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The following text is based on a newsletter received in April from «Partners Asia», a non-profit organisation that supports community initiatives such as education, healthcare and human rights work, humanitarian relief, and local leadership in Myanmar and across Southeast Asia.

«Across Myanmar, Thailand, and Cambodia, the New Year arrives this week. Throughout the region, the season is marked with water. For generations, the turning of the year has been welcomed by splashing water over friends and strangers alike, a simple ritual meant to wash away the hardships of the past year and begin again. This year the celebrations unfold against a sobering backdrop. Temperatures in many places are already soaring above 100 degrees (38°C). Fuel is expensive and often rationed, and in countless places, fuel costs now exceed those paid by many Europeans. Families who depend on motorbikes or small trucks to move between villages are feeling the enormous strain of rising costs. And in Myanmar in particular, the realities of war mean that many people live in fear and cannot travel or celebrate in the ways they once did...»

The endurance and resilience of the people in Myanmar bring to mind what the Czech writer Vaclav Havel once wrote:

«Hope is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something is worth doing no matter how it turns out.»

This admirable spirit is carrying so many people forward in these challenging times.

It is exactly this spirit that continues to guide and sustain Zoe, Lyon, teachers, students, staff and friends in their daily work and commitment at Light of Love and Lei Thar Gone.

The same spirit of hope is very present in Zoe’s input for this report...

Ma Myat Myat Moe Oo, 14 years old, the eldest of five siblings, has carried responsibilities far beyond her years. Her father passed away in 2021, and in 2024, her mother moved to Thailand to work illegally. So far, much of her mother’s earnings have gone toward repaying the broker’s



loan and covering living costs, leaving the family with irregular support. At home, the children live with their grandmother, who is physically

present but limited by age and health, and four cousins who have almost the same family history as them. No wonder she has to take on the family's responsibilities.

Before joining LOL School, Myat's life was marked by hardship—she begged on the streets to help her family. When she joined LOL School, her certificate recorded her as a Grade 3 student, but her actual learning level was much lower. With determination and special attention from her teachers, within a year, she had reached a level where she could join the regular class alongside her friends.



Myat: nearest to the camera with the bracelet

After just one year of schooling and support from the foundation, Myat's life shifted dramatically—from the streets, begging for survival, to learning under a safe roof. She is now armed with basic mathematics, reading, writing, and social skills that have given her dignity and hope, and with that,

she works in the market as a salesgirl support her family.



On the way back from work with her cousin.

From the school's side, supporting Myat has required patience and commitment. Teachers provided extra academic support to help her bridge learning gaps, and the school had to carefully manage her frequent absences due to numerous issues with her family—balancing compassion with school rules to ensure she remained enrolled. Through encouragement, flexible support, and guidance, LOL School helped her stay on track. This coming school year, she will be in grade 6.



Today, Myat shows clear improvement not only in her learning but also in her life. After school, she takes care of household chores, and on weekends, she works to support her family. Despite these burdens, she continues to pursue education with courage, believing it is the path to a brighter future for herself and her siblings.



The students at LOL are selected from children with family situations similar to Myat's; they are diverse in many ways, but one thing they have in common is that they carry the heavy burdens of life's hardships. Maintaining them in school is our highest priority; it is the only environment where they can achieve small milestones and build toward a bigger transformation: a life of dignity, hope, and opportunity.

As we close the school year in March, with small achievements like Myat's evident in the majority of students, we celebrate it as a truly successful one, made possible not by our own strength alone, but by the steady, continuous support of all our donors. Your specific support for children's needs, such as regular food, shelter, and health care, is the foundation for their learning journey and life transformation. We would especially like to thank the Förderverein Kinderhilfe Birma e.V., Enfants de Birmanie and Solidar' Birmanie for your loyal support. As a result of your generosity, we can touch the individual lives of needy children in profound ways. While the achievements may not always appear as grand milestones, every act of support matters deeply for the children's futures. Your kindness shapes brighter tomorrows for those who need it most.

Thank you for walking alongside us in this journey of transformation.



