

# Karen/Kayin State (March 2022)

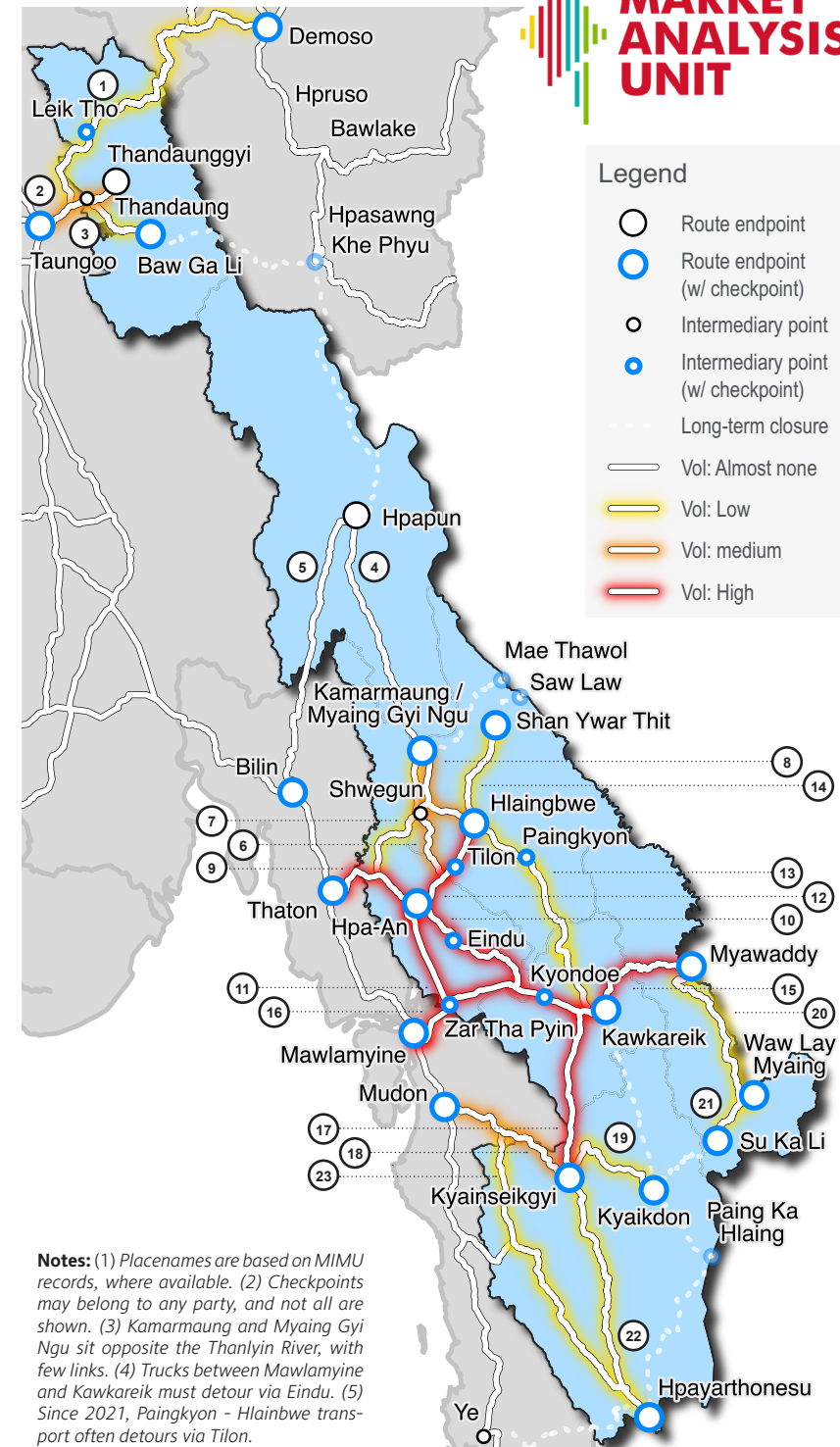
# Commercial Transport Report

## Market Analysis Unit (MAU)

The MAU monitors transport routes to track the flow of commercial goods between major towns and border crossings. Data are based on KIIs with market actors. Some route depictions may not be exact. Reports are available online at [www.themimu.info/market-analysis-unit](http://www.themimu.info/market-analysis-unit).

