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Students from IDP camps sitting for the first half-year examination at Satyonesu Ward Sub-Basic Education High School. PHOTO: NAY LIN

Schools reopen in Maungtaw, Buthidaung as stability returns

Min Thit (MNA)

SCHOOLS temporarily closed in Maungtaw and Buthidaung townships after ARSA extremist terrorist attacks have now reopened as peace and stability return to the region.

Yesterday, students could be seen attending school and resuming their normal routines, according to the head of state education department in Sittway.

"In Maungtaw, primary, middle and high schools were reopened. In Buthidaung too, up to 21 schools were re-

opened. Teachers have also returned to schools and are teaching the students", said U Aung Kyaw Tun head of the state education department.

A high school headmaster said academic life has been fully restored in Maungtaw.

"School was reopened on 19 September, but some students were unable to attend. All teachers are present", said U Aung Myint Thein, headmaster of No. 1 Basic Education High School in Maungtaw Township.

According to the office of the head of the Rakhine

State Education Department, schools in Maungtaw and Buthidaung towns were reopened, but schools in villages were not yet opened due to security situations.

"Opening of schools in rural areas of Maungtaw and Buthidaung townships depend on security. Schools in ethnic villages are safe and secure, but we need to think about schools in Bengali villages. If the administrative side considers it safe, these schools will reopen. Teachers are ready", said U Aung Kyaw Tun.

According to the Rakhine State Education Department, about 3,000 students who fled from Maungtaw and Buthidaung towns to Sittway after ARSA extremist terrorist attacks were attending schools in Sittway so that there would be no gap in their education.

"There are students from kindergarten to matriculation class from relief camps attending this school. Books and stationery were provided to them free and they were attending class together with students from this school.

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SUNDAY SPECIAL

SUNDAY SPECIAL

Be a good reader, to become a unique leader

Today's issue contains an 8-Page special pull-out supplement.



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Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker delivers rice to Sittway IDP camps

AMYOTHA Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung and donors delivered 3,000 bags of rice to displaced people sheltering at camps in Sittway and Maungdaw yesterday.

They left for Sittway yesterday and were welcomed in Sittway by Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu and officials.

The Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker and donors then went to IDP camps in Sittway and delivered the rice bags. Thirty rice bags were given to 308 people from 89 households in Adatehtan Monastery temporary relief camp, 30 rice bags for 265 people from 93 households in Dhammarama Monastery temporary relief camp, 30 rice bags for 338 people from 102 households in Maramargyi Monas-

tery temporary relief camp, 50 rice bags for 486 people from 114 households in Hindu temple temporary relief camp and 70 rice bags for 686 people from 286 households in Danyawadi Sports Ground temporary relief camp were donated.

While meeting with local ethnic nationals in the temporary relief camps, Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung explained the government's programmes for regional development, road communication and security in Maungdaw region and gave words of encouragement.

U Aye Tha Aung and donors will continue to provide assistance to ethnic nationals in Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships from 1 to 3 October, it is learnt. —Win Min Soe (IPRD)■



Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung donates rice bags to displaced people in Sittway. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister meets MMPA executive members, attends opening of MMPA Cinema

Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint attended a opening ceremony of the Myanmar Motion Picture Asiayon (MMPA) cinema which was held in conjunction with a ceremony to welcome and farewell incoming and outgoing MMPA executive members held at MMPA on Wingaba Road in Bahan Township, Yangon.

The Union Minister and MMPA Chairman U Lu Min touched the Magic Ball to open the MMPA cinema, and some scenes were screened to demonstrate the cinema's video and audio systems. Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint then delivered a speech to commemorate the event.

In his speech, the Union Minister said it is an auspicious occasion because new MMPA executive members were systemat-

ically elected according to rules and regulations agreed upon by motion picture personnel and old MMPA executive members graciously transferred duties. "Whichever sector you are in, it is required to work together for the development of your work and society. Recognition is given to MMPA for selecting executive members as per their wishes for the development of the sector. This selection is a good example for the country as well as other organisations. People in the country were interested in the selection of the new executive members. Present Chairman U Lu Min and new Chairman U Zin Wine's acting ability, as well as leadership skills, are much admired. The Union Minister urged the use of these skills diligently for the motion picture



Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint, MMPA executive members and artists attend dinner party for opening of MMPA Cinema on 30 September 2017. **PHOTO: MNA**

personnel's affairs and added that the Ministry of Information will support the MMPA in the best possible ways.

Afterwards, MMPA Chairman U Lu Min gave a speech followed by another speech from the newly elected MMPA Chair-

man U Zin Wine.

