

Myanmar replies to Japan's offer for cooperation in Dawei SEZ



A beach in Dawei

Myanmar welcomes Japan's offer to invest in the Dawei Special Economic Zone project in Tanintharyi Region. An official reply from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been sent to Japan. The Japanese will be involved in developing the US\$8 billion, 20,000- hectare SEZ, which will be implemented in phases and include a deep sea port and high-tech zones. A minister-level meeting is now expected between the three governments, but committee officials are unsure if this will take place before or after the new cabinet is formed. Japan's involvement comes after repeated delays in getting the Dawei SEZ started. The Italian-Thai Development, a Thai construction firm, was to have taken the lead in developing the project when the initial memorandum of understanding between the Myanmar and Thai governments was signed in 2008, but the process was stalled in 2013 when the firm ran out of funds. Talks and proposals to restart development, including several involving the Chinese, have been ongoing until now. Japan is currently studying the deep-sea port project and will consider whether to finance the project through official development assistance or other methods.

Learnt from: Myanmar Times (November 30, 2020)

Myanmar to complete Rakhine power plant next year



Three new substations were officially launched in Yangon Region on Saturday.

A US\$ 170 million gas power plant project now being constructed in Kyaukphyu, Rakhine State, is expected to be complete before the end of 2021. Kyauk Phyu construction has begun despite some delays due to COVID-19. The 135-megawatt project will supply electricity to Rakhine State as well as the national grid. It is being developed by Kyaukphyu Electric Power Co, which is a joint venture between Myanmar's Supreme Group and state-owned Power China Enterprise. The gas turbine for the plant has already been procured and the plant, which will be powered by natural gas from Myanmar, is now 35 percent complete.

Learnt from: Myanmar Times (December 07, 2020)

Construction of highway connecting Dawei SEZ, Htikhee to commence next year



The kilometer zero marker may one day be the centre of an SEZ one-quarter the size of Singare.

The construction of a 140-kilometer two-lane highway connecting the Dawei Special Economic Zone (SEZ), in Tanintharyi Region to the Htikhee at the Thai border will commence in mid-2021. When complete, it will take travellers from the SEZ about 2.5 hours to reach Htikhee by car. It will take another two hours to reach Bangkok from Htikhee. The project will be carried out with a loan from Thailand's Neighbouring Countries Economic Development Cooperation Agency (NEDA). The highway is expected to accelerate development of the Dawei SEZ as well as local social economic conditions while strengthening trade and diplomatic relations between Myanmar and Thailand. The development comes after Japan on November 5 offered to invest in the SEZ, which is expected to be Southeast Asia's Largest industrial zone. The Japanese will be involved in developing the US\$ 8 billion, 20,000 hectare SEZ, which will be implemented in phases and include a deep sea port and high-tech zones.

Learnt from: Myanmar Times (December 08, 2020)

Lack of foreign investors could dampen Myanmar property market, but local demand intact



The Yoma Central development site in Yangon is seen in the distance.

Foreign investments in the Myanmar real estate sector are expected to decline in 2021 as a result of COVID-19, but some developers believe there are opportunities to tap demand from local buyers. Condominium owners who rent out units

to foreigners have been particularly affected by the decline in demand. Due to the decline in foreign investments and the number of foreigners entering the market, rental prices of such properties have halved. Meanwhile, since rental negotiation is a must process for both owners and tenants, the situation adds pressure to property owners. Until free movement of people across borders resumes, the property market seems to remain difficult for international investors. People urge the government to enact laws related with condos fast for foreign investments to ender and to aid the recovery of the real estate sector. On the other hand, some developers are focusing on local buyers and expanding affordable apartments projects in Yangon. Meanwhile, the role of using technology becomes important in these days. 90 percent of people who are looking for homes use online services. Therefore, developers need to prepare information about real estate issues they are dealing with. Business needs to initiate alternative techniques which can expand the market so that potential buyers can easily search the brand of property services on the internet.

Learnt from: Myanmar Times (December 14, 2020)

Public can own Nay Pyi Taw pensioner housing units



The Satetaramahi housing estate in Mandalay.

Rooms for pensioner housing under construction in Nay Pyi Taw's Zabuthiri township will be sold not only to former civil servants but also to the general public as well. Non-civil servants can buy

one room per person. The pensioner housing will include 189 four-storey buildings, with 3024 rooms. The ground floor and the first floor were already sold to pensioners and incumbent government employees. More than 1,500 rooms of second floor and third floor will be sold to the public but residents have not yet been informed about it. The price of per room on the second floor is MMK 23 million, while the cost of units in the third floor is MMK 21.5 million. Interested buyers will have to pay 30 percent down payment, while the balance can be paid in installment in 3 years, 5 years and 10 years.

Learnt from: Myanmar Times (December 15, 2020)

Myanmar government to build one million affordable residential properties



An affordable housing project in Yuzana Garden City

The Ministry of Construction will build one million affordable, low-cost rental rooms from between 2021 until 2031 in different regions and states across the country. So far, 55,600 rooms have been completed. The project aims to help people buy affordable and low-cost rooms and to meet the housing demands of a growing population. The units will be sold over the long term, and can be purchased with low interest rates. According to Myanmar's population growth, more than 30,000 rooms are needed to keep up with demand, but the country can only meet 20 percent of current housing demand.

Learnt from: Myanmar Times (December 16, 2020)

Japan to conduct survey on Dawei deep sea port project



A file photo of signboards pointing the way to the site of the Dawei Special Economic Zone.

The Japanese government will commence a survey to determine the total amount of capital expenditure required to participate in the development of the Dawei deep sea port project. Myanmar is counting on financial and technical support from Japan to start construction of the long-delayed SEZ. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) will conduct the survey and feasibility study on the deep sea port project. The survey will include soil, climate, tide and market conditions and replace an earlier study. The SEZ will require basic facilities and infrastructure such as water supply, road and electricity access and a deep sea port for trade. The Dawei SEZ is expected to be the largest SEZ in South East Asia- about eight times larger than Thilawa SEZ in Yangon- and over ten times larger than Kyauk Phyu SEZ in Rakhine when complete. Located 20 kilometers north of Dawei, the capital of Tanintharyi Region in Myanmar's southeast coast bordering Thailand, the Dawei SEZ comprises 20,000 hectares of land and includes industrial as well as port facilities. Loans have been acquired from the Thais to construct a highway between Dawei and the Thai border, which will be completed in 2023. Work to connect the SEZ to the national grid is expected to be completed in 2023 as well.

Learnt from: Myanmar Times (December 18, 2020)