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Chin Human Rights Organization

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After dropping its usual attacks on foreign media from the pages of the state-run news papers (below), new govt. propaganda takes aim at the ethnic resistance groups ...



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Established 1914

# The NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Individuals and organizations in the nation that have different views from the government should not take account of disagreements  
**Work with us for common goals in the national interests**  
 Killings, bomb attacks, kidnapping and collection of extortion money are completely unacceptable to civilized world  
 Myanmar will be developed soon if people are united and work hard together, making good use of favourable conditions

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## Arbitrary Taxation & Extortion

### Army Soldiers Forcibly Collected Rice from Villages

04 July 2011:

Some villages in Falam Township, Chin State were forced to contribute rice for the military rations by soldiers from Burma Army Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) No. 269 based in Tibual village, local villagers told Chin Human Rights Organization.

Company Captain Kyaw Kyaw Thu of LIB No. 269 and his soldiers ordered village headmen to collect four cups of rice each from 160 households of Leilet and three each from 24 households from Haimual on 16 June and 3 July 2011 respectively.

The Captain was also claimed to have conducted a series of money extortion from local traders in villages near Thipcang along the Indian-Burma border before the recent incident of forcible rice collection for military rations, according to the locals.

Local villagers in the areas have been said of facing difficult condition following severe weather that destroyed crops in their farm late in February this year and of getting only a small amount of rice mostly purchased from Mizoram State of India.

A cup of rice costs 300 Kyats.#

**“... village headmen ordered to collect four cups of rice each from 160 households of Leilet and three each from 24 households from Haimual ...”**

Townships in Chin State  
(in alphabetical order)

1. Falam Township
2. Hakha Township
3. Kanpetlet Township
4. Matupi Township
5. Mindat Township
6. Paletwa Township
7. Tedim Township
8. Thantlang Township
9. Tonzang Township



### Cattle Trader Extorted Money by Army Soldiers

15 July 2011: Company Captain Kyaw Kyaw Thu and his six soldiers from Burma Army Infantry Battalion No. 269 forcibly demanded money from a cattle trader Cung Nual near Leilet village in Falam Township, Chin State on 6 July 2011.

The 42-year-old Chin trader from Hmandaw village of Kalay District, Sagaing was stopped and forced to give 500,000 Kyats for his 16 cattle after being accused of conducting an illegal trading in the areas across the international border, Cung Nual told Chin Human Rights Organization.

"The Captain asked me 100,000 Kyats at first for each cattle, which would have made a total of 16 Lakhs. After repeatedly begging him, he finally agreed with 5 Lakhs. I didn't get any profit out of this trip," added the Chin trader. #

## Police Force Seized Cattle, Extorted Money from Trader

**20 July 2011:** Burma Police Forces of Tibual village in Falam Township, Chin State seized cattle and forcibly demanded money from the owner while Burma Army soldiers from Light Infantry Battalion No. 269 and 268 exchanged military bases.

Chin trader Pa Hu, 40, from Hmantaw village in Sagaing Division said he was stopped with his 32 cattle at Leilet village on 15 July 2011 and accused by the Police Officers of smuggling as they were not informed of his trading.

"I was told to follow them to the Police Station as I was alleged that my cattle trading was an illegal business without their knowledge," Pa Hu told Chin Human Rights Organization.

"As I explained and begged them so many times that I had never done any trading of cattle before and it was my first time, I was finally ordered to pay 20,000 Kyats for each cattle," said the trader. #

## Villagers Forcibly Collected Money for School Signboards

**22 July 2011:** Households in Haimual of Zawngte village tracts have been forcibly asked to make financial contributions for the Primary School signboards for the academic year 2011-12.

The total estimation for the cost of two toilets and two signboards, which have got new writings such as Three National Causes and Haimual, was 40,000 kyats but the amount collected from each family was not exactly known, according to one of the locals.

"We were told to put up the signboards and build the school fences by 20 August 2011, according to the instructions from head of Falam Township Education Department," said the local.

The collection was to be carried out by members of Village Peace and Development Council. #

## Police Sequestered Motorbike, Threatened Owner in Falam Township

**24 July 2011:** A Police Officer in charge of Burma Police Force in Tibual village, Falam Township forcibly seized a motorbike belonging to a 31-year-old local for patrolling on 19 July 2011, the owner told Chin Human Rights Organization.

The Officer and his two policemen stopped the owner and said they had to go to Thipcang village as instructed to check on cattle traders.

"I told them my bike is not that good and running out of fuel. But he said if I didn't want to get hurt, I'd better stop talking. Then, they went to Thipcang, which is about 10 miles from here," said the bike owner.

The villager said the motorbike was returned around 5pm without any compensation for fuel. #

## Police Forcibly Demanded Chicken from Villagers

**26 July 2011:** Tibual-based police officer and his men forcibly demanded chickens for dinner in Haimual during their trip to Thinghual village in Falam Township on 19 July 2011.

The local villager said the policemen ordered the village headman to get chicken as they were hungry after traveling from Thipcang to Thinghual village to check on the local cattle traders near the Indian border.

"As soon as they arrived, they stayed in our headman's house. And they ordered his family to cook rice and get chicken for curry. It was the time when all of our chicken died due to the outbreak of 'avian influenza'," said the owner of chickens.

The Police Officer accused the headman of discriminating them from the soldiers, saying: "You gave chickens and rice to the soldiers, why didn't you want to give us?"

"I went and killed my chickens worth of 8,000 kyats while the headman was out in town looking for the chicken," added the villager. #



## Primary School Students Forced to Buy Notebooks

**01 August 2011:** Local students of Primary School in Tlanglo village, Thantlang Township were forced to buy notebooks by their teachers in accordance with an instruction by head of Township Education Department.

One of the teachers, whose name is not revealed, told Chin Human Rights Organisation that the notebooks were sold at the price of 150 kyats each from a total of 12 dozens allocated to the Tlanglo Primary school.

"For the academic year 2011-12, teachers were required to sell and submit the financial report to the head teachers, who would then pass on to the office of Township Education Department at the July meeting," said the teacher.

The teachers were threatened with their salary cut if they failed to sell the notebooks to the students.

"Each student got only four notebooks and we just had to do it or else our salary would be cut at the end of the month," added the school teacher. #



**Primary School  
Fanthen Village, Thantlang Township  
(Photo: CHRO)**

*"The teachers were threatened with their salary cut if they failed to sell the notebooks to the students."*

## Money Forcibly Collected from Students for School Furniture Repair

**03 August 2011:** Students of Primary School in Tlanglo village, Thantlang Township were asked by force to make financial contributions to repair school furniture including benches, chairs and tables, Chin Human Rights Organisation was informed.

"We have got to collect money from the students as we haven't been given any fund by Township Education Department for our school furniture and others including chalks and papers," said one of the teachers, who asks not to be named for security reasons.

The teacher said that their salary would have to be cut if they didn't find the fund on their own.

"Even though we have instructions from the township authority that no fund should be collected from the students, we can't afford to buy these materials from our own pockets. The collection is carried out just because no money is provided to the school," added the local teacher. #

### Chin Villagers Forced to Contribute for Office Signboards and Seals

**14 August 2011:** Falam Township Administration Officer U Khin Maung Win issued an order for collecting money from the local villagers in Falam Township, Chin State for making his office signboards and stamp seals last Sunday, according to Chin Human Rights Organisation's sources.

A Chin local, who does not want to be named, told CHRO that the Burmese Admin Officer was said to have ordered the local leaders of Falam's village tracts to forcibly demand 3,00 Kyats from each family and to hand in the collection at his office by 10 August.

"In our village tracts of Zawngte, each family was asked by force to contribute 300 Kyats and the collected money was submitted to the Falam Office on Tuesday," continued the villager.



Primary School in Falam Township

The Zawngte village tracts include Ngailan, Zawngte, Thipchang, New Hnahthial, Old Hnahthial, and Haimual villages of Falam Township.

In June this year, U Khin Maung Win was accused of 'milking' fund provided for construction of new school buildings in Falam Township and intentionally calling a community meeting on Sunday, when most of the Chin villagers go to church.#

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**Myanmar will be developed soon if people are united and work hard together, making good use of favourable conditions**

### Villager Arbitrarily Arrested, Demanded Money by Drunk Police

**18 August 2011:** A local farmer from Sakta village in Hakha Township, Chin State was arbitrarily arrested and demanded money for his release by Second Lieutenant U Aung Tin and his policemen on 2 April 2011.

Second Lieutenant U Aung Tin and four policemen of Myanmar Police Force detained the farmer following an allegation that he didn't inform them of kindling a fire of dry cut-down trees for cultivation in his own farm, according to the local.

