

BURMA BULLETIN



A month-in-review of events in Burma



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- The number of refugees in Arakan State reaches 115,000 as a result of the latest wave of sectarian violence. The UN warns of a “growing humanitarian emergency” as IDPs remain in desperate need of shelter, clean drinking water, food, and medical care.
- President Thein Sein touts infrastructure projects and birth control as the ‘solution’ to ongoing tensions between Buddhists and Muslims in Arakan State.
- Bangladesh and Thailand continue to push back and deport hundreds of fleeing Rohingya. The UNHCR says that the ongoing exodus of boat people could have “destabilizing effects” on Burma’s neighbors.
- US President Barack Obama visits Rangoon and delivers a speech that addresses the ongoing challenges in Burma, the need for further reforms, and says there is “no excuse” for the violence against Rohingya in Arakan State.
- Peaceful protests against regime-backed businesses intensify in several locations across Burma. In two cases, regime authorities respond with excessive use of force, arbitrary arrests, and threats.
- Audit reveals “misuse and dishonest actions” by 15 ministries which lent US\$68 million to “private businessmen” during the 2011-12 fiscal year. However, high-ranking officials escape punishment.
- Parliament concludes its fifth session without any progress on the amendment/repeal of oppressive laws. The Foreign Investment Law is enacted.
- Regime continues its strategically-timed release of political prisoners. Fifty-five dissidents are freed but over 200 remain behind bars.
- Fighting between the Tatmadaw and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) continues as additional troops are deployed to Kachin State.

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KEY STORY

Number of IDPs in Arakan State reaches 115,000

The number of IDPs continued to grow as a result of ongoing sectarian violence in Arakan State. As of 15 November, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported a total of 115,000 IDPs in Arakan State, including over 36,000 displaced since 21 October.¹ Over 60% of the IDPs were sheltered in Akyab [Sittwe].²

¹ OCHA (15 Nov 12) Myanmar: Humanitarian Snapshot – Displacement in Rakhine State

² OCHA (15 Nov 12) Myanmar: Humanitarian Snapshot – Displacement in Rakhine State

On 21 November, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Ashok Nigam said that IDPs in Arakan State were living in “terrible conditions” and were in desperate need of shelter, clean drinking water, food, and medical care.³ The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also warned of a “growing humanitarian emergency” in Arakan State, with IDP camps dangerously overcrowded and some people forced to shelter on boats or remain at the sites of their burned-out homes.⁴ Many children in camps continued to suffer from severe malnutrition and reports surfaced that some children had starved to death.⁵

Aid workers and IDPs in Arakan State faced ongoing hostility from Rakhine communities despite UN requests for the regime to ensure a “favorable environment” for relief operations.⁶ On 5 November, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said that its team had been prevented from accessing some areas of Arakan State and that some personnel had received written and oral threats over its ongoing relief efforts.⁷ On 27 November, it was reported that local Rakhine in Pauktaw Township expressed their opposition to a proposed IDP camp for Rohingya in the area.⁸

Authorities track down Rohingya; Thein Sein offers more ‘solutions’

In November, regime authorities in Arakan State began a process of registration for the Rohingya population in order to identify those deemed to be illegally residing in Arakan State.⁹ However, in many cases Rohingya refused to cooperate with the registration process because authorities forced them to register as ‘Bengali’ and not as ‘Rohingya’.¹⁰ Rohingya feared that after being registered as ‘Bengali’ authorities would automatically consider them illegal and deport them.¹¹

Meanwhile, President Thein Sein continued to fail to propose concrete measures to address unrest in Arakan State but offered no shortage of questionable ‘solutions’ for the ongoing tensions.

- **16 November:** President Thein Sein claimed that “isolation of the state due to poor transportation, low education standard[s] coupled with poverty, and fewer business and job opportunities” were the root causes of sectarian violence in Arakan State.¹² He identified the envisaged economic benefits of key infrastructure projects under development (Akyab and Kyaukpyu deep-sea ports; Kyaukpyu-Kunming oil and gas pipelines) as a possible solution for the ongoing tensions.¹³
- **16 November:** In a letter addressed to UN Sec-Gen Ban Ki-moon, President Thein Sein pledged to consider new rights for Rohingya, including “birth registration, work permits and permits for movement across the country”. However, there was no commitment to grant them citizenship.¹⁴

³ AlertNet (22 Nov 12) UN hikes appeal for Myanmar displaced

⁴ UNHCR (23 Nov 2012) UNHCR begins aid airlift for IDPs in western Myanmar; AFP (13 Nov 12) UN warns of humanitarian crisis in Myanmar

⁵ CNN (26 Nov 12) Terrorized, starving and homeless: Myanmar’s Rohingya still forgotten ; NYT (05 Nov 12) Charity Says Threats Foil Medical Aid In Myanmar; UNICEF (23 Nov 12) UNICEF scales-up response, calls for stronger combat against child malnutrition in Rakhine State

⁶ NYT (05 Nov 12) Charity Says Threats Foil Medical Aid In Myanmar

⁷ AP (05 Nov 12) Group: Myanmar ethnic tensions block medical aid; RFA (05 Nov 12) MSF Blocked in Rakhine

⁸ RFA (27 Nov 12) Refugee Camp Plan Opposed

⁹ AFP (09 Nov 12) UN calls on Myanmar to offer citizenship to Rohingya; AP (30 Nov 12) Myanmar launches operation to verify citizenship of Muslims in strife-torn west; RFA (06 Nov 12) Checks on Rohingyas Launched; RFA (20 Nov 12) Resources Stretched in Rakhine; EMG (22 Nov 12) Illegal Bengali migrants probed

¹⁰ RFA (08 Nov 12) Call To Beef Up Rakhine Security; Irrawaddy (13 Nov 12) Rohingya Refuse to Register as ‘Bengali’; RFA (20 Nov 12) Resources Stretched in Rakhine; EMG (22 Nov 12) Illegal Bengali migrants probed

¹¹ Irrawaddy (13 Nov 12) Rohingya Refuse to Register as ‘Bengali’

¹² NLM (17 Nov 12) Local people in Rakhine State should not pursue their own interests only instead they should extensively pursue the interests of Myanmar and its people, global nations and entire mankind - Entire people to work together with the government without racism and regionalism in efforts to ensure mutual understanding over differences between two communities, to respect the rights and avoid conflicts; Xinhua (17 Nov 12) Myanmar president calls for collaborative efforts for survival of 600,000 Rakhine victims

¹³ NLM (17 Nov 12) Local people in Rakhine State should not pursue their own interests only instead they should extensively pursue the interests of Myanmar and its people, global nations and entire mankind - Entire people to work together with the government without racism and regionalism in efforts to ensure mutual understanding over differences between two communities, to respect the rights and avoid conflicts

¹⁴ AP (17 Nov 12) Myanmar’s president says he’ll consider new rights for Rohingya minority ahead of Obama visit; AFP (17 Nov 12) Myanmar leader condemns Rakhine violence in UN letter; Reuters (17 Nov 12) Myanmar president says will address sectarian violence, blames “extremists”

- **21 November:** President Thein Sein said that the regime planned to introduce a birth control program as a way to improve relations between Buddhists and Muslims in Arakan State.¹⁵

Fact-finding commission: Two Muslim members removed, report delayed

More than three months after its formation, the regime-appointed commission tasked with investigating sectarian violence in Arakan State had yet to produce a report. On 5 November, commission member Zarganar announced that the deadline for the submission of the report had been delayed from 16 November to 31 March 2013.¹⁶ In addition, the regime made the commission - which does not include any Rohingya - even less representative of the Muslim community. On 1 November, the regime removed Muslim leaders Nyunt Maung Shein and Tin Maung Than from the commission.¹⁷ The dismissal of the two religious leaders appeared to be linked to their public criticism of local regime authorities over the poor handling of the unrest in Arakan State.¹⁸

Bangladesh, Thailand push back Rohingya refugees, including children

Burma's neighbors failed to provide sanctuary to fleeing Rohingya, despite the UN High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) calls for countries in the region to keep their borders open and cease push-backs.¹⁹

On 11 November, a Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) official said that in previous weeks they had pushed-back at least 800 Rohingya.²⁰ Between 12-29 November, Bangladeshi authorities pushed-back a further 207 Rohingya from various areas along the Burma-Bangladesh border.²¹ Bangladesh was not Burma's only unwelcoming neighbor to Rohingya fleeing Arakan State. On 11 November, Thai authorities deported 112 Rohingya boat people, almost half of whom were under 18-years-old, who landed the day before at a beach north of Phuket.²²