#	Route (point A - point B)	Route Status as of Mar. 2022 (compared to Jan. 2021)	Closures	Commercial Volume		
				Change	Total	Direction
1	<b>Taungoo (Bago) - Demoso (Kayah)</b> via Leik Tho	Connects Taungoo to Demoso, but rarely used.	Frequent	—	●	➡
2	<b>Thandaunggyi - Taungoo (Bago)</b> via Thandaung	Still Thandaunggyi's main supply route. Goods come from Yangon/Mandalay.	Rare	—	●●	⬅
3	<b>Baw Ga Li - Taungoo (Bago)</b>	Still Baw Ga Li's main supply route. Goods come from Yangon/Mandalay.	Occasional	▼	●	⬅
4	<b>Hpapun - Kamarmaung</b>	Still Hpapun's main supply route, but transport has mostly stopped.	Long-term	▼	○	⬅
5	<b>Hpapun - Bilin (Mon)</b>	Still Hpapun's secondary supply route, but transport has mostly stopped.	Long-term	▼	○	⬅
6	<b>Kamarmaung - Hpa-An</b>	Still Kamarmaung's main supply route. Goods come from Yangon/Myawaddy.	Rare	▼	●	⬅
7	<b>Myaing Gyi Ngu - Hpa-An</b>	Still Myaing Gyi Ngu's main supply route. Goods come from Yangon/Myawaddy.	Rare	▲	●●	⬅
8	<b>Myaing Gyi Ngu - Hlaingbwe</b>	Still Myaing Gyi Ngu's secondary supply route. Goods come from Hpa-An/Kawkareik.	Rare	—	●●	⬅
9	<b>Hpa-An - Thaton (Mon)</b>	Still one of two main supply routes for Hpa-An. Goods come from Yangon via Bilin.	Rare	▲	●●●	➡
10	<b>Hpa-An - Kawkareik</b>	Still one of two main supply routes for Hpa-An. Goods come from Thailand via Myawaddy.	Rare	▲	●●●	➡
11	<b>Hpa-An - Mawlamyine (Mon)</b> via Zar Tha Pyin	Connects Hpa-An to Mawlamyine. Most goods are passing from Thailand to Mon State.	Rare	▲	●●●	➡
12	<b>Hlaingbwe - Hpa-An</b>	Still Hlaingbwe's main supply route. Goods come from Yangon/Myawaddy.	Rare	—	●●●	⬅
13	<b>Hlaingbwe - Kawkareik</b> via Paingkyon	Still Hlaingbwe's secondary supply route. Goods come from Thailand via Myawaddy.	Frequent	—	●	⬅
14	<b>Shan Ywar Thit - Hlaingbwe</b>	Still Shan Ywar Thit's main supply route. Goods come from Hpa-An/Kawkareik.	Rare	—	●	⬅
15	<b>Kawkareik - Myawaddy</b>	Still Kawkareik's main supply route and Kayin's primary border crossing with Thailand.	Occasional	▲	●●●	⬅
16	<b>Kawkareik - Mawlamyine (Mon)</b> via Zar Tha Pyin	Still the main route for Thai imports to Myanmar. Goods come from Myawaddy.	Rare	▲	●●●	➡
17	<b>Kyainseikgyi - Kawkareik</b>	Still Kyainseikgyi's main supply route. Goods come from Thailand via Myawaddy.	Rare	▲	●●●	⬅
18	<b>Kyainseikgyi - Mudon (Mon)</b>	Still Kyainseikgyi's secondary supply route. Goods come from Yangon via Mawlamyine.	Rare	—	●●	⬅
19	<b>Kyaikdon - Kyainseikgyi</b>	Still Kyaikdon's main supply route. Goods come from Mudon and Kawkareik.	Rare	▼	●	⬅
20	<b>Waw Lay Myaing - Myawaddy</b>	Still Waw Lay Myaing's main supply route. Goods come from Thailand via the Myawaddy crossing.	Occasional	—	●	⬅
21	<b>Su Ka Li - Waw Lay Myaing</b>	Still Su Ka Li's main supply route. Goods come from Thailand via the Myawaddy crossing.	Occasional	—	●	⬅
22	<b>Hpararhonesu - Kyainseikgyi</b>	Hpararhonesu's main supply route. Goods come from Kawkareik. Secondary crossing with Thailand.	Rare	▼	●	⬅
23	<b>Hpararhonesu - Mudon (Mon)</b>	Hpararhonesu's secondary supply route. Goods come from Yangon/Dawei via Mawlamyine.	Rare	—	●	⬅

Table updated with corrections: March 31, 2022.