"I was approached by two policemen on my farm and

taken away for no reasons. Only when I got to meet with their officer was I told the reason for the apprehension. They asked my family to bring 50,000 kyats for my release," said the victim.

The victim was released after his family, with the help of another local villager, brought a total amount of 10,000 kyats and one chicken to the police officer.

"We begged and explained him that we didn't have enough money and that the amount brought and chicken were all that we have," added the farmer.

Second Lieutenant U Aung Tin and his policemen were said of exploiting their authorities under the influence of alcoholic drinking, according to the local witnesses. #

### Municipal Dept Collected Excessive Amount of Taxes from Locals

**23 August 2011:** The Municipal Department of Hakha Town has collected an exorbitant amount of taxes on construction of new houses in the capital of Chin State, according to Chin Human Rights Organisation's sources.

The municipal authorities have reportedly set the minimum amount of tax to 50,000 kyats for collection depending on the size and kind of houses, according to the locals from Hakha.

In May this year, one local was asked to pay 150,000 kyats for permission of construction for a house of 20

feet in length by 15 in width while another gave 200,000 kyats for a slightly bigger building.

One of the Hakha locals said: "People are facing difficulties in building houses not only because of the taxes but also because of the rising prices of wood and bricks."

"In addition to the taxes collected by the Municipal Department, we also have other collections from Fire Brigade and Forestry departments," added the local.

The authorities are said to have threatened Hakha locals that their plots of land would be confiscated if no building was constructed for a few months, according to one of the land-owners. #

### Forced Labour



### Women in Hakha Forced to Attend Myanmar Women's Day on Sunday

06 July 2011

**W**omen employees of government departments in Hakha Town, Chin State were ordered to participate in a ceremony marking Myanmar Women's Day last Sunday.

About 1,000 women, with the majority being Christian, attended the event held at Town Hall of Hakha in the morning, where local church services normally starts at 10am on Sundays.

A local resident in Hakha told Chinland Guardian: "The ceremony fell on Sunday and they [women] were asked by force to attend. Whether they agreed or not, they had to follow the instructions."

About 50 high school students were also forced to make an appearance at the Sunday's ceremony in their Chin national dresses, according to the Hakha local whose sister was also in the attendance.

"My sister said their boss told each one of them to go to the ceremony. She didn't know what could have happened to her if she didn't go. But they just had to do what they were told," added the local.

Chin State Chief Minister U Hung Ngai was claimed to have attended the ceremony, which took place from 8am to 11am.

Myanmar Women's Day was first organised on 3 July 1998, the founding day of the Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs (MNCWA) in 1996 following the participation of Myanmar delegation at the 4th World Conference on women held in Beijing, China in 1995.#

## Villagers Forced to Carry Rice Bags for Military Rations

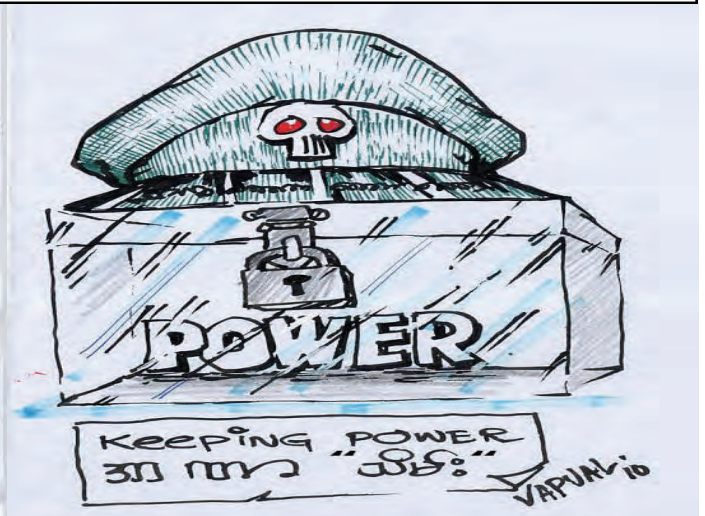
**08 July 2011:** Four locals from Haimual village in Falam Township were coerced as porters to carry bags of rice for Burma Army soldiers from Tibual-based Light Infantry Battalion No. 269, one of the forced porters said.

The villagers, Lal San Dam, 16, Lal Khum Luai, 22, Lian Ting Thang, 67, and Lal Thawm Thang, 42, were forced under the direct order of Burma Army Company Captain Kyaw Kyaw Thu of the military personal

number 22438 on 22 June 2011.

With four bags of rice on their backs, they were ordered to travel for two days without any payment from Haimual to Leilet village, which is about 14 miles away, and to Thipcang where the Captain was temporarily based, according to the porter.

Captain Kyaw Kyaw Thu and his six soldiers are known to have been in the areas near Thipcang village since February this year, extorting money from local traders travelling to and from Mizoram State of India, and forcibly taking rations such as rice and chicken from villagers. #



## Soldiers Forced Villagers to Carry Military Rations

**23 July 2011:** Four locals from Haimual village in Falam Township, Chin State were ordered as porters to carry the military rations by soldiers from Burma Army Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) No. 269 based in Tibual late last month, according to Chin Human Rights Organization's sources.

Burma Army soldiers forced Mr. Lal San Dam, 16, Mr. Lal Khum Luai, 22, Mr. Lian Ting Thang, 67, and Lal Thawm Thang, 52, to porter four bags of rice from their village to Leilet under the direct order of Company Captain Kyaw Kyaw Thu on 22 June 2001.

One of the villagers said that they spent a night at

Leilet village and went to Thipcang village where the captain was based.

The four villagers received no money for carrying the military supplies for two days, according to one of the porters.

***...The four villagers received no money for carrying the military supplies for two days...***

There have been reports of extortion and tax collection from the local cattle traders by the soldiers, who are also accused of forcibly asking the villagers to provide rice and chicken for their meals.

Based in Thipcang village since February this year, Burma Army soldiers from LIB No. 269, led by Company Captain Kyaw Kyaw Thu, of the military personal number 22438, have been patrolling in the areas near the Indian-Burma border. #





Horses used to carry heavy loads in Chin State

## Locals Forced to Carry School Notebooks

**05 August 2011:** Two locals, Rawt Ping, 14, and Lal Rin Thang, 22, were asked by force to carry school notebooks from Haimual to Khualung village in Falam Township, according to a source of Chin Human Rights Organisation.

The two villagers were coerced into 'portering' without any kind of payment as dozens of 'allocated' school notebooks for villages in Falam Township transported by car up to Haimual village required further delivery, according to the locals.

Students from the villages were forced to buy school notebooks for the academic year 2011-12 by their teachers, who were known to be threatened with their salary cut if they failed to sell them, according to the local teacher.

"The headmaster has got to make financial reports to the meeting held at the end of the month. We are required to get money back from our students or our own pockets to cover the cost of the notebooks and deliveries that the government had spent. That's the idea," explained the school teacher. #

## LIB 266 Soldiers Used High School Students as Porters

**15 August 2011:** Soldiers from Hakha-based Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) No. 266 conscripted three male high school students from Congthia Village to porter army goods while patrolling in Thantlang Township, the victims testified to Chin Human Rights Organisation (CHRO).

The students, who are studying 10th grade in a high school in Thantlang, testified that on 8 August 2011, they were conscripted as porters by a patrol army unit from LIB 226 led by Second Lieutenant Lay Aung Thein and Corporal Kyaw Kyaw.

The students were on their way to Thantlang Town from Congthia Village where they visited their families to get money and supplies for their schooling when they met the soldiers on patrol, who were also heading to Thantlang Town. They were immediately asked to carry army rucksacks.

One of the porters, whose name is kept anonymous, said, "About four miles into our journey from Congthia we caught up with an army unit that was also on their way to Thantlang Town. Upon seeing us they asked us to carry their rucksacks saying that their loads were too heavy for them. We already had our own things to carry that were heavy enough. We were unable to carry the double load, and had to leave our own stuff midway at Kuhchah village."

The students said they didn't know what was inside the rucksacks, but judging from the weight they believed that it was ammunition. #



The way porters are carrying military rations in Chin State (Photo: CHRO)

## Soldiers Forced Locals including Women to Carry Military Rations

**30 August 2011:** A total of 24 Chin locals from Kuhchah village in Thantlang Township, Chin State were forcibly used as porters for carrying military rations by Burma Army soldiers on 10 April 2011.

A sergeant and his soldiers from Light Infantry Battalion No. 266 based in Hakha Town coerced 8 men and 15 women into portering to Congthia vil-

lage while patrolling in the area toward Hlamphei village in Thantlang Township, according to one of the victims.