The UN and various NGOs voiced concern over the risks associated with the ongoing exodus of Rohingya via dangerous boat journeys from Burma and Bangladesh.²³ On 7 November, at least 50 people went missing after a boat carrying 110 boat people - mainly Rohingya - sank in the Bay of Bengal off of the Bangladesh-Burma border.²⁴ UNHCR said it was "gravely concerned" over the recent boat tragedies [See *October 2012 Burma Bulletin*] and warned that the volatile situation in Arakan State risked forcing many more people to leave than in previous years, which could have "potentially destabilizing effects in other countries."²⁵ UNHCR called on the regime to urgently address the main push factors leading people to flee by boat, including the statelessness of Rohingya.²⁶

¹⁵ Mizzima News (22 Nov 12) President announces Four-point Plan for Rakhine State

¹⁶ Mizzima News (06 Nov 12) Rakhine report delayed; two Muslims sacked from commission; EMG (08 Nov 12) Rakhine violence probe team to seek 4 more months

¹⁷ Mizzima News (06 Nov 12) Rakhine report delayed; two Muslims sacked from commission; DVB (08 Nov 12) Muslims removed from Arakan probe for criticising gov't

¹⁸ DVB (08 Nov 12) Muslims removed from Arakan probe for criticising gov't

¹⁹ UNHCR (13 Nov 12) UNHCR seeks regional support amid reports of high seas tragedy off Myanmar; Xinhua (13 Nov 12) UN refugee agency concerned over boat tragedies in Bay of Bengal

²⁰ AFP (11 Nov 12) Bangladesh detains Myanmar Rohingya refugees

²¹ Kaladan News (15 Nov 12) Over 320 Rohingyas arrested at Bangladesh-Burma border; Kaladan News (21 Nov 12) BGB continues arrest Rohingyas at Bangladesh-Burma border; Kaladan News (29 Nov 12) 48-Rohingya pushed back to Burma; Kaladan News (30 Nov 12) More 31-Rohingya pushed back to Burma

²² Phuketwan (12 Nov 12) 'Deported' Boatpeople Destined for Factories or Life on Trawlers, Says Activist

²³ IRIN (06 Nov 12) More Rohingya boat people likely; Irrawaddy (02 Nov 12) Help Protect Arakan Boat Refugees, Says UN; Xinhua (13 Nov 12) UN refugee agency concerned over boat tragedies in Bay of Bengal; UNHCR (13 Nov 12) UNHCR seeks regional support amid reports of high seas tragedy off Myanmar; Irrawaddy (14 Nov 12) UN Urges Bangladesh to Keep Borders Open

²⁴ Xinhua (07 Nov 12) 50 rescued, about 60 still missing as illegal immigrants' boat sinks off Bangladesh; AFP (08 Nov 12) Search on for 50 missing after Bangladesh sinking

²⁵ Irrawaddy (02 Nov 12) Help Protect Arakan Boat Refugees, Says UN; Xinhua (13 Nov 12) UN refugee agency concerned over boat tragedies in Bay of Bengal

²⁶ UNHCR (13 Nov 12) UNHCR seeks regional support amid reports of high seas tragedy off Myanmar; Xinhua (13 Nov 12) UN refugee agency concerned over boat tragedies in Bay of Bengal

International community continues to voice concern

In November, the international community continued to express concern over sectarian violence in Arakan State.

- **3 November:** The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said that it was “urgent” that law and order be restored in Arakan State and that humanitarian access to those in need be granted.²⁷
- **5 November:** Egypt’s Foreign Ministry expressed “deep resentment” over renewed violence against Rohingya in Arakan State and urged the regime to take “swift and strong measures” to end the violence.²⁸
- **6 November:** UK Foreign Secretary William Hague said that Burma’s regime should work to end the violence in Arakan State and “address the issue” of Rohingya citizenship.²⁹
- **9 November:** The UK, US, Australian, Egyptian, French, Saudi Arabian, Japanese, German, Norwegian, Brazilian, and Turkish embassies in Rangoon released a joint statement calling for an immediate end to the violence in Arakan State and for the regime to ensure “safe, timely, and unhindered” humanitarian access to those affected by the violence.³⁰
- **9 November:** UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay called on the regime to review the 1982 Citizenship Law “to ensure that Rohingya have equal access to citizenship.”³¹ Pillay also warned that sectarian violence in Arakan State, if not resolved, could “undermine the reform process.”³²
- **14 November:** The Malaysian Foreign Affairs Ministry released a statement expressing concern over those displaced by sectarian violence in Arakan State and said that Malaysia stood ready to extend assistance.³³
- **14 November:** US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that the US condemned the violence in Arakan State and called for “meaningful dialogue” to address the “underlying issues” behind the violence.³⁴
- **17 November:** The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) called on the international community to act to save Rohingya in Arakan State from “genocide.”³⁵ In an earlier statement issued on 4 November, the OIC said that it was working to bring the issue before the UN Security Council.³⁶
- **20 November:** The Pakistani Parliament adopted a resolution that condemned the violence against Muslims in Arakan State.³⁷

ASEAN treads carefully over Arakan State unrest

In November, ASEAN refrained from overtly pressuring Burma over ongoing sectarian violence in Arakan State, due to the regime’s insistence that the issue was an internal affair.³⁸ The regime rejected the inclusion of any detailed reference to the situation in the Chairman’s Statement, to be issued at the conclusion of the ASEAN Summit on 18 November.³⁹ The adopted text ultimately contained only one watered-down passage pertaining to the unrest, which focused exclusively on ASEAN’s willingness to lend humanitarian support in cooperation with the regime.⁴⁰ On 16 November, ASEAN Sec-Gen Surin Pitsuwan said that it was not ASEAN’s role to pressure Burma’s regime to change its citizenship laws regarding Rohingya.⁴¹

²⁷ KUNA (03 Nov 12) UNHCR appeals to Myanmar’s neighbouring countries to keep their borders open

²⁸ RFA (05 Nov 12) MSF Blocked in Rakhine

²⁹ AFP (06 Nov 12) Australia, Britain prod Myanmar on sectarian unrest

³⁰ US Embassy Rangoon (09 Nov 12) Joint Statement by the Undersigned Embassies

³¹ AFP (09 Nov 12) UN calls on Myanmar to offer citizenship to Rohingya

³² AFP (09 Nov 12) UN calls on Myanmar to offer citizenship to Rohingya

³³ Bernama (15 Nov 12) Malaysia Ready To Assist Myanmar Solve Refugee Crisis

³⁴ AFP (15 Nov 12) Obama to discuss Rohingya violence on Myanmar visit

³⁵ AFP (17 Nov 12) Top Islamic body warns of ‘genocide’ in Myanmar

³⁶ KUNA (04 Nov 12) OIC to hold session in Djibouti to discuss developments in Myanmar

³⁷ Xinhua (20 Nov 12) Pakistani parliament condemns Israeli airstrikes on Gaza

³⁸ Star (18 Nov 12) Act to resolve sectarian violence, Myanmar urged

³⁹ Star (18 Nov 12) Act to resolve sectarian violence, Myanmar urged

⁴⁰ ASEAN (18 Nov 12) Chairman’s Statement of the 21st ASEAN Summit

⁴¹ DVB (17 Nov 12) ASEAN ‘cannot’ press Burma on Rohingya citizenship

Protests intensify across Burma

In November, peaceful protests against regime-backed businesses took place in several locations across Burma. In two cases, regime authorities responded with excessive use of force, arrests, and threats.

Monywa copper mine project

Protests against the expansion of the Monywa copper mine, operated by the military-backed conglomerate Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings (UMEH) and the China-owned Wan Bao company in the Letpadaung mountain range in Salingyi Township, Sagaing Division, continued for the third consecutive month. About 1,000 people, including activists, students, and Buddhist monks, took part in the latest wave of protests in six different locations.⁴² Activists also held protests against the project in Rangoon.

