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UNION OF MYANMAR, NEW DELHI

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SPECIAL ISSUE

MESMERISING MYANMAR



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*Ambassador of
the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
New Delhi*



FOREWORD

I am delighted to know that eGov magazine in association with the Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar is coming up with a special issue, underscoring the immense potential of Myanmar as India's partner. The close ties between the two countries can bring about a positive change and transformation in the lives of citizens of both countries by opening ways for interaction among the two cultures and strengthening trade and business to enrich each other in the pursuit of growth and development.

Myanmar and India have always strived to celebrate the common link of socio cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity shared by both. It is imperative for us to deepen relations further to fulfill the aspirations of the people of our two countries. I am glad to see that both India and Myanmar have been making steady progress in achieving this goal by engaging at multiple levels to establish new benchmarks in this very crucial bilateral relationship.

As India's 'Act East' Policy endeavors to cultivate economic and strategic relations with the ASEAN member states, Myanmar is favorably placed to further India's cooperation in the region. In the larger global and regional context, Myanmar is a trusted partner of India in its effort to develop inclusive, balanced, transparent and open regional architecture for security and economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific.

I am hopeful that this special report would prove to be of great value for developing better insights on Myanmar as a country of diverse culture and unfathomable beauty endowed with unmatched natural and human resources.



Moe Kyaw Aung

Ambassador

Date. 19th February, 2020

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> MAGAZINE

It compiles ICT-related advancements being introduced, exercised by various government organisations via eGovernance module.

> NEWS

Dealing with various key developments and policy-related decisions that define Indian governance style at large, this section throws light on the most important aspects.

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With a reach of sixty lakhs, the website is pushing the Digital India campaign of the Government of India. It highlights various dimensions of anything and everything related to the changing trends of governance in India .

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This segment narrates the discussions and deliberations of participants at the occasional conferences held nationally or internationally.

> CASE STUDIES

It deals with in-depth detail of various projects being implemented in any part of the country, worth inspiring others in providing solutions.

> VIDEOS

The youtube channel 'EletsTV' deals with live recorded versions of tech-experts and key decision makers who participate in key debates or discussion of Elets knowledge conferences.

> INTERVIEWS

This section highlights various stakeholders, bureaucrats and policy makers influencing governance in the country.

Taking India, Myanmar relations to the next level

Myanmar has consistently registered an impressive growth over the last decade following a series of reforms taken up by the South East Asian country after facing decades of isolation and stagnation owing to the internal political situation. India and Myanmar relations have historically been strong owing to geographical proximity and cultural commonalities. Post liberalisation, the bilateral relations between the two countries have been growing strongly driven by common aspirations of their people and mutual cooperation in areas ranging from trade and business to capacity building.

Endowed with natural resources coupled with its strategic location, Myanmar is key to the success of India's Act East Policy, which was revised under the current government to provide more depth to its engagement with southeast Asian and East Asian nations. With the frequency of engagement at the highest level of government in both countries increasing significantly, new areas of cooperation have emerged. The Tri-nation Highway connecting India with Myanmar and Thailand is a case in point, which is expected to create new horizons of growth by immensely benefitting the three countries when connected together by it.

Myanmar is also sitting on a rich oil and gas reserves, which is key to further fuel the economic growth of India and provide it energy security closer home. To tap this opportunity, Indian oil and gas companies have already started setting up their operations in Myanmar, which has welcomed them with an open arm.

This special issue of eGov focuses on key opportunities Myanmar offers to India by giving better insights into the India-Myanmar bilateral relations, emerging business opportunities, infrastructure support offered by Myanmar and the great tourism potential this beautiful land possesses as one of the world's last countries having unchartered territories, lush green forests, and sun-soaked beaches.

Due to the renewed interest of the countries around the world in Myanmar, the country has also been witnessing substantial growth in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). However, India's private sector has been slow to respond to this changing trend. There are huge opportunities awaiting the Indian private sector in Myanmar in Health, Education, Agriculture, Power, Technology industries, etc.

I hope this issue will be a useful resource for understanding Myanmar in a new light and help both the countries in their growth by strengthening mutual cooperation.



DR RAVI GUPTA

Editor-in-Chief, eGov magazine, and
Founder Publisher & CEO,
Elets Technomedia Pvt Ltd



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MYANMAR – The Golden Land



Myanmar, for many outsiders, is a forgotten place, a land where little ever changes. But this country of some 55 million people is warily but determinedly opening up to the world.

Endowed with abundance of natural resources -- arable land, forestry, minerals, natural gas, oil, freshwater and marine resources, gems and jade -- Myanmar is the world's 40th largest country situated in Southeast Asia, bordering the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal in south.

Owing to its strategic location, Myanmar serves as a bridge between India and China, as well as SAARC countries and ASEAN countries. The country is bordered in north and northeast by China, in east by Laos and Thailand, in west by Bangladesh and the Indian states of Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram.

Previously an independent kingdom, Myanmar (then called Burma) was annexed by the British Empire into the

colony of India in 1886. The occupation brought social, economic, cultural and administrative changes to the once-feudal society. The Japanese Empire invaded and occupied the country during World War II but it was returned to British control until independence in 1948.

Myanmar, for many outsiders, is a forgotten place, a land where little ever changes. But this country of some 55 million people is warily but determinedly opening up to the world. After ruled for nearly five decades by a military regime, the country is changing rapidly, and may possibly be entering its most optimistic period of reforms in decades. Asian investors from China, India, Thailand, South Korea and other nations are pouring capital into Myanmar, which has rich reserves of

oil, gas, and other natural resources. This renewed interest could finally help the country develop. Myanmar's priority sectors for investment include agriculture, tourism, health, education, energy, and banking and finance.

Myanmar is crucial for connecting India, China and other ASEAN countries. The country is surrounded by some of the most populated countries in the world which together account for about 41 percent of the world's population.

Myanmar is a lower-middle income economy with a GNI per capita of US\$1,210 in 2017. According to World Bank's 'Poverty Report', the proportion of Myanmar's population living under the national poverty line halved from 48.2 percent in 2005 to 24.8 percent in 2017. The reduction in poverty is



Myanmar at a Glance

Official name: Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Capital: Nay Pyi Taw
Economic centre: Yangon
President: U Win Myint
Population: 53 million
Currency: Kyat
Area: 676,552 sq km (261,218 sq miles)
Major language: Burmese (official), Kachin, Kayah, Karen, Chin, Mon, Rakhine, and Shan
Major religions: Buddhism
Highest elevation: Mount Hkakabo Razi (Khaka Borazi) at 5,881 m (19,295 ft) located in Kachin state
Main rivers: The Chindwin (the 'Mighty Chindwin') and the Irrawaddy (Ayeyarwady)
Border countries: Bangladesh, China, India, Laos, Thailand

visible in both rural and urban areas, but has been faster in urban areas. Poverty depth and severity have also decreased substantially since 2005.

Administratively divided into seven States and seven regions, the country is at the crossroads of cultural, ethnic and religious influences from China and India. The rich and diverse cultural assets, both tangible and intangible heritages, especially those closely related to religious practices, exemplify the co-existence of past and modern way of life. Myanmar is perhaps alone in East Asia, where men still wear traditional dress—longyi sarongs—and

women wear thanaka, a chalky paste made from bark and applied to the face as a natural sunscreen.

Tourists from across the world see in Myanmar vestiges of the slower, seemingly more relaxed life common four decades ago in Thailand or Singapore. They are often seen relaxing in open-air teashops, spending hours sipping warm green tea and eating samosas and mohinga noodles beneath a skyline of gold-encrusted temples and crumbling colonial facades. The bookstalls in central Rangoon, selling tattered copies of old Penguin classics, attract

far more interest than similar stalls in wealthier neighbors like Thailand.

Mandalay, the last seat of Myanmar's monarchy, was until recently a forlorn town. But today, central Mandalay has massive shopping malls dominate its skyline, surrounded by new hotels and coffee shops catering to tourists and businessmen. Today, tourists are flocking not only to bigger Myanmar cities but also to the lesser known cities and regions, transforming the South Asian country, which still has almost 50 percent of its area under forest cover, at a rapid pace. China has proposed a high-speed rail line to connect it to Myanmar's coast, and has started to revive the old "Burma Road" from World War II, a decaying link across the north.

Having a rich history stretching back to times of Pyu dynasty which prospered for a 1000 years from 200 BC to 900 AD; a rich diversity of its numerous ethnic groups, languages, fairs and festivals; and splendid religious and spiritual sites, Myanmar is among the last countries of Asia awaiting to be revealed to the travellers of the world. ■



INDIA - MYANMAR

A PROGRESSIVE PARTNERSHIP

India has been using soft diplomacy to foster deeper business links with Myanmar by focusing on development assistance, grants-in-aid, lines of credit, and capacity building programmes, which have been serving both the countries well.

Despite historically close ties and India being the fifth largest trading partner of Myanmar in terms of bilateral trade, Indian investments in Myanmar are modest and remain below potential.

As of April, 2019, India was the 11th largest investor in Myanmar with an approved investment of \$7630 million by 30 Indian companies, according to India's Ministry of External Affairs. Most of Indian investments have been in oil & gas sector. But in the past few

years, Indian companies have shown interest in investing in Myanmar and major contracts have been won by them.

India has been using soft diplomacy to foster deeper business links with Myanmar by focusing on development assistance, grants-in-aid, lines of credit, and capacity building programmes, which has been serving well both the countries.

India's President Ram Nath Kovind was in Myanmar on a three-day state

visit from December 11-13, 2019. The President reemphasised that Myanmar was a key partner for India's "Act East" and "Neighbourhood First" policies. During his visit he committed India's projects that promote Myanmar's priorities. He also inaugurated the Fifth Enterprise India Exhibition in Yangon to showcase the best of Indian products, services, innovation and knowhow to business partners, start-ups, incubators and customers in Myanmar.



Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid his first bilateral State visit to Myanmar from 5th to 7th September 2017. During this visit, both the countries reviewed various projects in Myanmar like the Kaladan Multi Modal Transit Transport Project and other road and bridge construction projects as fully funded grant-in-aid projects supported by India. Completion of these projects is set to further boost the investment climate with improved connectivity.

With both the countries trying to find ways to diversify their mutual trade and investments, the potential areas of investment in Myanmar by Indian companies include renewable energy, power, light engineering, agro-products and machinery, IT, pharmaceuticals, healthcare and education sectors.

India has been engaged in a range of projects in Myanmar including in areas like roads, railways, telecom, power, energy, hydrocarbons, remote sensing, agriculture, industry, IT, health-related services and education.

Some of the Indian companies that have been making inroads in Myanmar include ONGC Videsh Limited, Jubilant Oil and Gas, Escorts, Tata Motors, Essar Energy, RITES, Apollo, CIPLA, Ranbaxy, Cadila Healthcare Ltd, Dr. Reddy's Lab. and Century Ply, among others.

As India and Myanmar have a long history of shared religious, linguistic and ethnic ties, Myanmar can be India's gateway to South East Asia and ASEAN.

