

Maungtaw women alleging rape interviewed by journalists

FOREIGN and local journalists who are being allowed to independently report the news from Maungtaw have interviewed three women who claim they were raped three months ago by security forces.

The media group visited No. 1 Border Guard Police Headquarters that had been attacked in October and nearby villages in Maungtaw Township — Kyikanpyin, Wapeik, Aungmingalar, Pharwattchaung, Pyintphyuchaung, Kyarkaungtaung, Kyatyoeypin, Ngarsakyu, Pyaungpype, -- and collected information about socio-economic improvement, local development, rule of law, stability, accidental fires and residents who had returned after fleeing because of the violent attacks that occurred on October 9, 2016.

During the trip that the three women from Kyatkaungtaung village allegedly told journalists that they were raped by security forces three months ago. It was learnt that responsible persons will investigate the matter to uncover the truth.

The media group conducted by the Ministry of Information will independently cover news from 28 March to 1 April. The media are TV Asahi, the BBC, the VOA, EPA, Nippon, Fuji



Members of media interview local women in Maungtaw, Rakhine State on 30th March 2017. PHOTO: MNA

TV, Central News Bureau, Frontier Myanmar, Myanmar News Agency, Myanmar Alin and Kyaeomon. A total of 18 journalists made the trip, led by General Manager U Ye Naing from the News and Periodicals Enterprise.

Similar events have transpired in Pyaungpite and Kyatyoeypin villages, said U Ye Htut,

Chairman of the Maungtaw District Management Committee.

“Daw Than Than of Kyatyoeypin Village reported a similar case when both media groups and the investigation Commission visited Rakhine. We reported to the Border Police Force so that legal action can be taken for the victim and they went on a field inspection to the village

on that very day. However the victimized female was found to have left the village after receiving compensation and after listening to voices of the village chief and elders the case was discontinued,” he added.

“We will properly handle the case in a legal manner. The three victims confessed to the media regarding the allegations

of being raped. It is necessary that the victims themselves file a lawsuit in order for the Border Police Force to move in for inspection. Anonymity will be given for safety reasons for witnesses if they were to give a testimony but the victims need to take responsibility for their own testimonies. If found to be guilty then the perpetrators will be given a fitting sentence in accord with the law,” said the chairman of the committee.

“If the victim personally testifies their sexual assault then immediate action will be taken, however responsibility needs to be taken for their own accusations,” he added. “Just verbally is not enough, the victims need to show firm evidences for their grievances. We need cooperation to take action against the perpetrator. We can’t put pressure on the victims,” said U Ye Htut.

“If they can say about when and where the event was happened, we can check out the list of the officials in that region and try to expose the perpetrators,” he said. “Concerning the current case, local women escorted the female victims to Ngakhuya police station to file a law suit. Now, they have returned to their respective villages,” he said. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Tarred road commissioned into service in Thongwa Township

A ceremony to open a new tarred road was held in Thongwa Township, Yangon Region yesterday morning.

At the ceremony, Union Minister for Construction U Win Khaing said that the ministry is implementing construction of roads and bridges in the regions and states in its first 5-year short term plan from April 2016 to March 2021. Six roads and three bridges will be built in Yangon Region through international aids, parliament's pledges and BOT system. The ministry had already constructed 637 mile and 6 furlongs long roads and 49 bridges above 180-ft in Yangon Region.

Bago-Thanatpin-Kayan-Thongwa-Thanyan Road and Yangon-Pathein Road Section are scheduled to be upgrade to tarred ones with the assistance of Asian Development Bank (ADB) commencing the fiscal year 2018-2019, he added. Thakayta Bridge is under construction with the help of the Japan and the detailed designs are being drawn up for the Dala Bridge with the fund contributed by the Korea and the project is expected to begin in the near future.

A feasibility study is being conducted for the No (3) Bago River Crossing Bridge that links

Thilawa SEZ and the newly inaugurated road will be first of its kind in Yangon Region in the time of new government, he said.

The union minister highlighted that the local products from Thilawa SEZ in Yangon Region and Bago Region can be easily exported to other regions in a short period of time without passing Yangon City. The new road will help improve socioeconomic status of the local people and reduce poverty rate in rural area. In an attempt to ease traffic congestion and to reduce transportation charges, steps have been taken to allow the public to use nine bridges in Yangon Region free of charge starting from 1 April. He called for public participation for durability of the bridge.

Daw Nilar Kyaw, Yangon Regional Minister for Electricity, Industry and Road Transportation, the regional Hluttaw representatives, a town elder and an official from the Road Department formally opened the tarred road.

Then, the union minister, the regional minister and Thongwa Pyithu Hluttaw Representative Daw Su Su Lwin and guests posed for documentary photo and strolled along the tarred road.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Man missing in Maungtaw Township

A resident of Ywatnyo Taung Village, Maungtaw Township has been reported missing after he did not return from a trip to a nearby village.

Yar Yar, 23, left his home to visit Yethwin village on Wednesday at about 7am and did not return home. Security forces have been interrogating residents of Yethwin to learn what has happened to Yar Yar.

According to the interrogations of the villagers, it was learnt that Yar Yar was seen on Wednesday afternoon but was not seen by anyone in the evening.

