garow resident of Kyaikmayaw Township, lost 80 acres of farmland during the flood. He said, *“The government hasn’t done anything yet for rehabilitation. The farmland, now, is still submerged. The farmland will be destroyed even after the water declines. If we want to re-farm rainy-season paddy, we need 90-day short-term paddy species. We had stored that kind of paddy seeds but we have to start from zero as everything was lost in the flood.”*

Despite the Mon State Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation statements indicating they will provide local farmers with paddy seeds, the department has only 500 baskets of 90-day short-term paddy seeds. The State Department requested the Union Department to provide additional support.

“At first, we requested 500 baskets of paddy seeds (from) the Union Department. Now, we requested another 1,000 baskets. So, we can get 3,000 baskets of paddy seeds from both State and Union Departments. (But it still wasn’t enough), so we have to report to the Mon State government for the rest of the need,” said U Aung Zaw Nyne.

Local residents fear the longer term impacts of the flooding on food production. *“I can’t estimate the acre(age) of farmland land destroyed by the flood. From Ye City to Kaw Hlyne village, all farmland besides the motor road were destroyed. It isn’t possible to do farming again (this year). The farmers are in a big trouble. There was no paddy production next year. Some farmers lost all of their farmland,”* said a Ye resident.

In 2003 and 2009, heavy rains and flooding similarly affected farmlands in Kyaikmayaw Township. In 2018, more than 70,000 acres of farmland in Mon State were submerged and 31,657 acres were destroyed, according to the Mon State Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.



News

LOCALS DEMAND GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT THEM FROM POSSIBLE LANDSLIDE



September 4, 2019

HURFOM: Since 2018, the Sarsanar 2500 Monastery located at Sit Kel Kone Ward, Mawlamyine, Mon State has been constructing a four-story building on a hill on the monastery premises. During the heavy rains in August, 2019, there was soil erosion from the hillside and local residents living at the base of the hill worried about a possible landslide.

Following the landslide at Ma Lat Mount in Paung Township, local residents in Sit Kel Ward have worried a similar tragic event may strike their community. In August, 2019, 72 people died in the landslide at Ma Lat Mount in Paung Township, Mon State and another landslide at Ma Loi Mount in Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division killed two people.

"My home is nearest to the hill so I've been worrying a lot. The weather is getting worse day by day. Our lives are at risk. When there is a heavy rain, we daren't sleep at our home. Some (of my neighbors) go to their relatives' house at night because they daren't sleep at their home. This issue is too much related to the lives of citizens," said

Daw Khat Tar Aung, a homeowner at the base of the hill.

There are approximately 200 houses at the base of the hill and the community population is estimated to be between 800-1,000 persons. The monastery halted construction after the Thel Phyu Gone event.

Last year in August, 2018, there were heavy rains and soil from the hillside collapsed burying half of the houses at the base of the hill. Local residents suffered losses, noted Daw Khat Tar Aung.

Local residents filed a report at the time, to the Mon State government and the office of the Mon State Parliament. However, after the Mawlamyine Municipal Department checked the damage, they were unable to do anything because the issue related to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture.

Residents expressed frustration about such internal government processes. *"... the landslide hasn't happened yet but if (it) happens, (the loss is) unthinkable. It's better to do (some) protection before it happens,"* said Daw Khat Tar Aung.

Local residents say it is the government's responsibility to solve the problem. Daw Maw Maw Myint who lives at the base of the hill said, *"We only want the solution. After consulting with the scholars, the government must ...prevent (a) landslide."*

On August 23, 2019, local residents demanded the State government undertake prevention measures to prevent a landslide and address damage resulting from the initial construction of the building that began in 2018.