There is a lot of scope for the Indian companies to further deepen their roots in the country and look beyond agriculture, oil & gas sectors. With both the countries trying to find ways to diversify their mutual trade and investments, the potential areas of investment in Myanmar by Indian companies include renewable energy, power, light engineering, agro-products and machinery, IT, pharmaceuticals, healthcare and education sectors, among others.



Education and Health are particularly two very critical areas where India has competitive advantage in Myanmar, as the country needs educational institutions, centres of excellence and learning, and a world-class health infrastructure including multi-specialty hospitals. Enhancing strong links between institutions of India and Myanmar in these sectors will be a win-win for both the countries. As part of its efforts in these two areas of cooperation, India has successfully established centres for industrial training and enhancement of IT skills and other capacity building programmes in Myanmar. Also, both the countries have agreed to deepen their engagements in some of the mutually identified core sectors. Comprehensive MoUs would be explored in areas of Health Care and Textiles. Project identified for Myanmar for preparation of DPR includes setting up of a Multi-Specialty Hospital and/ or Medical College and an Educational Institute in Myanmar.

India has much to offer Myanmar in terms of infrastructure development, cutting-edge products and services and digitally-driven choices – from fintech to biotech. On the other hand, Myanmar is rich in human and natural resources and can offer opportunities for Indian

investments to grow in the fields of energy, telecom, banking, insurance and healthcare.

India and Myanmar share 1,643 kilometer-long common border along the Potkai Hills. India's four states; Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh share international border with Myanmar. This presents a unique opportunity for both the countries to increase their volume of trade.

However, there have been certain challenges that need to be addressed. The trade between India and Myanmar reached 1.6 billion in 2017-18, which is far less than the actual potential. Also, India's economic involvement in Myanmar, largely through the public sector, has not been up to the mark with complaints about implementation delays and quality controls.

Since Myanmar opened its doors to the world after decades of isolation, a new chapter has begun in India-Myanmar relation. With India developing its ambitious 'Act East' foreign policy, there is set to be a qualitative change in the relations between the two countries. However, this can only be achieved on the back of not only government to government efforts but also through a sustained people to people contact promotion of business and investment and partnerships with the private sector of both the countries. ■



THE WORLD AT MYANMAR'S DOORSTEPS

Foreign Direct Investment in Myanmar has increased manifold since the government adopted a series of political, economic, and administrative reforms in 2011. Today, many countries around the world are firming up their presence in Myanmar to benefit from the business-friendly policies that have been put in place to exploit the immense wealth of human and natural resources the country is trying to tap to drive its growth

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Myanmar has grown substantially since the government adopted a series of political, economic, and administrative reforms in 2011. Successive governments have pursued market liberalisation, opening up a range of sectors to private business and foreign investment. The easing of sanctions spurred a rush of interest into the country as one of the last Asian frontier markets. According to the World Bank, the country's GDP expanded by 6.4% in 2017–18, a figure which is projected to grow to 6.8% in 2018/19, 6.9% in 2019/20 and 7.1% in 2020–21.

In Myanmar, approved FDI varies significantly on a year-by-year basis due to major, "one-off" projects often in the energy sector. Nevertheless,

FDI in Myanmar rose by 45 percent to \$4.3 billion in 2017 – the third consecutive year of increase. Strong investments from ASEAN and the United States helped push the inflows. ASEAN remained the largest source of investment (48 percent), led by companies based in Singapore. Companies from the United States and the European Union were also active investors in Myanmar in 2017.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is projected to increase further as the government has drafted and enforced business-friendly measures, including a new Myanmar Investment Law (MIL) that was enacted in April 2017. The law combines aspects of the previous Foreign Investment Law of 2012 (FIL) and Myanmar Citizens' Investment Law of 2013, and is aimed partly at providing more opportunities

for foreign firms. Separately, a new Myanmar Companies Law was passed in 2017 and came into effect in August 2018, replacing in part the 1914 Myanmar Companies Act. The new law aims to strengthen the Myanmar economy by creating a set of clear, transparent, and consistent regulations with improved corporate governance and accountability.

However, despite the rise in FDI into Myanmar it continues to be dominated by Greenfield activities. The low level of M&A transactions reflects the limited M&A opportunities and less mature M&A environment. Despite the government's initiatives in fostering best business practices in the country, investors still face domestic risks. In particular, peace agreement talks with several ethnic armed groups are still ongoing, and

the government has had to accommodate a range of stakeholders with diverging interests in the economy.

Nonetheless, economic growth in Myanmar remains robust, offering large potential for business relationships to take place between foreign investors and local stakeholders.

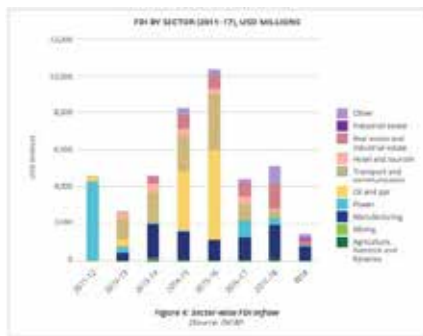
FDI INFLOWS BY SECTOR

Extractive industries, manufacturing and transportation services dominate FDI in Myanmar. There is also a significant increase in investments in manufacturing activities and services (accommodation and real estate), which have further contributed to the rise of FDI in the country, according to Myanmar’s Directorate of Investment



and Company Administration (DICA).

The following chart breaks down FDI by sector. The four largest sectors are: oil & gas, power, manufacturing, and transport & communication; they account for almost 82% of the total FDI inflow. Several key communications and oil and gas projects contributed to the large approval totals in 2014–15 and 2015–16.



activities pushed up investment in this industry. A consortium led by Total (France) started the Badamya gas production project in 2017 with partners that include Chevron-Unocal (United States), PTTEP (Thailand) and MOGE (Myanmar). Woodside (Australia) expanded its offshore activities, which resulted in three natural gas discoveries.

Ethos Energy (United States) won an \$8 million contract to upgrade the Ywama power plant and Sahakol Equipment (Thailand) was awarded a

EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY

Some large-scale extractive FDI





contract to operate a \$100 million tin mine operation. A number of significant M&A activities in mining took place in 2017. They include the acquisition by Siamgas and Petrochemicals (Thailand) of a 30 per cent interest in a 230 MW power plant for \$48 million, China Polymetallic Mining (China) of Hua Xing Global (China) mining activities and NH-Amudi Asset Management (Republic of Korea) of a gas upstream asset owned by Korea Gas Corporation (Republic of Korea) in the host country. In 2018, Pacific Hunt Energy (Australia) undertook drilling and exploration projects with two local companies and Total (France) started extraction of natural gas in the host country.

MANUFACTURING

FDI continued to flow to a wide range of manufacturing industries, which included food and beverage,

automotive, garments and cement production. In the food and beverage industry, New Hope Liuhe (China) made a \$10 million investment in 2017 for production of animal feed, Agrocrop International (Singapore) opened a rice production and export facility, Acecook (Japan) opened a \$20 million noodle factory and Sahadharawat (Thailand) started to invest in a \$5 million metal packaging plant in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone (SEZ). In the same year, Thai Beverage (Thailand) acquired a majority stake in a local distillery and a supply chain service company for \$742 million.

In 2018, De Heus (Netherlands) opened its second feed plant in the country and Trouw Nutrition (Netherlands) opened its first manufacturing unit, with an investment of \$6 million. Nestle (Switzerland) is opening a factory in the end of 2018 to serve the local

market. FDI in garments continued to be dominated by Asian investors.

LS Cable & System (Republic of Korea) together with an affiliate started construction of an \$18 million factory in 2017 to produce aerial cables for buildings. Komatsu (Japan) opened a plant the same year to produce equipment to support the host country's growing infrastructure industry. In 2018, Koryo Cable (Republic of Korea) made an \$8.2 million investment to build a cable manufacturing plant. Metal packaging companies Sahadharawat (Thailand) invested \$5.1 million to manufacture metal cans in Myanmar and Soilbuild (Singapore) sets up a plant with an investment of \$13.9 million to produce steel products.

In chemicals, BASF (Germany) opened its first manufacturing plant in Myanmar in 2018, producing construction chemicals for the domestic market, while Thailand

Central Chemical (Japan–Thailand) opened a fertilizer processing plant and Jotun (Norway), a chemical company, started the construction of a factory to manufacture paint products.

In the automotive industry, Nissan (Japan) and Tan Chong (Malaysia) opened a \$50 million vehicle assembly plant in 2017, and Ford (United States) together with a local partner started assembling cars in a new facility with an initial investment of \$10 million.

In other products, Unilever (Netherlands) formed a joint venture with EAC (Myanmar) in 2017 to manufacture, market and distribute home and personal care products in the country. Nippon Concrete Industries (Japan) and a local partner opened a \$5 million concrete manufacturing facility and Aju Group (Republic of Korea), a construction materials company, started construction of a factory.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is projected to increase further as the government has drafted and enforced business-friendly measures, including a new Myanmar Investment Law (MIL) that was enacted in April 2017.

SERVICES

Driven by an increase in both regional and global cross-border trade, logistic companies are expanding in Myanmar. In 2017, some foreign logistics companies invested or expanded their operations. They include Yusen Logistics (Japan) and CEVA Logistics (Netherlands). DHL (Germany) invested a further \$114 million to expand its supply chain business, and Nittsu Logistics (Japan)

completed construction of a logistics centre. Puma Energy (Singapore) opened a \$92 million petroleum products storage facility and Metro Cash and Carry (Germany) entered into a joint venture with a local partner in 2017. The latter started construction of a warehouse in the Thilawa SEZ last year. In 2018, Yamato (Japan) expanded into the country through offering warehousing, cross-border transport and freight forwarding services.

With increased access to smart phones and the internet, there has also been an increase in the number of digital firms investing in the country. NTT Communications (Japan) opened its first data processing centre in the country last year and Viettel Group (Viet Nam) launched a 4G mobile network in Myanmar in 2018. Ride-hailing taxi companies such as Grab (Singapore) expanded into Myanmar.





Fintech investments such as through Ooredoo (Qatar), a mobile payment company, and National Bank of Canada acquired a 22 per cent stake in Ongo (Myanmar), a mobile money service company in 2018. Lippo Group (Indonesia) is building hospitals in Myanmar with a joint venture partner.

INFRASTRUCTURE

JFE Steel Corporation (Japan), Meranti Steel (Singapore), JFE Shoji Trade Corporation (Japan), Marubeni-Itochu Steel (Japan) and Hanwa (Japan), formed a joint venture and was awarded a contract in 2017 to establish a \$85 million steel plant which is to be completed in 2020. In the same year, Punj Lloyd (Turkey) won a contract for the India–Myanmar–Thailand Trilateral Highway and Soilbuild Construction (Singapore) was awarded \$3.9 million for civil and superstructure work.

Extractive industries, manufacturing and transportation services dominate FDI in Myanmar. There is also a significant increase in investments in manufacturing activities and services (accommodation and real estate), which have further contributed to the rise of FDI in the country.