- **18 November:** Protesters gathered in front of the office of the China-owned Wan Bao company near the Monywa copper mine site on the Monywa-Bassein road, bringing the mine operations to a halt.⁴³
- **19 November:** A group of students and activists held posters outside Rangoon University during the visit of US President Barack Obama which called for an end to the Monywa copper mine project.⁴⁴
- **20 November:** About 500 Buddhist monks from Mandalay, Monywa, and Pakokku joined the ongoing protests by local villagers against the Monywa copper mine project.⁴⁵
- **26 November:** About 50 activists held a peaceful protest in downtown Rangoon against the expansion of the Monywa copper mine.⁴⁶
- **27 November:** Regime authorities charged six activists - including former political prisoner Naw Ohn Hla - under the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law and Section 505 (b) of the Criminal Code in connection with the 26 November protest.⁴⁷
- **27 November:** Regime Home Affairs Ministry ordered protesters to end their occupation of the Monywa copper mine site or face legal action.⁴⁸
- **28 November:** Hundreds of protesters occupying the Monywa copper mine site defied the regime's order to end their protest and insisted that they would continue the occupation until the copper mine project was halted.⁴⁹ Police unsuccessfully attempted to remove about 30 monks from a smaller camp located near the main protest site close to the Wan Bao company's office.⁵⁰
- **29 November:** Police used tear gas and water cannons in order to clear the main protest camp near the Wan Bao company's office.⁵¹ About 30 protesters, mostly Buddhist monks, suffered burn injuries in the crackdown and were admitted to Monywa hospital.⁵² Local regime authorities subsequently shut down all six protest camps.⁵³

High-ranking regime officials advocated for the continuation of the Monywa copper mine project and defended the violent crackdown against protesters.

⁴² AP (27 Nov 12) Myanmar government orders end to mine occupation; Xinhua (28 Nov 12) Copper mine project protesters disperse after deadline set in Myanmar; Irrawaddy (20 Nov 12) Monywa Copper Mining Protest Resumes

⁴³ Irrawaddy (20 Nov 12) Monywa Copper Mining Protest Resumes; AP (27 Nov 12) Myanmar government orders end to mine occupation; Xinhua (28 Nov 12) Copper mine project protesters disperse after deadline set in Myanmar

⁴⁴ Irrawaddy (20 Nov 12) Monywa Copper Mining Protest Resumes

⁴⁵ RFA (20 Nov 12) Monks Join Mine Protests

⁴⁶ Irrawaddy (26 Nov 12) Fear of China Keeps Copper Mine Open: Aung Min; AFP (28 Nov 12) Myanmar copper mine protesters charged: police

⁴⁷ Reuters (28 Nov 12) Myanmar activists held over latest copper mine protest; RFA (27 Nov 12) Authorities Arrest Mine Activists; Mizzima News (28 Nov 12) Copper mine protesters arrested and charged

⁴⁸ AP (27 Nov 12) Myanmar government orders end to mine occupation; Xinhua (28 Nov 12) Copper mine project protesters disperse after deadline set in Myanmar

⁴⁹ AP (28 Nov 12) Myanmar protesters defy government orders to end occupation of copper mine; AFP (28 Nov 12) Myanmar protesters ordered to end mine demo

⁵⁰ RFA (28 Nov 12) Police Disperse Mine Protesters

⁵¹ RFA (28 Nov 12) Police Disperse Mine Protesters; AP (29 Nov 12) Crackdown on copper mine protest in Myanmar injures dozens hours before Suu Kyi visit; AFP (29 Nov 12) Activist: Myanmar police fire water cannon at mine protesters; Irrawaddy (29 Nov 12) Copper Mine Protesters Burned Out in Police Raid

⁵² AP (29 Nov 12) Crackdown on copper mine protest in Myanmar injures dozens hours before Suu Kyi visit; AFP (29 Nov 12) Activist: Myanmar police fire water cannon at mine protesters

⁵³ Irrawaddy (29 Nov 12) Brutal Protest Crackdown Injures at least 27 Monks

- **23 November:** During negotiations with protesters in Monywa, President's Office Minister Aung Min said that the regime could not halt the project because that would entail paying massive compensation to the China-owned Wan Bao company for a breach of contract.⁵⁴
- **23 November:** During a Q&A session in the People's Assembly, regime Defense Minister Lt Gen Wai Lwin defended the Monywa copper mine project and warned of the negative impact on foreign investment if contracts with foreign companies were unilaterally breached by Burma.⁵⁵
- **29 November:** The regime Information Team issued a statement that said that the crackdown on protesters at the Monywa copper mine had been carried out "in accordance with democratic practices" and "in the interest of the people."⁵⁶

Land confiscation

- **2 November:** More than 100 farmers protested against inadequate compensation for land confiscated to make way for hotel development in Chaungtha Beach, Bassein Township, Irrawaddy Division.⁵⁷
- **23 November:** Over 30 farmers demonstrated in front of a local regime office in Rangoon's Botataung Township to demand compensation for land confiscated for the development of the Anawrahta Industrial Zone in Rangoon's Hlaing Tharyar Township.⁵⁸ The farmers had held a sit-in outside the War War Win company headquarters in Rangoon's Latha Township since 31 October after the company backtracked on a compensation promise made earlier in the year.⁵⁹

Moehti Moemi gold mine

- **3, 6, and 8 November:** Workers from the Moehti Moemi gold mine operated by the Myanmar National Prosperity Public Company (MNPPC) in Yamethin Township, Mandalay Division, protested in front of the MNPPC headquarters in Rangoon over the company's failure to respect an agreement reached in June.⁶⁰ The agreement allowed the workers to continue mining on a profit-sharing basis and receive compensation for loss of earnings.⁶¹
- **8 November:** Eighty-five workers from the Moehti Moemi gold mine began marching from Rangoon to Naypyidaw to protest against the MNPPC.⁶²
- **23 November:** Police in Myohla Village, Yedashe Township, Pegu Division, attacked, beat, and arrested four workers from the Moehti Moemi gold mine as they were marching to Naypyidaw.⁶³ Authorities subsequently charged them under the Peaceful Gathering and Demonstration Law and Article 505(b) of the criminal code.⁶⁴
- **26 November:** It was reported that workers from the Moehti Moemi gold mine decided to end their protests after agreeing to hold negotiations with the MNPPC on 3 December in Yamethin Township, Mandalay Division.⁶⁵

Fighting in Kachin State continues

Despite talks between the regime and the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) in October, fighting between the Tatmadaw and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) continued throughout November.

- **2 November:** Tatmadaw artillery fire at Nbala Hka in Hpakant Township, Kachin State, injured three children.⁶⁶ The Tatmadaw also fired artillery on KIA positions in Lamawng Kawng and Seng Ja Bum in Hpakant Township.⁶⁷

⁵⁴ Irrawaddy (26 Nov 12) Fear of China Keeps Copper Mine Open: Aung Min; DVB (26 Nov 12) Aung Min warns activists over demands to close copper mine

⁵⁵ Xinhua (24 Nov 12) Myanmar military official warns of deterrent to FDI influx if Myanmar breaks foreign contracts; Myanmar Times (24 Nov 12) Myanmar parliament approves Letpadaung mine probe

⁵⁶ EMG (29 Nov 12) Government clarifies statement concerning actions taken for protests in Lapadaungtaung copper mine project

⁵⁷ Irrawaddy (02 Nov 12) Protests Continue for Confiscated Farms and Land

⁵⁸ Myanmar Times (24 Nov 12) More protests over Yangon industrial zone; EMG (26 Nov 12) Farmers stage protest in Yangon

⁵⁹ Myanmar Times (24 Nov 12) More protests over Yangon industrial zone; EMG (26 Nov 12) Farmers stage protest in Yangon; Irrawaddy (02 Nov 12) Protests Continue for Confiscated Farms and Land

⁶⁰ Myanmar Times (17 Nov 12) Miners march from Yangon to Nay Pyi Taw to protest government

⁶¹ Myanmar Times (17 Nov 12) Miners march from Yangon to Nay Pyi Taw to protest government

⁶² Myanmar Times (17 Nov 12) Miners march from Yangon to Nay Pyi Taw to protest government

⁶³ DVB (23 Nov 12) Police arrest four miners during march to Naypyidaw; Myanmar Times (24 Nov 12) Miners arrested on march from Yangon to Nay Pyi Taw

⁶⁴ Irrawaddy (27 Nov 12) Gold Mine Protesters Escorted Home

⁶⁵ Irrawaddy (27 Nov 12) Gold Mine Protesters Escorted Home; DVB (27 Nov 12) Protesting gold miners to hold talks with gov't following crackdown

- **5 November:** KIA forces killed eight Tatmadaw soldiers during fighting in Dung Waw, Northern Shan State.⁶⁸
- **12 November:** KIA forces killed three Tatmadaw soldiers during a clash in Hpakant Township, Kachin State.⁶⁹
- **14 November:** Tatmadaw troops clashed with KIA forces in Hpakant Township, Kachin State.⁷⁰
- **19 November:** Tatmadaw troops fired artillery on areas close to Lamaungkon and Mawmaungkon in Hpakant Township, Kachin State.⁷¹
- **20 November:** Tatmadaw troops clashed with KIA forces in Lawng Hkang, Hpakant Township, Kachin State.⁷²
- **27 November:** KIA forces killed at least 10 Tatmadaw soldiers during a clash in Hpai Kawng, Muse Township, Northern Shan State.⁷³ In apparent retaliation for the attack, on 28 November, Tatmadaw troops from IB 240 set fire to an IDP camp near Pansai in Muse Township, Shan State.⁷⁴ The resulting blaze destroyed around 20 temporary homes in the camp.⁷⁵