One of the village headmen told Chin Human Rights Organisation that the soldiers forcibly used the locals to carry their rations after the car broke down on the way.

"The soldiers didn't threaten or swear at us. But all of us were tired as we, men, were carrying bags of rice and women bags of lentils for more than 15 miles," added one of the porters. #

## Freedom of Religion

### Chin Christians Banned to Rent and Construct Buildings

15 August 2011

**T**he local government authorities do not still allow Chin Christians to construct buildings and rent a house to live in as a family in Tayawaddy village of Sagaing Division.

However, it is reported that Chin Christian students studying at the Government Technological University can stay in a boarding apartment or in a rented house.

A Kalaymyo resident, who visited the village, told Chinland Guardian: "In Tayawaddy, construction of any Christian buildings is prohibited and Christian families can not rent a house to live. Only students attending the university can stay in a boarding house."

There are about 400 Chins out of 1,070 students studying at the GTC in the academic year 2011.

In November 2008, all the construction materials pur-

chased with a construction by the Chin students were removed by the local villagers under the direct order of U Ko Ko Latt, Chairman of Township Peace and Development Council.

Leaders of the University Christian Fellowship said permission to build a place for holding worship services by the students was eventually granted after a series of appeals made, adding: "At first, we were denied and told that it was not Chin State."

But the building foundation and materials used were all removed and destroyed later.

Amid intimidation and threat, the Chin Christian students still hold worship services in the morning on Sundays in a makeshift church until today, according to the Kalaymyo resident.

Established as Government Technological Institute in December 1999, the university was upgraded to its current status in January 2007, with introduction of major subjects in Civil, Electrical Power, Electrical, and Mechanical Engineering, and Computer Numerical Control. #

## Other Human Rights Violations

### Local Villager Unfairly Punched by VPDC Chairman

06 July 2011

**P**u Hrang Hup, Chairman of the Village Peace and Development Council (VPDC), hit a 17-year-old young man of Selawn village in Falam Township in his face as he was accused of being disobedient, a witness told Chin Human Rights Organisation.

The incident took place after Lal Eng Zua said to the 47-year-old Chairman that he did not want to stay with a new teacher of the Primary School in his house while his parents were away in Mizoram State of India, according to a local eyewitness.

The local said that Pu Hrang Hup punched him in anger as Lal Eng Zua denied his order to let the teacher stay in the house with him.

"His face was swollen and his body painful. He was

staying inside the house for two days because of the pain," said the eyewitness.

The local witness said: "This is the area where members of the local authorities exploit their power while the soldiers are not around. If you are not a member of government-sponsored groups, you are not allowed to become a village chairman. Therefore, it is not possible for ordinary villagers to confront the situation like this."#



## Army Captain Beat up Chin Local on False Accusation

**10 July 2011:** A Chin local male from Haimual village, Falam Township of Chin State, was ruthlessly slapped and kicked with the military boots on false accusations by Burma Army soldier late last month, according to Chin Human Rights Organisation's source.

Van Uk Ling, 30, was beaten up by Captain Kyaw Kyaw Thu of Burma Army Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) No. 269 while he was looking for his 'lost' horse near the village on 23 June 2011.

"I was on my way home and about two furlongs away from our village, I bumped into a group of soldiers led by Captain Kyaw Kyaw Thu. I was hit on my hip and face after being accused of secretly guiding the cattle traders through the jungle to avoid them," explained the Chin victim.

Since February this year, Captain Kyaw Kyaw Thu, of the military personal number 22438, and his soldiers are said to have been on patrol near the Indian-Burma border in the areas.

They have been accused of conducting an illegal operation of collecting taxes from the local cattle traders travelling to Mizoram State, India. #

## University Student Detained in Kalay

**28 July 2011:** Burmese police has detained a Chin student studying Civil Engineering at the Kalay Technological University in Sagaing Division after he was caught in a raid at a local home that turned up with five grams of heroin on Sunday.

On Sunday morning, personnel from the narcotic unit of Thahan police station raided a local house in Taungzalat Ward and arrested all occupants of the house after discovering illegal drugs hidden in the kitchen.

Rung Lian Ci (19), a first year Civil Engineering student, who was in the premise at the time, was arrested along with other occupants of the house.

Rung Lian Ci live with his grandmother in Pyin Khone Kyi village outside of Kalay Town. On Sunday morning around 8 a.m. local time, Rung Lian Ci was travelling to Kalay on his motorbike

## Soldiers Set Fire to 900 Acres of Land out of Frustration

**28 July 2011:** A sergent and his four soldiers from Burma Army Light Infantry Battalion No. 266 reportedly started fire on a forest belonging to Tahtlang and Tlangkhua villages of Thantlang Township on 2 March 2011 after failing to catch local traders in the area.

A former member of Village Peace and Development Council informed the Chin Human Rights Organisation that the soldiers did it out of frustration following their failure in tracking down the local cattle traders after travelling all the way from Tibual village, Falam Township, where they base.

"They [soldiers] thought that the cattle traders wer hiding in the forest. That was part of the reason why they set on fire," added the local.

The total acres of forest burnt down was estimated to be 900, a combination of 800 belonging to Tlangkhua and 100 to Tahtlang.

The local people from both villages spent about six days in total to put out the forest fire. #



Kalay Technological University

when he came across a stranger along the road. Upon learning that the stranger was heading to the same neighborhood as him, Rung Lian Ci picked up the hitchhiker and dropped him off at a house in Taungzalat Ward. On arrival at the house, occupants of the house offered Rung Lian Ci some tea as a gesture of gratitude for carrying the hitchhiker. Rung Lian Ci was attempting to leave the premise when police suddenly showed up and began searching the house. Upon discovering drugs hidden in the kitchen police arrested everyone in the premise, including Rung Lian Ci.— *continued onto next page*

Police immediately took them to the Township Police Station where they were interrogated by Station Chief U Thet Wai. Although both the hitchhiker and other occupants of the house testified that Rung Lian Ci was innocent, the police refuses to release him to date. According to an informed source, the Police has yet to notify Kalay Technological University officials of Rung Lian Ci's arrest and continuing detention.

Rung Lian Ci has an older brother attending at the Kalay Technological University. Both are known to be very active in student activities on campus.

A hearing is set for 8 August for Rung Lian Ci. But he is also due to appear for exams in the second week of September. He is said to be struggling to pay for a lawyer and fellow students have agreed to collect donation to help pay for his legal fees. But according to informed sources, a local lawyer has agreed to represent him after accepting an initial fee of 400,000 Kyats. Lawyer U Mya Aye has said that the charges against Rung Lian Ci, on conviction, carry a minimum jail term of three months.

"They know that Rung Lian Ci is innocent and yet they still charged him for the crime he didn't commit. This is extremely unfair," said a fellow student.#

## Seven Arrested after being Accused of Supporting Insurgent Group

**07 August 2011:** Seven locals from Vangva, Satawm and Saek villages in Falam Township were arrested on suspicion of supporting the Chin insurgent group by Burma Army soldiers late last month.

The Chin locals were seen being handcuffed on the road near Zawlte village by Captain Kyaw Kyaw Thu and his soldiers from Burma Army Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) No. 268 based in Tibual village, according to an eyewitness.

"We were on our way towards villages along the Indian-Burma border for medical treatment and met them with one Tibual local, who was not handcuffed. After taking a chance to secretly chat with the locals for a few seconds, I was shouted at to stop talking," the eyewitness told Chin Human Rights Organisation.

The Chin witness said the seven, whose names could not be confirmed as yet, included one from Vangva, two from Satawm and four from Saek villages in Falam Township.

It was rumoured that the Tibual local might have got involved in getting the seven villagers arrested.

"I didn't know exactly how and why it happened. But I heard that the Tibual local, who was not happy with the arrested locals, made a report to the soldiers saying that the villagers were supporting the Chin insurgency," added the witness.

It was reported that Burma Army soldiers from LIB No. 269 arrived in Tibual village mid last month.