Yar Yar's uncle has filed a case at the local police station and further investigation is ongoing by the police force. —*Myanmar News Agency*



Over 100 died in Malaysian detention camps, half from Myanmar

KUALA LUMPUR — More than one hundred foreigners died in the past two years in Malaysia's immigration detention centres from various diseases and unknown causes, most of them from Myanmar, according to documents from the government-funded National Human Rights Commission reviewed by Reuters.

The toll, which has not been previously disclosed, is based on Malaysian immigration depart-

ment data provided to the commission, which is known by its Malay acronym Suhakam.

There were 83 deaths in 2015, and at least 35 in 2016 up to Dec. 20.

It is unclear whether the death rate is higher than in neighbouring countries. Government officials in Indonesia and Thailand told Reuters they do not disclose such numbers.

The rate is higher than in major industrialised nations such

as the United States, which in the last financial year recorded 10 deaths in its immigration detention system, which has many more detainees than Malaysia's.

More than half of the 118 dead are from Myanmar, the source for tens of thousands of refugees coming to Malaysia, including Muslims from Rakhine State.

The number of Muslim fatalities in the camps is unknown. —*Reuters*

PERFORMANCES IN ONE-YEAR PERIOD



Retaining wall along the Minbu-An-Sittway Road. PHOTO: MNA



Local women learn weaving at the vocational training. PHOTO: MNA



Yarmaung Suspension Bridge on the Yangon-Sittway Road. PHOTO: MNA



Officials from the Veterinary Department inspect chicken farm. PHOTO: MNA



The State government has spared no effort to take measures against bank erosion and to build retaining walls. PHOTO: MNA

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After the violent attack on 9 October 2016, Myanmar Tatmadaw and Myanmar Police Force jointly carried out stability and law enforcement tasks while the Union government and the State government are focusing on regional development undertakings.

Non-discrimination

To ensure convenient journey for locals, all the people are treated equally except surprise checks for security reasons.

Five areas namely Kye-ichaung area, Ngakhuya area, Chamaungseik area, Tamantha area and Taungpyoletwei area have been designated for plying two market buses for each area which are difficult to access.

Upgrading schools

In the education sector, high, middle and primary schools were expanded. During one-year period, 29 primary schools were opened and 295 were upgraded. Spending over 5700 million kyat from Union capital fund, 140 schools were built in 2016-2017 Fiscal Year.

Health care

More health care facilities emerged in the last Fiscal Year in Rakhine State. Moreover, staff housings were built for health staff. One of the important steps taken by Rakhine State Health Department was appointing physicians and nurses and other health assistances.

In 2017, health staff will have to take vaccine as a precautionary measure if they need to go to infectious disease affected areas.

Power supply

Millions of kyats were spent on installation of transformers and erecting power lines in Gwa Township, Kyaukpyu Township and Ann Township.

The National Grid supplies power to 13 townships in Rakhine State and measures are being taken to supply power to reach villages.

So far, 147 villages are enjoy-

ing electricity and installation of power lines for 65 villages is in progress.

Disaster prevention

Six cyclone shelters were built at a cost of 600 million kyat for villages in Myebon and Taungup Townships. Two villages in Manaung Township also got the facilities worth 259.16 million kyat.

Land lease agreements

Altogether 585 land lease were granted for industrial works by State and District Administration Department. Farmers in rural areas are also enjoying land lease schemes.

Although Rakhine State is difficult to access in the past, thanks to the efforts made by Ministry of Construction new roads and bridges have been mushrooming one after another.

Communication

Ninety six more towers for mobile phones have been erected in Rakhine State. Local people in Rakhine state also received nearly 60000 SIM cards. It can be deduced from the fact that communication system covers almost all the areas in Rakhine State.

Lots of rain

Due to heavy rains, there occurs bank erosion and silting every year. Therefore, the State government has spared no effort to take measures against bank erosion and to build retaining walls.

Paddy yield

The area of cultivating summer paddy in 2016-2017 stood at 1103762 acres which yielded 65.27 baskets per acre and thus the whole areas produced over 72 million baskets.

Up to February this year 7255 acres of summer paddy have been cultivated against the target of 30200 acres. Agriculture Science was opened in Kyauktaw on 3 March 2016 and 250 students are pursuing agricultural education in that school. At the school workshop on vocational development and creating job opportunities was held attended by agriculturalists and livestock breeding and fishery entrepreneurs.

Smooth transportation, better water supply, rural housing, creating job opportunities

Although Rakhine State is difficult to access in the past, thanks to the efforts made by Ministry of Construction new roads and bridges have been mushrooming one after another. Nearly 14000 million kyat was earmarked to build 198 bridges big and small in 2016-2017 Fiscal Year. Urban and rural water supply systems are introduced spending a total of nearly 500 million kyat for 39 projects in urban areas and 10 projects in rural areas. Rural housing projects were implemented spending 350 million kyat in Maungtaw, Buthidaung and Taungup. Myasein-yang village project is aiming at creating job opportunities. Under the project 30 million kyat for each village was designated and altogether 122 villages has enjoyed the benefits so far.

People-centered projects

People-centered project is implemented with cooperation of World Bank in Ann Township, said Chief Minister U Nyi Pu. He also revealed that the Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT Fund) is also contributing to implementation of rural development projects in Gwa and Manaung Townships. He expressed his commitment to development of the whole Rakhine State.