The Tatmadaw also deployed additional troops in key areas of Kachin State. On 15 November, around 40 Tatmadaw trucks carrying soldiers, weapons, and supplies entered Kamaing, Hpakant Township, Kachin State.⁷⁶ KIA officials also said that an estimated 1,000 new Tatmadaw combat troops arrived to reinforce positions around Laiza in Momauk Township, Kachin State.⁷⁷

Landmine casualties on the rise

On 13 November, the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor said that while there were no reports of landmines laid by the Tatmadaw in 2011, the number of reported landmine casualties in Burma rose sharply compared to the previous year.⁷⁸ In 2011, there were 381 reported landmine casualties - an increase of nearly 40% from the 274 recorded in 2010. More than 50% of the casualties involved civilians. In addition, the group said that the actual number of casualties in 2011 was believed to be “much higher.”⁷⁹

Regime doesn't walk the walk on good governance

Despite President Thein Sein's numerous statements about the importance of good governance, the misuse of public funds and lack of budget transparency have, so far, characterized his administration.⁸⁰

On 15 November, in a report presented to the National Parliament, regime Auditor General Thein Htike revealed “misuse and dishonest actions” involving 15 ministries⁸¹ which resulted in about 58.4 billion kyat (US\$68 million) in loans to “private businessmen” during the 2011-12 fiscal year.⁸² The report said that 17.4 billion kyat (US\$20 million) had been repaid, leaving over 40.8 billion kyat (US\$48

⁶⁶ Kachin News Group (02 Nov 12) Burma army shelling injures 3 boys in Kachin state

⁶⁷ Kachin News Group (02 Nov 12) Burma army shelling injures 3 boys in Kachin state

⁶⁸ Kachin News Group (06 Nov 12) Burma army major, 7 soldiers die in battle with KIA in Shan State

⁶⁹ Kachin News Group (13 Nov 12) 7 Burma army soldiers die in two separate clashes with KIA

⁷⁰ EMG (15 Nov 12) Gov't troops, KIA clash anew in Kachin

⁷¹ Irrawaddy (20 Nov 12) Fresh Clashes Reported Near Hpakant

⁷² Irrawaddy (20 Nov 12) Fresh Clashes Reported Near Hpakant

⁷³ Kachin News Group (29 Nov 12) Kachin refugee camp burned down by Burma Army

⁷⁴ Kachin News Group (29 Nov 12) Kachin refugee camp burned down by Burma Army

⁷⁵ Irrawaddy (30 Nov 12) Burma Army Torches Kachin IDP Camp

⁷⁶ Mizzima News (17 Nov 12) Burma army reinforcement raises fears in Hpakant

⁷⁷ Kachin News Group (13 Nov 12) 7 Burma army soldiers die in two separate clashes with KIA

⁷⁸ AFP (13 Nov 12) More landmine victims in Myanmar despite curbs on use

⁷⁹ Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor (Nov 12) Landmine Monitor report – Myanmar/Burma 2012

⁸⁰ NLM (31 Mar 11) President U Thein Sein delivers inaugural address to Pyidaungsu Hluttaw; NLM (01 Apr 11) President U Thein Sein speaks to members of Union Government, heads of Union level organizations; NLM (23 Aug 11) President U Thein Sein addresses first Pyidaungsu Hluttaw second regular session; NLM (27 Jan 12) For the people to be able to earn their livelihoods democratically or independently in accord with the law, democracy cause and human rights are being promoted in line with the constitution; NLM (02 Mar 12) All must try to see national race youths who brandished guns using laptops - Government not divided into hard-liners and soft-liners

⁸¹ The ministries involved were: Livestock and Fisheries; Agriculture and Irrigation; Electricity; Education; Health; Science and Technology; Industry; Commerce; Forestry; Finance and Revenue; Hotels and Tourism; Communication; Information; Rail Transportation; and Cooperatives.

⁸² Irrawaddy (15 Nov 12) 15 Ministries Guilty of \$70m Graft: Govt Report; NLM (25 Nov 12) Information Team Press Release No (5/2012) - 24 November, 2012; EMG (18 Nov 12) Ministries blamed for \$60 million loss

million) to be repaid.⁸³ In addition, staff at the ministries involved had misappropriated about 144 million kyat (US\$170,000).⁸⁴ In response to the report's findings, the regime reassigned some ministerial staff members but failed to take action against high-ranking officials.⁸⁵ In addition, during the Parliament's fifth session, the regime Construction Ministry surreptitiously obtained approval for a 16.9-million-kyat (US\$20,000) expenditure for 400 domestic staff assigned to 70 retired military officers, including former SPDC Chairman Sr Gen Than Shwe, Vice Sr Gen Maung Aye, and various ministers serving in the current cabinet.⁸⁶

Parliament concludes fifth session

On 23 November, Parliament concluded its fifth session.⁸⁷ As in previous sessions, MPs failed to act to repeal or amend Burma's repressive laws. The regime also failed to introduce the much-anticipated media law. On 14 November, it was reported that Information Minister Aung Kyi said that a previous draft of the media law had been scrapped.⁸⁸ In addition to the adoption of the Foreign Investment Law [See below *Foreign Investment Law enacted*], important developments included:

- **6 November:** The National Assembly shelved a proposal to amend the 1982 Citizenship Law introduced by USDP MP Tin Mya.⁸⁹ Several MPs, including Rakhine Nationals Progressive Party (RNPP) MPs Kyaw Kyaw and Khin Maung aka Aung Kyaw Oo, had raised objections to the proposal.⁹⁰
- **9 November:** Despite the opposition of Education Deputy Minister Ba Shwe, the People's Assembly approved, by a vote of 248 to 64, a proposal introduced by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to form a committee tasked with devising ways of improving the quality of education at Rangoon University.⁹¹
- **9 November:** The People's Assembly approved a proposal introduced by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to form a committee responsible for the improvement of healthcare services at Rangoon General Hospital.⁹²
- **20 November:** New National Democracy Party (NNDP) MP Thein Nyunt introduced a proposal to privatize state-run newspapers.⁹³ Thein Nyunt justified the move in light of the Information Ministry's misuse of funds revealed by the Auditor General's report.⁹⁴ [See above *Regime doesn't walk the walk on good governance*]
- **23 November:** The People's Assembly approved by acclamation a proposal introduced by NLD MP Khin San Hlaing to form an independent commission to assess the social and environmental impact of the Monywa copper mine in Sagaing Division and issue findings on whether the project's expansion should be allowed to proceed.⁹⁵ [See above *Protests intensify across Burma*]

⁸³ NLM (25 Nov 12) Information Team Press Release No (5/2012) - 24 November, 2012; EMG (18 Nov 12) Ministries blamed for \$60 million loss

⁸⁴ AFP (21 Nov 12) Myanmar orders businesses to repay 'embezzled' cash; NLM (25 Nov 12) Information Team Press Release No (5/2012) - 24 November, 2012

⁸⁵ Irrawaddy (15 Nov 12) 15 Ministries Guilty of \$70m Graft: Govt Report

⁸⁶ Irrawaddy (27 Nov 12) MPs Probe \$20k Budget for Retired Generals

⁸⁷ NLM (24 Nov 12) Proposal to send large numbers of scholars to foreign countries approved - Fifth regular session of First Pyithu Hluttaw concludes; NLM (24 Nov 12) Pyu paper reading session to be held in Yangon is nothing related with Culture Ministry - Fifth regular session of Amyotha Hluttaw concludes

⁸⁸ Irrawaddy (14 Nov 12) Press Council Releases Draft Code of Ethics

⁸⁹ NLM (07 Nov 12) Proposal to revoke Myanmar Citizenship Law -1882 put on record; EMG (07 Nov 12) MPs block amendments to 1982 Citizenship Law

⁹⁰ EMG (07 Nov 12) MPs block amendments to 1982 Citizenship Law

⁹¹ EMG (15 Nov 12) Suu Kyi pushes for upgrade of Yangon University; Myanmar Times (19 Nov 12) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi pushes hluttaw on Yangon university plan