The Administrator of Sit Kel Gone Ward, U Cho said, *"I know that the construction of the building was prohibited (by the government). After the events at Thel Phyu Gone, people are really afraid of landslides."*



My home is nearest to the hill so I've been worrying a lot. The weather is getting worse day by day. Our lives are at risk. When there is a heavy rain, we daren't sleep at our home. Some (of my neighbors) go to their relatives' house at night because they daren't sleep at their home. This issue is too much related to the lives of citizens



News

SURVIVORS QUESTION MANAGEMENT OF VICE PRESIDENT'S DONATION

Photo: Mon News Agency - MNA



September 7, 2019

HURFOM: On August 9, 2019, 27 houses were damaged and 72 people died in a landslide in Ye Pyar Gone village, Thel Phyu Gone village track, Paung Township, Mon State. The Vice President and the Union Minister for the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement visited the affected area on August 12. According to local reports, during their visit the officials wished to make a donation to each of the households that had survivors in the amount of 0.5 million Kyat.

However, when the village General Administration Department (GAD) reported on the victim data collected, they only listed 18 affected households. According to local community members, the Vice President extended support only to those families. The village GAD then collected the donations intended for the survivors, reportedly to be re-distributed under their management.

“(The GAD) called us as we’re on the list. Some (villagers) were on the list but they’re busy with the funeral (of their deceased family members) so they didn’t go. The Administrator brought me to the GAD office by car. At the office, the Vice President gave each of us 0.5 million kyat. But when I

reached outside the office, the Administrator took the donation I received. He said he would give me back later,” said Ma —, a survivor from Ye Pyar Gone village.

The Administrator said the donation would be given back later to all family members of the landslide victims including those who had not been present to receive the donation.

The Ye Pyar Gone Administrator U Win Zaw, said the Township GAD and the local lawmakers had an agreement related to the management of the donation.

“When the Vice President came to make a donation, we couldn’t collect [all of the information] on affected households. They’re busy with funeral but the Vice President wanted to organize a ceremony to give them the donation. So we collected [the information on] the survivors but got only five of them. [At the ceremony] 18 persons representing 18 households received the donation. But (now) we have 27 affected households so if we gave the donation to [just] those 13 families, the rest of the survivors got nothing. After discussing with the local lawmaker and the Township Administrator, the money was kept in the bank. We don’t know if the Vice

President [will provide] more donations. If he does not, we’ll fairly divide the money (to all affected households),” said U Win Zaw.

The surviving families are dealing with hardships following the disaster and are eager to know how and when the donation will be distributed.

“We’re making the list (of affected households). We’ll finalize it very soon. After that, we [will] withdraw the money from the bank, and divide it [amongst] the survivors,” said the village administrator.

The Mon State government and the Union government have committed to providing additional support to families with deceased victims. This is reported to be 0.6 million Kyat/deceased person, but the affected families have yet to receive anything.

“The government is weak in disaster management. They’re the ones who are responsible for the disaster and besides rescue, they must have a policy related to disaster management. And, the rehabilitation is also important. The needs of the (affected) residents and supports... are really critical,” said an activist from a local community-based organization – CBO.

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News

GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE PROVIDES NO SOLUTION FOR AIR POLLUTION



September 9, 2019

HURFOM: On May 4, 2018, local people from Mawlamyine in Mon State called for the government to shut down air polluting factories in the Industrial Zone of Nyaung Pin Seik Ward, Mawlamyine.

On July 22, 2018, approximately 400 residents organized a protest demanding the shutdown of the antimony factories. The Mawlamyine Industrial Zone had 6 antimony factories.

Local residents complained that the Myanmar Shin Shin Antimony Purifying Factory and the Myanmar San Zaw Antimony Purifying Factory emissions were affecting air quality.

Antimony is a highly brittle, bluish-white, semi-metallic element. It is often alloyed with lead to increase lead's durability. Antimony alloys are used in batteries, low friction metals, and cable sheathing, among other products. Antimony compounds are also used to make flame-proofing materials, paints, ceramic enamels, glass and pottery.

Antimony is considered extremely dangerous. According to the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health **"occupational exposure may cause respiratory irritation, pneumoconiosis (a lung disease), antimony spots (pustules and eruptions near sweat glands) on the skin and gastrointestinal symptoms. In addition antimony trioxide is possibly carcinogenic to humans."**

The Mon State government formed a committee to investigate those factories which are powered by coal energy, another source of air pollution. The committee led by the State Directorate

of Industrial Supervision and Inspection had representatives from 6 different government departments including the Mon State Environmental Conservation Department.

