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# THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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## Pyithu Hluttaw holds 13<sup>th</sup>-day Meeting

Motion against formation of independent enquiry commission with one international person rejected by vote



Pyithu Hluttaw is being convened in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

**T**HE 13<sup>th</sup>-day meeting of the eighth regular session of the second Pyithu Hluttaw was held yesterday morning, where a motion against Announcement 3/2018 of the Office of the President to form an Independent Commission of Enquiry with three members, including an international person, as part of the national initiative to address reconciliation, peace, stability and development in Rakhine, was voted down.

Earlier in the meeting, the approval of the Hluttaw on adding, transferring and removal of the Pyithu Hluttaw committee members was obtained, questions raised and answered. After the debate and vote on the motion

against Announcement 3/2018 was conducted, an announcement on the bill amending the Television and Broadcasting Law was made.

Addition, transfer and removal of committee members

The Hluttaw approved the adding of U Sai Win Aye @ U Sai Tun Aye of Mongshu constituency, U Lu Htae Han @ U Aung Shwe of Laukkai constituency, U Soe Htay of Kawkaik constituency, U Sai Aung Kyaw of Kehsi constituency, Dr. Daw Khin Sithu of Loikaw constituency, U Mya Sein of Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) constituency, U Aung Kyi Thein of Chaungzon constituency, U Win Min of Hlinethaya constituency and U Nay Kyaw of Dagon

Myothit (East) constituency as committee members, transfer of U Sai Pho Myat of Muse constituency to the Citizens Fundamental Rights Committee, and the removal of U Tin Htwe of Waw constituency from Citizens Fundamental Rights Committee, as he will be assigned another duty.

**Question and answer session**

Next, in the question and answer session, a question by U Maung Maung of Htigyaing constituency on expanding and transferring Htigyaing Myoma market in Htigyaing Township was answered by Deputy Minister of Commerce U Aung Htoo.

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## Union Minister for Office of the State Counsellor participates in 24<sup>th</sup> International Conference on the Future of Asia in Japan

A Myanmar delegation led by U Kyaw Tint Swe, the Union Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor attended the 24<sup>th</sup> International Conference on the Future of Asia in Japan yesterday.

As the bilateral components, the Union Minister had met with His Excellency Mr Taro Kono, Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Yoshihide Suga, Chief Cabinet Secretary, H.E. Mr Hiroshige Seko, Minister for Economy, Trade and Industry and Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, Special Envoy for National Reconciliation in Myanmar and Chairman of Nippon

Foundation.

During the courtesy calls, matters related to the progress of Myanmar's peace process, Myanmar's democratization process, the latest developments in Rakhine State, and Myanmar Government's in Rakhine State, particularly signing of the MoU between the Government of Myanmar, UNDP and UNHCR as well as announcement of formation of an Independent Commission on Enquiry were discussed.

The delegation departed for Japan from Yangon International Airport on 10 June.— Myanmar News Agency ■



Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe shakes hands with Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Taro Kono in Japan. PHOTO: MNA

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**BUSINESS**

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## Private newspapers, journals, magazines up monthly

Daw Yu Yu Win, Acting Director of the Department for Copyright and Registration, has issued permits monthly for publishing private publications including newspapers, journals and magazines. As of May, some 26 newspapers, 216 journals, and 212 magazines have been published in the current year.

She said the aforementioned number of publications

were permitted publishing and sent to the department, in accordance with the Printing and Distributing Law Section 11 and Bylaw Section 15.

From 1 January to 31 May, the Ministry of Information, in accordance with the law, has given publication permits to 11 news agencies, 33 printing houses, 15 journals, 17 magazines and 100 general publications.