⁹² EMG (12 Nov 12) Suu Kyi calls for Yangon hospital upgrade

⁹³ Irrawaddy (22 Nov 12) MPs Call for End to State-run Media; EMG (22 Nov 12) Myanmar MP proposes to end state media operations

⁹⁴ Irrawaddy (22 Nov 12) MPs Call for End to State-run Media; EMG (22 Nov 12) Myanmar MP proposes to end state media operations

⁹⁵ Xinhua (25 Nov 12) Aung San Suu Kyi warns break-off of project to lose trust; Myanmar Times (24 Nov 12) Myanmar parliament approves Letpadaung mine probe; EMG (26 Nov 12) Impacts of China backed copper mines to be assessed

Earthquake strikes Sagaing and Mandalay Divisions

On 11 November, an earthquake measuring 6.8 on the Richter scale struck around 50km north of Shwebo in Sagaing Division.⁹⁶ The quake affected 22 townships across Sagaing and Mandalay Divisions.⁹⁷ Singu and Thabeikkyin Townships in Mandalay Division and Shwebo Township in Sagaing Division were among the worst-hit.⁹⁸ According to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), 26 people died and 231 people were injured as a result of the quake.⁹⁹ The regime stated that 2,606 buildings were damaged.¹⁰⁰

HUMAN RIGHTS

Political prisoners: 55 released, over 200 still in jail

In November, the regime continued its strategically-timed release of political prisoners. The latest release coincided with US President Barack Obama's visit to Burma. [See below *US President goes to Burma*] On 15 and 16 November, President Thein Sein granted two amnesties to a total of 518 detainees.¹⁰¹ Most of those freed in the amnesties were common criminals, including former military personnel and foreign inmates.¹⁰² On 19 November, 55 political prisoners were released as a result of the second amnesty.¹⁰³ They included prominent human rights defender Myint Aye, Karen lawyer Kyaw Kyaw Min, and members of the Karen National Union (KNU), the Shan State Army (SSA), the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), and the All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF).¹⁰⁴ As of 20 November, 216 dissidents remained behind bars in Burma.¹⁰⁵

Thein Sein's mass releases of prisoners			
Date	Total prisoners	Political prisoners	%
16 May 2011	14,578	58	0.4%
12 Oct 2011	6,359	240	3.8%
4 Jan 2012	6,656	36	0.5%
13 Jan 2012	651	302	46.2%
3 Jul 2012	80	25	31.2%
17 Sep 2012	514	88	17.1%
15 Nov 2012	452	0	0%
16 Nov 2012	66	51	77.2%
Total	29,356	800	2.7%

Sources: *New Light of Myanmar*; Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP)

Forced labor, recruitment of child soldiers continue

On 12 November, the International Labor Organization (ILO) said it continued to receive complaints of forced labor and recruitment of child soldiers in Burma.¹⁰⁶ The ILO said it had received 158 complaints between 1 June and 11 October, compared with 148 over the same period a year earlier, including 108 cases of under-age recruitment and 25 cases involving forced labor.¹⁰⁷

⁹⁶ OCHA (12 Nov 12) Myanmar: Sagaing/Mandalay earthquake, Situation Report No. 2

⁹⁷ OCHA (17 Nov 12) Myanmar: Sagaing/Mandalay earthquake, Situation Report No. 3

⁹⁸ OCHA (17 Nov 12) Myanmar: Sagaing/Mandalay earthquake, Situation Report No. 3

⁹⁹ Reuters (13 Nov 12) Myanmar quake death toll up to 26, tremor hits capital

¹⁰⁰ Myanmar Times (22 Nov 12) Wooden buildings reduced casualties in devastating Myanmar earthquake

¹⁰¹ NLM (15 Nov 12) Amnesty granted; Xinhua (15 Nov 12) Myanmar announces pardon of 452 more prisoners; Reuters (15 Nov 12) Myanmar to free 452 prisoners, dissidents included; Reuters (15 Nov 12) Myanmar frees prisoners, doubts over political detainees; AP (18 Nov 12) Myanmar to releases new batch of prisoners ahead of Obama visit; NLM (19 Nov 12) More amnesty granted; Xinhua (18 Nov 12) 66 more prisoners granted amnesty in Myanmar

¹⁰² RFA (15 Nov 12) Burma's New Amnesty Under Fire; Irrawaddy (15 Nov 12) No Political Prisoners Released in Amnesty; Myanmar Times (17 Nov 12) Prisoners released in Mandalay under Myanmar amnesty; NLM (16 Nov 12) Amnesty granted to 31 prisoners; Reuters (19 Nov 12) Myanmar frees political prisoners on day of historic Obama visit; Mizzima News (19 Nov 12) 45 political prisoners released across Burma

¹⁰³ AAPP (19 Nov 12) Released Political Prisoners List on 19 November, 2012

¹⁰⁴ Reuters (19 Nov 12) Myanmar frees political prisoners on day of historic Obama visit; RFA (19 Nov 12) 'We Will Move Forward'; DVB (19 Nov 12) At least 43 political prisoners released; Mizzima News (19 Nov 12) 45 political prisoners released across Burma; Irrawaddy (19 Nov 12) Govt Releases 66 Prisoners, Mostly Political Detainees; KIC (23 Nov 12) Ethnic prisoners released in President's amnesty

¹⁰⁵ AAPP (20 Nov 12) List of Political Prisoners whose whereabouts are verified

¹⁰⁶ AFP (12 Nov 12) Myanmar acting to cut forced labour: ILO

¹⁰⁷ AFP (12 Nov 12) Myanmar acting to cut forced labour: ILO

EU, UN pass resolutions on Burma

In November, the European Parliament and the UN General Assembly's Third Committee passed resolutions that primarily focused on sectarian violence in Arakan State and the conflict in Kachin State. On 22 November, the European Parliament passed a resolution on Burma that stated:¹⁰⁸

- Sectarian violence in Arakan State was the result of “longstanding discriminatory policies” against the Rohingya and could have wider implications for the region.
- Regime authorities had been complicit in the violence and discrimination against Rohingya in Arakan State.
- Regime measures introduced to quell the sectarian violence in Arakan State, including the enforcement of a state of emergency in affected townships, curfews, and the establishment of an investigative commission, had not been effective.
- All remaining prisoners of conscience should be released and steps should be taken to ensure their smooth integration into society.
- Legislative, institutional, and policy reforms should be enacted in order to end ongoing human rights violations in ethnic areas.

On 26 November, the UN General Assembly's Third Committee adopted by consensus a resolution on the human rights situation in Burma.¹⁰⁹ The resolution “expressed concern” in several areas, including:¹¹⁰

- Human rights violations, including arbitrary detention, forced displacement, land confiscation, rape, torture, and violations of international humanitarian law.
- The continuing armed conflict in Kachin State and the associated human rights and international humanitarian law violations.
- The situation of Rohingya in Arakan State and the latest outbreaks of violence between Muslim and Rakhine communities.

The regime's representative at the UN objected to the use of the name ‘Rohingya’ in the resolution, reiterating Naypyidaw's position that there was “no such ethnic group as Rohingya” in Burma.¹¹¹

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

More arms from North Korea

The regime was caught out with new evidence of ongoing military cooperation with North Korea despite previous claims that it had severed political and military ties with Pyongyang.¹¹² In an apparent attempt at damage control, it agreed to allow international inspections of suspected nuclear activity.

