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Union Minister U Thaung Tun, 2nd from Right, Indian Ambassador Mr. Vikram Misri, right, and Chinese Ambassador Mr. Hong Liang (2nd from Left) and other diplomats in Maungtau. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister and diplomats witness repatriation readiness

A DELEGATION of diplomats led by Union Minister U Thaung Tun observed repatriation readiness as part of a trip to share accurate information to international communities.

Union Minister for the Office of the Union Government

U Thaung Tun, diplomats from embassies of Myanmar's neighbouring countries, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and journalists yesterday toured Maungtau to witness the preparations for repatriation.

One of the trip's primary

aims is disseminating accurate information to international communities on the government's efforts for repatriation.

At Sittway Airport, Union Minister U Thaung Tun briefed the delegation on preparations made by the Union Government

and the Rakhine State Government for repatriation, including issuing National Verification Cards, providing temporary shelter, security, food, health care, help in resettlement and rehabilitation for returnees.

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VP U Myint Swe attends 'Green Economy' meeting

VICE President U Myint Swe attended the opening ceremony of the Inception and Implementation Meeting on the ASEAN Institute for a Green Economy (AIGE) held yesterday at the Myanmar International Convention Center-II (MICC-II) in Nay Pyi Taw, at which he said an environmentally responsible policy for economic development should be formulated.

In his opening speech, Vice President U Myint Swe said the ASEAN region, with a population of more than 630 million, was one of the world's biggest markets and stands as an important pillar in the world trade sector. It is expected to become the principal region in world trade. As a consequence, there will be an increasing demand for natural resources.

"The livelihoods of the people in the ASEAN region are still dependent on natural resources, and it is very important to manage and use the natural resources in a sustainable way. Most of the ASEAN countries face the effects of increase in population, poverty and climate change that results in heightened challenges of damage to historical and cultural heritages, depletion of natural resources, losses in biodiversity, drought and increased occurrences of natural disasters.

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Union Minister and diplomats witness repatriation readiness



Diplomats and officials meeting with local residents camping at the Zero Line at the border. **PHOTO: MNA**



Union Minister U Thaung Tun and ambassadors stroll on the friendship bridge between Myanmar and Bangladesh during their trip to Maungtau. **PHOTO: MNA**



Union Minister U Thaung Tun, Chief Minister U Nyi Pu and diplomats are briefed by an official on Kanyinchaung Economic Zone in Maungtau, Rakhine State. **PHOTO: MNA**

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Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu invited cooperation from the diplomats and the UN official in sharing accurate information on Rakhine State to international communities after they witnessed the genuine situation in the state.

He also urged them to cooperate with the authorities as Myanmar is ready to launch the repatriation and resettlement of returnees in accordance with the agreement with Bangladesh.

Following the briefing, the delegation flew by helicopter to Hla Pho Khaung camp, a transit camp for the returnees in Maungtau. At Hla Pho Khaung camp, Maungtau District Deputy Commissioner U Ye Htut and officials were briefed on preparations for providing shelter, security, food, water and electricity to returnees.

Following the meeting, the delegation led by U Thaung Tun toured the camp.

Hla Pho Khaung camp is established on 124.84 acres with 640 buildings and can accommodate more than 30,000 people. The camp is ready to provide accommodation, food, drinking water, electricity and health care to returnees. Under the arrangement of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine State (UEHRD), more than 500 tents are in reserve ready to be distributed to returnees whenever necessary.

Afterwards, the delegation went to Nga Khu Ya and the

reception camp, which will be used for accepting those who returned by waterway, and viewed readiness for scrutinising, issuing NV cards, health care services, internal and external liaison offices.

Afterwards, they flew to Taung Pyo Letwe reception camp and toured the facilities that will welcome those who return by road.

The delegation led by Union Minister U Thaung Tun also met with local residents who left their homes and are staying temporarily at the zero line at the border.

They briefed the residents about the government's repatriation process under the bilateral agreement between Myanmar and Bangladesh.

The delegation also visited Kanyinchaung Economic Zone, where U Aung Myint Than, Chairman of Border Trade and Merchants' Association, briefed them on current trading activities and objectives of the zone.

The delegation arrived back in Yangon in the evening.

The delegation comprised of Chinese Ambassador Mr. Hong Liang, Ambassador of India Mr. Vikram Misri, Ambassador of Singapore Ms. Vanessa Chan, the UN Resident Coordinator Mr. Knut Ostby, chargé d'affaires of the Thai and Bangladesh embassies, and journalists from Xinhua and NHK.

Myanmar was ready to launch the repatriation of returnees from Bangladesh as of 23 January with two camps and one transit camp established.— Myanmar News Agency ■



Union Minister U Thaung Tun and diplomats view readiness for scrutinisation at a repatriation camp in Maungtau. **PHOTO: MNA**