

Investment boosts target 10 areas

The Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) will give first priority to 10 kinds of investments, including low-cost housing projects and the construction of industrial projects. The new Myanmar Investment Law was out in October 2016 and in March, the Ministry of Planning and Finance released the final amendments, allowing firms to theoretically make investments smoothly and rapidly. The MIC has invited domestic and foreign business to submit investment proposals. The MIC said it would provide assistance to potential investors who submitted proposals for the priority sectors in cooperation with regional governments.

Learnt from: Eleven Myanmar (June 29, 2017)

Free Housing for Dagon Seikkan's poorest

In order to provide housing and basic services for the most poor and vulnerable families in the project area, the government of Japan provided the funding for UN-Habitat. The government gave land on which to build the units in Kyee Su Ward. The families will get a 350 square foot units and will be able to live 30 years for free but they must obey rules and regulations and maintain the units. Besides obeying rules and regulations and maintaining the units, residents cannot transfer, sell or rent them and cannot transfer, sell or rent them and cannot use them as a store. If they disregard the rules, the units will be taken back and give it to another needy family. The project was undertaken in two phase. Under phase1, six 5-storey buildings were built for 120 families, and under phase 2, three 5 storey building for 60 families will be built. This pilot project will contribute to solving the housing problems faced by the poor in informal settlements. When completed, it will provide quality housing for 180 families and more than 1000 people. The organizing committee carefully chose to give the units to the poorest of the poor. It is a community-based project and the committee met more than 20 times before choosing the families to stay in the units. It was the first time ever that the government of Japan had made available a grant

for the purpose of housing construction for the poorest and most vulnerable in the Myanmar. It is an expression of goodwill by the people of Japan for the people of Myanmar. The government and people of Japan assisted in putting some of the poorest and most vulnerable into decent and modern housing and look forward to future cooperation with the Union Government and Yangon on similar projects in the future.

Learnt From: Myanmar Business Today (July 4, 2017)

France and Thailand to jointly open hotels in Myanmar

To open three new hotels in Myanmar, France-based Accor Hotels and Thailand-based LP Holding have signed a shared contract. Plans are underway to open Pullman Yangon Centrepoint in Yangon and Mercure Mandalay Hill Resort in Yangon during this year and Mandalay Hill Resort MGallery by Sofitel is expected to be opened in 2020. The three hotels are situated in strategic locations in Yangon and Mandalay, for tourists and business guests alike. These three hotels will give travelers additional hotel choices with the growing tourism in the country particularly in Mandalay, as the city comes to develop. Mercure Mandalay Hill Resort will have 206 rooms offering views of Mandalay Hill, the Royal Palace and the Irrawaddy River. Pullman Yangon Centrepoint, with 300 rooms, is located opposite Yangon's High Court building and the famous Independence Monument Park. It will be part of the Centrepoint Towers, one of the tallest commercial buildings in the city. MGallery by Sofitel, Mandalay Hill Resort, will feature 150 rooms and villas, a restaurant and bar.

Learnt From: Eleven Myanmar (July 6, 2017)

Tax Overhaul to Boost Sluggish Property Market, Say Real Estate Agents

The real estate industry is expected to rebound after the government reduced stamp duty from 5 to 4 percent in July. Real estate agents also called on the government to lower property income tax and fix a standard maximum land price per square foot to provide a boost to Myanmar's lethargic property sector. The recent liberalization is like a

signal to the real estate market that it can begin to rebound. Property tax rates of up to 30 percent have hurt the market so the government plans to ease some tax rates which could see an increase in the number of taxpayers. Rather than setting higher tax rates, encouraging more people to pay tax is a good tactic to create more state revenue because people are afraid of paying higher tax. It will also have a positive impact for the sales in the real estate sector but not for renting.

Learnt From: Myanmar Business Today (July 12, 2017)

CHDB announces list of successful applicants to buy apartments

According to the Ministry of Construction, the Construction and Housing Development Bank (CHDB) has announced the list of successful applicants who can qualify for a loan to buy low cost apartments in Yangon region and Nay Pyi Taw. If the applicants had up to 30 percent of the apartment value in their saving accounts and a regular income to pay back the loan, will have the chance to buy the apartments. They were developed in Hlaingthaya, Dagon Seikkan townships in Yangon region and Oaktathiri township in Nay Pyi Taw by the Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development under the ministry. The announcement said the applicants can get application forms at the department offices in Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw to buy the apartments starting from July 10 and the deadline for the application forms will be July 21. Although the ministry needs up to one million low-cost and affordable apartments to meet the need over the next 20 years, they can only develop about 20 percent to meet the need. The apartment will build 100,000 apartments in the first five-year period from 2011 to 2015, 180,000 apartments in the second five-year period from 2016 to 2020, 300,000 apartments in the third five-year period from 2021 to 2025 and 420,000 apartments in the fourth five-year period from 2026 to 2030. The projects will be implemented with a government budget, respective regions and state governments' budget and other budgets and private investments.

Learnt From: Eleven Myanmar (July 13, 2017)

Homes at Bangkok's Whizdom 101 available for Myanmar buyers next week

Condominium units at Bangkok's Whizdom 101 integrated development project will be available for sale to Myanmar buyers at the Novotel Yangon Max from July 22 onwards. It is developed by Thailand's Mangolia Quality Development Corporation, Whizdom 101 will be built across 87,000 square feet of land and comprise 673 condominium and office units in three towers, a department store and several community malls. The condominium units will be priced at around K500,000 per square foot for each. Myanmar buyers will be given the option to apply for housing loans at United Overseas Bank and ICBC Bank, where they can opt for up to 70 percent in debt financing for the units. Buyers must pay 30 percent of the unit price upfront and begin servicing the remaining 70 pc after the project is complete in the third quarter of 2018. Although it is located in Bangkok, the units are expected to be well- received. As one square foot in a Bangkok condominium costs about the same as Yangon, this is the reason why they launched Bangkok housing in Myanmar. Notably, buyers can also apply for housing loans from Bangkok banks and the interest rate is around 5 percent per year in Bangkok compared to 13 percent in Myanmar. And there will be the option to pay via 3-15 year installment granted by the banks. There are 18 flights every day between Yangon and Bangkok and travel time is just 1.5 hours between the two cities. Therefore, it is also easily accessible to those who travel frequently between the Thai capital and Yangon. Currently, only units in the 41 storey Whizdom Connect Tower have been marketed for sale, with only 13 rooms available to residents of Myanmar. Foreigners can purchase up to 49 percent of the units in the development under Thai Law.

Learnt From: Myanmar Times (July 14, 2017)

Singapore to invest \$316m in housing

According to the Directorate of Investment and Companies Administration (DICA), the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) has allowed two Singapore companies to invest over US\$ 316 million in two Yangon housing projects. An official from the DICA said a Singapore company will invest US\$35 million in a housing project and another firm will invest US\$ 280 million in a separate project. The MIC also allowed two housing projects developed by two domestic companies. Fortune International Limited is allowed to build apartments, villas, offices and a shopping complex in Mindama Road in Mayangone Township. According to the DICA, Hi Star Co Ltd is allowed to build a four-storey commercial building besides the Yangon-Mandalay expressway in Phyu Township and take out a lease.

Learnt From: Eleven Myanmar (July 16, 2017)