There are more than 50 military camps with 12 battalions of Burma Army soldiers stationed and on patrol across Chin State after 1988 when only two battalions were being deployed. #



## Workers Cheated out of Wages by Govt. Engineer

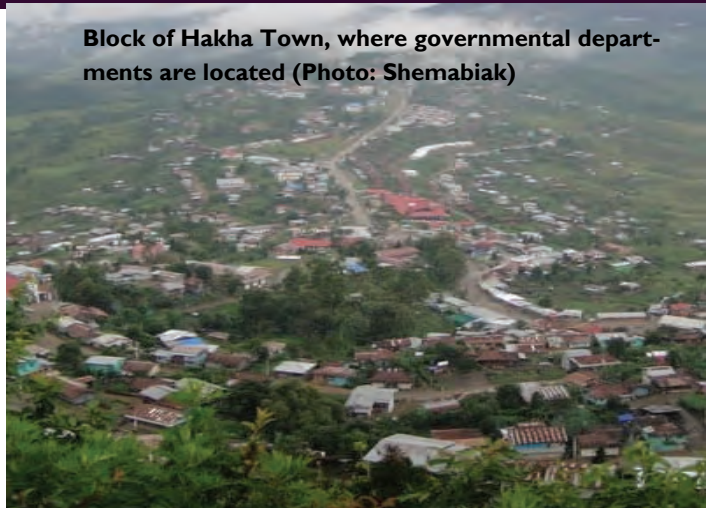
**20 August 2011:** Engineer U Myint Swe, from the Ministry of Electric Power No. 2, has cheated 5 local masons and 18 workers with their wages in Hakha, Chin State, according to Chin Human Rights Organisation's sources.

The Chin workers were not paid for wages of one month and eight days after working on the construction of his office in Hakha, Chin State.

One of the workers said: "We were promised to get paid in full amount on completion since the start of our work. The work had been done in late June, but we haven't got the pay until today."

U Myint Swe was known to have made full payment to workers from families of government employees at the end of June when the work was completed.

Block of Hakha Town, where governmental departments are located (Photo: Shemabiak)



"U Myint Swe kept postponing the date of our payment until today whenever we happened to ask him about it," added the Chin worker from Hakha, whose name is not revealed.

Electrical Engineer of Hakha Township, U Myint Swe is appointed by the central government to take responsibilities of the office building construction, according to sources from Hakha Town. #

## Food Crisis & Humanitarian Situation

### Chin State Named Poorest in Burma

07 July 2011



Chin State has been ranked the poorest among the 14 states and divisions in Burma, according to a report 'Poverty Profile' published last month by the UNDP.

The report based on the integrated household living conditions survey conducted in 2009-2010 said the highest values of poverty incidence are in Chin State at 73%, with the highest rate of food poverty at 25%, followed by Rakhine State.

Akbar Usmani, UNDP Resident Representative a.i., said: "UNDP is happy to have contributed to the first such survey to be done in Myanmar since 2005. We hope that the survey will contribute to well-informed pro-poor programmes for improving the living conditions of the people of Myanmar."

Since 2005, the poverty level has fallen by 6 percent, affecting around 25 percent of the population in the country, according to the survey results.

— continued onto next page



"Food poverty incidence is more than twice as high in rural than urban areas. Rural areas account for over 85 percent of total food poverty," added the report.

In terms of 'low-level' maternal health, Chin State tops the graph with 61 percent just above Rakhine at 55 percent. According to the report, 68 percent of Chin people do not have access to health care.

High levels of self-reported morbidity are found in Karen (8.9%), Chin (8.1%), Karenni (8.0%) and Rakhine (8.0%).

Chin and Karen States stands at

the lowest levels of access to primary schools with 73 and 75 percentage points respectively while the highest illiteracy rates are found in Rakhine and Shan at both 75 percent, according to the report.

Burma's ruling junta has been criticised for allocating only 4.3 percent for education and 1.3 percent for health while nearly 24 percent of the budget this year is reserved for the military.

The UNDP's Poverty Profile survey was presented with emphasis on consumption poverty and its correlates including other dimensions of living conditions such as

health, education, water and sanitation are reviewed.

The first nationwide survey was conducted in 2004-05 and the second 2009-10 with a representative sample of 18,660 households across the country.

According to a report by US-based Nobel Peace Prize-winning Physicians for Human Rights in January, more than 90 percent of Chins were subjected to forced labor, while over 14 percent of the population reported being persecuted by the Burmese authorities on the basis of their ethnic and religious/Christian identity.#

## Opium Users on the Increase in Chin State

**10 July 2011:** The number of opium users among Chin youths in northern parts of Chin State is on the rise although the exact figures cannot be revealed as yet, sources claimed.

A university student from Tedim Township was quoted by the Chin World Media as saying that more youths, especially males, are known to have engaged in using opiates.

In certain villages in remote areas, almost all the men are said to have used opium, according to an interview by the Chin World Media last month.

The 2004 Opium Survey in Burma by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime stated that opium poppy cultivation was observed in small areas, essentially in the northeast corner near Bokkan village in Sagaing Division.

About 1,000 acres of land are made for poppy cultivation in northern Chin State, for which the military authorities have collected taxes from the locals



Billboard by Burma's Government (Photo: CHRO)

over the past few years, according to *Khonumthung News*.

One Christian pastor, whose name is kept anonymous, told the Chin World Media that the estimated acres of land used for opium poppy plantation must now be around 5,000 in Tonzang Township.

The opium cultivation has grown enormously since 2009 after a Burma Army Officer was allegedly said of advising the villages that it was more meaningful to plant something that would quickly make financial benefits.

Sources confirm that the areas in which opium is cultivated are mostly

controlled by rebel groups from north-east India in collaboration with Burma's military authorities.

The Indian rebel groups are also known to be paying taxes to the local military authorities, according to *Khonumthung News*.

The 'unnamed' local said that it is not easy to locate the exact areas of opium poppy cultivation due to the tight security put in place in the region.

Burma's share of global opium production has increased from 5 per cent in 2007 to 12 per cent in 2010, with a rise in opium cultivation by 20 per cent in the country last year, according to the UN report last month.

Despite its recent burning of opium and other illegal drugs worth of US\$50 million on the UN International Day against Drgu Abuse and Illicit Trafficking last month, Burma remains the second largest opium poppy producer in the world after Afghanistan.#



Chin villages in Kanpetlet Township (Photo:CHRO)

## Dozens of Children Infected with Diarrhoea and Sore Eyes in Chin State

**17 July 2011:** At least 60 children aged up to 3 years in Kanpetlet Township have been hit by an outbreak of diarrhoea and eye infections in the remote parts of Chin State since the end of last month.

Chin children as well as some elderly are said to have been seriously infected with the 'prevalent' diseases in Khayaing village, aka Kham-Jäng, about 55 miles away from Kanpetlet town.

A Chin Christian pastor, whose one-year-old son has also been suffering from diarrhoea and sore eyes for nearly a week, told Chinland Guardian that the diseases are spreading very quickly and more children as well as the elderly get infected in the village.

"The biggest problem is we have no clinics or hospitals in our village. The nearest town with a hospital is Kanpetlet but it is not accessible by car. People have to travel on foot for at least two days in summer. Now that we are in the rainy season, it is even more difficult."

Two infected villagers are said to be in critical condition, according to the Chin pastor, who added: "The only possible way we can think of now is to buy and deliver some medicine from Kanpetlet town to our village."

The Dai Chin pastor said another village called Cintwe, about 23 miles away from Khayaing, has got a clinic but there is no nurse or doctor.

Talking about the situation in the areas, the pastor said: "It is not easy to get details of figures and facts due to communication difficulties. But I strongly believe that other villages are also hit by the infections."

When asked about any NGOs (Non-governmental Organisation) working in the areas, the pastor said: "The UNDP arrived in our village, helped us build bridges and provided some money for cultivation. But I

am not sure if they are aware of the current situation."

It is claimed that the diseases must have been related to the ramifications of mautam-caused food crisis triggered by a plague of rats ravaging the areas until late last year.

"We don't know exactly what has caused the infections. Some people said it's because of the unusual climate change. I believe the

lack of medical facilities and sanitary knowledge among the people contributes a great deal to the problems," explained the pastor.

Chin State has been ranked the poorest state among the 14 States and Divisions in Burma, with 73 percent of the population being under the poverty line, according to the UNDP's report last month. #

***"The biggest problem is we have no clinics or hospitals in our village. The nearest town with a hospital is Kanpetlet but it is not accessible by car. People have to travel on foot for at least two days in summer..."***

## Houses Flooded, Villagers Left Homeless in Kalaymyo

**11 August 2011:** At least 50 houses have been flooded and deserted in villages near Myittha River in Kalaymyo District following a torrential downpour of rains for nearly a week.

Scores of villagers who have abandoned their houses due to unusual inundation in the areas are still left 'homeless', with no shelter and aid assistance provided by the local authorities, according to sources.

A Chin reporter, who photographed 'flooded' houses in Gyigone village, about six miles be-

tween Kalaymyo and Kalewa towns, said the water level of Myittha River has risen due to heavy rains, overflowing into the nearby areas.

