



The 6th ASEAN-US Summit is held in Singapore yesterday. PHOTO: MNA (NEWS ON PAGE-1)

State Counsellor meets with Chinese Premier in S'pore



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi shakes hands with Chinese Premier Mr. Li Keqiang during the 33rd ASEAN Summit held in Singapore. PHOTO: MNA

53rd ASEAN-COCI meeting concludes with dinner

A DINNER was held in honor of members attending the 53rd meeting of the ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information (ASEAN-COCI) at the Royal Nay Pyi Taw Hotel at 7 pm yesterday.

The dinner was attended by the Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture, Thura U Aung Ko, Union Minister for Information, Dr. Pe Myint, Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council, Dr. Myo Aung, deputy ministers, departmental officials, officials of ASEAN-COCI from ASEAN countries, representatives from the ASEAN Secretary-General's Office, and local ASEAN-COCI officials.

In his opening remarks, Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko said he strongly believes that the friendship between the member countries of ASEAN has a bright future.

The minister said the meetings of the ASEAN Sub-committee on Culture and the ASEAN Sub-committee on Information, both held on 13 November, and the 53rd meeting of ASEAN-COCI went off successfully. He said the efforts made by ASEAN-COCI leaders and representatives from the ASEAN Secretary-General's Office were evident in yesterday's meeting, and thanked all participants and the meeting's

Organisation Committee.

He said he wished to exchange visions and experiences at the dinner for putting member countries on the path to one ASEAN, one identity, and one community.

Next, the Union Minister and the chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Council presented souvenirs to ASEAN leaders attending the 53rd meeting.

Dance troupes from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture and the National University of Arts and Culture (Mandalay) performed traditional and regional dances at the dinner. —MNA ■ / (Translated by Myat Thandar Aung)

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been in Singapore to attend the 33rd ASEAN Summit and related Summits, held bilateral talks with Mr. Li Keqiang, Premier of the People's Republic of China, on 15 November 2018 at the Suntec Expo Convention Centre at 1:45 pm yesterday.

During the meeting, the State Counsellor and the Premier exchanged views on promoting bilateral relations and cooperation, including education and human resources development, preparatory works for the repatriation of the dis-

placed persons from Rakhine State and the peace process.

The Chinese Premier expressed that China supported the Myanmar Government's Peace and National Reconciliation efforts and efforts to resolve the situation in Rakhine State and would continue to support Myanmar in the international arena.

The State Counsellor expressed appreciation to the Chinese government for the consistent support extended to the Myanmar Government for the peace process and the Rakhine State issue.—MNA ■

Union Ministers inspect repatriation readiness at reception centre

UNION Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye, Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, Deputy Ministers who are Chairmen of the Rakhine State work committees on receiving and resettlement of returnees, ministers from Rakhine State Government and depart-

mental officials visited Taung Pyo Letwe Reception Centre yesterday, where they inspected the centre's readiness to receive returnees. Deputy District Administrator U Ye Htoo and officials of the centre provided explanations about the activities of the centre.

Myanmar has been prepared to receive returnees since January 2018. The centre was



Union Ministers Dr. Win Myat Aye and U Thein Swe stand at the Taung Pyo Letwe friendship bridge in Rakhine State. PHOTO: MNA

Myanmar has been prepared to receive returnees since January 2018. The centre was ready to receive the first group of 2,250 returnees who were among the list sent by Bangladesh on 15 November.

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Myanmar is prepared to receive the returnees. Once they

return, arrangements were also made to provide humanitarian aid, to assist in their livelihoods, to give training for employment, education, health and to provide freedom of travel in accordance with the law, as well as a cash-for-work program through international cooperation.

Later in the evening, Union Ministers U Thein Swe and Dr. Win Myat Aye, Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu and Deputy Ministers who are Chairmen of the Rakhine State work committees on receiving and resettlement of returnees, met with the media at the Rakhine State government guest house.—MNA ■

(Translated by Myat Thandar Aung)

MOFA explains Rakhine repatriation



Permanent Secretary U Myint Thu from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, center in right picture, explains about the repatriation process of the first batch of displaced people from Bangladesh and the possible reasons for its delay, during a press conference in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a press conference on the repatriation of displaced people from Bangladesh to Rakhine State in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Review of the situation on the ground

Permanent Secretary U Myint Thu from MOFA answered questions from the media. He said the press conference aimed to explain the first phase of repatriation between Myanmar and Bangladesh, which begins today.