Since the legislation on the Printing and Distributing Law on 10 October 2014, some 2,381 permits have been granted to 104 news agencies, 1,514 printing houses, 46 distribution agencies, 539 journals, 442 magazines, and 1,354 general publications. Further information are available at the ministry's website at [www.moi.gov.mm](http://www.moi.gov.mm).  
— Myanmar News Agency ■



Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye and officials view TV showing activities of quick response to recent flash flood in Myanmar. **PHOTO: MNA**

## Authorities coordinate handling of recent flash floods

A COORDINATION meeting was held yesterday at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement to effectively administer humanitarian aid and disaster management concerning the recent flashfloods.

During the meeting Union Minister for SWRR, Dr. Win Myat Aye, met with Deputy Minister U Soe Aung, Director-General Dr. Ko Ko Naing, and officials talked about the recent flashfloods occurring around the country and discussed about the ministry and relevant departments' plans to respond to the situation.

Heavy rains in the past few days caused a flood in

Minbu Township that carried a car away on 10 June. Floods destroyed part of an embankment at milepost (28/6) in Sedoktaya Township that damaged 50 feet of the adjacent tar road. About 100 feet of road between Nyaungpinkyin village and Shein Village was blocked and the stretch of land near Seemechaung Bridge entering Sedoktaya Town was eroded as well.

To the east of Laukpale Village the 180 feet Zeechaung dam, 180 feet Word Vision sponsored dam, and the 450 feet World Bank sponsored were damaged. Roads leading to Bonebaw Village in Ngaphe

Township and Myayket Village were also temporarily closed due to damage from the rain.

As of yesterday, around 100 motor vehicles were stranded on their way from Yangon to Magway.

Rains also caused a small landslide in East Ingone Village and authorities relocated six households from the affected area.

In An Township, rains destroyed about 20 feet of the An-Mai road at (22/5-6) milepost. Authorities concerned are constructing a bailey bridge in the affected area which may take two days for completion.  
— Myanmar News Agency ■

## G-7 welcomes recent commitments made by Myanmar to Rakhine issue

G-7 SUMMIT held in La Malbaie, Quebec, Canada from 8 to 9 June 2018 issued a Communique in which it welcomed the recent commitments made by Myanmar Government.

In the Communique, the leaders of G-7 also pledged to coordinate efforts to build lasting peace and support democratic transition in Myanmar, particularly to allow safe and unhindered humanitarian access and the safe, voluntary and dignified return of displaced persons from Rakhine State.

The Myanmar Government signed an MoU with UNHCR and UNDP on 6 June 2018 to assist the Government's

efforts for the implementation of the Arrangement for repatriation of Displaced Persons between Myanmar and Bangladesh. The Myanmar Government also announced on 31 May 2018 that it has decided to establish an Independent Commission of Enquiry as part of its national initiative to address matters relating to reconciliation, peace, stability and development in Rakhine State.

These initiatives taken by the Myanmar Government were also welcomed by the United Nations and many countries including the United States of America, France, People's Republic of China and Japan.  
— Myanmar News Agency ■

## Rakhine Chief Minister meets local people of Thandwe Township

RAKHINE State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu met with the local people of the villages in Thandwe Township in Thandwe's Dwayawadi Hall yesterday.

During the meeting, the chief minister encouraged the participants to talk about the strengths and weaknesses of the regional development processes carried out in the last two years. He said the union government has been and is continuing to work on the rule of law, peace process, and the basic infrastructure in Rakhine.

Next, Thandwe District Deputy Commissioner U Nyi Nyi

Htwe explained the completed works, the progress, and plans for the projects in the 2018-2019 fiscal year. Township Administrator U Aung Kyaw Than explained the regional statistics and the regional development progress.