McDermott (United States) and Baker Hughes (United States) won a contract for front-end engineering design for Posco Daewoo (Republic of Korea) offshore project in Myanmar. TTCL, a joint venture between ITD (Thailand) and Toyo Engineering Corporation (Japan), announced plans to invest over \$6 billion in the

next few years to establish two coal-fired power plants and LS Cable & System Asia (Republic of Korea) and Gaon Cable (Republic of Korea) started investment to build a \$18 million power cable plant.

The expansion of the Thilawa SEZ, which involves a consortium of Japanese investors (AIR 2017) and companies that started operations in the zone in 2017 (e.g. Nissan-Tan Chong Motor and Nippon Express), also contributed to the rise in inflows in the country.

In 2018, Myanmar Railways awarded a \$2.5 billion contract to a consortium comprising Oxley Holdings (Singapore), Sino Great Wall (China) and Min Dhama (Myanmar). In the same year, Sembcorp (Singapore) started operating the country's largest gas-fired power plant (\$300 million) under a 22-year build-operate-transfer agreement.

FDI BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

In Myanmar, ASEAN remains the largest source of investment (48 per cent), led by companies based in Singapore. Companies from the United States and the European Union were also active investors in Myanmar in 2017.

The total investment by EU countries in Myanmar upto April 2018 stood at \$6.6 billion. There are about 300 companies from EU countries established and operating in Myanmar, according to the Business Guide 2019 by European Chamber of Commerce in Myanmar.

According to the latest data provided by DICA, country-wise break of investment data in terms of yearly approved amount of foreign investment shows that China, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, South Korea, the UK, USA, Netherlands and Vietnam

The total investment by EU countries in Myanmar upto April 2018 stood at \$6.6 billion. There are about 300 companies from EU countries established and operating in Myanmar, according to the Business Guide 2019 by European Chamber of Commerce in Myanmar.

were among the largest foreign capital contributors in Myanmar.

MYANMAR ON HIGH GROWTH PATH

According to the World Bank, Myanmar is one of the fastest

growing economies in the world with the country's GDP expanding by 6.4% in 2017–18, a figure which is projected to grow to 6.8% in 2018/19, 6.9% in 2019/20 and 7.1% in 2020–21. However, the country needs to overcome certain barriers to growth including outdated laws, limited M&A opportunities offered by the country, and domestic risks like terrorism and extremist-inspired violence, among others.

As the Government of Myanmar has committed to address these challenges at the earliest, efforts like creation of a separate Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations, peace agreement talks with several ethnic armed groups and opening up of a range of sectors to private business and foreign investment will go a long way to engender confidence in Myanmar as a place to invest in. ■





MYANMAR - AT CROSSROADS OF ASIA'S CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Myanmar offers an impressive blend of culture and modern life. Unique music, dance, exciting festivals, delicious food, and beautiful traditional crafts along the cities bustling with activities define the way of life in this exciting and unexplored South Asian country



notably those at Yangon, Mandalay, and Bagan, the site of the ancient kingdom of west-central Myanmar, bears the testimony of Myanmar's cultural richness, that has been surprisingly preserved in its pristine form even today.

Among Myanmar's most prominent cultural institutions are the state schools of dance, music, drama, and fine arts at Yangon and Mandalay, as well as the National Museum of Art and Archaeology at Yangon. There also is an archaeological museum at Pagan. A number of other museums focus on state and regional history.

MUSIC

Music has a deep influence on the life of farmers in rural areas, as the traditional Myanmar music was created to accompany the agricultural activities. Myanmar traditional music can be found in the worshipping of pagoda festival and wedding ceremonies.

There are historical evidences for the use of at least five basic musical instruments – kyey (Bronze), kyo (string), thayey (Skin of Hide), lei (wind) and let kup (clapper) – in Myanmar's performing arts. These five musical instruments are widely known and used till today.

Softer instruments commonly heard in nontheatrical indoor settings, such as the saung gauk (harp) and pattala (bamboo xylophone), typically accompany singing from a compendium of Burmese songs called Mahagita ("Great Music"). Since colonial times, musicians of Myanmar also have incorporated various instruments of Western origin into their indigenous musical traditions, reworking the instruments' sound, repertoire, and playing technique to reflect local aesthetics. For example, a significant repertoire of music has been developed for the piano, locally called sandaya, that is stylistically evocative of the circle of tuned drums, the harp, and the xylophone.

In Myanmar, the instrumental performance is not subservient to singing. The instrumental performances are of equal importance by agreement. One characteristic of Myanmar music is that through the length and breadth, there is no depth. Since Myanmar musical instruments are not constructed with harmony in mind, they are confined to producing melody so that audiences can listen to appreciate it.

The various pwe, the most popular dramatic form of dance, are



Myanmar has been at the cultural crossroads of Asia where amalgamation of ideas went hand in hand with exchange of material, giving rise to a distinctive cultural identity to the country. Buddhism, with its origin in India, found its way into Myanmar in the 1st Century CE and blended well with pre-existing non-Buddhist beliefs. The splendid architecture and sculpture of Myanmar's numerous temples and monasteries,



accompanied by music of the hsaing waing, a percussive instrumental ensemble with close relatives in neighbouring countries of mainland Southeast Asia. The leading instruments in the hsaing waing include a circle of 21 tuned drums called pat waing, an oboelike hne, a circle of small, horizontally suspended tuned gongs known as kyi waing, and another set of small gongs called maung hsaing. These instruments are supported melodically by other gongs and drums, while a wooden block and a pair of cymbals set the tempo and reinforce the musical structure.

DANCE

Myanmar dance patterns are moving, waving, bending and twisting of head, fingers, elbows and shoulders in circular movements and postures. The legs are doubled up, extended and turned in the same tentacular manner while the body bends and

winds in any direction. All the body parts mentioned above move with ease and flexibility. In short, Myanmar dance consists of posturings which slow or quick movements in between them.

Dance styles that are accompanied

by hsaing waing are derived in part—and indirectly—from southern India. Much of the Burman dance tradition was adapted from the styles of Thailand and other “Indianized” (or formerly Indianized) states of Southeast Asia, especially



during the 18th century.

The most popular dramatic form pwe is performed outdoors. There are a variety of pwe genres, including both human and puppet theatre, and most draw subject matter from the Jataka tales—stories of the former lives of the Buddha.

Archaeological evidences show that Myanmar dance forms have been firmly established in Pyu period, AD 1 to 9. Five bronze figures seemingly a troupe of doebat (doubled headed drum) dancers accompanied with the music of flute, cymbal and double-headed drum has been traced to this period.

TRADITIONAL ARTS AND DESIGN

Myanmar is famous for its traditional arts and design. The art work designs in Myanmar can be seen across the country. Wood carving, lacquerwork, goldwork, silverwork, and the sculpting of Buddhist images and mythological figures also survived during colonial rule; there has been a revival of these and other indigenous art traditions under government patronage. Both the arts of bronze casting among the Burmans and of making bronze drums among the Karen and Shan, however, disappeared. The cinema and rock-



based popular music are two international art forms that have been accepted into the cultural life of Myanmar.

Myanmar possesses ten traditional arts, called pan se`myo: Blacksmith, woodcarving, goldsmith, stucco relief, masonry, stone carving, turnery, painting, lacquer ware and bronze casting.

Amongst traditional arts and designs, Tapestry (Shwe Chi Hto) is also significant in Myanmar. It originated in the country about thousand years ago. Tapestry is a creation of a variety of picture and

patterns with a needle work including with gold thread to become delicate and detailed pictures. This form of art and design requires the best artistry skill and patience.

Myanmar traditional puppetry is a famous manifestation of the traditional arts and design where, 28 main characters are composed of puppets, ranging from Gods, animals, royals, actors and actresses. The Myanmar traditional puppets are usually made with wooden pieces including 17 to 19 pieces attached together with 11 to 16 strings.

LITERATURE & MEDIA

Myanmar's literature is an intimate blend of religious and secular genres. It remained alive throughout the colonial period and, in both verse and prose, has continued to thrive. A later (though not entirely new) development was biography, which has become more popular than fiction. Government-sponsored awards are given annually for the best translation, the best novel, and the best biography.

The government-operated Myanma TV and Radio Department has television programming in Burmese and Arakanese and radio programming in Burmese, English, and a number of local languages.





Some foreign radio services—most notably Voice of America and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)—are an important source of international as well as domestic news.

CUISINE

The staple food for Myanmar people

is rice and curry. Most of the curries are spicy and sour. Myanmar is also distinct as a country of sea food as Myanmar has long coast line.

Myanmar Cuisine, a result of fertile agricultural land, draws heavily on natural fruits, vegetable and fish. Fermented salted fish (Ngapi) associated with the Myanmar people,

is used to flavour many Myanmar dishes which are simply but spicy with ingredients.

Mohinga is the famous traditional food of Myanmar. It is a kind of fish soup and is served together with rice noodle. The fish soup is composed of soft banana stems, onions, beans, ginger, lemon grass as well as spicy ingredients.

Ohn-noh-Kauk Swel (coconut noodle) is also famous in Myanmar. It is a soup made of coconut milk, onion, beans and chicken. The soup is served with the flour noodle.

Both Mohinga and Ohn-noh-kauk-swel can be served as breakfast. Both these soups also find place on social and religious occasions.

The pickle tea leaf salad (laphetthoke) is a famous and typical food of Myanmar. The salad is served either with meal or as a dessert. The ingredients are pickle tea leaves, fried beans, sesame seeds, fried garlic, oil, chili, sliced tomatoes and dry prawns. The ingredients are mixed together to serve as a salad. ■





TRAVELLERS' GUIDE TO FASCINATING MYANMAR

Myanmar is the largest country in mainland South-east Asia, sharing borders with around 40% of the world's population. The country is connected to the world through at least three international airports, border roads and waterways, and efforts are on to improve the infrastructure further as more and more tourists are visiting this fascinating country with every passing year.

Myanmar is the northernmost country of Southeast Asia, sharing its borders with China in the north and northeast, Laos in the east, Thailand in the southeast, Bangladesh in the west, and India in the northwest. Myanmar slopes from north to south, from an elevation of 19,296 feet (5,881 metres) at Mount Hkakabo (the country's highest peak) in the extreme north to sea level at the Irrawaddy (Ayeyarwady) and Sittang (Sittoung) river deltas.

Air Connectivity

The best way to enter Myanmar is through the country's three international airports -- Mandalay International Airport, Yangon International Airport, and the newest airport in the capital Naypyidaw. The airport at Mandalay is Myanmar's biggest, while the one at Yangon located far in the south, is older and offers better international connections than its northern rival. The Naypyidaw airport is right in the middle of the country, and a fourth

international airport, Hanthawaddy, is currently being built in the Bago region and is scheduled to be completed in 2022.

Core routes such as Yangon to Mandalay and Yangon to Bagan have frequent, direct services; the number of direct flights between Yangon and Naypyidaw is also increasing. However, some internal flights work on a fluid schedule – many operate on circular routes, stopping off at different airports.