**Notes:** (1) Placenames are based on MIMU records, where available. (2) Checkpoints may belong to any party, and not all are shown. (3) Kamarmaung and Myaing Gyi Ngu sit opposite the Thanlyin River, with few links. (4) Trucks between Mawlamyine and Kawkareik must detour via Eindu. (5) Since 2021, Paingkyon - Hlaingbwe transport often detours via Tilon.

## Routes and Volumes

**Large volumes of commercial goods continue to flow east-west through the Myawaddy corridor in southern Karen/Kayin State, while towns in the far north and south see far less traffic.** The Hpa-An/Kawkareik/Myawaddy triangle now sees high trade volumes, and so do some nearby routes to Hlangbwe and Kyaingseikgyi. Many goods along this corridor continue into central Myanmar via Thaton, Mudon and Mawlamyine in Mon State. Volumes are low in the state's far northern/southern townships (e.g., Thandaungyi, Kyainseikgyi) and very low in Hpapun District and contested areas on the Thai border.

**Since January 2021, the state's main arteries are largely unchanged, but volume has increased along the Myawaddy corridor and it has decreased elsewhere.** The gap between routes to Thailand and those in the rest of the state has widened in the past year. Thai imports via Myawaddy have doubled as regional trade rebounded from the initial effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and this has pushed more goods through gateway towns like Kawkariek, Hpa-An and to some extent Hlaingbwe and Kyaingseikgyi. By contrast, increased armed conflict has reduced volume on more remote routes (e.g., near Thandaung and Kyainseikgyi) and all but halted flows of goods into Hpapun Township.

## Implications

- **Transport conditions in Karen/Kayin State will differ greatly by location and period.** The frequency of closure varies by route, and some checkpoints may be more strict than others.
- **Lengthy route closures can destabilize price and supply.** Closures force retailers to change suppliers and accrue more transport costs for weeks or months, increasing retail prices.
- **Steady supply of Thai imports could help meet local demand.** Yet it also makes communities more vulnerable to closures and reliant on backup supply from central Myanmar at these times.
- **Areas like Hpapun face perpetual access problems.** Commercial transport is consistently unreliable due to longstanding closures and access to goods is likely poor.

## Closures and Checkpoints

**Major routes remain open to commercial transport, but many experience short-term closures and almost all include multiple checkpoints.** Formal closures may be either temporary or permanent, but while they prohibit most commercial transport they may not halt it entirely. Trade is officially prohibited by at least one party on routes in contested areas along the state's eastern border, in the far north/south and on routes to Hpapun. In the past year, routes serving Baw Ga Li, Hlaingbwe and Kawkareik also experienced periodic closures lasting weeks or months. Most towns in the state are still served by at least one open route, except for Hpapun which is largely isolated. There are checkpoints at all towns and many junctions and intermediary villages (most routes have one-to-four checkpoints). Checkpoints vary in nature: some may wave-through drivers while others require them to turn off their car engine or get advance travel authorization. Most checkpoints take less than 10 minutes if there is no queue.

**Since January 2021, route closures have become more numerous and frequent, even though many closures and checkpoints existed long before.** Commercial transport has long been prohibited on routes in contested areas along the state's eastern border and in the far north/south, but 2021 brought new standing closures for routes

to Hpapun and Kayah State. Other routes remain open but now see more short-term closures (e.g., near Kawkariek). The number and location of checkpoints in the state are largely unchanged in the past year, although some were added at major junctions in 2021, and some changed ownership.