U Myint Thu said he attended the third Myanmar-Bangladesh Joint-Working Group meeting in Dhaka on 30 October. He said an agreement was made to repatriate 2,261 people as the first batch of returnees on 15 November.

He said the 2,261 people slated to return to Rakhine state were on a list of 8,032 people sent by Bangladesh and were scrutinized at the Home Affairs Ministerial meeting held in Dhaka in February this year.

U Myint Thu said Bangladesh has informed Myanmar that the first batch of displaced people will return by sea route to the Nga Khu Ya Reception Centre, and later, they informed

that they will be taken to the Taung Pyo Letwe Reception Centre by road. He said Myanmar had completed preparations for their return.

The permanent secretary said that SWRR Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye had talked about his visit to the centres for repatriation and given information about them at a recent press conference in Yangon. Physical arrangements are complete on Myanmar's side and the 2,261 returnees will be accepted starting 7am, yesterday, said U Myint Thu.

He said officials are already in place at the Taung Pyo Letwe friendship bridge gate to welcome the returnees. The officials include Rakhine State's Minister for Security and Border Affairs Col. Phone Tint, who is also the Joint-Chairman of the Working Committee for Repatriation of Displaced People, and Rakhine State's Minister of Electricity, Industry, and Transportation U Aung Kyaw Zan, said U Myint Thu.

He added that Union Ministers Dr. Win Myat Aye and U Thein Swe, Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, Deputy Minister U Soe Aung, and other officials have also arrived

at the Taung Pyo Letwe Reception Centre.

Repatriation delayed

U Myint Thu said although preparations for receiving the returnees are complete, Bangladesh has still not sent any people. He offered his opinion that Bangladesh could not complete the physical arrangements thoroughly.

He said the list of 8,032 people was not filled out by the intended people themselves, and it is because of this that unnecessary delays are occurring.

U Myint Thu said he met with representatives of the displaced people in Kutupalong camp in Cox's Bazar on 31 October. He also met with Hindu representatives and said there are 438 Hindu people there that wish to return as soon as possible.

Possible causes for delay

The permanent secretary said the displaced people can be divided into three groups. The first group has people who wish to travel to a third country, such as Canada, from Bangladesh. This group may not have any desire to return to Myanmar, he said.

The second group has people who were involved in the ARSA terrorist attacks that occurred in 2016 and 2017, said U Myint Thu. He said these are the villagers who were recruited into ARSA to attack the 30 police posts and an army base. He said this group may not wish to return to Myanmar too.

The third group comprises of people who have homes and relatives left behind, own fields and fishing boats and have a business of their own. These people have the desire to return

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Continued cooperation

U Myint Thu said they will cooperate with neighboring countries and mentioned that China had donated 1,110 houses in the last month while India donated 250 and Japan donated houses too. He mentioned that ASEAN countries have announced they will provide support in Northern Rakhine as well.

He said the AHA Centre in Indonesia offered an invitation to cooperate with Myanmar during the 33rd ASEAN Summit held in Singapore recently. He said they will accept the offer.

U Myint Thu said they are also working together with UNDP and UNHCR in line with the MoU signed with them on 6 June 2018. He said they have conducted two Rapid Needs Assessments in Northern Rakhine in September and October. He said they regularly hold technical working group meet-

ings with UNDP and UNHCR and will continue cooperation processes.

He repeated himself and said the union ministers, Rakhine State chief minister and other officials are already in place at the Taung Pyo Letwe Reception Centre for the repatriation process which begins today.

He said they will follow the signed arrangement with Bangladesh and cooperate in the repatriation process. He said they will ensure the repatriation is voluntary, safe and dignified for the returnees.

He said he hopes the UNHCR does not operate in a hindering way regarding the repatriating of people who truly wish to return. He concluded by saying they will continue cooperating with Bangladesh in the repatriation process. He then replied to questions from the media.

Also attending the press conference were Permanent Secretary U Myo Myint Maung from the Ministry of Information, Director-General U Ko Ko Naing from the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, department officials, and local and foreign media members. — MNA ■ (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

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