On 24 November, the Japanese daily newspaper Asahi Shimbun reported that in August North Korea attempted to ship materials suitable for uranium enrichment or missile development to Burma via China in violation of UN resolutions that ban the purchase of military equipment from North Korea.¹¹³ The shipment included about 50 metal pipes and 15 high-specification aluminum alloy bars.¹¹⁴ On 22 August, Japan seized the items following a raid on a cargo vessel docked at Tokyo port.¹¹⁵

On 18 November, the regime announced its intention to ratify the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) “additional protocol,” which would grant the IAEA access to suspected nuclear

¹⁰⁸ European Parliament (22 Nov 12) Resolution on the situation in Burma/Myanmar, particularly the continuing violence in Rakhine State (2012/2878(RSP))

¹⁰⁹ Reuters (27 Nov 12) U.N. committee expresses concern for Myanmar's Muslims

¹¹⁰ UNGA 67th session, Third Committee, Situation of human rights in Myanmar, 16 November 2012, UN Doc A/C.3/67/L.49/Rev.1

¹¹¹ Reuters (27 Nov 12) U.N. committee expresses concern for Myanmar's Muslims

¹¹² Reuters (02 Jun 12) Myanmar abandons nuclear research: defense minister

¹¹³ Asahi Shimbun (24 Nov 12) Japan intercepts N. Korea weapons-grade material bound for Myanmar

¹¹⁴ Asahi Shimbun (24 Nov 12) Japan intercepts N. Korea weapons-grade material bound for Myanmar

¹¹⁵ Asahi Shimbun (24 Nov 12) Japan intercepts N. Korea weapons-grade material bound for Myanmar

material, sites, and activities in Burma.¹¹⁶ On 20 November, the National Parliament approved the measure.¹¹⁷

US President visits Rangoon

On 19 November, US President Barack Obama made a six-hour visit to Rangoon, accompanied by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and other US officials.¹¹⁸ It was the first visit to Burma by a sitting US President. During his short stay, Obama met with President Thein Sein and other regime officials.¹¹⁹ He also met with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at her home and representatives from 14 ethnic and civil society groups.¹²⁰

In the afternoon, Obama delivered a much-anticipated speech at Rangoon University in which he acknowledged the “flickers of progress” in Burma but warned that “huge challenges” remained.¹²¹ Obama spoke of the importance of a democratic constitution, inclusive economic development, bringing the military under civilian control, continuing to lift media censorship, and a future without child soldiers, prisoners of conscience, and exploitation of women.¹²² On the situation in Arakan State, Obama said that there was “no excuse” for committing violence against innocent people and that Rohingya held the same dignity as any other person.¹²³

Washington lifts ban on imports from Burma

On 16 November, the US suspended its ban on imports from Burma ahead of President Barack Obama’s visit to the country. A ban on the import of jadeite and rubies will remain in place.¹²⁴ On the same day, seven companies in Burma were added to the US Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) List, which bars US companies from doing business with them.¹²⁵

Daw Suu visits India

From 13 to 18 November, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi visited India. It was her first trip to the country since 1987.¹²⁶ Amid a flurry of engagements [See box *Daw Suu’s India visit*], Daw Suu raised issues related to Burma’s democratization process.

- **14 November:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Indian PM Manmohan Singh held discussions on a variety of issues, including Burma’s national reconciliation and democratization process and cooperation between the Parliaments and judiciaries of India and Burma.¹²⁷
- **16 November:** Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said that Burma’s progress towards democracy would depend on critical amendments to the 2008 constitution.¹²⁸ Daw Suu said that the charter had “created an unfair situation” in the country’s political system and could not ensure free and fair elections in 2015.¹²⁹

¹¹⁶ AFP (19 Nov 12) Myanmar to sign new nuclear safeguards; Xinhua (19 Nov 12) Myanmar pledges to deal with some pressing affairs in building democratic gov’t; NLM (19 Nov 12) Republic of the Union of Myanmar Information Committee: Press Release 2/2012 - 18 November, 2012; Myanmar Times (24 Nov 12) Myanmar makes bold human rights, governance pledges

¹¹⁷ NLM (21 Nov 12) Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approves Bill Amending the Constitutional Tribunal Law; Xinhua (23 Nov 12) Myanmar parliament abrogates three laws, enact foreign investment law

¹¹⁸ BBC (19 Nov 12) US President Obama in landmark Burma visit

¹¹⁹ NLM (20 Nov 12) Speakers of Pyithu Hluttaw, Amyotha Hluttaw meet US President Barack Obama

¹²⁰ NLM (20 Nov 12) Speakers of Pyithu Hluttaw, Amyotha Hluttaw meet US President Barack Obama; Myanmar Times (24 Nov 12) Obama cooperative with Myanmar civil society, NGOs: representatives

¹²¹ AP (19 Nov 12) Obama pushes change on historic Myanmar visit

¹²² White House (19 Nov 12) Remarks by President Obama at the University of Yangon

¹²³ White House (19 Nov 12) Remarks by President Obama at the University of Yangon

¹²⁴ AP (16 Nov 12) US waives Myanmar import ban before Obama’s trip

¹²⁵ AP (16 Nov 12) US waives Myanmar import ban before Obama’s trip

¹²⁶ IANS (13 Nov 12) Suu Kyi to arrive in India today after 40 years

¹²⁷ PTI (14 Nov 12) PM, Suu Kyi discuss democratic reforms in Myanmar

¹²⁸ RFA (16 Nov 12) Charter Change Key to Fair Polls; EMG (19 Nov 12) Fair election needs amendment of constitution, says Suu Kyi

¹²⁹ RFA (16 Nov 12) Charter Change Key to Fair Polls; EMG (19 Nov 12) Fair election needs amendment of constitution, says Suu Kyi

Daw Suu's India visit

13 Nov: Arrived in Delhi.¹³⁰

14 Nov: In Delhi: Visited the memorials of Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru;¹³¹ delivered the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Lecture;¹³² met separately with PM Manmohan Singh and Foreign Secretary Ranjan Mathai.¹³³

15 Nov: In Delhi: Met with the Parliament's Lower House Speaker Meira Kumar;¹³⁴ met with Vice-President Hamid Ansari;¹³⁵ toured research facilities and eco-friendly projects at The Energy and Resources Institute's (TERI) campus;¹³⁶ met with External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid.¹³⁷

16 Nov: In Delhi: Visited Lady Shri Ram College and spoke to about 8,000 members of the Burmese community at the Oxford Senior Secondary School.¹³⁸

17 Nov: In Andhra Pradesh: Visited rural development and women's empowerment programs in several villages in Anantapur District.¹³⁹ In Bangalore, Karnataka: Spoke with students at the Indian Institute of Science;¹⁴⁰ visited the headquarters of tech multinational Infosys.¹⁴¹

ECONOMY

Foreign Investment Law enacted

On 1 November, the National Parliament approved the Foreign Investment Law after President Thein Sein had returned the draft law to MPs with his proposed amendments in late September.¹⁴² [See *September and October 2012 Burma Bulletins*] On 2 November, Thein Sein signed the law, which repealed the previous Foreign Investment Law enacted in 1988.¹⁴³ The following are some of the law's key provisions:¹⁴⁴

- The Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) will designate the minimum amount of investment capital for foreign businesses.¹⁴⁵
- Foreign investors can own 100% of businesses or form joint ventures with Burmese partners on mutually-agreed shareholding ratios.¹⁴⁶
- Foreign investment is conditioned in 11 areas, including investment in agriculture, livestock breeding, and fishing sectors.¹⁴⁷ However, foreign investors can do business in the restricted sectors if they form a joint venture with a Burmese counterpart, with foreign-ownership caps to be set by the MIC at

¹³⁰ AFP (13 Nov 12) Myanmar's Suu Kyi begins landmark India visit; ANI (13 Nov 12) Myanmar Opposition leader Suu Kyi arrives in India; Xinhua (13 Nov 12) Aung San Suu Kyi arrives in India; Mizzima News (13 Nov 12) India's FM welcomes Suu Kyi to India; IANS (13 Nov 12) Suu Kyi in India, nostalgia in the air; VOA (13 Nov 12) Burma's Aung San Suu Kyi Greeted Warmly in India

¹³¹ AP (14 Nov 12) Myanmar's Suu Kyi meets with top leaders in India; ANI (14 Nov 12) Aung San Suu Kyi meets Manmohan Singh

¹³² AP (14 Nov 12) Myanmar's Suu Kyi meets with top leaders in India; AFP (14 Nov 12) Suu Kyi visits India; PTI (14 Nov 12) Gandhi, Nehru are two Indian leaders I feel closest to: Suu Kyi; NYT (14 Nov 12) In India, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi Speaks of Inspiration From Nehru

¹³³ AP (14 Nov 12) Myanmar's Suu Kyi meets with top leaders in India; AFP (14 Nov 12) Suu Kyi meets PM Singh on landmark India visit; PTI (14 Nov 12) PM, Suu Kyi discuss democratic reforms in Myanmar; IANS (14 Nov 12) PM, Suu Kyi discuss democratic reforms in Myanmar; ANI (14 Nov 12) Aung San Suu Kyi meets Manmohan Singh

¹³⁴ PTI (15 Nov 12) Suu Kyi, Meira Kumar discuss Indo-Myanmar ties; IANS (15 Nov 12) Prefer turbulent parliament over quiet one: Suu Kyi

¹³⁵ ANI (15 Nov 12) Burmese leader Aung San Suu Kyi meets Vice-President Hamid Ansari

¹³⁶ ANI (15 Nov 12) Aung San Suu Kyi seeks TERI advice on boosting sustainable development in Myanmar; Mizzima News (16 Nov 12) Suu Kyi plants a tree, discusses alternative energy sources