Later, the local people discussed their needs regarding regional development, education, healthcare and confiscated land. Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, state ministers U Kyaw Lwin, U Aung Kyaw Zan, Dr. Chan Thar, U Win Myint and other officials then responded to the questions posed by the residents.  
— Myanmar News Agency ■



Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu delivers the speech at the meeting with local people in Thandwe Township. **PHOTO: MNA**

# The Committee for Implementation of Recommendations on Rakhine State

Report to the People on the Progress of the Implementation of Recommendations on Rakhine State  
(January to April 2018)

## Introduction

AS the Government of Myanmar works towards achieving stability, durable peace and development across the country including Rakhine State, the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State was established with an aim to help create a peaceful, fair and prosperous future for the people living in the State. This report provides an update to the people of Myanmar regarding the progress of the implementation by the Committee, for the period of January to April 2018.

## Economic and Social Development

Due compensations are granted for lands acquired from local people for projects necessary for comprehensive development of Rakhine State. Compensations for 6.06 acres of land that was acquired for Kantharyar police station in Gwa Township amounting in 2.7068 million MMK, and for 3.11 acres of acquired for Ahmyintkyun police station in Sittwe Township amounting in 7.775 million MMK are now sanctioned; and authorities are currently processing the payments to the farmers. Compensation for the land acquired for the village tract administrator office of Ahmyintkyun Village Tract in Sittwe Township is included in the FY 2018-19 budget proposal.

China International Trust and Investment Corporation (CITIC) and the Government Designated Entity (GOE) as a counterpart from Myanmar are working closely for conducting Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Social Impact Assessment (SIA) and Geological and Topographical (G.T) Survey for Kyaukpyu Special Economic Zone Project, in order to promote public participation, and to ensure local people can enjoy the benefits from investments and extraction of natural resource in Rakhine State.

Discussions and plans are in progress with ILO for a labor market assessment. Meanwhile, livelihood skills trainings targeting women such as trainings for production of value-added food, home science, tailoring, agricultural practices, and refresher courses for cooperatives were delivered, to increase job opportunities as a means to address low participation of women in labor force. A total of 42 training courses were conducted during this reporting period, benefitting a total of 568 women.



With regards to transportation sector that is crucial for socio-economic development of the state, construction of 13 bridges is now completed whereas construction of another 11 bridges is planned to be complete in FY 2018-19. With support from capital expenditure budgets of the Union and the State, 34 roads are being upgraded section by section, and two new May-U mountain passes are also being built. The construction of these two main mountain passes- Kyaukpadu-Inndin Zaydipyin Mountain Pass (9/0 mile) and Kyeinchaung-Goatpi Mountain Pass (9/7 mile)- is now 98% complete. The construction of Buthidaung-Thabaitdaung-Nyaungchaung-Aungzeya-Angumaw Road (46 miles 5 furlongs) is also almost complete. In waterways, between 22 to 25 ferry and freight lines are operating regularly; with a total fleet of

50 river freight vessels, more than 700 freight vessels with over-20-horse power engines, and more than 600 freight vessels with under-20-horse power engines providing passenger and freight transportation services.



Electricity is also another crucial sector for socio-economic development. Efforts are being made to provide 24-hour electricity from the national grid in Maung Daw area. Construction of a 66-KV transmission line from Ponnagyun to Rathaedaung is now complete; and Rathaedaung power distribution substation was opened on March 31, 2018 to provide 24-hour electricity. Similarly, construction of a 66KV, 2 x 5MVA substation in Buthidaung and a 66KV, 5MVA substation in Maung Daw are in progress, with 38% and 12.61% of total project work completed to date respectively. These projects will be completed on time to provide 24-hour electricity from the national grid to Buthidaung township at the end of June 2018; and to Maung Daw township at the end of December 2018. Rural electrification using solar power prior to electrification through the national grid is also simultaneously implemented in Rakhine State. Contracts for installation of 8092 solar power systems were now awarded through a public tender.



Projects for sufficient supply of drinking water and water for agriculture were also implemented across rural areas of Rakhine State. A total of 245 water supply projects were completed including 184 projects funded by FY 2017-18 Rakhine State Budget and Supplementary Budget through the Union Fund, 13 projects funded by UNICEF and 48 projects funded by the Union grants.