Zoe & Light of Love family

Light of Love updates...

The start of the year in January went smoothly, with all students returning to school after the Christmas break. This year, preparations for the final exams began earlier, especially for students in Grades 5 and 9, who had to sit the obligatory government examinations.

Grade 12 students also prepared for their final matriculation examinations in March. These national exams play a decisive role in the students' future, as passing them opens the possibility of further studies at university or technical college. The results are unfortunately not expected until July. The internal Light of Love examinations for the other grades began on February 4th. The exams went according to plan and thankfully all the students were present. Although exams can be repeated, a missing student must be reported to the Township Education Office, with a reason for the absence given.

The end of the school year remains a challenging period because of meetings with teachers and parents/guardians, during which many decisions concerning the future of students are discussed. While the school sees many positive developments and the children learn a great deal, some students continue to struggle with behaviour, school routines, and motivation to study. After careful discussion, the difficult decision was taken that eight students would be expelled and four students would repeat their grade. Unlike in Myanmar government schools, where students usually pass automatically if they attend classes, Light of Love evaluates the child's overall development throughout the year, including behaviour, participation, and motivation.

In addition, eight further students received formal warnings concerning behaviour and motivation. Most of the students affected by these measures are from the primary classes, where adapting to the routines and expectations of school life can be especially difficult. Many of these children grow up lacking stable adult guidance and supervision. As a result, changing deeply rooted habits and adjusting to the structure and discipline of school life can be doubly challenging for them. These decisions are never easy, but we consider them necessary for the long-term benefit of the children.

January was also an important month for meetings with teachers and parents/guardians, during which the coming school year was discussed.

At the same time, teachers were busy preparing the examination papers for all subjects and grades. These papers were then submitted to Zoe, who carefully checked whether the content was correct, the questions clearly formulated, and the objectives of the subject properly reflected. Alongside this responsibility, Zoe also had to prepare the examination papers for the classes she herself teaches, making this period especially demanding and time-consuming.

Because of increasing fear of forced conscription and police checks, the guardians of seven male high school students asked that the children remain at Light of Love for greater safety. Young people are being taken off the streets regardless of age or legal regulations and sent to military training centres, with families having to show proof that the children are students and in spite of proof pay money to secure their release. Fear is widespread, and in town mostly women and elderly men are now seen in the streets. There are also growing reports that girls will increasingly be targeted for conscription, as

already reported in Yangon and Mandalay. For this reason, a new building –a boarding place for students – is under construction.
More information will follow in the next report.

From January until the beginning of the final exams in February, Monday assemblies were enriched by «Guest Speakers» who shared life experiences and spoke on topics such as the consequences of drug abuse, the importance of wisely using given opportunities and about the difficulties of growing up with uneducated parents, showing how perseverance and hard work eventually lead to success in spite of challenges. Although these sessions were brief, they provided important benefits by teaching practical life skills and helping the students better understand the challenges and responsibilities they will face in the future.



U Thin Ko Lwin, a member of a local Red Cross group, spoke to the students about volunteering, service, and the importance of helping others in times of need. He encouraged the students to develop a spirit of responsibility, compassion, and willingness to contribute positively to their communities.



Daw Nu Nu Htay, a penal lawyer, spoke to the students about the misuse of social media and the dangers of drug abuse, explaining how such behaviour can lead to arrest and placement in feared correction centres.

After the final exams in mid-February, the LOL compound became much quieter, as students returned home at the end of the school year. Only Grade 12 students, whose matriculation exams took place in mid-March, and the Pre-School children, who finished on 14 March, remained at school for a longer period. Since then, all students—except the

new Grade 12 students already preparing for the coming academic year at LOL—have gone back to their villages and are hopefully enjoying their summer break.

Pre-School – growing and learning together...

The Pre-School had a positive year with the children continuing to make encouraging progress in many areas of their development. A total of 11 children attended classes with another three children enrolled to begin their Montessori Pre-School education when the school reopens after the summer break on 1 June.