"Some families just left their houses as they were all submerged by the flash flood and not safe to live in. So far, we haven't seen any assistance from the authorities," an eyewitness who visited the flooded areas told Chinland Guardian.

Some other towns including Tamu and Khampat, where most of the residents are Chins, are also reported being affected with their houses swamped by the flood.

Severe landslides have also made roads completely destroyed, causing

transport and travel disruptions in the region since last Sunday.

The local transport department is said to have sent bulldozers to clear the roads in some 'landslide-affected' parts of the Kalaymyo District, according to a source.

Kalaymyo is a town in Kalay District located on the Myittha River, a tributary of the Chindwin River flowing just below the town of Kalewa.

There is an estimated population of between 200,000 and 300,000 Chins living across 28 out of 37 townships in Sagaing Division, with more than 80 percent being subsistence farmers.#



Floods in Kalay District, Sagaing Division (Photo: CHRO)

## Heavy Rains Destroyed Bridges and Houses in Tedim Township

**12 August 2011:** Torrential rains over the past few days in Chin State have caused damages in Chin State, destroying bridges and houses in Tedim Township.

A report yesterday by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Burma said heavy rainfall, which has been heavier than in previous years, was recorded during the last weekend, resulting in damage to bridges, houses and landslides.

At least 14 bridges and 20 houses

have been recorded being destroyed by swollen streams in the recent downpour, according to the report.

Landslides have blocked roads between villages, with some local farmers and travellers trapped in the affected areas.

The recorded damages include mini-hydro plantations in Phunom and Lailui villages, a Zalui hydropower system for Tedim town, 57 acres of apple farm, 12 acres of corn fields, drinking water source and pipes in Tuisau village, and some other canal line constructions for hydropower.

Local villagers are facing electricity, water and transport predicaments following the unusual weather condi-

tions in Chin State.

Seven families have been evacuated to another place in fear of landslides due to cracks in soil in Dimpi village.

The New Light of Myanmar yesterday said local authorities and well-wishers are providing relief supplies, and health care to the victims at the relief camps.

More than 500 families have been reported moved to other places in Kalaymyo District of Sagaing Division.

Several areas in other States and Divisions across Burma have also been hit by torrential rains. #





*Damages of roads, bridges and houses by flood in Tedim Township (Picture: CYO/TYF)*

## Appeal for Assistance Launched as Flood Hits Parts of Chin State

**21 August 2011:** The Tedim Youth Fellowship (TYF) has launched an appeal for assistance for helping the flood-and-landslide-affected villagers and restoring roads and bridges destroyed in Chin State.

The appeal issued today urges Chin communities, churches and organizations as well as individuals across the globe to contribute towards assisting the locals in worst affected areas in Tedim and Tonzang townships.

"We make an appeal for your kind contribution in order to restore what have been destroyed and to help those who are affected by the flood," said the TYF's letter.

Rice and commodity prices are sharply rising as communication and transport has been completely disrupted since the start of torrential rains early this month, according to the appeal letter.

"Villagers are facing serious difficulties as they are not able to travel to town due to road landslides and collapse of bridges," added the appeal.

The Zomi Innkuan Singapore said it will make rice and financial contribution for restoring bridges and buying electric generators for the local villages in Chin State.

At least 14 bridges and 20 houses are known to have been destroyed by swollen streams following recent heavy rains in Tedim Township, Chin State, according to a report by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Burma.

The Chin locals are said to have faced electricity and water cut-off following the unusual weather conditions in Chin State over the past weeks.

A source from Tedim town said that at least seven families have been evacuated to a safe place because of cracks in soil in Dimpin village of Tedim Township.

Many towns and cities across Burma have been hit by torrential rains early this month.#



**Locals working to rebuild their communities (Photo: TYF)**

## Event & Protest



Martyr's Day ceremony at ZTC (Photo: ZTC)

### ZTC Observed Martyrs' Day in Falam

21 July 2011

**A** commemorative service for the 64th anniversary of Martyrs' Day was held at the Jubilee Hall of the Zomi Theological College (ZTC) in Falam, Chin State, Burma yesterday.

The event that marked the assassination of General Aung San and other cabinet members of the pre-independence interim government on 19 July 1947 started with an opening prayer by Pastor Tial Hliang and a key speech given by ZTC Principal Rev. Dr. Law Ha Ling.

ZTC, a member institute of the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia, ATESEA since 1982, offers courses for Master's and Bachelor's degrees, producing hundreds of Christian ministers, community leaders and pastors.

In other parts of Chin State, Martyrs' Day was not officially observed although the 19th July was a public holiday.

Pu Van Lian, Chairman of National League for Democracy in Chin State, told *Khonumthung News* that the NLD used to organize a service at least in prayer but Martyrs' Day has not been officially commemorated in Chin State since 2005.

A local from Hakha town, the official seat of Chin

<h3>Chins Joined Burma's 8888 Protests in London</h3> <p><b>08 August 2011:</b> More than 300 people gathered in front of the Burmese Embassy in London today, marking the 23rd anniversary of Burma's 1988 nationwide uprising.</p> <p>In the event organised by Burma Democratic Concern in association with ethnic and Burmese organisations in the UK, one of the 88 Generation student leaders said the spirit of 1988 uprising is still alive as what we demanded then and now is the same</p>	<p>- peace, human rights and democratic government in Burma.</p> <p>Chin activist Sian Mun Khai told the protesters the importance of maintaining unity among ethnic nationalities in Burma as the military government continues human rights violations in the country.</p> <p>In another rally in front of the German Embassy in London, about 100 people joined a demonstration demanding the German government to stop opposing a UN Commission of Inquiry into war crimes and crimes against humanity in Burma.</p> <p>Zoya Phan, Campaigns Manager at</p>	<p>Burma Campaign UK, said: "The German government is protecting rapists and war criminals in Burma."</p> <p>"A UN Inquiry could help reduce abuses in Burma, but Germany opposes it because it puts business before human rights. The price is likely to be paid by ethnic minority women being raped, and by political prisoners still in jail."</p> <p>More than 3,000 people including Buddhist monks, university students and civilians were killed during the 8888 Uprising on the streets of cities across the country by Burma's dictatorship.#</p>
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## World's Indigenous Peoples Day Observed in Aizawl

**10 August 2011:** The Zo Indigenous Forum and the Chin Human Rights Organisation (CHRO) jointly organised a seminar in Aizawl, Mizoram State of India, commemorating the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples yesterday.

The event attended by about 20 people from NGOs and local communities was held at the CHRO Office in recognition of the first meeting of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations in Geneva in 1982.

In the statement, the Zo Indigenous Forum urged all sections of Zo indigenous people worldwide to stand united, and to preserve and protect the social, economic and cultural identities and institutions as well as traditional knowledge.

Key speakers at the celebration, chaired by CHRO Field Director Pu Terah Thantluang, included C. Lalremruata, Director of Zo Indigenous Forum on indigenous people and development; and Bernard L. Chhangte on migration and cross-border issues of migrants indigenous people.

In 1994, the General Assembly decided that the Interna-



tional Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples shall be observed on 9 August every year during the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

The date marks the day of the first meeting, in 1982, of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

Across the globe, the indigenous peoples number about 300 million, living in more than 70 countries and representing over 5,000 languages. #

## Situation of Refugees

### Refugee Family Robbed In Delhi

**02 July 2011:** An 'unknown' burglar broke into the flat of a Chin refugee family in Delhi, India, stealing their belongings in the early morning of Wednesday, according to a source from Chin Human Rights Organisation (CHRO).

Mr. Sang Bik and his four family members were sleeping in their rented room when the robbery took place supposedly between 2 and 5am at night in the second-largest Indian metropolis.

The Chin family, from Matupi township in Chin State, Burma, were shocked to see their boxes were left open outside the door, and personal possessions including mobile phone, camera and 700 Rupees taken away.

night," said Mr. Sang Bik, a Chin human rights activist working for CHRO.

***There have been reports of various incidents involving physical assault, rape, sexual harrassment, discrimination, robbery, room eviction and attacks facing the Chin refugees in the Indian***

The case has been lodged at the local police station in Bindapur, Uttam Nagar of New Delhi but no other details have been known about the night robbery.

There have been reports of various incidents involving physical assault, rape, sexual harrassment, discrimination, robbery, room eviction and attacks facing the Chin refugees in the Indian city.

As of last month, it is estimated that there are about 12,000 Chin refugees stranded in New Delhi after fleeing various forms of repressive measures perpetrated by the ruling military authorities in Chin State, Burma. #

## Chin Student Girl among 15 Refugees Arrested in Malaysia

**20 July 2011:** The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) from Royal Malaysian Police conducted a night raid in Jalan Imbi of Kulua Lumpur, arresting 15 refugees including a 14-year-old Chin girl student last night.