Railway

The rail system services a large area of the country with the main routes being between Yangon and Mandalay, Kalaw, Pyin Oo Lwin and Hispaw. The Yangon-Mandalay-Myitkyina railway is the main artery, and from it there are branchlines connecting the northern and central Shan Plateau with the Irrawaddy. Other branches run from Pyinmana across the Bago Mountains to Kyaukpadaung and from Bago to Mawlamyine to Ye. The Pyay-Yangon railway has a branchline crossing the apex of the delta to

Hinthada and Patheingyi (Bassein).

Road System

Roads connecting the major centres are good, however as you leave these areas the quality varies. Historically, the road system until independence was confined to the Irrawaddy and Sittang valleys, duplicating the railway route. A road goes from Pyay along the Irrawaddy to the oil fields, and many roads extend into the rural areas. These rural roads, however, are often impassable during the wet season. There were originally three international roads in use during World War II: the Myanmar Road from Lashio to Kunming in China; the Stilwell, or Ledo, Road between Myitkyina and Ledo in India; and the road between Kengtung, in the southeastern Shan Plateau, and northern Thailand. These roads subsequently became neglected but more recently were rebuilt and extended.

Ports

Yangon, as the terminus of road, rail, and river-transport systems, is the





country's major port, with up-to-date equipment and facilities. Patheingyi, Mawlamyine, and Sittwe are also important ports.

Visa Requirements

The Government of Myanmar controls travel to, from, and within Myanmar. To enter Myanmar, you must have a valid passport with at least six months remaining validity and a valid visa. You should apply for your visa at a Burmese embassy or consulate abroad before you arrive in Myanmar. Overland entry is permitted with valid visa for international visitors at designated check points along Thailand-Myanmar border. Prior permission is required for package tour travellers at China-Myanmar border and India-Myanmar border.

The entry visa to Myanmar is applicable at Myanmar Embassies and Consulate General Offices abroad and it is valid for 28 days, extendible for an additional 14 days.

A Myanmar visa allows a stay of 28 days, extendible up to 12 months on a case-by-case basis. Visa on

Arrival is granted on prior arrangement with the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

E-visas are available for citizens of 100 countries who can apply online via Myanmar's Ministry of Immigration and Population website. Generally, an e-visa is issued within five working days and it costs around

\$50 per person with a validity of 28 days. However, travellers on e-visa can enter Myanmar only through Yangon, Mandalay and Naypyitaw international airports; and at three Thai-Myanmar land border crossings: Tachileik, Myawadi (Myawaddy) and Kawthoung (Kawthaung). ■



ENCHANTING MYANMAR

A SUMPTUOUS TREAT FOR INTUITIVE TRAVELLER

As decades-long isolation ends, Myanmar remains one of the world's foremost unexplored natural and cultural wonders offering overwhelming magical experiences to globetrotters.



Given its thousands of shimmering pagodas, Myanmar is often called "the golden land". This moniker is not only limited to grand stupas covered in gold leaf by Buddhist devotees; it also refers to the rich experiences visitors enjoy, thanks to the generosity of spirit of the Myanmar people. Moreover, it points to the nation's wealth of cultural heritage, largely untapped, like a treasure trove waiting to be discovered. Such is Myanmar's beauty and exoticism, that Rudyard Kipling wrote in his 1898 "Letters from the East" (using its former designation), "This is Burma, and it will be quite unlike any land you know about".

Diversity, with over 130 different ethnic groups; and authenticity, engendered by passion and a period of seclusion; are defining characteristics of the preservation of Myanmar's unique heritage. The mostly Buddhist culture permeates numerous aspects of history and society but the country's location, at

the crossroads of Southeast Asia, has brought many influences from neighbouring countries.

Furthermore, British colonial rule has left an indelible mark on the architecture of cities like Yangon. Now, in the new era of openness and accessibility, society is modernising and embracing change while also staying faithful to its past.

A visit to Myanmar is more than a trip; rather it is a journey of discovery which reveals a way of life and depth of society that has been lost in many other parts of the world. All of this is set against a landscape of mighty rivers, soaring mountains, fertile plains and turquoise seas. This is the journey you have been waiting for and now is your time. Explore ancient kingdoms and temples built millennia ago, visit bustling cities and laid-back hill stations, witness the simple customs of people residing on rivers and lakes; or simply relax on beautiful, pristine beaches. Myanmar is many destinations within one destination. Are you ready to be enchanted? ■



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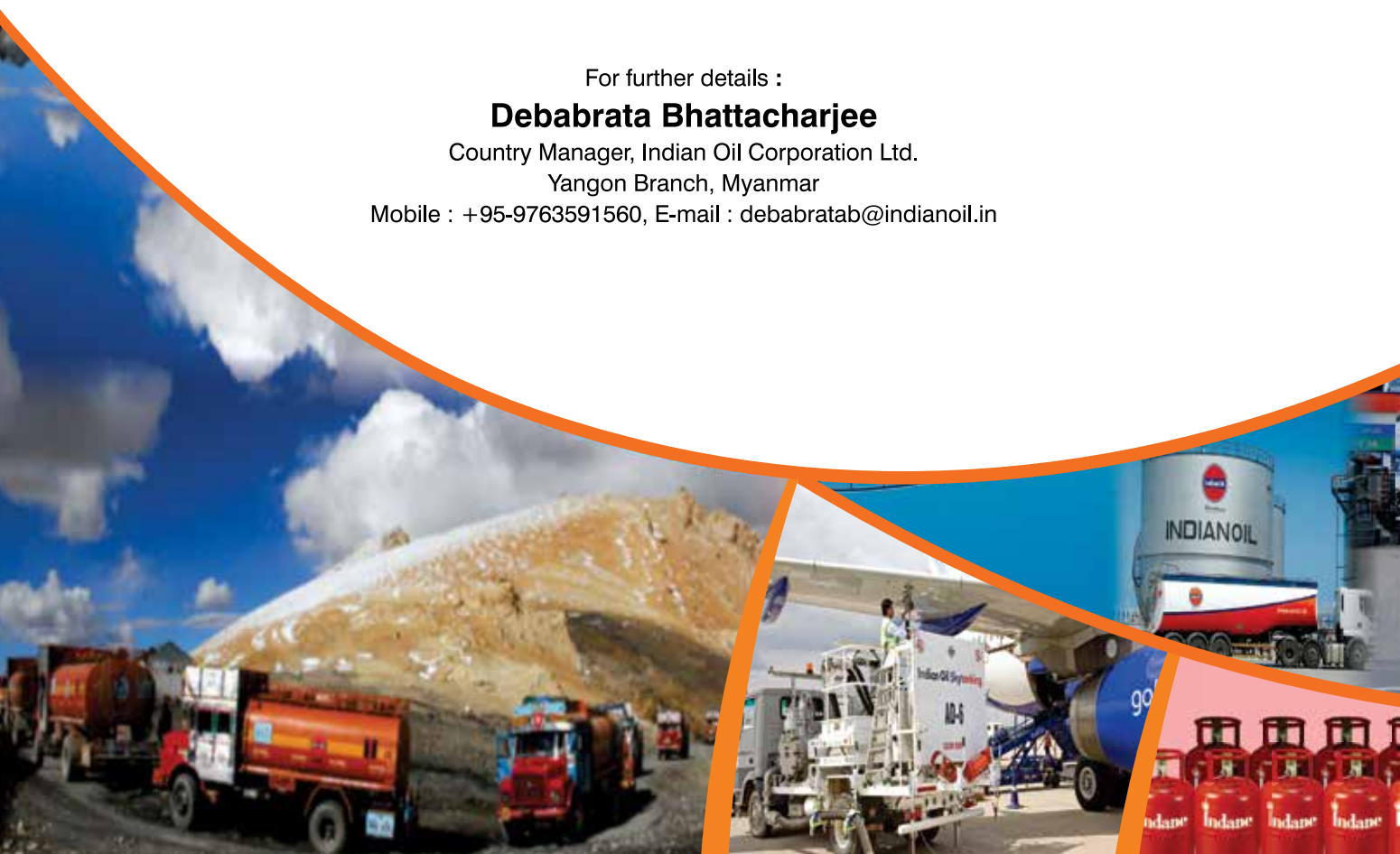
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L N G



INLAY – WHERE NATURE MEETS TRADITIONS

Inlay Lake provides the perfect picture of rural Myanmar lifestyle in perfect harmony with the mesmerising natural beauty of Shan State

Located in Shan State at the heart of the country, this beautiful highland lake is based at about 900m above sea level, 22km long, 10km across, and is the second largest lake in Myanmar. One of the must-visit places in the country, the lake is surrounded by mountains on all sides offering a breathtaking natural view. The area is rich in

animals and plant species and you can see some of the rarest species here.

Inhabited by many different ethnic nationals of the area who follow well-preserved traditions and cultures, Inlay Lake (also sometimes spelt Innlay and Inle) is famous for the unique way of life of the local tribes, for their villages on stilts, floating

gardens, fresh produce markets and well-preserved traditions. There are 17 villages at this lake where the villagers belong to different ethnic groups such as the Intha who are called the people of Inlay Lake, Shan, Taungyo, Pa-Oo, Danu, Kayah, Danaw and Bamar.

In many places the authentic life on the lake shines through.





Functioning communities - largely based entirely on the water - are fascinating to observe and interact with. The main source of livelihood is farming and fishing. The area is well known for its locally produced woven textiles especially lotus, and hand-rolled cheroot cigars. It is also home to plenty of craftsmen who produce handicrafts in time-honoured traditions such as silver wares, bronze wares and wooden sculptures.

The same is true of the surrounding villages where, for example, naturally beautiful, handmade Shan paper decorated with fresh flowers. The villagers are famous for a one-legged boat rowing technique that can only be seen at Inlay Lake. Every experience of Inlay will leave an indelible mark on your soul.

TOP ATTRACTIONS

PHAUNG DAW OO PAGODA

This pagoda is one of the holiest sites in Shan State. The shrine itself is huge and features five ancient

golden Buddhas. Next to it is the large golden barge, a replica of the one said to have been used by King Alaung Sithu to travel around the country, which makes an annual tour during the Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda Festival to 14 villages around the lake, towed by over 50-long boats,

each with around 40 leg-rowers, dancers and music performers.

INTHEIN

Meaning "shallow lake", Inthein (also spelt Indein) is some distance from the main circuit of Inlay Lake and can be reached (water level permitting)



by boat on a narrow canal to the west of Ywama. It is most famous for atmospheric clusters of hundreds of densely packed stupas and ancient pagodas (some ruined, some restored) waiting to be explored. The village has a vibrant market and wonderful views across the lake can be enjoyed from Shwe Inthein Paya.

INLAY LAKE WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Established in 1995 this wetland sanctuary covers 1,664 sq km in the townships of Nyaung Shwe, Pin Laung and Peh Kon and aims to conserve and protect natural vegetation, wetland birds and freshwater fish. Inlay Lake, though not large, contains over twenty endemic species of snails and nine endemic species of fish that are found nowhere else in the world. In 2015 Inlay Lake became the first site in Myanmar to be added to the UNESCO-backed "World Network of Biosphere Reserves".