Myanma Agricultural Development Bank also sanctioned 12,853.41 million MMK as loans to 349 farmers for procurement of 349 tractors during this reporting period. Agricultural Mechanization Department also sold 156 hand-operated tractors in this period.



Efforts are taken to scale up the opportunities to access agricultural loans for all communities in Rakhine State. In January 2018, a total of 246.30 million MMK was sanctioned for 67 members of four cooperatives in two townships, for agricultural work in 821 acres of farmland. Additionally, Myanma Agricultural Development Bank also sanctioned 25 million MMK as pre-monsoon agricultural loans, from January to April 2018.



A total of 1,331 participants received technical support through 34 technical trainings, in order to help farmers from Rakhine townships with modern agricultural techniques.

77 new mobile radio stations and 28 new post offices were also expanded to improve access to telephone, internet and communications services that will support socio-economic development of local people in Rakhine State. Additionally, 84 kilometers in length of new fiber cables are now installed in Sittwe - Ahngumaw - Maungdaw - Buthidaung cable route and Maungdaw Taungpyoletwe cable route.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications granted approvals to invite Expressions of Interest (EOI) through announcements in state-owned newspapers, and to hire a consultant to prepare Request for Proposal (RFP) as an initial step for construction of a new airport in Mrauk-U township. Consultants are now preparing EOI documents in accordance with the international standards and procedures for Public Private Partnership (PPP). In addition, repair and maintenance works were also carried out at the Sittwe and Kyaukpyu Airports that are important for the transportation in the state- including repair of a runway segment damaged by landslide and additional double seal-coating of the runway at Sittwe airport, and patching (2880x100 feet) and double seal-coating (1300x50 feet) of the runway at Kyauk Phyu airport. Myanma National Airway-a state-owned carrier - transported 45,197 passengers to Sittwe, Kyaukpyu, Man Aung and Ann townships from January to April 2018; and this accounts for 9% of all domestic passengers.

(To be continued)

Be positive, committed to process of re-establishing trust to solve Rakhine issue

**T**HE Myanmar government is committed to the speedy implementation of the recent signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Myanmar and the UN agencies on the assistance for the repatriation process of displaced persons. Besides this, the Union Government has decided to form an independent commission of enquiry for Rakhine State.

The commission was formed a few months after the advisory board made their recommendations.

The Union Government is dealing with the Rakhine issue, which is complicated. What Myanmar is facing in Rakhine today is a long-standing issue that goes back a couple of centuries. People forget that it is not something that happened yesterday.

Until the refugees have been given the forms, until they've been informed fully of all the steps they need to take to come back to Rakhine, we will not be able to carry forward the process very quickly.

and decide whether or not the situation is trustworthy. If you're not prepared to try out a situation, you can never tell for sure whether it's acceptable or not.

Until the refugees have been given the forms, until they've been informed fully of all the steps they need to take to come back to Rakhine, we will not be able to carry forward the process very quickly.

Some have come back but through the official channels.

The ones who came back said they were not aware of the need to fill in the forms and to follow a certain procedure.

Everybody concerned must be positive and committed to the process of re-establishing trust. We believe that the better choice before us is to recognize the reality of the situation on the ground and accommodate each other's concerns. ■

We must work together to build trust to achieve lasting peace, stability and development in Rakhine.

Trust is a two-way business. It is not just up to Myanmar to establish trust. The other side also has to take the necessary steps to establish trust.

For example, we understand that the forms that are required to be filled in, in accordance with the MoU agreed between Myanmar and Bangladesh, have not been distributed widely among the refugees. Unless these forms are distributed and the refugees know there's a legal and safe way for them to return to Rakhine, we will not be able to make speedy progress.

The MoU is agreed to by two or more parties, and it is imperative for all parties involved to implement their responsibilities.

The Myanmar government has carried out all its responsibilities, in line with the MoU. Everybody can see what the government has been doing if they study the MoU.