Flevia Khuang Cer Thluai, a Grade-III student of Chin Student Organisation (CSO), was arrested around 10pm while walking home with her friend from the church service.

The student was said to have been freed late last night after the Chin community leaders were asked 300 Malaysian Ringgits for her immediate release by the CID staff members, according to the confirmed

sources.

"The rest of the detainees are still kept in the police station. At least 1,000 Malaysian Ringgits per person might be required to get them free," said one of the Chin leaders in Malaysia.

The 'undocumented' arrestees including 8 from Burma were taken to the Dangwongi Police Station.

Flevia Khuang Cer Thluai said she and her friend were stopped and asked for IDs by the non-uniform CID members in front of a corner shop in Jalan Imbi.

"They let my friend go after she presented her UN card to them. I took out my CSO student card but they still took me away. When I saw many others being handcuffed and sitting on the street, I was so scared

and started crying," explained the 14-year-old Chin girl.

"I was petrified when we got to the police station. But I didn't know what to do then. I was so lucky that our Chin leaders came and rescued me from this nightmare," added Flevia, who arrived in Malaysia from Burma in February this year.

It is claimed that some Chin children are being targeted to make money by the Malaysian authorities including police, CID members, RELA and Immigration officers on patrol.

In August last year, six children were arrested and taken to the RELA detention camp.

The CID is said to be carrying a daylight raid in other parts of Kuala Lumpur today.#

## 4-year-old Chin Refugee Girl Abducted in New Delhi

**09 August 2011:** Mai Ngun Tle Mawi, 4, was abducted by a 'masked' Indian man while she was sleeping with her parents at their rented apartment in New Delhi, India last Thursday.

The Chin refugee girl was brought back to the apartment after about 40 minutes of abduction at night, according to her father as quoted by Chinland Today.

"My daughter woke up when the Indian man first carried her but she just thought that it was me - the father. She told us later that the man covered her mouth and pressed her throat so she couldn't make voices," Pu Thang Lan Mang told Chinland Today.

Mai Ngun Tle Mawi, aka Mawite, has pains and difficulties in urinating although it is yet unclear what the man had actually done to her, according to the Chin family.

"When she was back to our house, she was crying in pain and fear. We asked her what had happened to her but she didn't answer but fell asleep that night. Gradu-

ally, we managed to talk to her the next day," added her father.

The family is known to have informed the UNHCR of the incident through the local communities including the Chin Refugee Committee based in New Delhi.

However, the family didn't make a report to the Indian police. Until today, it is not yet known what the Indian local had done to the four-year-old girl.

Sources said that the incident took place during the night when some other Chin refugees, who live in the apartment, slept at another place due to the 'sweltering' heat.

Pu Thang Lan Mang and wife Pi Bawi Men Zing with their daughter, from Zawngte village in Falam Township, Chin State, Burma live as refugees in Hastal, New Delhi.#



**Mai Ngun Tle Mawi, New Delhi  
(Photo: Chinland Today)**

## Major Crackdown on 'undocumented' Workers Expected in Malaysia

**13 August 2011** - KUALA LUMPUR: Refugees staying in Malaysia are expecting knocking doors and sleepless nights as the country's government decided to conduct a major crackdown starting this November to expel all undocumented foreign workers.

The major enforcement programme is targeting illegal immigrants who fail to register and legalise themselves under the current amnesty programme.

"This registration and amnesty exercise offer the last opportunity for them before the Government mounts a major enforcement operation in November," said

Home Ministry Secretary General, Tan Sri Mahmood Adam.

Mahmood also announced that the deadline for biometric registration of illegal foreign workers under the amnesty programme had been extended by a week to 21 August 2011.

The amnesty programme entails registration, legalisation, amnesty, monitoring, enforcement and deportation of illegal immigrants.

The biggest number of workers registered were Indonesian, followed by Bangladeshi, Burmese, Indian, Nepalese, Filipino, Cambodian, Pakistani, Vietnamese, Thai, Sri Lankan, Chinese and others. #

**Reporting by Thomas Chong**

## 6P Confusion Embraces Refugee Communities in Malaysia

**25 August 2011:** Many Chin as well as other Burmese refugees have raised grave concerns in fear of deportation to Burma over the documents issued by the Malaysian Immigration following the 6P registration beginning on 23 August.

The documents issued after the taking of individual biometric information at the Putrajaya Immigration Office include some indications that translate 'return to origin' or 'returning to your country of origin', according to sources.

Some refugees who have had their fingerprints taken in Kuala Lumpur are alarmed after finding out they have been issued documents with different writings on them.

The UNHCR in Malaysia have been criticised for not being able to give clear messages regarding the 6P exercise and accused of 'betraying' the refugees to undertake the biometric processes without its details being properly explained.

A Burmese refugee, Kyaw Htoo Aung, was quoted as saying that the UNHCR tricked them [refugees] in a bid to clear corruption dealings with refugee processes.

Yante Ismail, External Relations Officer at the UNHCR in Kuala Lumpur, said: "UNHCR has received confirmation that the Government of Malaysia has no intentions of deporting UNHCR document holders who register under the 6P programme."

"UNHCR has learnt that the document issued to refugees and asylum-seekers during the registration was the same as the document issued to migrants. This was a document that carried the words "Return to my home country" for the purpose of providing that option to migrants. But this does not apply to refugees and asylum-seekers," posted Yante Ismail today.

David Nun Tho, Coordinator of Falam Refugee Organisation (FRO), admitted the 'confusion and anxiety' created among Chin refu-

gee communities in Malaysia while stressing that they should go ahead with the biometric registration as the community-based organizations (CBOS) have a constant liaison with UNHCR.

Yante Ismail also acknowledged the 'inadequate communication' that has caused a bewildering atmosphere, adding: "When UNHCR learnt about this yesterday, we immediately raised this matter with the Government who will now rectify the document for all UNHCR-registered refugees and asylum-seekers."

The new biometric system requires all foreign individuals including refugees and asylum seekers registered with UNHCR to undergo the taking of their bio-data and information when entering Malaysia.

It is estimated that there are over 86,000 refugees from Burma registered with UNHCR in Malaysia, of which more than 35,000 are of Chin ethnicity. #

## Chin State Government

### Electricity Projects Surveyed in Chin State

20 August 2011

With an announcement made last month by the Ministry of Industry No. 2 to provide electricity to 5,000 villages across Burma, Chief Minister of Chin State is said to have started conducting initial surveys in Chin State.

Ex-General Mr. Hung Ngai said one of the projects that will provide electricity to Hakha, the capital of Chin State, is scheduled to be completed before the end of next year, according to a local government employee.

"66 KV high-tension transmission electric power lines will be installed connecting Kyaw town of Gangaw Township, Magway Division and Hakha, with three points of substations at a distance of 10 miles in between," Chin State Chief Minister said.

U Win Myint, Assistant Director of the Ministry of Industry No. 2, said electricity will be supplied through solar panels, wind turbines, bio gas, hydro-turbines and diesel generators, according to the Myanmar Times.

But he also said that, under the five-year project, villagers will be selected based on their proposals and recommendations by the Chief Ministers of each State and Region.

U Win Myint remarked that a survey has been started in Chin State, adding the villages would come up with plans on how to manage the facilities and to fund the maintenance.

The cost of electricity installations are to be paid in a shared contribution by the ministry, the village or in some cases donors, according to U Win Myint of a ministry with massive budget boost with an allocation of \$185million.

He also made an indication that both the local and international organisations are welcomed for collaboration in the electricity projects in the country.

The recent visit to Chin State by Mandalay-based Indian Consul General Dr. Madan Mhohan Sethi followed a 'controversial' donation of \$6million for the development of Burma's northwestern state, where the fund is reportedly set to be used in health, education, and social development.

India's donation to its bordering state for the first time of its kind has received mixed feelings from the Chin communities worldwide.

Some Chin leaders in exile are much 'bewildered' by the motives behind the 'unanticipated' financial contribution of the Indian Government while many others cautiously welcome in light of development purposes soon after the Consul's visit, the first in Chin State.

A source from Hakha Town said that an additional \$2million has been given for road constructions in Chin State by the Indian Government.

Meanwhile, concern has been raised over the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transport Project being implemented in Chin and Arakan States about possible negative consequences for the local population, including possible use of forced labor and displacement.

The mega development project, a joint undertaking between the Indian government and the military junta, involves the construction of a sea port in Sittwe of Arakan State, an inland water terminal in Paletwa of Chin State, as well as construction of a transnational highway from Paletwa up to India's Mizoram border.