According to local residents, although the committee has been investigating the factories, air pollution levels have not declined, nor has air quality improved, and no action has been taken against the factories. **"They said they're elected government and are doing investigation. But there is no improvement. The bad smell is still emitting."** offered one community member.

State Counsellor, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi during a public consultation trip to Mawlamyine on April 14, 2019 said the factories must be closed if they're emitting a bad smell.

The Mon State Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation has been conducting investigation and promised to take action against the factories.

Local residents are skeptical, **"But everything has faded as time goes by. There was no legal action,"** said Ko —, who lives 300 ft away from the Myanmar San Zaw Antimony Purifying Factory.

When community members initially reported their concerns in 2018, under U Thein Sein's government some factories were shut down within a week.

In May 2018, HURFORM reported the Myanmar Shin Shin, Myanmar San Zaw were able to obtain government permission to operate as pilot projects, under the supervision of the Mon State

Environmental Conservation Department.

However, the Myanmar San Zaw Antimony Purifying factory was eventually shut down in August, 2019 but the Myanmar Shin Shin Factory continues to operate.

Although local residents have filed reports several times to the National League for Democracy (NLD) government, there has been no legal action. The government has never consulted with the local people regarding the concerns about the air pollution or air quality problems.

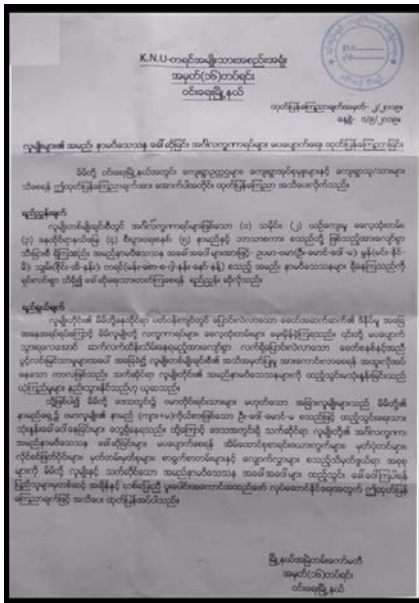
"The people have been reporting to the government a lot. By they didn't listen... There is no improvement (related to air pollution). This factory is life-threatening. Now, (air pollution) is getting worse and we can't even sleep at night (because of bad smell). Then, even another factory was constructed. We don't know the name of that factory. It has no chimney so the Ward has been full with smoke (emitted by the factory). Our disappointment at the government has piled up as time goes by," continued Ko —.

The Chair of Mawlamyine Industrial Zone Management Committee U Aung Kyaw Nyunt said, **"When the government came to investigate the factories, they didn't call me. I received no written instructions (related to an investigation). As the Industrial Zone Management Committee, we knew nothing. At the moment, there is no improvement (of air pollution or air quality). And there is also no (government) instructions on how to deal with the factory."**

The State government claims they instructed the factories officials to increase the height of the factory chimney but emissions continued with a polluting odor. Local residents filed a report with their concerns to the President during his trip to Mawlamyine on December 14, 2018 and with the State Counsellor during her trip on April 14, 2019. They have also reported their concerns several times to the Mon State government.

News

MINORITIES CONCERNED THEIR ETHNIC TITLES MAY BE LOST



September 11, 2019

HURFOM: Non-Burmese ethnic minorities are expressing concerns their ethnic titles may gradually disappear due to an electoral and other formal registration systems that appears to favour Burmese or Burman titles.

On March 2, 2019, as part of the “Faithful (Thit Sar) Project”, National Registration Cards were granted to local residents. Individuals wrote their ethnic titles ahead of their names but some staff with the National Registration and Citizenship Department did not accept “non-Burmese ethnic titles” and forced these applicants to write “Burmese titles”.

On September 1, 2019, Battalion #16 of the Karen National Union (KNU) based in Win Ye Region, Kyarinnseikyi Township, Karen State released a statement urging people to know and use their own ethnic titles.