But trust is not something that can be created by just signing a piece of paper, and it's the people who have to take a risk

# Reinforcing Motor Vehicle Laws in the Public Transport

By Than Phyo Naing  
(Kanyinkyoo)

**O**VER recent years, there has been an increase in the number of deaths related to traffic accidents in Myanmar. I have read in the papers that traffic accidents which occurred on June 4 and 5 had claimed 15 lives. Thus we can assume that the increasing number of deaths from road accidents in Myanmar can be attributed to reckless driving and disobeying traffic rules.

As for Road Transport Administration Department, efforts have been made to get easy access to transportation flow with the aim of linking with other countries, because the road network is vital to our economy. Many roads have been upgraded into tar roads and many traffic signs or road signs have been erected on roadsides across the country.

In order to reduce casualties and to become more aware of the traffic rules and regulations, many traffic signboards have been installed across the country. The signboards are also aimed at encouraging the people to obey the traffic rules and regulations and to indicate the drivers do's and don'ts while driving.

## Causes of road accidents

Many drivers show an utter disregard for road rules, speeding and wearing seatbelts. As a result, road safety is now a major public health issue. It is found that drivers often lose attention on the expressways. Other factors



for its notoriety include poor maintenance, unsafe overtaking, lack of driving experience and zebra crossings. Zebra crossing means that pedestrians have to cross the road by their instinct.

As for the ministry concerned, efforts have been made to upgrade the infrastructure and build crossing bridges across the towns and cities. Most accidents were caused by human negligence and heedlessness, that's why it is of great importance to educate the public, including drivers and pedestrians alike.

Some of the most common reasons for road accidents are caused by reckless driving, drunken driving, over speeding, falling asleep while driving, disregard for traffic signs, car signal lights on the part of the pedestrians, and reluctance to use overhead pedestrian passes and reluctance to use the zebra-crossings.

Some of the most common reasons for road accidents caused by reckless driving, drunken driving, over speeding, falling asleep while driving, disregard for traffic signs, car signal lights on the part of the pedestrians, and reluctance to use overhead pedestrian passes and reluctance to use the zebra-crossings.

## Safety first

The aim and objective of the law is to regulate motor vehicle related issues and make the roads more convenient for people. Myanmar is experiencing rapid motorization, which is associated with the growing economy and population. The tasks of implementation of road safety are of vital importance for the nation, being the tasks to be carried out specifically for safety of people's lives.

## Precautionary measures for traffic accidents

In building new roads, special care is needed to be taken for road safety and it also needs to abide by road designs and standards. In repairing roads as well, responsible departments and organizations are needed to take care of security matters. Road signs and installation of signal lights are required to follow existing rules and laws. Deep-rooted and wrong road habits on expressways for vehicles to overpass preceding ones need to be corrected to

rightfulness. In upgrading the reduction of road accidents, establishment of an organization for raising funds for road safety needs to be carried out. In schools, lessons on road safety should be started to be included in the syllabus. Common sense should be indoctrinated at a young age that road safety knowledge is needed for all of us. Provided that every individual keeps road safety disciplines, roads and vehicles are in better conditions, accidents will surely decrease.

The Ministry of Transport and Communication has formulated future processes for success. Programs have been drawn up and implemented to reduce road accidents and fatalities. Cooperation is essential to achieve road safety for the public.

We should be aware that threats to road safety are huge and increasing, and the world is putting great emphasis on road safety to contain these threats. For the success of these processes, there is a need to train

and educate road users, to enact vehicle and traffic rules. There also is a need to inspect the vehicle usage, maintenance and installation of safety measures while proper design of roads, laying roads up to standard and regular road maintenance are required to be done without fail.

Among Southeast Asian nations, Myanmar ranks second out of 11 countries in road traffic deaths, with 20.3 deaths per 100,000 people. This amounts to more than 10,000 deaths in 2015 due to road accidents, according to a World Health Organization report from 2015.