## Permanant Route Features

#	Route (point A - point B)	Mode	Distance (Hrs)	Quality	Monsoon Conditions
1	<b>Taungoo (Bago) - Demoso (Kayah)</b> via Leik Tho	Road	8	★★★★	- →
2	<b>Thandaunggyi - Taungoo (Bago)</b> via Thandaung	Road	1	★★★★	→
3	<b>Baw Ga Li - Taungoo (Bago)</b>	Road	4	★★	- →
4	<b>Hpapun - Kamarmaung</b>	Road	3	★★★★	→
5	<b>Hpapun - Bilin (Mon)</b>	Road	5	★	- →
6	<b>Kamarmaung - Hpa-An</b>	Road	2	★★★★	→
7	<b>Myaing Gyi Ngu - Hpa-An</b>	Road	2	★★★★	→
8	<b>Myaing Gyi Ngu - Hlaingbwe</b>	Road	1	★★★★	→
9	<b>Hpa-An - Thaton (Mon)</b>	Road	1	★★★★★	→
10	<b>Hpa-An - Kawkareik</b>	Road	3	★★★★	→
11	<b>Hpa-An - Mawlamyine (Mon)</b> via Zar Tha Pyin	Road	1	★★★★★	→
12	<b>Hlaingbwe - Hpa-An</b>	Road	1	★★★★	→
13	<b>Hlaingbwe - Kawkareik</b> via Paingkyon	Road	4	★★	→
14	<b>Shan Ywar Thit - Hlaingbwe</b>	Road	3	★★	→
15	<b>Kawkareik - Myawaddy</b>	Road	1	★★★★★	→
16	<b>Kawkareik - Mawlamyine (Mon)</b> via Zar Tha Pyin	Road	3	★★★★	→
17	<b>Kyainseikgyi - Kawkareik</b>	Road	3	★★★★	→
18	<b>Kyainseikgyi - Mudon (Mon)</b>	Road	2	★★★★	→
19	<b>Kyaikdon - Kyainseikgyi</b>	Road	2	★★	→
20	<b>Waw Lay Myaing - Myawaddy</b>	Road	4	★★★★	→
21	<b>Su Ka Li - Waw Lay Myaing</b>	Road	3	★	- →
22	<b>Hpayarthonesu - Kyainseikgyi</b>	Road	4	★★★★	→
23	<b>Hpayarthonesu - Mudon (Mon)</b>	Road	5	★★★★	→

## Route Indicators

Indicators are estimated based on KIIs. They are intended to provide a qualitative impression rather than exact measures.

**Closures** – Frequency of closures on route since Jan. 2021.

- Long-term** - Closed indefinitely
- Frequent** - Closed 6 or more times per year
- Occasional** - Closed 2-5 times per year
- Rare** - Closed less than twice per year

**Volume (change)** – Change in volume on route since Jan. 2021.

- ▲ **Increased**
- **Stable**
- ▼ **Decrease**

**Volume (total)** – Current commercial volume on route, relative to routes in Jan. 2021. Excludes raw materials and illicit trade (e.g., timber, drugs).

- ○ ○ **Almost none**
- ○ ○ **Low**
- ● ○ **Medium**
- ● ● **High**

**Volume (direction)** – Portion of volume in each direction (null if volume is “almost none”).



**Mode** – Route modality (e.g., road, waterway).

**Distance** – Route length, measured as hours of travel by standard car/boat (incl. checkpoints). Travel times vary; this is intended only as a rough measure of relative distance.

**Quality** – Route quality in dry season based on infrastructure, relative to elsewhere in state.

- ★ ★ ★ ★ **Very poor**
- ★ ★ ★ ★ **Poor**
- ★ ★ ★ ★ **Medium**
- ★ ★ ★ ★ **High**

**Monsoon Condition** – Route conditions in monsoon season.

- ✗ **Closed** - Closes in monsoon
- ↘ **Poorer** - Worsens in monsoon
- → **Variable** - Weather dependent
- **Good** - Stable in monsoon

## Market Analysis Unit (MAU)

The Market Analysis Unit provides development practitioners, policymakers and private sector actors in Myanmar with data and analysis to better understand the impacts of Covid-19, conflict and other crises on:

- Household purchasing power, including coping mechanisms, safety nets and access to basic needs;
- Supply chains, including trade, cross-border dynamics and market functionality (particularly as it relates to food systems);
- Financial services, including financial services providers, household and business access to finance and remittances; and
- Labor markets (formal and informal), with a focus on agricultural labor and low-wage sectors (e.g., construction, food service).

## CONTACT

Market Analysis Unit  
[market.analysis.unit@gmail.com](mailto:market.analysis.unit@gmail.com)