OTHER PLEASURES

Beyond Inya Lake lie bustling towns Taunggyi and Nyaung Shwe, and a more tranquil hill station, Kalaw, from where many trek to immerse themselves in nature and local tribal



communities. Rural idylls abound in Shan, as do sacred cave systems bedecked with Buddhist icons, for example Pindaya Cave and Hten San Cave.

Worth visiting any time, Kakku is an enchanting place with thousands of closely-packed, tinkling stupas. It is also the impressive setting for Kakku Pagoda Festival in March when the Pa-O people, for whom Kakku is an important centre of worship, pay homage in their finest ethnic attire and by decorating their

prize bullocks.

The lake's serenity and spectacular scenery are often so beguiling that visitors may forget how Inlay is home to a plethora of busy communities. An excellent example of a traditional Inlay village is Nampan where you find small enterprises that produce handmade cheroot (traditional local cigars) and the lake's oldest pagoda, Alodaw Pauk, a large gem-encrusted golden shrine.

Vegetables and flowers are cultivated in floating gardens in the villages of Kaylar, Inchan and Zayatgyi. Famous for its floating market, Ywama village also has various handicraft workshops, a monastery and a pagoda. Other villages are worth visiting, many accessible via the lake's narrow canals, sometimes nestled among impressive bamboo groves with small lagoons where children play.

NOT TO BE MISSED

Other important festivals are Shan State Day in January, Kakku Pagoda Festival and Pindaya Cave Festival in March, food offering ceremonies in Inthein in October and Taunggyi's stunning Hot Air Balloon Festival in November. ■



KAYIN – THE ENCHANTING HOME OF 1100 BUDDHAS



KAYIN STATE

Encircled by karst limestone peaks that soar out of lush green paddy fields, Hpa An, is the picturesque capital of Kayin State (also known as Karen). Most famous for its impressive and very sacred limestone caves, Kayin State also offers many scenic spots comprising of hills and rivers, and farmlands. A popular place to start the ascent of Mount Zwegabin is Lumbini Garden, home to over 1,100 Buddha statues.

The picturesque scenery of Kayin State, including over an estimated 300,000 acres of Monsoon rice paddy, benefits from the rainfall of its hot and humid climate. Farming is a big feature of the landscape, with

hillside farms a common sight, cultivating crops of groundnut, sesame, beans and pulses, sugarcane, rubber, areca and fruit.

Kayin is also an important tea and coffee producing region. Animist festivals often mark successful harvests and local produce can be found at colourful markets where visitors have the chance to sample and purchase fresh foods and traditional crafts as well as to mingle with friendly native people.

TOP ATTRACTIONS

MOUNT ZWEGABIN

For those who tackle the steps to reach Mount Zwegabin's 722m-peak,

the monkeys will provide entertainment along the way. The effort is rewarded by fabulous views from Kayin's most famous landmark. Visitors wishing to enjoy the sunset spend the night in the monastery, atop one of Myanmar's most sacred mountains. Down by the river Shwe Yin Myaw Pagoda, located on the bank of Thanlwin, is a favourite spot for tourists to watch the setting sun. Its compound is home to statues of a dragon and a giant frog who, according to legend, created the city.

KYAUK KALAP PAGODA

One of Kayin's most amazing sights is Kyauk Kalap, a pagoda perched on the summit of a sheer rock that rises

stunningly out of an artificial lake. It is a unique experience to spend time marvelling at the unspoiled nature surrounding this special pagoda near Hpa An. At certain times the usually still waters of the lake reflect back a mirror image making for the perfect photo opportunity.

KYONE HTAW WATERFALL

Another interesting attraction is Kyone Htaw Waterfall, near the town of Hlaing Bwe. Encircled by a pristine forest it draws fascinated tourists due to its naturally green-coloured water.

THANDAUNG

Developed by the British in Victorian times, to provide respite from the heat, Thandaung is a hill station that is becoming a popular resort town. Located in the north of the state, it is mainly inhabited by Bwe Kayin (Karen) people who are largely Christians and enjoy romantic folklore. Like many of Myanmar's less populated areas, traditions are revered especially locally.

BAYINNYI AND KAWGUN CAVES

Kayin is well known for its caves, the two most famous of which are



Bayinnyi and Kawgun. Bayinnyi Cave is in a large complex with hot springs at the base of the hill near Mount Zwegabin whereas Kawgun Cave (also known as Kawgoon) is very close to the state capital. The latter features thousands of tiny clay Buddha images and carvings, some dating back as far as the 7th century. Mounted on the walls and roof of the main cave it is quite an impressive sight.

OTHER CAVES

Some of the other intriguing caves include Sadan Cave, and it takes about 10-15 minutes to walk through and exits onto lovely views of a lake and paddy fields. On the other hand Kaw Ka Taung consists of 3 caves, only 2 of which are open to the public. The first has a tiled floor with numerous Buddha statues, while the second is along a path and is a water-filled cave that serves as a "swimming hole". For visitors wishing to explore further, Kayin is home to at least 5 other caves which are of interest; namely Phakat, Htaungwi, Yathaepyan, Wepyan & Pathone Khayone. ■



MON STATE GATEWAY TO SOUTH-EASTERN MYANMAR



Boasting varied landscapes which include islands, hills, tropical forest, crop land and plantations, Mon State covers the upper part of the Tanintharyi Peninsula. Its capital, Mawlamyine (also known Mawlamyaing) is Myanmar's 4th largest city, and the capital of the former British Empire. Mawlamyine is the main gateway to south-eastern Myanmar. It featured in a number of famous writings such as George Orwell's 1936 memoir, "Shooting an Elephant" and Rudyard Kipling's poem, "The Road to Mandalay".

Its charm remains to this day; rich

history and deep roots in Buddhism mix with colonial architecture, coupled with diverse traditions like the weaving of colourful local fabrics. Mon is where Theravada Buddhism was first established in Myanmar some 2,500 years ago.

Mon has many surprising religious sites like the little known Nwa-la-bo which consists of a stupa on top of three stacked, sausage-shaped gold boulders; Kyaik Ka Mi Yele Pagoda, a metal-roofed Buddha shrine complex perched over the sea as well as Kyaikami Yele Pagoda, Sein Yin Hmyaw Pagoda and Shwe Sar Yan Pagoda.

TOP ATTRACTIONS

KYAIKHTIYO PAGODA

Kyauktiyo Pagoda (Golden Rock), the third most important Buddhist pilgrimage destination in Myanmar (after Yangon's Shwedagon Pagoda and Mandalay's Mahamuni Pagoda), is by far Mon's most famous site. It appears as if it is floating and is a wonderful place to watch the sun set.

WIN SEIN TAW YA

The site of the world's largest reclining Buddha statue. The approach to it is quite a sight to see because it is lined with a procession

of some 500 larger-than-life concrete burgundy-robed monks.

PA AUK TAW YA

Mon State is vibrantly spiritual; monasteries offer insight awareness meditation (satipatthana vipassana), and Pa Auk Taw Ya, which at 500 acres is one of the largest meditation centres in Myanmar, is about 10km from Mawlamyine.

MON CULTURAL MUSEUM

The museum mainly displays traditional costumes, Buddhist artefacts, sculptures, palm-leaf manuscript, handicrafts, bronzeware, silverware, coins and figurines of the ethnic Mon people who founded one of the earliest civilisations in Mainland Southeast Asia, and were responsible for the spread of Theravada Buddhism in Mainland Southeast Asia.

THATON

Thaton was the capital of the Thaton Kingdom, an ancient Mon kingdom which ruled present day Lower Burma between the 4th and 11th centuries.

THANLWIN

Thanlwin is one of the state's most prominent landmarks in Mon State. It



was the longest bridge in Myanmar before the construction of Pakouku Bridge.

KHAYONE CAVE

Spirited away in the back of the little-known, dark and dank Kha-Yon Caves are rows of ghostly buddha statues and wall paintings that come lurching out of the dark as the light from a torch catches them. Close by is another, smaller, cave system with an open cavern and a small cave-dwelling stupa. Bring a torch or buy candles from the stall near the

entrance. The caves are northeast of Mawlamyine, 30 minutes by bus along the road to Hpa-an.

KYAUKTALON TAUNG

It is a flat rock formation 91m high with a Buddhist shrine atop. On the opposite side of the road is a similar but smaller outcropping surmounted by a Hindu temple. Kyauktalon Taung is around 40 minutes' drive south of Mawlamyine, on the road to Thanbyuzayat.

THANBYUZAYAT

It is home to an atmospheric memorial to the 100,000 prisoners of war and civilians who perished at the hands of the Japanese during the construction, on perilous terrain, of the so-called "Death Railway" in WWII. The railway was made infamous by the epic 1957 film "Bridge on the River Kwai".

KYAIK THAN LAN PAGODA

Kyaik Than Lan Pagoda, built in 875 is thought to be the setting where Rudyard Kipling wrote "Mandalay", a famous poem penned and published during colonial Burma in 1890. Linked to it by a covered walkway is the state's largest temple complex, Mahamuni Pagoda. ■



BAGAN: THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MARVEL OF MYANMAR

Set amongst thick greenery on the Ayeyarwady river basin with misty mountains at a distance, Bagan will surely enchant you with its mystical appearance. The temples rise above the canopy of trees, presenting a picture-perfect scenery to visitors.



Located in Central Myanmar, only four hours away from Mandalay, Bagan is one of the world's greatest archaeological sites. Chronicles tell that Bagan was founded in 2nd Century AD and fortified in 849 AD by King Pyinbya, a successor of the founder of Bagan. It was the first capital of the Pagan Kingdom between the 9th to 13th centuries. More than 10,000 Buddhist temples, pagodas and monasteries were constructed during the most



flourishing days of the Kingdom between the 11th to 13th centuries. Today, around 2,200 temples and pagodas still survive and are carefully looked after by the government.

The temples are a part of Bagan Archaeological Zone. They contain carvings, frescos and statues of Buddha, which are certainly mesmerising and fun to explore. Out of the 2,200 sites, only a few are regularly visited. Being the country's foremost tourist destination, Bagan has innumerable licensed tourist transport services to help tourists enjoy this beautiful site.

Apart from the temples, visitors can also enjoy a leisure trip on the Ayeyarwady River, Myanmar's lifeline. Take a cruise from Mandalay to Bagan and enjoy the riparian vegetation, the soothing river breeze and not to mention the sights and sounds of life along the river. You will also be able to indulge in the fascinating views of Mt. Sagaing, Pakokku, Myingyan and other sites along the way.

TOP ATTRACTIONS

PAGODAS & TEMPLES

Ancient chronicles say that there were once 4,446 pagodas and stupas covering Bagan's wide plains but

today around 2,230 splendid examples remain, as recorded by UNESCO in 1988. Largely built from the 10th to the 14th century, they are found in the Bagan Archaeological Zone, which is defined as an area measuring 104 sq km (40 sq miles) located in the vast expanse of plains in Upper Myanmar on the bend of the mighty Ayeyarwady River.