The increasing burden of road traffic collisions and related fatalities has become a serious public health threat in Myanmar, which must be addressed through effective preventive and corrective measures, using a multi-sector approach.

For this reason, the Ministry of Health and Sports and WHO have initiated a multi-sectoral project on road safety in collaboration with the University of Public Health of Yangon, the Road Transport Administration Department under the Ministry of Transportation, the Expressway Maintenance Unit of the Ministry of Construction and the Traffic and Highway Police departments, as well as additional public and private partners.

The project aims to assess the road safety situation of the busiest expressway in the country – the Yangon-Mandalay Highway – in order to identify gaps and facilitate necessary corrective actions, in accordance with the policy recommendations of the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020.

Main causes of crashes have been identified as over-speeding, tire bursting, reckless driving habits that do not respect the rules of the road and inadequate road conditions. To address this growing problem, a series of measures are being planned for implementation by the respective sectors.

Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung

## A simple way to save a life: Give blood

By Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh,  
Regional Director of WHO South-East Asia

*Giving blood is a uniquely powerful act. Effective coordination can dramatically increase its life-saving impact*

Most of us want to make a positive difference to the lives of others – people we don't know; people we may never meet. Thankfully, there's a simple, safe and effective way to make the biggest difference of all: give blood.

Doing so is a uniquely powerful act. The blood you give could save the life of a woman suffering birth complications, revive and sustain a child with severe anemia, facilitate urgent surgery, or provide critical support during a public health crisis. It is a gesture made all the more significant given blood's core components are yet to be synthesized, making voluntary donation one of the most basic expressions of human solidarity possible.

Well-coordinated blood and blood product systems can dramatically increase the act's life-saving impact. In recent years WHO South-East Asia and its Member countries have done just that, making rapid strides in enhancing the safety, quality and availability of blood products and the systems that support them, thereby helping secure access for all people everywhere to essential health services – one of WHO South-East Asia's Flagship Priorities.

Several of the Region's achievements stand out. All Member countries have now developed and are implementing national policies on blood transfusion and blood safety. Region-wide, each and every pint of blood donated is tested for the potential of transfusion-transmitted infections. Remarkably, 82% of the blood collected in the Region is from voluntary, non-remunerated donors, meaning the overwhelming majority is from persons with no family affiliation and who give their time and blood out of pure altruism. Their sense of civic responsibility is commendable.

Nevertheless, more solidarity, commitment and blood are needed: At present around 15.9 million units of blood are collected Region-wide annually, with around 18 million units required. To reach that volume, regular donations should be encouraged as a matter of duty, with advocacy among youth a particular point of focus. At the same time, given that the Region's blood banks (on average) separate just under half of all blood into its various components – a process that allows patients to receive only the plasma, platelet, red or white cells they require, leaving the rest to be used as and where needed – there is significant scope to increase the efficient use of blood already donated. That should be pursued as a matter of priority.

But beyond enhancing the sheer volume of blood collected, as well as ensuring its more efficient use, blood and blood product systems Region-wide can build on the substantial gains already made and scale up implementation of WHO's global strategy for safe blood (including by advocating for voluntary non-remunerated donations), thereby increasing timely access to safe, high-quality blood products for all.

First, through detailed planning and needs assessments, blood products can be more efficiently processed and distributed to ensure all people have access to the blood they need, when they need it. That means designating centralized blood banks responsible for the collection, processing and distribution of blood, at the same time as accurately mapping-out the volume of blood needed to cover specific catchment areas. It also means ensuring blood storage centers – including primary health care facilities – are effectively allocated and tended to so blood and blood products are readily available to communities in remote and hard-to-reach areas.

Second, haemovigilance – from donation to processing, and from storage to transfusion – should be better managed and regulated. In particular, Member countries should ensure haemovigilance measures are reported to the WHO Global Database on Blood Donor Safety, with a particular focus on ensuring all public and private facilities do the same. Similarly, they should also work to harness the latest laboratory technology to guarantee the most rigorous screening possible is carried out.