There have been some challenges, especially concerning the teachers. Rose, a PSIE Montessori-trained teacher, left in March, after completing her in-service year at Light of Love. Although she would very much like to return to Yenangyaung and continue working, this is currently uncertain because of commitments towards the institution that sponsored her training in Yangon. Now Khaing Mi Mi San, herself a former Light of Love student and PSIE trained Montessori teacher leads the Pre-School. She remains in close contact with Rose, who continues to support and advise her.

Khaing Mi Mi San is helped by two assistant teachers. One other continuing difficulty is the unreliable electricity supply, as the Pre-School compound is not connected to the solar power system. Frequent unscheduled power cuts, sometimes lasting four hours or more, create practical problems for water supply, cooking activities with the children, and daily life for the PSIE teachers living in the teachers' house on the compound.

«**Observation Days**» are an especially valuable part of the children's learning experience. These excursions give the children opportunities for fun, new experiences and exploration beyond the classroom. On 30 January, they visited Kyauk Saryoun, a well-known site in Yenangyaung - stone tablets engraved with Buddha scriptures. A week later they took a short walk over to the Guest House. After a wide-eyed exploration of the grounds, with a peek at one of the guest rooms, they enjoyed a picnic by the swimming pool. These excursions are an important part of helping the children grow in understanding of the wider world around them.



Lei Thar Gone Guest House Trimester Report Update 2026

This report summarizes the latest developments, operational challenges, and ongoing progress at Lei Thar Gone Guest House during the first trimester of 2026.

Terrace Construction Progress

The new terrace project is now close to completion. Most of the structural work has been finished, although lighting installation is still required. The project is expected to be fully completed by the end of this month. Once finalized, the terrace will provide a more comfortable and attractive space for guests to relax and gather.

Departure of Long-Term Guests

The long-term Chinese guests checked out during this period after deciding to rent a private house in Yenangyaung. This highlighted an ongoing operational challenge related to immigration regulations and long-term accommodation arrangements.

Despite this setback, the Guest House welcomed a reasonable number of short-term guests in April, largely because Lei Thar Gone Guest House was able to provide reliable 24-hour electricity through the solar power system while many areas continued to experience unstable electricity supply.

Inflation and Fuel Crisis

Economic conditions became increasingly difficult during this trimester. As the Middle East crisis intensified again, fuel prices rose dramatically:

Diesel prices increased from approximately 2,700 kyats per liter to 7,400 kyats per liter.
Gasoline prices increased from approximately 2,200 kyats to 5,900 kyats per liter.

The sharp rise in fuel costs caused transportation expenses to increase significantly, which then pushed up the prices of nearly all goods and services.

For example:

A 50 kg bucket of chlorine for the swimming pool previously cost around 830,000 kyats.
The same product now costs approximately 1,450,000 kyats, excluding additional transportation charges.

These rising operational expenses continue to place heavy financial pressure on the Guest House.

Gratitude and Personal Update

Despite the ongoing crisis, inflation, and operational challenges, Lei Thar Gone Guest House continues to survive through resilience, careful management, and the prayers and support received from friends and supporters. On a personal note, our family is also preparing to welcome a new member. My wife is expecting to give birth to a baby girl in August, and we are looking forward with joy and hope to this new chapter for our family.

Thank you again for your continued prayers, encouragement, and support.



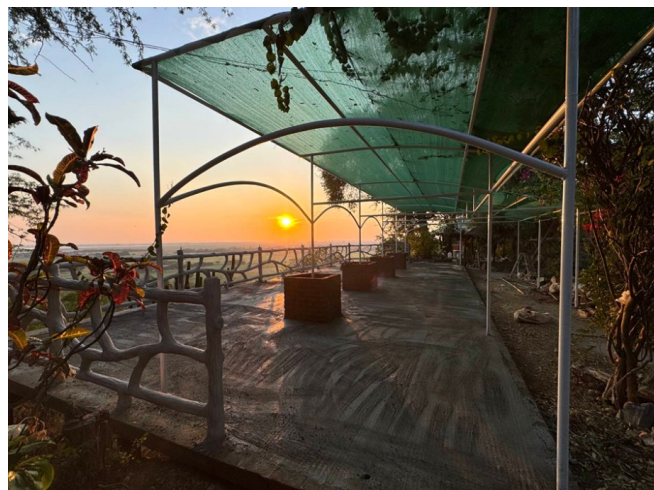
These photos give a good impression of the work on the terrace, described by Lyon:



Huge rocks for the foundation, reused from the previous terrace



On 2nd February
nearly completed!