The statement said Burmese people have ethnic titles (U, Maung, Daw, Ma); Mon people have their own titles (Min, Nai, Mi); Shan people use (Sai, Ei, Nan) titles and Karen people have (Mahn, Saw, Sa, Ga, Nan, Naw, Nant) ethnic titles.

Some non-Burmese people do not wish to use Burmese titles (U and Daw) to preface their names. They prefer to use their own ethnic titles.

“I feel that (Burmese) racism has swallowed (a huge amount of influence over) us – ethnic minorities. While Burmese people are promoting Burmese racism, we must protect our ethnicity as much as we can. Each of us should do this with our own senses,” said Padoa Saw Maung Shwe, the Chair of KNU Battalion #16 in Win Ye region.

The Union Election Commission had issued controversial instructions for the process of developing a voters’ list for the upcoming 2020 general election. The Commission had said, the title (U or Daw) must be written ahead of voters names for those who were over 18 and the title (Maung or Ma) must be written ahead of the names of those under 18 years of age.

U Hein Lin Htet, the Secretary of Mon State Election Sub-commission explained this directive was related to a software programming limitation. **“Without putting (U or Daw), ethnic names can’t be written (into the voters’ list). (U and Daw) titles are used to differentiate male and female by computer software program. [However] If you want to put your own ethnic name, you can write it after (U or Daw) title,”** he added.

However, the statement from the KNU Battalion #16 urged that when applying for household list, or a National Registration Card (NRC), or different kinds of licences and government documents, every person should write their ethnic title ahead of their name.

This disagreement led the Deputy Speaker of Mon State Parliament, Dr Aung Naing Oo to intervene and negotiate with the Chief Official of the Township Immigration Department and Department of Labor as well as the village Administrator.

Using his social media platform Dr Aung Naing Oo intervened by writing, **“This (putting ethnic titles ahead of names) is a fundamental right of ethnic minorities. If this right was refused and there is government staff who denied the rights of ethnic minorities, please inform me or [the]**

Chief Official of the Township Immigration Department with detailed information. We’ll solve the problem effectively.”

Previously, for NRC applicants it was compulsory to write the Burmese titles (U and Daw) ahead of an individual name even if they person is not Burman. Now applicants are allowed to write any ethnic title they wish to use, according to a government official.

“There is no prohibition (on putting titles) in Myanmar Citizenship Law. Based on the applicant’s ethnicity, he or she is allowed to write his or her name in their own ethnic language as they want,” said U Tin Chel, the Director of Township Labor and Immigration Office.

Earlier this year, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi also weighed into the debate when she said at a Peace Talk held in Mawlamyine University on June 14, 2019, **“Putting Burmese titles (U or Daw) ahead of non-Burmese ethnic names is because of having respect to those individuals. U or Daw can be excluded in informal and social usages but when applying NRC or government documents, everyone must follow the rules and regulations.”**

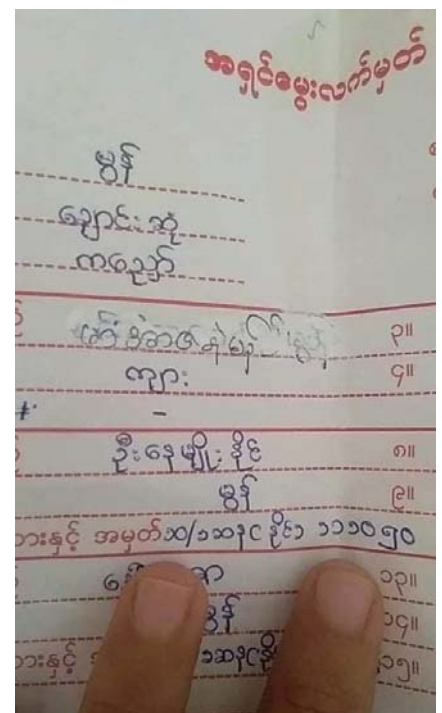


Photo: Naiaung Naing (facebook)