¹³⁷ Times of India (16 Nov 12) Suu Kyi on same page with junta over Rohingyas'

¹³⁸ BBC (16 Nov 12) Burma's Aung San Suu Kyi returns to India college; PTI (16 Nov 12) I feel party a citizen of India: Suu Kyi; Indian Express (17 Nov 12) In Vikipuri, she speaks Burmese: I want them to feel they're back home; Mizzima News (17 Nov 12) Majority should look through the minority's eyes: Suu Kyi

¹³⁹ IANS (17 Nov 12) Aung San Suu Kyi visits Andhra villages; IANS (17 Nov 12) Suu Kyi impressed by self-help of Andhra village women; PTI (17 Nov 12) Dalit enclave in AP dist named after Suu Kyi

¹⁴⁰ Deccan Herald (17 Nov 12) Suu Kyi hopes for best of India, Myanmar ties; IANS (17 Nov 12) Science education is poor in Myanmar: Aung San Suu Kyi

¹⁴¹ Deccan Herald (17 Nov 12) Suu Kyi hopes for best of India, Myanmar ties; Business Standard (17 Nov 12) Suu Kyi visits Infosys campus; IANS (17 Nov 12) Science education is poor in Myanmar: Aung San Suu Kyi; Mizzima News (18 Nov 12) Suu Kyi visits IT company in Bangalore

¹⁴² Reuters (01 Nov 12) Myanmar parliament approves foreign investment bill; AFP (01 Nov 12) Myanmar MPs approve business-friendly investment law

¹⁴³ AP (02 Nov 12) Myanmar parliament revises foreign investment law; AFP (02 Nov 12) Myanmar president enacts foreign investment law; Foreign Investment Law, Article 57

¹⁴⁴ Official English language translation of the Foreign Investment Law available at: <http://bit.ly/R471z>

¹⁴⁵ Foreign Investment Law, Article 10(a)(iii)

¹⁴⁶ Foreign Investment Law, Article 9(a) and Article 10(a)(ii)

¹⁴⁷ Foreign Investment Law, Article 4

a later stage.¹⁴⁸ In addition, the MIC can allow foreign investors into the restricted sectors with the approval of the authorities in cases of national interest.¹⁴⁹

- Foreign firms are entitled to a tax holiday for the first five years of operation.¹⁵⁰ Foreign manufacturing companies may be entitled to tax exemption of up to 50% on profits made from exports.¹⁵¹
- Foreign investors can lease land from the state or from authorized private owners for up to 50 years with the possibility to extend up to a maximum of 70 years.¹⁵²
- Burmese shall be employed in undertakings where no skill is demanded.¹⁵³ In areas where special skills are required, at least 25% of the employees shall be Burmese for the initial two years. The percentage increases to 50% for the second two year period and 75% thereafter.¹⁵⁴
- An enterprise formed under the Foreign Investment Law shall not be nationalized.¹⁵⁵

World Bank and IMF confirm their support to Burma

In November, international financial institutions moved ahead with their financial and technical support to Burma.

On 1 November, the World Bank earmarked a US\$165 million loan for Burma under an 18-month work plan to provide policy advice and technical assistance to the regime.¹⁵⁶ The Bank also approved a US\$80 million grant for rural development projects in 15 townships across Burma.¹⁵⁷ [See *August and September 2012 Burma Bulletins*]

From 5-22 November, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) conducted a mission to Burma to hold discussions on macroeconomic policies with regime officials, MPs, private sector representatives, and donors.¹⁵⁸ On 21 November, the IMF released a statement that said the regime recognized it had “a long way to go” and that Burma’s economic development was “stymied by many distortions.”¹⁵⁹ The IMF said it expected Burma’s GDP to accelerate to around 6.25% in the 2012-13 fiscal year and expected inflation to remain “moderate” at around 6%.¹⁶⁰

Tavoy SEZ planning gains speed

In November, the regime held several meetings that focused on speeding up the development of the Tavoy Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Tenasserim Division.

- **7 November:** Vice-President Nyan Tun met with Thai PM Yingluck Shinawatra and Thai Deputy PM Kittiratt Na-Ranong in Bangkok at the first meeting of the Thai-Burma Joint High-Level Committee (JHC) on the Tavoy SEZ.¹⁶¹ They agreed to set up six sub-committees to speed up project development and set an April 2013 target date to begin infrastructure construction including roads, a rail network, a deep-sea port, and water supply.¹⁶²
- **19 November:** President Thein Sein and Thai PM Yingluck Shinawatra agreed on three joint communiqués regarding the Tavoy SEZ on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The agreements gave priority to the development of roads, a deep-sea port, industrial estates, a power plant, telecommunications, and a high-speed train.¹⁶³

¹⁴⁸ Foreign Investment Law, Article 10(a)(iv)

¹⁴⁹ Foreign Investment Law, Article 5

¹⁵⁰ Foreign Investment Law, Article 27(a)

¹⁵¹ Foreign Investment Law, Article 27(d)

¹⁵² Foreign Investment Law, Articles 30 and 31

¹⁵³ Foreign Investment Law, Article 24(c)

¹⁵⁴ Foreign Investment Law, Article 24(a)

¹⁵⁵ Foreign Investment Law, Article 28

¹⁵⁶ Reuters (01 Nov 12) World Bank earmarks \$245 mln for Myanmar, outlines work plan; World bank (01 Nov 12) World Bank Group steps up support for reforms in Myanmar with new interim strategy to improve people’s lives

¹⁵⁷ AP (01 Nov 12) World Bank approves new aid for Myanmar

¹⁵⁸ IMF (21 Nov 12) Statement at the Conclusion of an IMF Staff Mission to Myanmar

¹⁵⁹ IMF (21 Nov 12) Statement at the Conclusion of an IMF Staff Mission to Myanmar

¹⁶⁰ IMF (21 Nov 12) Statement at the Conclusion of an IMF Staff Mission to Myanmar

¹⁶¹ Xinhua (08 Nov 12) News Analysis: Thailand agrees to keep Myanmar’s Dawei special economic zone project alive; Xinhua (09 Nov 12) Myanmar, Thailand to speed up development of Dawei SEZ

¹⁶² Nation (08 Nov 12) 6 joint panels set for master plan; Bangkok Post (08 Nov 12) Dawei group crosses fingers

¹⁶³ MCOT (20 Nov 12) Thailand, Myanmar move closer on Dawei mega project

OTHER BURMA NEWS IN NOVEMBER

3	European Commission President José Manuel Barroso says that the EU stands ready to provide four million euros (US\$5.2 million) in aid to meet immediate humanitarian needs in Arakan State.
3	VISA signs a licensing agreement with Kanbawza Bank, Myanmar Oriental Bank, and Co-Operative Bank to officially launch its credit card services in Burma.
3	President's Office Minister Aung Min says that the regime will commence political dialogue with armed ethnic groups in December.
3	US, Australian, and UK ambassadors tour Pauktaw, Minbya, Mrauk U, and Kyauktaw Townships in Arakan State to assess the situation of those affected by sectarian violence.
3	President Thein Sein meets with Norwegian PM Jens Stoltenberg in Naypyidaw to discuss bilateral cooperation in areas such as energy, hydropower, oil, natural gas, and communications.
4	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi says she will not use her "moral leadership" to back either Buddhist Rakhine or Rohingya.
4	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with Norwegian PM Jens Stoltenberg in Naypyidaw.
4	Norwegian and Danish joint embassy officially opens in Rangoon's Mayangone Township.
5	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with ethnic MPs from AMRDP, SNDP, WNUP, and INDP in Naypyidaw to discuss ways to prevent further sectarian violence in Arakan State.
5	Seven 88 Generation Student leaders arrive in Bangkok to hold meetings with Burmese exiled organizations and migrant workers.
5	Workers from the Golden Day garment factory in Dagon Seikkan Township, Rangoon Division, go on strike over salary arrears.
5	Karen villagers and civil society representatives release a statement that says the regime is using the peace process to push forward infrastructure projects without proper safeguards.
5	President Thein Sein and Australian PM Julia Gillard discuss investment in Burma's energy and mining sector at the Asia-Europe Meeting in Vientiane, Laos.
5	Australian PM Julia Gillard says that "more needs to happen" on issues of human rights for ethnic nationalities in Burma after meeting with President Thein Sein on the sidelines of the Asia-Europe Meeting in Vientiane, Laos.
6	Regime Election Commission approves the registration of the Myanmar Farmers' Development Party.
6	Civil society organizations release a statement at a press conference in Rangoon that states the World Bank's funding to Burma lacks transparency.
6	During a Q&A session in the People's Assembly, regime Information Minister Aung Kyi says that the regime is not in the position to determine the timeframe for the publication of privately-owned dailies.
7	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and MPs from several ethnic political parties issue a joint statement that urges authorities to clearly explain to the public how they intend to handle citizenship issues and the ongoing sectarian violence in Arakan State.
7	Tavoy SEZ Support Team Chairman Tin Maung Swe says more than 30,000 villagers from Yebyu and Launglon Townships in Tenasserim Division will be relocated before June 2013 as a result of the project.
9	Sixteen 88 Generation Students begin a tour of Mon State.
9	Tatmadaw troops attack and capture a Ta'ang National Liberation Army camp at Htat Chat Hill near Namkham, Northern Shan State.
10	Regime delegation led by President's Office Minister Aung Min meets with representatives from ethnic and exiled groups including the KNPP, ABSDF, UNFC, and the DPNS in Chiang Mai, Thailand.
11	Supreme Court informs human rights lawyer Aung Thein that it has reinstated his license to practice law.
12	President Thein Sein meets with Swedish PM Fredrik Reinfeldt in Naypyidaw to discuss issues including Swedish assistance for the promotion of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.
13	Interim Myanmar Press Council announces it has drafted a 15-point code of ethics that will apply to all journalists working in the country.
13	Tatmadaw delegation headed by Deputy Commander-in-Chief Gen Soe Win visits China's bi-annual defense exhibition in Zhuhai.
14	European Commission announces that it will provide an additional US\$1.3 million through the WFP to provide food to those affected by sectarian violence in Arakan State.
15	A Tatmadaw soldier from LIB 567 shoots and kills a 48-year-old Kachin man in Mong Wi, Namkham Township, Northern Shan State.
15	Regime forms a six-member Information Team led by President's Office Deputy Minister Aung Thein in order to release news and information regarding Burma's political, economic, and military affairs as well as natural disasters.
16	President Thein Sein blames "some foreign organizations and countries" for "circulating false and fabricated news" about the unrest in Arakan State.

