

TITLE: Myawaddy industrial zone set for 2017 opening

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SUMMARY: myawaddy industrial zone set for 2017 opening

the mae sot checkpoint in tak province is a main trade point between thailand and myanmar and is 11 kilometres from the myawaddy industrial zone.(photo by patipat janthong)

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The Myawaddy industrial zone in Kayin state is being built on a 201-acre site between Myawaddy and Thingan Nyi Naung, just 11 kilometres from the

Thai-Myanmar border in Mae Sot district in Tak province.

“The state government hasn’t set a time limit on the project, but it will mostly be ready in 2016 to 2017,” Kayin State’s Minister for Industry Saw Kyi Lin told the Myanmar Times.

When the local government granted Nyi Naung Oo Co a land lease in 2013 to build the zone, it was set to be used for regional industry.

However, it has since been reclassified as an economic zone at the advice of the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) because of its proximity to the Thai border.

Under the 2012 Foreign Investment Law, foreign business is forbidden within 16 kilometres of Myanmar’s borders with neighbouring countries, unless in an industrial zone that has been approved by the MIC.

The zone has since seen an influx of applications from Thailand, mostly in partnership with local companies based in Myawaddy, said Saw Kyi Lin.

The nearby border crossing to Mae Sot in Thailand is Myanmar’s second busiest overland trade point, after Muse in Shan state on the border with China.

Basic amenities are 90% complete, according to Nyi Naung Oo’s project director Kyaw Tint. He added that 450 plots have been demarcated and that at least 15 factory owners have applied, mostly in the garment and consumer goods sectors.

A shoe factory, an automobile spare parts manufacturer and a galvanised iron sheet factory are among those hoping to start business, he said.

Myawaddy is one of three industrial zone projects in Kayin state, along with the Payathonsu industrial zone and the Hpa-an industrial zone – a 100-acre industrial park which opened to foreign investors earlier this year.

The project was intended to be completed within five years, but was delayed due to a lack of electricity and regional instability.

Saw Kyi Lin dispelled concerns about whether the infrastructure at the Myawaddy industrial zone would be up to scratch, saying that it benefits from 24-hour electricity from neighbouring Thailand.

"Thailand's electricity is better than Myanmar's and there will be a guaranteed 24-hour supply," he said.

Nyi Naung Oo has applied for MIC permission to buy electricity from Thailand and is in discussions with Thailand's Enova Power to supply electricity to the entire zone, said U Kyaw Tint.

The developer began selling land plots late last year and also offers leases to foreigners, as they cannot purchase property under Myanmar law.

KEYWORDS: ["zone", "myanmar", "myawaddy", "thailand", "electricity", "state", "factory", "naung", "mic", "industrial", "project", "kilometres"]

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