News

GOVERNMENT APPOINTS 340 ETHNIC LANGUAGE TEACHING ASSISTANTS IN MON STATE

ပြည်ထောင်စုသမ္မတမြန်မာနိုင်ငံတော်အစိုးရ
ပညာရေးဝန်ကြီးဌာန
အခြေခံပညာဦးစီးဌာန
၁၃၈၁ ခုနှစ်၊ တော်သလင်းလဆန်း(၄)ရက်
၂၀၁၉ ခုနှစ်၊ စက်တင်ဘာလ(၂)ရက်
“ရုံးအမိန့်စာ”

အမှတ်။ ၀၀၁(၄၀၅) (၂၈-၈-၂၀၁၉)ရက်နေ့တွင် ကျင်းပသော ပညာရေးဝန်ကြီးဌာန စီမံခန့်ခွဲရေးကော်မတီ အစည်းအဝေး အမှတ်စဉ်(၁၇ /၂၀၁၉)အရ ၂၀၁၉-၂၀၂၀ ပညာသင်နှစ်၊ မွန်ပြည်နယ်၊ ကျိုက်ထိုမြို့နယ် အတွင်းရှိ အခြေခံပညာကျောင်းများတွင် အောက်ဖော်ပြပါ ပုဂ္ဂိုလ်များအား နေ့စားလပေး (Teaching Assistant- TA) အဖြစ် အမှုန့်တကယ်အလုပ်ဝင်ရောက်သည့်နေ့မှစ၍ တိုင်းရင်းသားဘာသာစာပေသာမက ကျောင်းသင်ဘာသာရပ်များ သင်ကြားရာတွင် အထောက်အကူပြု TA (နေ့စားများ)အဖြစ် ခန့်ထားလိုက်သည် -

မွန်ပြည်နယ်

စဉ်	အမည်	နိုင်ငံသား စိစစ်ရေး အမှတ်	ပညာ အရည်အချင်း	သင်ကြားမည့် တိုင်းရင်းသား ဘာသာ	နေ့စားလပေး ခန့်ထားသည့် ကျောင်း/ မြို့နယ်	မှတ်ချက်
၁	ဒေါ်အင်ကြင်းထက်	၁၀/ကထာ(နိုင်) ၁၅၇၂၂၃	ပထမနှစ်	မွန်	မုလွန် (ဘူတာ)	
၂	ဒေါ်သီတာအေး	၁၀/ကထာ(နိုင်) ၁၂၃၂၈၃	နဝမတန်း အောင်	စကောကရင်	အ.မ.က (ဆောင်နိုင်ငံ)	
၃	ဒေါ်နှင်းနင်းဝေ	၁၀/ကထာ(နိုင်) ၁၅၃၉၃၃	ပထမနှစ် (သမိုင်း)	စကောကရင်	မုလွန် (ကျွန်းတော)	
၄	ဒေါ်မြင့်မော်	၁၀/ကထာ(နိုင်) ၁၄၃၆၇၁	B.A(Geog)	စကောကရင်	အ.မ.က (သရက်ကုန်း -၂)	
၅	ဒေါ်လဲ့လဲ့ဦး	၁၀/ကထာ(နိုင်) ၁၂၃၂၆၃	နဝမတန်း အောင်	စကောကရင်	မုလွန် (ဝင်းကလေး)	
၆	ဒေါ်ခင်မာထွေး	၁၀/ကထာ(နိုင်) ၁၄၃၆၁၂	နဝမတန်း အောင်	စကောကရင်	မုလွန် (နတ်စင်)	
၇	ဒေါ်နော်ထွေးစိ	၁၀/ကထာ(နိုင်) ၁၂၃၂၃၂	နဝမတန်း အောင်	စကောကရင်	မုလွန် (ချောင်းစောက်)	
၈	ဒေါ်သန်းသန်းမော်	၁၀/ကထာ(နိုင်) ၁၃၈၄၀၉	နဝမတန်း အောင်	စကောကရင်	အမက (ကျောက်တန်းလေး)	

(ကိုလေးဝင်း)
ညွှန်ကြားရေးမှူးချုပ်

chance to serve as “language teachers” and would be paid 30,000 kyat a month while “teacher assistants” are paid 4,800 kyat per school day. “Teacher assistants” would also be trained to teach other curriculum, according to the Minister.