MMPA Chairman U Lu Min then presented a certificate of honour to U Zin Aung Soe of Clover Solutions, who donated audio equipment for the MMPA Cinema.

Later, the Union Minister

attended a dinner held in the lawn in front of the statues of the fathers of Myanmar motion picture industry. The day's event was attended by officials from Ministry of Information, MMPA officials and artists.—Myanmar News Agency■

Donation for villagers remaining in villages

RAKHINE State minister for Social Affairs Dr. Chan Thar led donors from Myitta Ariyan Foundation to donate foods, clothing and cash to security personnel and villagers remaining in villages in Maungdaw district yesterday afternoon.

First, Dr. Chan Thar and party went to No. 1 Border

Police command commander office and donated food in recognition by the people of the security personnel and Police Maj-Gen Thura San Lwin and officials accepted the donation. Next, the party donated offerings to Ywamakyangtike Sayadaw of Kyeinchaung village, Maungdaw Township and

donated food, clothing and cash assistance to villagers remaining in the village.

With regards to the donation, Myitta Ariyan Foundation chairman U San Kyaw said "There are many donations to relief camps but donation to those who didn't flee (the violence) are few. That is why

we are going to the villages to donate. Each household is provided a cash donation of Ks 15,000. Total value of donation including cash and goods is about Ks 30 million. We plan to visit about seven to eight villages to donate."

After the ARSA extremist terrorist attacks of 25 August,

local people were facing difficulties and some have fled while some remains.

This is why Myitta Ariyan Foundation led by state minister for social affairs went to donate villagers remaining in Kyeinchaung and Yan Aung Myin villages.—Thant Zin Win, Naing Lin Kyi ■

Forum on printing industry development

WITH an aim for continued existence and development of the print industry and to provide modern printing technology to printing businesses, the Ministry of Information and the Myanmar Printers & Publishers Association (MPPA) organised the Myanmar Printing Industry Forum – 2017 which was held yesterday morning at the Sedona Hotel in Yangon.

Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint delivered a speech, in which he noted that opportunities for printing businesses and printing technologies would be discussed.

Printing press and printing technology has changed, and with the onset of electronic media, there is fear of the print media sector disappearing. Despite those fears, researchers pointed out that print is far from disappearing, but rather than appearing in the old form, it is appearing in many new forms and will continue to develop, the minister said.

Printing businesses need to innovate for the existence and development of print industry, and it is for this reason that today's forum was held, said the Union Minister.

"Individually or collectively as a group, people in the business should discuss and review. New ideas and methods to develop the entire printing



Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint looks at printing paper at the Forum on printing industry development held in Yangon on 30 September, 2017. PHOTO: MNA

industry will come out of discussion like this. By working together, opportunities for success will be achieved", he said.

The Myanmar printing industry is not at a stage where anyone should be worried, the minister continued. But globally, the print business is believed to be declining. At a time when discussions and thoughts were put in for existence and development, our country's printing businesses discussing to find ways for development is a sign

of being ahead of time rather than being late. Therefore, our printing businesses should discuss ways recognising opportunities and develop them while obtaining new technology and achieving success. The Union Minister also expressed his hopes that good results will come out of the forum for printing technology and printing industry development.

Afterwards, MPPA Chairman U Min Han gave a welcoming speech.

U Kyaw Thu from Graphic Consult Group, Fuji Xerox Asia Pacific Operation Pte. Ltd Operation Manager Mr. Timothy J. Howard, Myo Kyun Tha Co. Ltd. Managing Director U Thein Zan and MPPA joint secretary U Kyaw Htay Min discussed "Modern printing technology," "Publishing and printing digitally," "Graphic systems" and "Development of print industry", respectively and forum attendees asked questions on the topics.

In the afternoon, the Ministry of Information's Printing and Publishing Department, MPPA, printing businesses and experts discussed the topics of opportunities for development of businesses related to the printing business and technology development in printing and publishing.

The forum was attended by the MPPA Chairman, the Vice Chairman, executive members, experts from local and foreign printing businesses, departmental officials and interested persons.

"With the appearance of social media, printing businesses that rely on newspapers, journals and magazines are declining. Currently, printing businesses appear to be weakening.

The forum was held to prevent this. The belief is that if a public company that involves all materialises from this forum, it would be able to face the competition from foreign investment," said MPPA Chairman U Min Han.

MPPA was formed in 1990 with an aim to instill unity among members, achieve technological parity internationally in development, increase job opportunities and act as a bridge between member businesses and the government.— Myanmar News Agency ■

Schools reopen in Maungtaw, Buthidaung as stability returns

FROM PAGE 1

There were quite a number of them when the terrorist attacks started, but as peace returns to the region, some already went back and only a few remains in this school", said deputy headmaster U Than Myint of the Satyonesu Ward Sub-Basic Education High School, Sittway.