In his Trimester Report Update, Lyon mentions the fuel prices and the crisis it has caused. But more than this – it has created chaos!

This is how the government dealt with the crisis:

In response to expected fuel shortages linked to the war in the Middle East, the Myanmar military authorities introduced a nationwide fuel-saving policy based on vehicle number plates. From now on, vehicles with even-numbered licence plates may only drive on even-numbered dates, while vehicles with odd-numbered plates may only be used on odd-numbered dates. The measure applies to most private and commercial vehicles, although some public and emergency vehicles are exempt. The authorities say the policy is intended to reduce fuel consumption, but many people see it as unrealistic and difficult to enforce in a country already heavily affected by civil war. For many families and small business owners, the restrictions have already led to reduced income and higher daily living costs:

- *A tuktuk driver in Yangon's Thaketa Township told BBC Burmese that fuel restrictions have severely curtailed his income because he can't refuel as much as he needs. "Normally I make K45,000 [about US\$11 at the market rate] every day. Now, I'm struggling to make K15,000 a day," he said, adding that he used to make about 15 trips per day, but now can only make three.*
- *A resident of Yangon's South Okkalapa Township told the paper that the junta's odd-even traffic rule added extra cost to their monthly family expenses. The man explained that the family now has to pay for taxis on the days they can't use their own car.*

The inflation Lyon mentioned is really extreme – even life threatening:

Price increases:

Eggs 120 MMK → now 500 MMK for one

Beef 8'000 MMK → now 36'000 MMK per peiktha (= 1.63kg)

Cream – only available in Yangon, 65'000 MMK p. litre - € 14.40/CHF 13.20

Pasteurised Milk is not available. Fresh milk has to be bought locally & boiled



Independence Day, 4th January 2026

In view of the ongoing, so-called «elections» hotel & shop owners were pressured by the authorities to buy and display Myanmar flags. Lyon had to purchase a flag for LTG, raise it on a pole, photograph it, and send proof to the Ministry of Hotels & Tourism in Magway. The flag itself cost 12'000 MMK, with an additional 8'000 MMK charged for motorbike delivery—costs that each business owner had to pay personally.

It was another example of how ordinary citizens and businesses are increasingly pressured into complying with political demands imposed by the military authorities.

Installation of a CCTV System

Because of the difficult economic situation and growing insecurity, the risk of crime, especially theft has greatly increased – very sad, in a country previously known it's friendly and peaceful population.

Lei Thar Gone is surrounded by many very poor neighbouring households, and Lyon felt it was important to improve security in a calm and non-confrontational way. The new CCTV system provides evidence in case of theft or other incidents and recordings from the cameras can help justify and protect July and staff members in situations involving difficult or intoxicated guests or curious visitors around the reception and pool area. Our special thanks go to the Stiftung Hirtenkinder for financing this important project.



Here a few of the locations, where there are cameras – a total of 16 (!)



For those that are interested in more in-depth information on the situation, here a few relevant articles:

Why Military Parties Win Elections in Myanmar

<https://www.irrawaddy.com/opinion/analysis/why-military-parties-win-elections-in-myanmar.html>

Meet Zaw Win Shein, Hotel Magnate in an Era of Collapse

<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/junta-crony/meet-zaw-win-shein-hotel-magnate-in-an-era-of-collapse.html>

Five Years After the Coup, Myanmar Is Worse Off Than Ever

<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/five-years-after-the-coup-myanmar-is-worse-off-than-ever.html>

***This report was written by Therese, Zoe and Lyon and the final version,
with photos, compiled by Therese***