The newly appointed “teacher assistants” schedule will assist students to learn local geography and cultural heritage three times a week, and twice a week with ethnic language learning.

“I’m a primary school teacher and I’m teaching students from Grade 1 to Grade 4. I am paid [on a] daily basis and get 4,800 kyat per day. Now, every academic year [brings] new curriculum so we need training (for the new curriculum). There are 5 school days a week and I teach one-hour class a day,” said a Thanbyuzayat resident who has recently been appointed as a “teacher assistant”.

“Teacher assistants” have been appointed by the Ministry of Education so their salary will be paid from the Union government budget.

“It’s good that (non-Burmese ethnic language teachers) are appointed as government staff. And their main duty should be teaching ethnic languages. When they have spare time, they can teach other languages. I’ve heard that some “teacher assistants” (non-Burmese ethnic language teachers) can’t teach ethnic languages as they have to teach another curriculum,” mentioned Min Aung Zay, a Program Coordinator of the Mon National Education Committee.

In the 2017-18 academic year, there were 568 Mon language teachers, 371 S’Kaw Karen language teachers, 113 East Poe Karen language teachers, and 66 Pa’O language teachers.

According to the Myanmar Radio and Television (MRTV) Website, there are 13,050 Mon students, 12,460 S’Kaw Karen students, 4,773 East Poe Karen students, and 2,156 Pa’O students.

September 12, 2019

HURFOM: The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs have jointly appointed over 300 non-Burmese ethnic language “teaching assistants” in government schools across 10 townships in Mon State for the 2019-20 academic year. These teaching assistants (TA’s) will be responsible for teaching Mon, Karen and Pa’O languages, according to the statement released by the two Ministries.

Of the 340 TA’s 171 will be for the Mon language, 148 for the Karen language and 21 for the Pa’O language, confirmed U Saw Aung Myint Khine, from the Karen Ethnic Affairs Minister of Mon State government.

“We’ve appointed (teacher assistants) basing on the need of the schools and the number of applicants. The person who applies for the position must pass their Grade 9 [levels]. The State (Union Government) decided [on] the appointments because there is a shortage of (ethnic language) teachers in (government) schools. This is the second time of [such] appointments,” said the Minister.

The first appointments took place in the 2017-18 academic year when 424 “teacher assistants” and 126 “language teachers” were appointed to teach non-Burmese ethnic curriculum in government schools in Mon State.

Those who were not appointed as “teacher assistants” would have a

News

FLOOD VICTIMS FEEL EXTORTED FOR TRANSPORTATION FEES FOR DONATED MATERIALS



September 15, 2019

HURFOM: According to local sources, the village Administrator in Pauk Pin Kwin village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division was charging (2,000) kyats to each household that suffered losses by the recent heavy monsoon. This fee was being collected to pay for the transportation of donated materials to aid flood victims.

Donated goods were being stored in Ye Township, leaving the transportation costs to get the goods to affected villages, unaccounted for.

Local residents were dissatisfied with the Administrator's plan to charge 2000 kyat/affected households as a transportation fee, labelling the plan as extortion. Half of the villagers affected by the flooding, did not pay the (2,000) Kyats fee. As a result, only those households that paid the

transportation fee received any of the donated materials.

"About 100 houses were flooded. 58 houses got [donated material] support. They were the houses that paid (transportation fee) 2,000. The house[hold's that did] not give fee, did not get materials so there was extra [donated materials.]. The extra materials were [then] re-allocated to those households that [paid the transportation fee, but they] already got support. [This] meant that the households that got flooded ...got double supports while the rest did not get any support at all. It should not be like that" said a community leader and public health worker in Pauk Pin Kwin village.

There are 500 houses in Pauk Pin Kwin village and about 100 houses were flooded by the heavy rains that fell on 8 August 2019. The monsoon not only

affected many households but also destroyed plantations in Pauk Pin Kwin village.

During the 4-week period of flooding, Ye Township authorities tried to manage the donations received to support flood victims.