Traditional horse and cart is a popular and enjoyable way of seeing Bagan but visitors can also hire bicycles, e-bikes and taxis to get about.

ANANDA TEMPLE

Constructed in 1091 by King Kyansittha, the structure of Ananda Temple is very artistic and the ground plan is like a perfect Greek cross with pavilions on all four sides. Likely one of the most famous pagodas in Bagan, it is 51m high in total while the entire compound measures 180m from north to south and 182m from east to west. In the centre of the temple are high niches enshrining four colossal standing Buddhas on a throne, each of them nearly 10m tall.

BUPAYA PAGODA

Noted for being one of the earliest monuments on the plains of Bagan, the original pagoda was built in Pyu



style, a descendant from the Indian style stupa. Legend has it that Bupaya (Bu meaning "gourd" and relating to the gilded pagoda's shape) was built by King Pyusawhti who rid the river of this weed and that it dated back to the 3rd century. However, historians place it closer to the 9th or the 11th century (respectively when Bagan city was founded or the city walls were built).

DHAMAYANGYI TEMPLE

The largest temple structure in Bagan, Dhammayangyi Temple is a cave pagoda and was built between 1167 and 1170 by King Narathu. It has an intriguing past as the legacy of one of the most bloodthirsty kings in Burmese history. Viewed from a distance, its structure resembles an Egyptian pyramid. The temple is about 1km to the Southeast of the city walls. Although never completed most of the arches and the major portion of the structure are still intact.

HTILOMINLO PAGODA

Very close to the road between Nyaung U and Bagan, Htilominlo Pagoda is about 1.5km northeast of Bagan. This large temple was built by King Nantaungmya in 1218. The

temple is well known to be the last Myanmar style of temple built in Bagan. The name is a misreading of the Pali word for 'Blessings of the Three Worlds'. King Nantaungmya erected the temple on this spot because it was here that he was chosen, among five brothers, to be the crown prince.

LAWKANANDA PAGODA

Built in 1059 by King Anawrahta during his reign, Lawkananda Pagoda has the Buddha's tooth relic enshrined. The pagoda was erected

on the bank of the Ayeyarwady River. During those days, with the power of Bagan Dynasty, the Mon region, Rakhine and even as far as Sri Lanka would anchor by the Ayeyarwaddy riverside. With its distinctive elongated cylindrical dome, Lawkananda would be the first pagoda to be seen. It is still used as an everyday place of worship.

MYINGABA GUBYAUKGYI TEMPLE

An early period temple, Myinkaba Gubayaukgyi is of particular interest



for the well-preserved paintings inside, which are thought to date from the original construction of the temple and are therefore the oldest remaining in Bagan. The monument was built in 1113 by King Kyanzittha's son, Rajakumar, upon his father's death. Indian in style, the temple consists of a large shrine room with a smaller antechamber attached to it. The fine stuccowork on its exterior walls is in particularly good condition.

SHWEZIGON PAGODA

Shwezigon Pagoda was built as the most important reliquary shrine in Bagan, a centre of prayer and reflection for the new Theravada faith that King Anawrahta had established in Bagan. The pagoda is between the villages of Wetkyi-in and Nyaung U. Initiated by King Anawrahta, this beautiful pagoda was not completed until the reign of King Kyanzittha (1084-1113). The pagoda is a prototype of Burmese stupas consisting of a circular gold leaf-gilded stupa surrounded by several smaller temples, shrines and a pagoda museum.

SULAMANI TEMPLE

Entering the red-brick Sulamani Temple through its gateway is like entering another world. Built by King Narapatisithu in 1181, it is a large,



very elegant multi-storey structure from the late Bagan period. One of the most visited temples in Bagan, the temple still has some frescos although many have been badly damaged due to their exposure to the elements. The light inside is particularly striking as the sun's rays shine through the outer arches and radiate a soft terracotta glow.

THATBYINNYU TEMPLE

This majestic structure is visible from much of the Bagan plains as it towers above other nearby temples and pagodas. At 61m high, Thatbyinnyu Temple is the tallest

temple among all the monuments in Bagan. Suitably magnificent, "Thatbyinnyu" is an original name and signifies the omniscience of the Buddha. Built in 1144, the temple is a big complex structure with seven terraces which all face east. Inside the temple are circumambulatory vaulted corridors, four-terraced devotional stupas, a monastery and a library.

THARABAR GATE

It is the only surviving piece of secular architecture in Myanmar.

NATHLAUNG KYAUNG

It is the only Hindu temple remaining in the country.

RIVER LIFE

Being located in the dry central zone of the country, in the region of Mandalay, means that Bagan is not subject to the monsoon season like many other parts of Myanmar. This imbues the river with even greater importance for the inhabitants of the area. While most visitors arrive in Bagan by air or by road, some take a leisurely (and often luxury) river cruise from Yangon or Mandalay to absorb the beauty and history of Bagan. For those who don't, it is highly recommended to experience a





memorable boat excursion in the early evening to capture glimpses of local riverine life and watch the sunset.

MOUNT POPA

A 1,500m-high, extinct volcano just 60km southeast of Bagan, Mount Popa has great importance to those who believe in the 37 Nats, ancient Burmese animist spirits. Perched dramatically atop a huge rocky outcrop of its slopes there is also the sacred Popa Taungkalat Monastery. To reach the summit of this solitary mountain and fully enjoy the amazing views of this designated nature reserve and national park, you need to climb the 777 steps which are populated with monkeys.

SALAY

A colourful old religious centre about a 1.5-hr drive south of Bagan, Salay long ago developed its own unique style of Bagan-era architecture. While exploring you can learn more about this and about monastic life. Of the numerous ancient monasteries, a

highlight to any trip to Salay is Yoke Sone Monastery which is a cultural heritage site located on the eastern bank of the Ayeyarwady River. It is worth visiting for its exceptional 18th century spectacular woodcarving works. Salay is also famous for its cultivation of plums which are sold all over Myanmar.

COTTAGE INDUSTRY VILLAGES

A number of villages close to Bagan continue to foster cottage industries through traditional practices. One such place is Zee O Village, famous locally for its enormous, 1,000-year old tamarind tree. Here you can see palm sugar production and local methods of making peanut and sesame seed oils. Witness cow rotating a mortar and pestle to extract the oils in a traditional manner. On the other hand, Nga Tha York Village is renowned for its wooden sandals, earthenware pottery and soya bean paste production.

Numerous traditions have been

preserved in Bagan and its surrounding villages, including handicrafts such as beautiful lacquerware, basket weaving, sand art painting, woodcarving and bronze wares. If you cannot make it to a workshop to witness these items being made, be sure to browse some of the stalls around the pagodas for suitable souvenirs and keepsakes. There are also some truly delicious locally produced foodstuffs such as jaggery, toddy, tamarind flakes, plum jams and bean paste.

Enjoying the atmosphere of a pagoda festival in Bagan can be the best time to witness Buddhist rituals and experience the social gatherings of local people. The month long, sanctified festival for Ananda Temple usually falls in January, whereas the one for Manuha Pagoda is held in September or October.

Another famous event in Bagan, Alo-Daw Pyae Pagoda Festival, occurs in December. In April the whole country enjoys the water festival, Thingyan, and in the dry zone Bagan is no exception. ■



NAY PYI TAW

‘THE ABODE OF KINGS’

Nay Pyi Taw (also known as Naypyidaw) is the young administrative capital of Myanmar, founded over a seven-year period at the beginning of this millennium. Located on a plain between the Bago Yoma and Shan Yoma mountain ranges, Nay Pyi Taw is centrally and strategically located (376km from Yangon and 274km from Mandalay), and is easily accessible from most of the country's major cities. Visitors can fly into Nay Pyi Taw International Airport, or they

can get there by private car, highway bus service or by rail.

The third largest metropolis by population (after Yangon and Mandalay), Nay Pyi Taw is unusual in that it is dominated by seemingly interminable wide open spaces and highways that are largely devoid of any traffic. With a population of just under a million it is also a low density urban environment but fascinatingly known as one of the world's 10 fastest growing cities. Closer to three important states namely Shan, Kayah

and Kayin, it is located in the country's dry zone so it mostly escapes the yearly monsoon rains. The city is efficient and, given Myanmar's growing economy, has suitably large venues for a country in transition.

TOP ATTRACTIONS

PARLIAMENTARY COMPLEX

At the heart of this fascinating capital lies the parliamentary complex which comprises 31 palatial buildings designed with pagoda-style roofs



said to represent the 31 planes of existence in Buddhist cosmology. The huge and impressive parliament building was built on an 800-acre complex in Zabu Thiri Township with a 20-lane highway. City Hall, headquarters of the Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee is another landmark in the capital.

MICE

With the best event facilities in the country, Nay Pyi Taw is positioning

itself as Myanmar's top MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Events) destination. The new capital has over 50 hotels (totalling more than 5,000 rooms) including top international brands with luxury facilities that have received VIP guests such as President Barack Obama. For major conferences welcoming several thousand delegates, there are two large, international standard buildings, the Myanmar International Convention

Centres. It is here that global events such as the World Economic Forum East Asia, ASEAN Summit and ASEAN Tourism Forum have been successfully held.

UPPATASANTI PAGODA

It is considered the most renowned shimmering landmark of Nay-Pyi-Taw. A replica of Yangon's treasured Shwedagon Pagoda, it is a slightly shorter and is unusual in that it is hollow with superbly decorated ceilings. Moreover, it affords spectacular views across the surrounding areas and has some auspicious white elephants housed nearby. In fact, Nay Pyi Taw Zoological Garden is also home to the country's largest zoo with more than 420 animals and within a 45-min drive is an elephant sanctuary called Phokyar Resort.

NATIONAL MUSEUM

National Museum (Nay Pyi Taw) is located on 14-hectare plot in Ottarathiri Township. It has 5 main buildings - A, B, C, D and E. Building A houses a mini theatre, VIP holding rooms, President's Gifts Exhibition Room and a public area. The rest of



the buildings have display areas, for example in Building B, the display area is divided into different exhibition rooms, namely: Primate and Fossil, Prehistoric Period, Proto-historic Period, Historic Period (11th-14th Century AD), Myanmar Art Gallery and Myanmar Performing Arts.

WUNNA THEIKDI STADIUM

Wunna Theikdi Stadium is the biggest stadium in Myanmar. Based in in Zabu Thiri Township it is a multi-use international standard stadium and includes a modern gymnasium and swimming pool. The oval-shaped stadium has a capacity of about 30,000 spectators and boasts a floor area of 44,000 sq m.

DEFENCE SERVICES MUSEUM

Nay Pyi Taw boasts an impressive Defence Services Museum, a grand colonnaded collection of buildings on a 604-acre site enjoying fine views across the city and countryside with a backdrop of the Shan hills. It is divided into three main sections, the Army, Navy and Air Force. The army section covers some early history from the time of former kings but most exhibits date from the inception of the Armed Forces to the present day. There are also assortments of military machinery including planes, Spitfires, tanks, guns and ships.