As of last month, the state-run electricity supply, which are only available in some bigger towns of Chin State, has been reported 'unreliable and limited' as the locals get power only twice a week for two or three hours a day.

The locals in some parts of Chin State have only been able to get electricity in their 'limited' areas through electric generators mostly purchased with the help and contribution from Chin people living abroad.

With 73 percent of its population living under the poverty line, Chin State has been ranked the poorest among the 14 states and divisions in Burma, according to a report 'Poverty Profile' published last month by the UNDP. #

## Chin State Government to Hold Meeting with NGOs

**23 August 2011:** In a new political atmosphere developed in recent days in Burma, the government of Chin State is preparing to convene a meeting with development and humanitarian agencies in Hakha, Chin State.

The meeting believed to take place on 1 September at Chin State Parliament Building will invite all representatives of the agencies working for Chin State, the poorest in Burma, according to a confirmed source.

However, the source said the government made a clear request that the invitees must be a Burmese national and officer in charge.

The General Administration Department is said to have been busy working on the invitation and agendas for the meeting whose detailed programmes have not yet been released.

"Once we receive the proposed agenda for the meeting, we will inform you for your inputs and suggestions," said an email by one of the NGOs working in Chin State to members of local humanitarian organizations.

Although it still remains unclear at this stage about what will be discussed, the Chin State government is reportedly organizing the general meeting in an attempt to improve coordination and cooperation with all the humanitarian organizations.

"We have heard about the meeting to be called soon. But no officer letters have been circulated. And we



**Chin State Parliament Building, Hakha, Chin State**  
(Photo: CHRO)

are not sure who will be invited yet and what will be about," said a local staff of one of the international NGOs based in Hakha.

Sources cannot confirm as to whether the Chin Christian leaders and organizations will be included in the meeting on Thursday next week.

One of the Chin pastors told Chinland Guardian: "We will be grateful if the official invitation is sent to us. We have a very strong communication and collaboration among Chin Christian churches and groups. But we haven't received any letters as such."

Last week, one of the senior government employees from Hakha Town said that the government of Chin State has made an indication of willingness to work with the international organizations for the development of Burma's north-western state.

A member of one of the Chin humanitarian groups told Chinland Guardian: "It is great to hear that the government is verbally opening the doors. But we have to bear in

mind that this kind of movement is not new to us at all. It is important that they prove practically what they say is actually done for the long run."

In a never-before-seen move that still remains controversial in the views of Chin leaders in exile, the government of India has recently made a donation of £8million for Chin State following a visit to Hakha by Indian Consul General Dr. Madan Mhohan Sethi.

India has got a joint mega development project with Burma's military-turned-civilian government in Chin and Arakan States, which involves the constructions of a sea port in Sittwe and a transnational highway from Paletwa up to India's Mizoram border, and an inland water terminal in Paletwa.

The local Chin communities have launched an appeal to Chin Diasporas worldwide for making a contribution toward helping the victims affected by landslides and flash floods destroying bridges and roads in Tedim and Tonzang Township early this month.#

## Chin State Government to Take Control of India's Donation

**26 August 2011:** The government of Chin State is in an active preparation for managing a staggering financial contribution by the Indian government for the development of Burma's north-western region.

The 8million fund donated to improve the 'neglected' situation of health, education, road and social conditions across Chin State will be channelled through the government's administration, sources disclosed.

One of the senior government employees said that the Chin government decided to take control of the fund in an attempt to disseminate more effectively as the diverse nature of the Chin people is thought to have normally led to a dispute among themselves and an incompleteness of the project.

A local community leader from Hakha told Chinland Guardian: "After years and years of corruption, dishonesty and exploitation by the government, it is not easy for us, the people, to believe in them until they can practically prove."

Salai Ceu Bik Thawng, of the Chin National Party (CNP), told Chinland Guardian that it was great that the Indian government gave such amount of money to

Chin State and that it is more important that the fund is used wisely for the benefits of the Chin people.

"We all will keep our eyes on the development activities carried out by respective departments of the government. It is essential that there should be accountability and transparency on each project," said the CND Secretary.

On Thursday next week, the Chin government is holding a meeting with representatives of Burmese nationalities only from development and humanitarian agencies working for Chin State.

Mr. No Than Kap, President of the Chin Progressive Party (CPP), said the Chin government is responsible to improve the State, which he described as being 'poor and undeveloped' in comparison with other states and visions in Burma.

In Hluttaw session being held in Naypyidaw, CPP is expected to put forward a proposal for the development of Chin State in areas including road communication, education and industry.

Last week, a meeting led by Captain Aung Min, Secretary of the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), was held in Thantlang Town discussing the identification and preparation of projects to propose to the Chin government in the near future.#

## Opinion

### Thinking about My Identity: Reflections of a Young Chin Woman

08 July 2011

Firstly, I would like to admit that I don't know much about Chin State although I am Chin. Raised in Rangoon (Yangon), the former capital city of Burma (Myanmar), I rather find myself as an urban Chin. To tell the truth, I don't know the square meter of Chin state and its population, let alone its history. What I know is just the fact that I am Chin, which I am proud of.

"What is it like to be in Chin State?" This is the first question Megan and many other friends who have great concern about Chin State asked. As an urban Chin, I won't be able to tell the essence of living as other Chin fellows who live their entire lives there. However, I can share with you

how I see and feel about Chin State, based on my visits during summer holidays.

When we look into the world map, Chin State is just like a very tiny little cheese half eaten by mice. Still, it is one of the most important parts to make our beautiful map of Burma complete. With an artist's eye, I see a map of our country as most beautiful and well-shaped compared to the maps of other countries. The reason why I say Chin State is one of the most important parts is because of its border shape. If we take off Chin State from Burma, then it would just look like an 'impact' map. Imagine what if we make the same thing to other states and divisions as well as Naypyidaw, the official seats of the new government. This has a very clear implication that no single state or division is more important than the others but they all are equally important in Burma.

Surrounded by ranges of hills and mountains, Chin State



is very often addressed as Chin Hills. In summer, it takes us about two nights and three days to get to Hakha, the capital of Chin State from Rangoon via Mandalay. Unfortunately, foreigners are not allowed to visit the state, apart from a small area in the southern part near Mount Victoria, as it is designated as a restricted zone.

Unique and distinct in its richness of natural beauty and landscape, Chin State has got several attractive landmarks including nine-step waterfall, heart-shaped lake, caves, different kinds of orchids and wonderful creatures that we haven't got a chance to show to the world.

The next question I was frequently asked is about job opportunities in Chin State.

Some young Chins with families that can run private businesses such as a teashop or clothes store can get busy helping as waiters, shopkeepers and sellers. Others, especially boys, would jump at the opportunity to grab any available jobs such as garage assistant for cars and motorbikes or highway assistant driver. With the arrival of an increasing number of vehicles in town, high school drop-outs would get their hands on these kinds of manual works.

I take pride in saying that Chin State has new talents among the youths in composing songs and music. But only a few can read musical notes. There are many gifted poets, poetess and writers as well. Unfortunately, we are not allowed to publish books or produce films and songs in our own language. Even if we get permission, it is still limited.

In Hakha, there are two colleges namely, the Government Technological College (GTC) and Chin Christian College (CCC). Students graduating from CCC, if they can afford or get scholarships, can continue their studies for Master of Divinity (M.Div) in Rangoon or abroad. Then, they would serve as a pastor in local Chin churches.

Those students with no religious background would join the English language learning programs in Rangoon such as IELTS and TOEFL in an attempt to further their studies abroad. The best job they can get locally is in NGOs or running own business, which is very rare. I don't know much about the opportunity for students from GTC as it is new and there are no graduate students as yet.

Ordinary children in Chin villages are now inclined to think of going to Malaysia as their biggest dream. The education system is totally Burmanized, meaning all the text-

books and teachings have to be done in Burmese. Children are not allowed to learn Chin language in State schools. They have to learn it during summer holidays through the programs organized by churches.

Subsistence farming has been the main source of income for the Chin families for years and with the huge migration since the early 1990s come total dependence on support from family members or relatives living overseas. It is getting hard and even harder now for families in Chin State to make a living by running own business or from white collar jobs. Therefore, the people are in dire need of both physical and mental support and encouragement.

In my belief, only God cannot be blamed for our situation now. He has his own plan which none of us can imagine. I believe that I am created to be a Chin on purpose. I feel safe and happy to be a Chin Christian. As a Christian, we have a chance to participate in church activities and community matters, which are organized and led in democratic ways.

