

1/ FECs to be phased out

<http://www.mizzima.com/business/9101-fecs-to-be-phased-out.html>

Myanmar will abolish its Foreign Exchange Certificates (FEC), of which more than 30 million USD is in the circulation. It is reportedly that that an official press release from the Central Bank of Myanmar stated that the FECs will be phased out in 90 days beginning on 1 April 2013. Economists welcomed the move, as it is a part of economic liberalization.

2/ EU moves to reinstate Myanmar's preferential trade status

<http://www.mizzima.com/news/world/9108-eu-moves-to-reinstate-myanmars-preferential-trade-status.html>

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=IM-PRESS&reference=20130318IPR06674&format=XML&language=EN>

The EU should reinstate Myanmar's duty and quota free access to the EU market, announced the European Parliament's International Trade Committee on 21 March 2013. The reinstatement of trade preference is to be adopted by the full House and approved by member States. It is expected that the reinstatement could raise Myanmar exports by 30%.

The full House will vote on the reinstatement of trade preferences for Myanmar in May. Formal approval by the Council will then be required. After that the regulation will enter into force retroactively, as from July 2012 when the ILO lifted restrictions on cooperation with Myanmar.

3/ Myanmar to open offshore oil and gas bids by April

Myanmar Business Today, 14-20 March 2013

Myanmar will open bids for 25 offshore oil and gas exploration blocks by April 2013. Currently, the Ministry of Energy has not yet revealed the terms of the offshore bids. Foreign company has to definitely work with a local partner for onshore and shallow-water blocks. But no decision has been met, whether foreign company can have 100% stake in the offshore blocks, which are more technically complex. BP, Woodside, Shell and Chevron are reportedly ready to compete in the upcoming bidding.

4/ Myanmar timber exports face closer scrutiny

www.eiu.com

Government announced plan to crack down on illegal logging as the EU tightens rules on timber imports. Hardwood timber is accounting for 6.8% of total export earnings. In April 2012, EU suspended its ban on import from Myanmar for 1 year, allowing timber import from Myanmar. On 3 March 2013, the new EU Timber regulation came into effect and EU would look for marked improvement in Myanmar's regulation of timber production.

5/ Military spending reduced to one-fifth of state budget

www.eiu.com

Myanmar reduced its military budget for fiscal year 2013/2014 (April-March) by 5%. Defence spending still accounts for more than 20% (2.6 billion USD) of the entire national budget

6/ Further price reduction of SIM card is expected

Newsletter, ThuraSwiss

SIM card price would be reduced to a couple of thousand kyats during April 2013, marking a significant drop from the current retail price. In February 2011, SIM card prices has been decreased from around 1.5 million kyats (1697 USD) to 500,000 kyats (566 USD), and then to 200,000 kyats (226 USD) in April 2013.

7/ Pepsi to aid in business courses at Yangon University

Myanmar Business Today, 21-27 March 2013

Pepsi is to offer assistance to establish business centre at Yangon University of Economic. The company will offer assistance through the UNESCO and will impart business knowledge and skills to student.

8/ CISCO to set up network academies in Myanmar

Myanmar Business Today, 21-27 March 2013

CISCO will establish two network training centers in Myanmar to share knowledge and skills in telecommunication technology to Myanmar. The company will conduct this project in the collaboration with USAID. It is also aimed at increasing the number of job-ready graduates to join the Myanmar IT's sector.

9/ WEF expected to attract 1,000 world and business leaders in Myanmar

Myanmar Business Today, 21-27 March 2013

Myanmar, in collaboration with WEF, will host the WEF on East Asia in June 2013. It is expected that around 1,000 business and world leaders will attend the meeting.