GEMS MUSEUM



Flanked by two white elephant sculptures, the 3-storey Gems Museum, features a 69-kg jade boulder and Myanmar's largest ruby, weighing in at a whopping 21,450 carats; hardly surprising in a country synonymous with precious jewels. It also displays an enormous natural pearl (6.2cm by 3cm) which weighs an incredible 845 carats and there's also an even heavier cultured pearl at 104 carats.

WHITE ELEPHANTS HOUSE

At the foot of the Uppatasanti Pagoda, there is an elephant house containing several white elephants. Myanmar people believe they bring luck, peace and prosperity to their lives.

NATIONAL LANDMARKS GARDEN

Home to miniature models of the states and regions of Myanmar, the National Landmarks Garden, is situated on a 400-acre plot near Thaik Chaung Village in Zeyathiri Township. The garden showcases scaled-down versions of the country's most famous attractions, such as the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon, Ngapali Beach in Rakhine State and Inlay Lake in Shan State.

ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN

The Zoological Garden in Nay Pyi Taw is the biggest of its kind in Myanmar. Located just off the old Yangon-Mandalay Highway, the zoo covers about 500 acres and is home to 430 animals, representing 81 species. There is a daily show with performing elephants and elephant rides available.

GOLFING

The capital boasts several golf courses. Royal Myanmar Golf Course has 18 holes and the shape and roll of the terrain were accentuated in the design phase to highlight the site's natural attributes. It is very challenging as there are fairway bunkers on contoured fairways and several lakes strategically placed throughout the course. ■





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Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IndianOil) is one of India's largest commercial enterprises and the flagship national oil company invested in the full value chain of upstream, midstream and downstream hydrocarbons industry.

IndianOil's core business has been refining, transportation and marketing of petroleum products. In line with India's growing energy demand, the Company has over the years expanded its operations - upstream into oil & gas exploration & production and downstream into petrochemicals, besides diversifying into natural gas and alternative energy resources.

IndianOil continues to expand its business operations abroad through its overseas establishments in Mauritius, Sri Lanka, UAE, Sweden, USA, The Netherlands, Singapore, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Nepal.




US\$ 85 billion
(₹6060 billion)
Revenue 2018-19



33,498
Employees



117th Rank
Fortune
"Global 500" listing 2019

Business Coordinates



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- Delhi Aviation Fuel Facility Pvt. Ltd.
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- India
- USA
- Venezuela
- Canada
- Russia
- UAE
- Oman
- Libya
- Gabon
- Nigeria
- Israel

The Energy of India

Operating Refineries	11
Oil Depots & Terminals	125
Aviation Fuelling Stations	116
LPG Bottling Plants	91
Lube Blending Plants	10
R&D Centre	1
Pipeline Terminals	88
Fuel Stations	27,700
LPG Distributors	11,964

Representative / Branch offices

- Myanmar
- Bangladesh
- Nepal



Business Profile

Refineries



- Owns 11 refineries
- Capacity : 80.70 MMTPA (1.6 million barrels/day)

Pipelines



- Crude oil and product pipelines : 14231 km
- Throughput: 94 MMTPA for liquid fuels, 22 MSCMD for gas

Marketing



- 27,700 fuel stations (Sales: 89.89 MMTPA; Exports: 5.24 MMTPA)
- 12,000 LPG Distributors; 91 LPG Bottling Plants
- 7000 dedicated pumps for bulk consumers
- 116 Aviation Fuel Stations
- 125 Terminals / Depots

Petrochemicals



- Sales : 2.64 MMTPA
- 100% capacity utilisation of plants

Natural Gas



- 5 MMTPA LNG import terminal at Ennore on the east coast
- City Gas Distribution in 40 geographical areas

Exploration & Production



- Overseas E&P assets in 10 countries
- Upstream Integration Ratio of 5.5%

Alternate Energy & Sustainable Development



- Installed Renewable Energy Capacity of 222MW (Solar & Wind)
- Making forays into Automotive Grade Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG)

Research & Development



- 872 active patents
- R&D expenditure (US 61 million per annum)

MMTPA = Million Metric Tons per Annum, MSCMD = Million Standard Cubic Meters per Day

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Refineries

- Technical services like process optimisation, technology upgradation, trouble-shooting, production planning, etc
- Configuration study of oil refinery
- Operation & maintenance planning, commissioning of process units, shutdown planning & monitoring, etc.
- Inspection services, material failure analysis, health assessment of static equipment, etc

Marketing

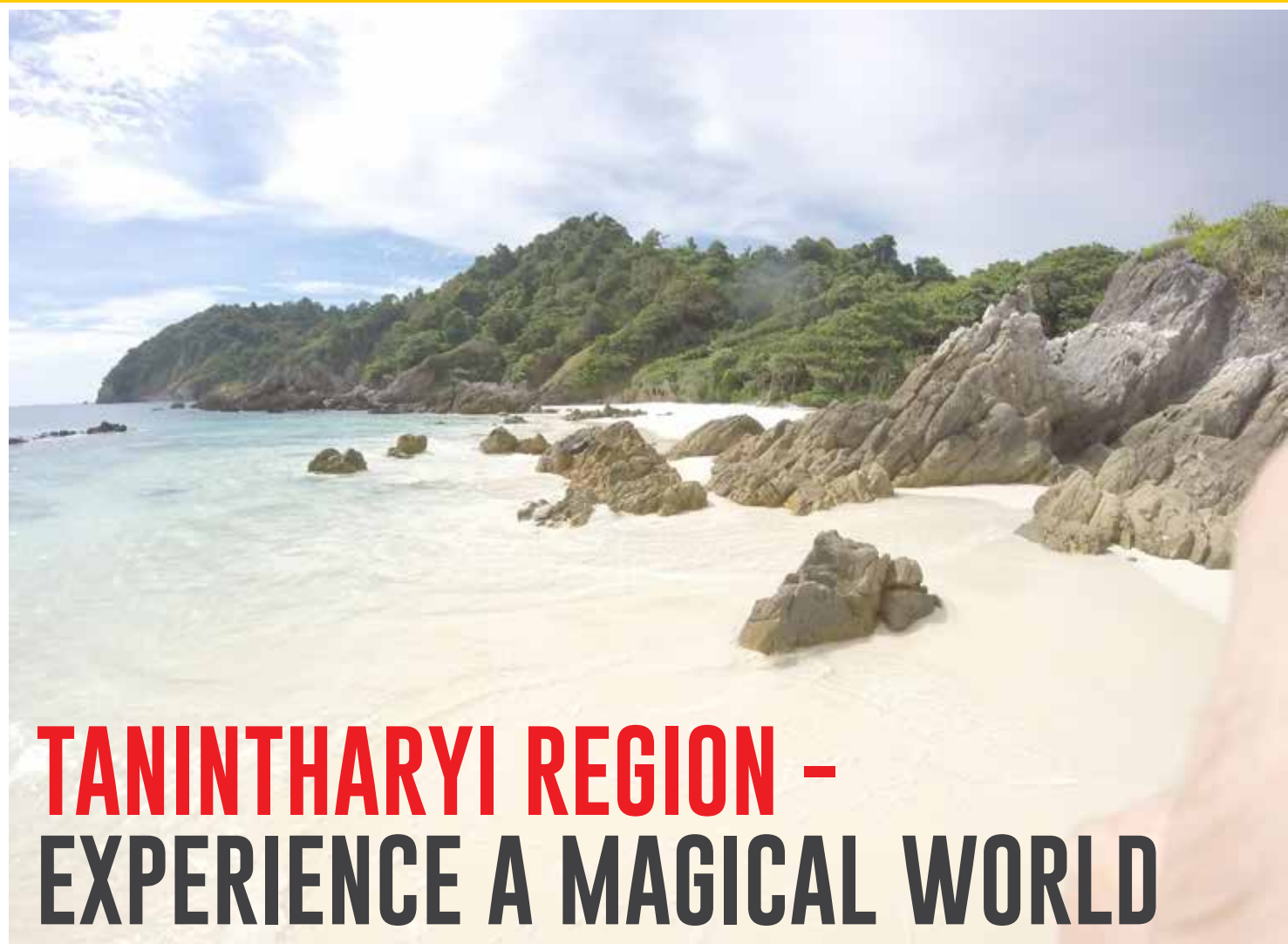
- Rural marketing – facilities planning, supply & distribution, marketing
- Concept to commissioning of automated bulk storage terminals
- Design and implementation of LPG bottling plants, aviation fuel stations, lube blending plants, fuel stations, etc.
- Supply chain management
- Tanker and bunker operations

Pipelines

- Technical services like conceptualisation, design, engineering, project management, operation, maintenance, etc.
- Intelligent pig surveys
- Operation & maintenance

R & D

- Crude oil evaluation
- Performance evaluation of fuels and lubricants
- Plant simulation and optimisation
- Material failure analysis



TANINTHARYI REGION - EXPERIENCE A MAGICAL WORLD

A visit to Myanmar's southernmost region will likely entail arrival at Dawei, Myeik or Kawthaung, where domestic airports are located. Despite being the capital of Tanintharyi, Dawei is quite a laid-back, tropical seaside town. Dotted with pagodas and some interesting colonial buildings, it is easily accessible by all means of transportation. Myeik has been a bustling, strategically located port for five centuries and despite its role as the regional economic hub it has a characterful mix of meandering streets with heritage buildings and modern buildings. Kawthaung, at the very tip of the country, is one of the entry ports into Myanmar for visitors from Thailand.

Reaching Tanintharyi Region and the Myeik archipelago usually entails

flying from Yangon into either Myeik or Kawthaung airports with domestic airlines. Some flights may not operate during the monsoon season.

You can also enter Myanmar from the Thai border in the south, travelling via Ranong. From here you will need to take a boat ride to cross the river to Kawthaung. Myeik and Kawthaung are the departure points for chartered boats to the islands. Flights to Dawei operate throughout the year.

Most visitors to Myanmar's southernmost region, Tanintharyi, go there to enjoy the spectacularly gorgeous and remote Myeik archipelago. The allure of the region, both on land and at sea, is enchanting. Scattered across the turquoise waters of the Andaman Sea are more than 800 glorious islands. Myanmar's decades-long isolation - with very few

tourists visiting the country's southernmost region - has helped preserve the delicate environments and ecosystems, in particular the Myeik archipelago which remains virtually deserted. This makes for fabulously pristine, uninhabited islands thick with vegetation and wildlife; all waiting to be discovered.

TOP ATTRACTIONS

DAWEI

The seaside capital of Tanintharyi Region is a trading post of growing importance. Enjoy the colonial architecture and a host of pagodas especially Shwe Taung Zar Pagoda. Further afield are Shin Mokthi Pagoda and Shwe Tha Lyaung Daw Mu Reclining Buddha. Not far from Dawei is Maungmakan Beach, a popular

place to watch the sun set with the locals. For a quieter experience with seemingly endless, empty stretches of brilliant white sand visit San Maria Bay, Teyzit (Tizit) Beach and Nabule Beach.