SEE PAGE 10

# Over 100 people, broken boat found stranded at seashore in Yathedaung



Officials transport Islamic people to Nga Khu Ya Reception Centre for scrutinization. **PHOTO: MNA**

SECURITY forces found a boat broke apart and 104 people stranded at a sea shore in Yathedaung Township yesterday and transported them to the Nga Khu Ya Reception Centre.

Acting on an information, the security forces inspected the seashore between Agnumaw and Donpiké villages in Yathedaung Township, Rakhine State, yesterday morning and found 104 people including 44 men and 60 women and a bro-

ken motorized boat which is 40 ft long and 20 ft wide and 6 ft in depth.

All Islamic people were transported in four vehicles to Ngakhuya Reception Centre in the evening to receive scrutinization by officials of the Immigration and National Registration Department.

On 21 May 2015, 228 boat people including 208 from Bangladesh were found in sea near the Thinbawgwe Village

in Maungtaw Township, Rakhine State. The Bangladesh people were provided with aid and were systematically handed over to their country.

Similarly, on 29 May, 2015, a total of 734 boat people from Bangladesh were found in sea south east of Pyapon, Ayeyawady Region, and they were provided with humanitarian aid and handed over to Bangladesh.— Myanmar News Agency ■

## A simple way to save a life: Give blood

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And third, Member countries should make concerted efforts to limit the need for blood products in the first place. The best way to do that is by providing high-quality essential services at the primary level, including attentive antenatal care, sharp-eyed disease screening and diagnosis, and effective health promotion and counselling as

a matter of routine. By taking preventive action, the need for blood transfusions will be significantly reduced, at the same time as fortifying health systems more generally.

That is, in part, why donating blood is so uniquely powerful. Beyond the symbolic act of giving, the blood collected can only be as effective as the systems that support it. To that end, Member countries Region-wide should build

on recent progress and enhance the safety, quality and availability of blood products and the systems they rely on, thereby strengthening health systems as a whole. Though giving blood may be a simple way to save a life, it is also a potent means to advance progress towards a goal for which WHO South-East Asia and its Member countries are all striving: access to essential health services for all. ■

## 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Philippines independence celebrated in Nay Pyi Taw

A CEREMONY in commemoration of the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the independence of Philippines was held in Horizon Lake View Hotel, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The event starts off with the playing of the national anthems of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Republic of the Philippines.

Next, Philippines Ambassador to Myanmar H.E. Eduardo E. Kapunan Jr. and Union Minister U Kyaw Tin delivered opening speeches.

Afterwards, the Union Minister and wife and the Ambassador and wife cut the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary Philippines Independence Day cake.

Following this, the Ambassador and wife hosted the attendees to a dinner.

The ceremony was attended by Chief of General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) Gen. Mya Tun Oo and wife, Nay Pyi Taw Command Commander Maj-Gen Myint Maw and wife, heads of departments and invited guests.— Myanmar News Agency ■



Union Minister U Kyaw Tin welcomed by Philippines Ambassador Mr. Eduardo E. Kapunan Jr. at the ceremony of 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the independence of Philippines. **PHOTO: MNA**

## Australian delegation arrives Yangon

A DELEGATION led by Australian Senator, the Honourable Concetta Anna Fierravanti-Wells, Minister for International Development and the Pacific, arrived Yangon by air yesterday evening.

They were welcomed at the

Yangon International Airport by Australian Ambassador Mr. Nicholas Coppel, Daw Kay Thi Soe, Director-General of the Strategic Studies and Training Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and officials.— Myanmar News Agency ■



Director-General Daw Kay Thi Soe welcomes Australian Senator, the Honourable Concetta Anna Fierravanti-Wells in Yangon. **PHOTO: MNA**