16	Tatmadaw Deputy Commander-in-Chief Gen Soe Win meets with Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Chinese Army Qi Jianguo in Beijing to discuss issues including regional security, bilateral relations, and military ties.
17	State-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar reports that regime authorities have arrested 1,081 people in connection with sectarian violence in Arakan State since May.
18	US State Department issues a statement on US cooperation with the regime on anti-trafficking, including legislative measures, action plans to address the recruitment of child soldiers, and a pledge to provide funding and technical assistance to Burma.
18	Regime pledges to allow the resumption of prison visits by the ICRC, discuss the opening of a UNHCHR country office, and set up a mechanism to review the status of prisoners in jails across Burma.
18	Regime authorities in Amarapura Township, Mandalay Division, reject a protest permit application from villagers who want to demonstrate to demand the return of land confiscated by the Construction Ministry in 2001.
19	US announces an aid package of US\$170 million to fund a US-Burma initiative to strengthen democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in Burma.
19	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi warns against the risk of a “mirage of success” of Burma’s democratization process.
19	United Nationalities Alliance releases a statement saying that it is too early to lift all sanctions on Burma and that ceasefire agreements must be followed by political dialogue.
19	Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying says that China hopes US President Barack Obama’s visit to Burma would be conducive to peace, stability, and development in Asia.
20	UNAIDS appoints Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as the organization’s Global Advocate for Zero Discrimination.
21	A court in Akyab, Arakan State, sentences Muslim leader and former National Democratic Party for Human Rights MP elected in the 1990 elections Tun Aung aka Nurul Haque to 12 years in prison for his alleged involvement in the 8 June riots.
22	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with New Zealand PM John Key in Naypyidaw.
23	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi dismisses suggestions that economic progress in Burma will resolve its longstanding ethnic conflicts.
23	People’s Assembly approves a report submitted by the Rule of Law and Peace and Stability Committee in which the group detailed the weaknesses of the judicial system and makes recommendations for its improvement.
24	Tatmadaw soldiers from LIB’s 553 and 554 fire mortar shells at SSA-S forces, killing two officers, in Loi Hwe Maw, Monghsat Township, Shan State.
26	Thailand’s Labor Ministry refuses regime Deputy Labor Minister Myint Thein’s request for a six-month extension to the 14 December deadline for the nationality verification process for migrant workers.
27	ADB says that Burma’s energy resources are hampered by limited capital; a lack of qualified personnel; poor legal and regulatory frameworks; and a lack of coordination and planning among seven energy-related ministries.
27	US Senator Richard Lugar writes to President Thein Sein requesting an explanation over reports that North Korea attempted to ship materials suitable for uranium enrichment or missile development to Burma in August.
27	President Thein Sein meets with Chief of Staff of the Indian Air Force Air Chief Marshal Norman Anil Kumar Browne in Naypyidaw to discuss issues including cooperation between the two countries’ armed forces.
28	AIPMC releases a statement welcoming the UN resolution on the situation of human rights in Burma, and in particular its concern for Rohingya in Arakan State.
29	President Thein Sein and Vietnamese President Truong Tan Sang agree to boost bilateral economic cooperation and sign MoUs on banking and the petroleum sector during a meeting in Naypyidaw.
30	Daw Aung San Suu Kyi criticizes the regime’s violent crackdown on peaceful protesters at the Monywa copper mine.
30	About 200 monks rally in Mandalay to condemn the crackdown on Monywa copper mine protesters.
30	About 30 Buddhist monks rally at Rangoon’s Sule Pagoda to demand that police responsible for the crackdown on the Monywa copper mine protesters be held accountable.
30	Regarding the regime’s crackdown on demonstrations against the Monywa copper mine project, US State Department Spokesperson Victoria Nuland says that the US urges regime security forces in Burma to exercise maximum restraint, respect due process, and allow people to freely assemble in accordance with international standards.

REPORTS ON BURMA RELEASED IN NOVEMBER

“**Myanmar: Displacement in Rakhine State, Situation Report No. 11**”, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) <http://bit.ly/SgjYT0>

“**Myanmar: Displacement in Rakhine State, Situation Report No. 12**”, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) <http://bit.ly/Y8KCTT>

“**A Good Office? Twenty years of UN mediation in Myanmar**”, International Peace Institute (IPI) <http://bit.ly/Y8KFz7>

“**Interim strategy note for the period FY13-14**”, World Bank <http://bit.ly/SrN5Ej>

“**Landmine and Cluster Monitor Report Myanmar/Burma 2012**”, International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) <http://bit.ly/Wpkjb2>

“**The Burden of War**”, Palaung Women’s Organization (PWO) <http://tinyurl.com/ce5vduk>

“**Pipeline Nightmare**”, Ta’ang Students and Youth Organization (TSYO) <http://bit.ly/OptXrA>

“**Ending 50 years of military rule? Prospects for peace, democracy and development in Burma**”, Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (NOREF) <http://bit.ly/Tx2gtP>

“**Monthly Chronology of Burma’s Political Prisoners for October, 2012**”, Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) <http://bit.ly/SOzFI6>

“**Myanmar: Sagaing/Mandalay earthquake Situation Report No. 1**”, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) <http://bit.ly/ZrvQEI>

“**Myanmar: Sagaing/Mandalay earthquake Situation Report No. 2**”, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) <http://bit.ly/Tx57mL>

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“**Myanmar: Earthquake - Information bulletin No 1**”, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) <http://bit.ly/SlzxD>

“**Steps towards peace: Local participation in the Karen ceasefire process**”, Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG) <http://bit.ly/Q9znXN>

“**Migrant Information Note - October 2012**”, International Organization for Migration (IOM) <http://bit.ly/QZJAqc>

“**Recommendations for Strategic Interventions in the current media and political landscape in Myanmar**”, Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA) <http://bit.ly/SY7A8w>

“**Decent Work in Myanmar - ILO Programme Framework: November 2012 - April 2014**”, International Labor Organization (ILO) <http://bit.ly/Sglwvf>

“**The 2012 Thabeikkyin Earthquake - Situation Report 1**”, SEEDS Asia <http://bit.ly/Sb1yCH>

“**Rakhine Response Plan (Myanmar) July 2012 – June 2013**”, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) <http://bit.ly/Sa9ztb>

“**Myanmar: Energy Sector Initial Assessment**”, Asian Development Bank (ADB) <http://bit.ly/SqcAnQ>

“**Appetite for Destruction: China’s Trade in Illegal Timber**”, Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) <http://bit.ly/V7AEuz>