Most of my Buddhist friends haven't got a chance like us. They don't know the happiness and benefits of being a part of an organization. Through their involvement in the works of NGOs in Burma recently, they eventually realize how well Christian organizations are organized and effective for the community.

Although it is declared that there is freedom of religion in Burma, we haven't still tasted it as permission to construct church buildings is restricted and so is singing out moderately loud in praises and worship.

In governmental departments, Christian Chins as well as other ethnic nationalities practicing different religions from Buddhism are marginalized and pushed aside from taking a leading role. In the military, they can only be promoted up to a major rank because of their religion and ethnicity.

The Burmans, who are the biggest ethnic people in Burma, are not bad by nature. Some of them are even more kind-hearted and better than that of my Chin friends. However, after years of this 'burmanisation' policy that the government has been implementing, we have been brain-washed unknowingly to think that the ethnic nationalities are lower class than the Burmans. Maybe for this reason, on the other hand, we, the ethnic groups, feel that we are even closer at heart.

Burma is rich in natural resources, tradition and culture. A charming mixture of its eight different ethnic nationalities,

namely Kachin, Karenni, Karen, Burman, Mon, Rakhine Shan and Chin makes the country even more interesting. Each of these ethnic groups has their own culture, tradition and customs, which they are very proud of. Ethnic leaders work hard to protect and promote their cultural and traditional identity as the government's systematic policy of 'assimilation' is seen as a threat.

Recently, Chinland is renamed the poorest State in the country, with no natural resources such as ruby, jade and other precious jewels. Clearly, if we can freely work to survive in our native land, we don't need to flee to foreign countries. I strongly believe that the new generation of the Chin Diasporas, who flee their native places and get educated in foreign countries, will one day come back and lead us into a better future. They are the 'treasured' jewelery of Chinland.

I am a 21-year-old student living with my family in Rangoon. A 21-year-old in the developed western countries such as the UK and US can stand on her own feet and run her life by herself. However, I am still fully dependent on my parents financially, mentally and physically. Speaking

of maturity, I do not even know how to cast a vote whereas the 21-year-old in the US would have stood and made her voices in politics. To the worse, I am in a situation where I do not know what to do and how to start even though I would like to see some changes in Chin State and my country.

We are oppressed, isolated and deprived, but we are still strong in our willingness to protect our own identity. We have our own talents as others have. We have our own unique culture and tradition that some other people don't have. It's just that we don't get a chance to present, polish and use it. We may be poor but we are rich at heart and that's why I am never ashamed of my Chinland, but proud of being Chin.

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Zung Chin

*The author is a full-time final year student of arts in Rangoon. This article is dedicated to her foreign friends who have got great interest and always keeps asking never-ending questions about Chin State.*

## The Legacies of Ne Win: Our Common Enemy

**14 August 2011:** The Union of Burma suffers one of the world's longest-running civil wars and conflicts in modern history. On August 8, 2011, we once again commemorate the 23rd anniversary of the 1988 people's uprising in Burma, breaking down the chain of the 27-year reign of General Ne Win, the first dictator in our nation's history. General Ne Win died, but his notorious legacy lives on. As we ponder our forward strategy against the military rule of totalitarianism, let me step back for a moment to reflect on the vestiges of Ne Win's notorious legacy leading the Union of Burma into a full-blown theatre of civil war and conflict, as we witness today.

An in-depth investigation reveals the underlying source of the decades-old conflict: Ne Win's racial chauvinist ideology and his assimilationist policy of Burmanization, which does not embrace unity in ethno-cultural diversity. The result is centralization of decision-making power at the hands of armed forces or "tatmadaw" in Burmese.

Since General Ne Win replaced Lt-General Smith Dun as the tatmadaw commander-in-chief in 1949,

senior positions in Burma's armed forces have been exclusively held only by soldiers of ethnic Burman origin. Systematically, soldiers with a non-Burman ethnic background serving in the tatmadaw have been discriminated and denied high-level positions. Burma's tatmadaw has now become Ne Win's tatmadaw. It is not the tatmadaw that the architect of Burma's independence movement - General Aung San - had founded. What is the difference between the two?

With his theoretical acceptance of the principle of unity in diversity for a multi-ethnic Union of Burma, General Aung San was a visionary leader who attempted to integrate non-Burman ethnic nationalities into the Union by recognizing their inherent rights to self-determination. As John Badgley once put it, General Aung San was "the just man," the leader who apparently placed national interests before the interests of the Burman majority."

General Ne Win, on the other hands, is against the concept of giving concession to the political demands of ethnic national minorities, rejecting any form of constitutional arrangement recognizing ethno-cultural

General Ne Win, on the other hands, is against the concept of giving concession to the political demands of ethnic national minorities, rejecting any form of constitutional arrangement recognizing ethno-cultural diversity of the Union of Burma, including a federal system that combines both elements of self-rule for constituent member states and shared-rule for a common Union. Consistent with his motto of one blood, one nation, and one voice - and under his policy of Burmanization - he launched his nation-building scheme to create a homogeneous society by institutionalizing a system of one-party rule and a dogmatic "Burmese way to socialism," thereby denying the inherent and equal rights of self-determination among the ethnic nationalities who co-founded the Union on equal footing.



Erroneously, his wrong equation of federalism with secession culminated in the staging of a military coup in 1962 under the pretext of saving the Union from disintegration. By propagating the fear of Burma's break-up, Ne Win systematically indoctrinated his armed forces with misleading distortion and dreadful caricature demonizing the underground ethnic armed resistance groups, accusing them of trying to secede from and break up the Union. In characterizing those armed groups, the word 'tupung' in Burmese was used, which is equivalent to the modern English word 'terrorist.' Alas, with full government control of the media, Ne Win has indeed succeeded in brainwashing the general public and his armed forces, misguiding them into believing that the tupungs are terrorists trying to break up the Union. And only 'tatmadaw can hold the country together', which is a bogus claim.

The fact of the matter is that Burma's armed forces under various rules - from Ne Win to Saw Maung to Than Swe to Thein Sein - are the ones committing vicious atrocities against innocent civilians beyond what one can fathom. They deserve to be called government terrorist groups under brutal regimes that mastermind the killing of thousands of innocents. In reality, the opposition armed groups carrying on the resistance movements against successive military juntas are what one would accurately call 'freedom fighters and defenders of inalienable human rights, who would die for peace and freedom, racial harmony among different ethnic groups, and a democratic federal system.

Ne Win's doctrine of Burmanization has contributed to the growing lack of trust between the dominant Burman and non-Burman ethnic groups. Let alone granting the political rights of equality and self-determination, the successive military governments abhor any system that protects and promotes ethno-cultural distantness of non-Burman ethnic nationalities within the Union. Ne Win and his successors' misplaced attack on diversity has led to forbidding the teaching of ethnic language at school and banning of national day celebrations such as the Chin National Day. With the full militarization of all leadership under tatamadaw, ethnic nationalities are treated as second class citizens.

For ethnic-based armed groups, their armed resistance today is deeper than simply uprooting the totalitarian rule of successive military governments: they are forced to take up arms to defend and claim their inherent rights to equality, self-determination, and freedom within their own territories; freedom from totalitarian rule and ethnic-cleansing.

Instead of trying to find a negotiated settlement to the political strife with leaders of non-Burman ethnic groups through peaceful means, General Ne Win adopted his hostile approach by inventing the infamous four-cut strategy that aims to root out the armed opposition groups. As Martin Smith put it, the 'Four Cuts' campaign was designed to cut all links in food, funds, intelligence, and recruits between the insurgent groups and the civilian population.

Unfortunately, the notorious legacy of Ne Win lives on and continues to haunt us. Therefore, while advocating for Burma's democratization, it is essential that we, both above and underground democratic opposition forces, also concurrently wage an all-out war against the chauvinist ideology of Ne Win and its vestiges of Burmanization under his slogan, "one nation, one blood, one voice."#

**By Salai Za Ceu Lian**

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Poem & Cartoon

Mr. President's Lies or Baits

26 August 2011! C. Van Lian Tu

"Come home, citizens!" declared Mr. President  
 In a Machiavellian call to clog a global vent.  
 What a cunning voice of patriotism displayed on  
 Amid slaying and confining many a Solomon!

"Let's build our nation," appealed Mr. Ex-Gen  
 From an imperious podium in a Chauvinistic scene.  
 What a hollow chant of love for a 'blighted' country  
 Amid acculturating ethnic peoples and NLD!

"Democracy and peace!" acclaimed U Thein Sein  
 In a narcissistic defense against truth and pain.  
 What a gaudy character of play on a world's stage  
 Amid an Orwellian blitz against his own populace!