SALONE FESTIVAL

Visit in February and you may enjoy Salone Festival where ethnic tribes celebrate their seafaring, tribal existence. Here you can see spiritual dances and customs, diving and rowing competitions, folk singing and a traditional Salone feast.

LAMPI MARINE NATIONAL PARK

The conservation of both local traditions and the environment in Tanintharyi is of prime importance and Lampi Marine National Park offers various nature-loving opportunities such as observing sea turtles, bird-watching and canoeing in the mangroves or visit local villages to sample deliciously fresh seafood.

MYEIK

A harbour town humming with activity, Myeik has one of Southeast Asia's best kept collections of colonial era buildings. Visit Theindawgyi Pagoda which offers fabulous views across the town and harbor and Pataw Padet



Kyun Island, just 500m across the water to see the reclining Buddha, hilltop pagoda and monastery. All a couple of hours by boat from Myeik town are the beautiful islands of Smart, Bailey, Kadan, Kala, Marcus and Natthamee Yae, making them suitable for day trips.

KAWTHAUNG

Formerly known as Victoria Point (after Queen Victoria) Kawthaung is Myanmar's southernmost town. Take in superb views of it from the summit of Ngar Thone Lone Hill. Under 10km from the centre are Shwepyi Thar

Pagoda and Pa Lone Tone Tone Beach. Further afield, in an area of breathtaking scenery, Maliwan Waterfall and Maliwan Hot Springs can be found. Kawthaung is a good departure point for snorkelling and diving tours of the Myeik archipelago.

ISLAND LIFE

Most islands in Myeik archipelago are untouched. Myanmar's first marine national park was established here in 1995, and declared an ASEAN Heritage Park in 2003. The park protects a rich biodiversity, with over 1,000 recorded species; and also provides conservation of the evergreen and mangrove forests, beaches, dunes and coral reefs.

Among the 800+ islands that are worth visiting include Lampi Island, which is formed like a giant horseshoe, and is the largest and most famous island in the southern part of the archipelago. South of Lampi is Bo Cho Island with its mile-long sandbank and scenic views overlooking the village from the pagoda located on the hill. Cocks Comb Island, southwest of Kawthaung, has a stunning interior lagoon. It is also fondly referred to as "Emerald Heart Island" due to the shape of this lagoon and the fact that it changes colour with the sea. ■



YANGON - A MIX OF COMMERCE, CULTURAL HERITAGE AND SERENITY



The former administrative capital of Myanmar, and its largest city, Yangon, is often the first point of entry for most international visitors; usually arriving via its international airport or seaport. Home to nearly six million, this is a metropolis on the move. It remains a top commercial hub in Myanmar, with the port and the international airport as its main point of entry. Though you'll find everyone is going about their business in the bustling metropolis; yet with so many spectacular pagodas to enjoy it is possible to find serenity.

TOP ATTRACTIONS

PARKS

For a busy city there is a surprising number of attractive parks and lakes which are veritable oases. Yangon Zoological Park, established in 1901, now boasts over 1,100 animals. People's Park, to the west of

Shwedagon offers many activities from a water fountain show and a planetarium, to an old steam locomotive and an old Myanma Airways aircraft. The heritage rich downtown is an oasis of green with refreshing fountains in Maha Bandula Park, home to Independence Monument and imposing statues of the mythical chinthe (lion).

PAGODAS

The well-loved landmark of Yangon is Shwedagon Pagoda, which is reportedly more than 2,500 years old, and it towers above the green landscape of Yangon. Revered locally as the most important place of worship, Shwedagon Pagoda is inspiring to all, even those who are not of the Buddhist faith. It can be seen from lots of Yangon's vantage points but is best appreciated close-up. In the heart of downtown, Sule Pagoda and Botahtaung Pagoda are worth a

visit. Yangon is always a fun place to be especially during one of the many festivals held in the country as its inhabitants love to celebrate, especially during Thingyan (Water Festival) in April.

YANGON CIRCULAR RAILWAY

If you prefer to be on the move, then the 46-km long Yangon circular railway offers travellers the chance to participate in, and catch glimpses of, the day-to-day lives of the city's inhabitants and experience their warm, friendly nature.

BAGO

Bago, about 80km north of Yangon has attractions including Kanbourzathadi Palace, Shwemawdaw Pagoda, Shwe Tha Lyaung Pagoda. On the way you can stop to visit the impressive Allied War Memorial Cemetery, dedicated to the fallen from WWII.

THANLYIN

Thanlyin is about a 30-min drive from the city with attractions including an old Portuguese building, Kyaik Khauk Pagoda and Yele Pagoda on a small island.

HERITAGE BUILDINGS

Downtown Yangon is widely thought to have the highest density of colonial period buildings in Southeast Asia. The Yangon City Heritage List consists of nearly 200 edifices including religious structures, ancient pagodas and British colonial buildings. Not to be missed are the imposing red brick High Court, the legendary Strand Hotel, the sprawling Victorian elegance of The Secretariat and Yangon City Hall.

KANDAWGYI GARDENS

Kandawgyi Gardens is a popular 260-acre park, lake and recreation area. It offers a fabulous view across the water towards the magnificent Shwedagon Pagoda, an orchid garden, a playground for children, a mini zoo, souvenir shops, many local restaurants and Karaweik Hall, an impressive replica of the royal barge where you can enjoy dinner with traditional dances.



MARKETS

There are many markets worth visiting but the most popular one in Yangon is Bogyoke Market. Built in 1926 under the British rule it was formerly known as Scott's Market. With more than 2,000 shops and a big selection of handicrafts, souvenirs, clothes, gems, jewellery, antiques and art galleries, you can while away your time browsing, searching for that perfect gift for your family or eating at one of the many traditional Myanmar and Chinese food stalls in the market.

HLAWGA NATIONAL PARK

It is a 1,540-acre nature reserve with a museum of replica traditional Myanmar buildings, a 62-acre zoo with a rock garden and a lake just 25km from Yangon.

THANLYIN

National Races Village is situated in a lush park near Thanlyin Bridge. It plays host to miniaturised landmarks from around the country, a playground, a lake, crocodile farm and bird sanctuary. Thanlyin is a major port city of Myanmar, located across the Bago River from Yangon. The main tourist attraction in Thanlyin itself is Kyaik Khauk Pagoda. ■





KAYAH - TAKE THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

Kayah's various tribes and clans, coupled with its remoteness and incredible ethnic texture has endowed the state and its populace with a fascinating heritage of historical intrigue.

Kayah, Myanmar's smallest state, is packed with diversity and potential for 'off the beaten track' experiences. Closed for over half a century, the state was recently opened to visitors, and is now accessible by air and road. One of Southeast Asia's last frontiers for inspiring, authentic travel, Kayah's tranquil yet appealing capital, Loikaw, is usually the base for visitors

whereas local villages and hamlets offer the perfect opportunity to understand the traditional, tribal way of life.

Known as Karenni State until late in the 1950s, Kayah borders Shan State to the north; Thailand to the east; Kayin/Karen State to the south; and Kayin State to the west. It is quite probably the most culturally diverse state in Myanmar.

Visitors will find Kayah's lush landscapes and weave of cultures visually enchanting but what truly sets the destination apart is the opportunity to experience the endearing warmth of the people, their sense of humour and passion to share their rituals, crafts and music.

Handicrafts play a key role in domestic, artistic and spiritual life. Unusual musical instruments are

crafted from bamboo and other woods. Skilful villagers produce woven bamboo items like baskets and purses, use natural dyes and weave traditional fabrics on the loom. Visit local workshops to explore how indigenous products are made and purchase souvenirs.

Many items are for sale, while others (like the frog drums) are considered highly sacred, and only played on special occasions.

Whether you enjoy visiting established, cultural sites; or heading "off the beaten track" to explore market towns and villages, rubbing shoulders with local folk; Kayah's colour and diversity will keep you interested. The joy of Kayah is its simplicity, authenticity and rich ethnicity. Village tribes delight in sharing their traditions with visitors.

TOP ATTRACTIONS

LOIKAW

The capital of Kayah state, Loikaw (named by the Shan people) describes the dividing point between two mountains: Shwe Taung and Thiri Mingalar Taung. Loi means mountain and Kaw means separate. The town's most iconic site is Taung Kwe Pagoda, also known as Broken Mountain, which offers stunning panoramic views of the urban area and surrounding mountains. The reclining Buddha, the colourful, bustling market, the museum, churches and traditional craft and product workshops are also worth visiting.

SCENIC BEAUTY

Breathtaking, unspoilt views, especially in the south, offer enriching experience to visitors. Kayah's landscape is a tapestry of fields, rolling hills and lush forests. Visitors can now enjoy soft adventure trekking, accompanied by local guides. These inspiring people have lived with the forest since childhood. Their deep knowledge of wild foods,





natural dyes, herbal medicines, and local legends helps to bring the relationships between nature and local people alive, adding insight to adventure. Additionally there are scenic lakes, waterfalls and caves to visit many of which remain very rural and untouched. There a number of natural and embellished caves worth visiting around Kayah State.

NATURAL CAVES

Aung Tha Pyay Cave is located near Htee Se Kha Waterfall and features 10 sitting Buddha statues. Kyat Cave 19km from Loikaw is an impressive limestone and dolomite cave where ancient wooden coffins can be found. The highly sacred Lwel Ta Mu Cave has 15 pagodas and 254 statues.



THE PEOPLE

Tourists can choose to simply enjoy local hospitality or delve deeper into its unique history by taking part in community-based tourism activities. Developed in select villages, they aim to enrich the visitor while also sustainably preserve the indigenous cultural heritage.

If you visit during April you can witness the state's most important festival "Kayhtoboe Tagundaing", during which traditional offerings are made to the spirit guardian to request "peace for the region, fair weather and a successful, bountiful harvest, free from all dangers". In October "Kawhyin htoke" festival (glutinous rice wrapping) takes place. Kayah's cuisine is simple, fresh and healthy. Be sure to try local dishes including the Kayah sausage seasoned with Kayah pepper harvested in the surroundings of Demoso and Pan Pet villages coupled with some millet wine (known locally as "rice wine").

A treasure trove of traditions and customs awaits discovery in Kayah State. ■





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27th MARCH 2020, NEW DELHI



Programme Mentor
U P SINGH, IAS
Secretary
Ministry of Jal Shakti
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ABOUT THE SUMMIT

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KEY THEMES

- ◊ Demand Side Management of Water in Agriculture, Industries & Municipal Bodies
- ◊ Rejuvenation of Water Bodies
- ◊ Budget at Community Level
- ◊ Waste Water Treatment
- ◊ Water Security Plans
- ◊ Atal Bhujal Yojana
- ◊ Water Conservation
- ◊ River Rejuvenation
- ◊ Inter Linking of Rivers
- ◊ Rain Water Harvesting
- ◊ Research & Development
- ◊ Dam Improvement
- ◊ Innovation & Technology
- ◊ Global Best Practices
- ◊ 24x7 Water Supply & Smart Water Meters

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