No agreement had been reached between affected household and the Village Administrator regarding how the transportation costs of donated materials would be dealt with. The Administrator just decided to collect money for the transportation costs from affected households and did not ***"respect our opinion."*** said another community leader.

**RESPECT
OUR
OPINION.**



News

MON STATE SALT FARMERS SUFFER HUGE LOSSES FOR TWO CONSECUTIVE YEARS



September 16, 2019

HURFOM: Salt farmers from Pa Nga village, Thanbyuzayat Township, Mon State suffered another huge loss due to heavy rains and flooding that began in early August of this year. This is the second year of heavy losses. In 2018, Pa Nga salt farmers lost roughly 2.6 million peittha or 4,238,000 kilograms of salt due to heavy rains and flooding. Peittha is the Burmese unit to measure weight.

There are 3,000 acres of salt farms spread across Mon State and the Pa Nga operation has the largest production figures. Approximately 4.7

million peittha or 7,661,000 kilograms of salt was lost during the disastrous rains that fell on Thanbyuzayat Township.

According to a local salt farmer, private business owners lost 3.6 million peittha (5,868,000 kg) and 1.1 million peittha (1,793,000 kg) was owned by a government project.

"We, the local salt farmers from Pa Nga, have suffered from flooding for two consecutive years and we've had a huge loss this year." The losses amount to more *"more than 800 million Kyat,"* said Nai Hote, a Pa Nga salt farmer.

Most of the farms are located in lowland areas which are easily flooded during heavy rains. Salt kept in the warehouses had dissolved in the pooling rain water. Farmers could not move their salt to higher ground because transportation routes were also flooded and damaged.

"Every salt farmer is in trouble when there is heavy rain because the flood destroys the salt farm. We couldn't transport salt easily during the flood. That's why [we] face a huge loss. We've demanded the government construct a (special) route for salt transportation," continued Nai Hote.

Farmers get a higher price for salt in the rainy season, so they store salt during the summer and the winter. As a result larger volumes that are warehoused are subject to flooding. This business decision contributed to this year's losses. Due to high demand and low supply, the price of raw (low grade/ not refined yet) salt has risen from 160 kyat to 190-200 kyat per peittha (1 peittha = 1.63 kg).

Mon State holds second place for salt production. The Irrawaddy Division is the largest salt producer in the country.

PARENTS CONCERNED FOLLOWING ACCIDENT INJURING 3 STUDENTS FROM CEILING COLLAPSE

September 30, 2019

HURFOM: On 22 September 2019, 3 students attending their high school were injured when the interior ceiling, in their class fell on them. The incident took place at the Basic Education High School (Sub) of Kyar Bo village, Ah Hlat village tract, Paung Township, in Mon State.

Parents are worried that other incidents may put their children in jeopardy.

Rain water had infiltrated into the classroom ceiling via roof hole during the recent heavy rains. The interior suspended ceiling became soaked with rain water and could not bear the weight, collapsing onto the students

during class time. According to the school, 3 Grade 6 students – 2 boys and 1 girl, suffered minor injuries.

"I was angry with the company that built the school when hearing the ceiling fell down. Parents asked the principal, 'how many years

[has this school]

been built. [The principal] replied that it has been one year and few months. It was just over a year but it caused an accident so it is not good for [the] long term" said U Hla Win, one of the parents.

The government provided 43.2 millions kyat to construct the school and the

Win Tha Pyay company was granted permission to build the school in August 2015. The school has been operating since June 2016, according to Paung Township Department of Basic Education.

"State Minister will fix this (school) for us but we do not expect much. We would like to fix it with our own money if possible. We want to improve this school condition. Even though it is high school, it has no fence," continued U Hla Win.

Estimates to repair the damaged roof will be covered in the upcoming budget year. The students are continuing their studies in the same room after the fallen debris was removed.