Tenth-grader Maung Kyaw Naing fled to the Sittway relief camp with his family from Maungtaw township when terrorist attacks occurred on 25 August and looks forward to returning to his hometown.

"Due to the terrorist at-

tacks, I fled from the village with my family to Sittway.

We are currently staying in the relief camp and I am attending Satyonesu Ward Sub-Basic Education High School. Once our region is peaceful, I will return to the village with my family. I'll attend school in the village", Maung Kyaw Naing said.

It is learnt from the office of the head of the state education department in Sittway that when schools closed due to terrorist attacks are reopened, overtime classes will be organised in order to make up for any lost teaching periods.

Laungdon Village post-primary school in Maungtaw Township, Rakhine State remains open

AFTER the 25 August extremist terrorist attacks by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), primary schools in villages were closed, but the Laungdon Village post-primary school in Maungtaw Township remained opened through the efforts of a local ethnic teacher U Me Chay, with monetary support from the Wai Lu Kyaw Foundation.

"The school teaches from primary to fifth standard. All the teachers fled to Maungtaw and Sittway when the events occurred, but 129 students remained. With the Muslim students, there used to be a total of more than 800 students.

No Muslim students remain now. I taught in this school for four years. When the event occurred, there were gaps in the teaching, but due to the monthly support of Ks50,000 per month provided by the Wai Lu Kyaw Foundation and author Waihin Aung, I've been teaching alone for seven days because other teachers are afraid to come.

My feeling is that the students are discouraged for being unable to learn. If young people do not learn, they will not achieve their life's targets. But Ko Kyaw Win met with Ko Waihin Aung and arranged to provide help, so I was able to

continue to teach and I am very happy about this" said U Me Chay.

Ko Kyaw Win, a local who helped look after the school, said the remaining 129 students still represent a diverse cross-section of ethnicities.

"Students in this school include Rakhine, Mro, Thet, Daingnet, Marama, Bama, Palaung and Kayin youngsters. Forty-eight are in primary, 36 in first standard, 19 in second standard, none in third standard, 24 in fourth standard and two in fifth standard. They all live in Laungdon Village and there is a police post nearby."— Myanmar News Agency ■

Nurturing Flower Buds Not to Wither

Khin Maung Oo

VERY recently, juvenile offences, events and actions of unhappiness were heard on media and social website pages. Juvenile cases and problems should be dealt with great care. Being naïve in intellect and knowledge, it will be the best way that they are well-trained to become well-behaved ones by their parents, teachers, guardians and seniors.

These days, disappointing news concerning with children are being talked about here and there. A case was filed against 3 children who happened to take K 300 from the donation cash-box. One of the two children whose parents absconded from home without paying debts

was killed in the event of torture by the creditor. And, children in their early school age were also punished so that they may be mentally harmed. Above all, the worst thing is that innocent children were killed without any reasons.

Some of the said children affairs were effectively solved by authorities concerned. Yet, due to lack of legal knowledge on rights and future of children, as for their parents and guardians, cases of negligence of children and violations over the minors are being still heard.

Weakness of authorities concerned in dealing with the very recent case of three children who happened to have taken K 300 from the donation cash-box led to a furore among the public, as if taking out

a pierced thorn by using an ax instead of a needle. An event of taking a legal action against a very small minor case done by children below mature age, made the public burst out their anger, staging a demonstration.

As a matter of fact, we have had juvenile codes in the country. If needed, their offences are to be dealt with according to the prescription of juvenile codes. Under section 2/A of the juvenile code 1993, those under 16 are defined as children, while in section 2/B those under 18 above 16 defined to be youths. Being under 16 years of age, the above-said 3 children must be dealt with according to juvenile rights and codes.

Children must be said to be the great-

est investment of a country. Children must be corrected if they are found to have gone astray or mentally dissolute, if ever. If they are well cultivated since younger age, they will surely become trustworthy and reliable for their families, societies and country.

If they are wrongly cultivated under fear and inferiority complex, they will wither. Any good results cannot turn out from them when they have grown up, as if buds are picked up or males are castrated. Then it will become a great worry for the country in future.

Accordingly, parents, guardians, teachers and authorities concerned should prioritize protection, nurture and development of children. ■

Fake News are Rampant

Khin Maung Myint

AT a time, even when the heads of states, such as the presidents, the prime ministers, and the responsible government officials around the world have no scruples, whatsoever, about faking news themselves or directing their staffs to do so, it's no wonder the fake news are becoming rampant. In certain countries, fabricating or faking of news have become a lucrative business.