Information on HURFOM and Invitation for Feedbacks from Readers

Dear Readers,

Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) was founded in 1995, by a group of young Mon people. The main objectives of HURFOM are:

- ☐ Monitoring the human rights situation in Mon territory and other areas in southern Burma
- ☐ Protecting and promoting internationally recognized human rights in Burma,

In order to implement these objectives, HURFOM produces the monthly “Mon Forum” newsletters. If publication is delayed it is because we are waiting to confirm information, and it comes with our heartfelt apologies.

We encourage you to write to us if you have feedback or if you know someone who you think would like to receive the newsletter.

Please email or mail a name and address to:

HURFOM, P.O. Box 35, Sangkhalburi Post Office,

Kanchanaburi, 71240 Thailand

E-mail: info@rehmonnya.org

Website: <http://www.rehmonnya.org>

With regards,

Director

Human Rights Foundation of Monland

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The local people want the government to supervise the construction company to make sure their buildings are strong, qualified and durable. Parents indicated they are willing to donate money to fix the ceiling and U Htun Min Aung, the Minister of the Mon State Ministry of Immigration and Human Resources, will ensure the necessary repairs take place.

“Most of locals here are farmers. They just know having a school is good but they do not know about the quality of the school building. However, the

government has a supervision team and they should check the quality of the construction. We want the school [to be] strong” stated U Min Thu, Village Administrator.

According to the Administrator, the school filed a written report with photos illustrating the damage with the Township General Administration Department.

There are 500 students attending the Basic Education High School (Sub) of Kyar Bo village.

“State Minister will fix this (school) for us but we do not expect much. We would like to fix it with our own money if possible. We want to improve this school condition. Even though it is high school, it has no fence

ADMINISTRATOR FAILED TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST THE HEAD OF A VILLAGE MILITIA GROUP FOR REMOVING STREET SIGNS



September 19, 2019

HURFOM: Villagers of Kwan Hlar village, in Mudon Township, Mon State have filed a complaint against 3 people including the head of a village militia group. The villagers claim these individuals wrongfully removed 8 street signs on January 27, 2019, and that the village Administrator had failed to take any action.

The street signs were installed in the second week of January, 2019 at the direction of the Ward Administrator and a Kwan Hlar village committee. Then removed within a week. Despite complaints from the villagers, no action was taken for the sign removal. On September 16th 2019 the villagers organized a protest directed at the Kwan Hlar Administrator for a failure to take prompt action against those who removed the street signs installed in January.

“The signs were kept in the administrator’s office after their removal. The administrator claimed the case will be solved within 3 days after [an] investigation. It has been months [and] the perpetrators [have] not

[been]

punished. About 150 villagers signed a complaint letter to the Mon State government and 8 particular government departments on February 26, 2019,” stated Daw Than Than Htay, who led the protest.

The Deputy Chief Officer of Mudon Township General Administration Department (GAD) arranged a meeting to discuss the initial complaints, with the local residents on March 11, 2019. It was understood at that time, that the case would be submitted to the authority of the Mawlamyine District.

One month after the March meeting, the Deputy Chief Officer of Mudon Township GAD indicated the street signs would be reinstalled following a discussion with the village committee.

“Just restoring the signs back haven’t made us satisfied,” said a resident of Phaung Kalatt Ward of Kwan Hlar village. Local residents feel that those who removed the street signs in the first place, should be punished in accordance with the laws, and that the village Administrator is also at fault for failing to take prompt action.

Paung Hluttaw lawmaker Mi Kon Chan, raised this issue in the Phyi Thu Hluttaw on September 11, 2019. She asked, Why militia groups were formed in the village and which department is responsible to address their actions?

The Deputy Minister of Ministry of Defense, General Myint Nwe explained that the military are managed by a separate legal system but because village militia are not soldiers (from the Tatmadaw), their actions must be dealt with by civil courts.

In addition to militia groups, there are many small splinter groups which have surrendered to local battalions. It has been reported that some of these splinter groups are involved with the drug trade, arms trafficking and some groups have been threatening local people to give up their land (land grabbing).

According to the Deputy Defense Minister, local military battalions have formed their own militia groups in regions they control. There are estimated to be over 6,000 such militia groups across the country and each group could have anywhere from 20 to 60 members.

HURFOM

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