The fake news are everywhere. They can be seen in the business competition, in the political lobbying, in diplomatic wrangling, as military strategy, in the arms race, even in the election campaigns and in various other uses as many as you can imagine. Though they may vary in nature, their main objectives are the same—to achieve their own gains by deceptions—which are unethical. The fake news had even become the key player in deciding who is elected and who is not, in major election, even in a certain very developed country.

Our country too is being severely attacked with the fake news and the false propagandas. It wouldn't be far from the truth if I say that our country is the hardest hit victim of fake news and false accusations lately. The fake news managed to convince gullible and naïve people around the world, including the most responsible persons of certain authoritative world organizations and countries. They are accusing our country of committing genocides, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity, without any concrete proof.

Their accusations are completely contrary to the real situations that are actually happening on ground. In reality it was the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, or the (ARSA) terrorists and their handlers from abroad, who are the ones committing the arsons and massacring. They are killing even their own kind, who they suspect of collaborating with the authorities.

I had been aware that the spreading of the false and faked news were in vogue and were gathering momentum since after the incidents that took place in 2012 in Northern Rakhine. The social media provided them a very convenient tool to spread false and fabricated informations about the plights of the so-called Rohingyas. The Internet websites, such as the #Rohingya, the #Arakan and the #Rakhine are flooded with misinformations and faked photos posted by people around the world who blindly support the ARSA, without knowing the truths or are intentionally ignoring them. Some very well known international media groups are also lending them a hand in promulgating fake news in the print, as well as on the broadcast media.

The term Rohingya emerged around the late 1960s. However, it was not widespread as now and not many people outside of the Rakhine State had ever heard of that name before. Even in Rakhine, only a handful of people knew about their presence in those days. The self-identified term was linked to an underground movement group called the "Rohingya Muslim Independence Revolutionary

Front (RMIRF)", which was uncovered, apprehended and jailed, but that news wasn't publicized much in those days. However, the extensive propagandas after the 2012 incident made that name to become world-renown. The propagandas were done through the spreading of false and faked news on the social media and also with the help of some well established international media.

They claimed that as their ancestors had dwelt in the Rakhine State since many centuries ago and thus they are an ethnic national race of Burma. That was a false claim and didn't have any historical record to support it. In reality the people who migrated from the East Bengal of India many centuries ago were never known or recorded as that term, but only as Bengali. When that tactics failed, they claimed they are discriminated, harassed and persecuted and accused that they are being unfairly denied citizenships. All of their accusations are false. They are in fact present day illegal migrants, who are not entitled to be granted citizenships, let alone to be recognized as an

Fabricating or faking of news a lucrative business.

ethnic race. The genuine descendants of those who were granted citizenships since the British annexation of Rakhine in 1824 were entitled and were being recognized as citizens, down many generations until today. After the latest clashes, in which the ARSA terrorists were the real perpetrators who committed the atrocities of massacring, arsons and laying of the anti-personnel mines, some leaders including the UN chief, UN human rights chief, the Bangladeshi Prime Minister, and some leaders from the West falsely accused our country, using harshest terms, such as genocides, atrocities and crimes against humanity, which are totally unfounded. I'm sure their accusations were based on the fake news from the well known

international media that are one-sidedly advocating for the ARSA terrorists.

The latest reports of the number of people who were supposed to have fled to Bangladesh, too were also very doubtful. In my opinion they were being inflated intentionally. Though all military operations had ceased as of 5 September, they claimed that refugees continued to flood into their country. That couldn't be true.

One day the report said about 270,000 refugees had arrived there, but the next day the number shot up to over 400,000. That meant over 130,000 people arrived there in the next 24 hours. I am very familiar with that place where the fleeing people made the river-crossing and had some experience repatriating illegal migrants across that river in 1969. Judging from the photos and video clips in which only a few people were seen crossing the river

and based on my own experience, I know for sure that over a hundred thousand people, including elderlies, disabled, children and pregnant women couldn't have made it within a matter of 24 hours. That was abso-

lutely impossible.

These fake news are being intentionally spread for various reasons, but the main reason is to discredit our country and at the same time rally the support of the UN to pressure us into receiving back those who fled there. In the mid 1970s, our country was bullied to take back double the number of what were actually expelled or fled from our country.

I can go on writing about the fake news endlessly, but I think I had made my point that they had done much damage to our country. Because of them we are being condemned, criticized, ridiculed and pressured, or to put it bluntly, we are unfairly being bullied.

SEE PAGE 9

Books donation to Information and Public Relations Department libraries

A ceremony to donate a hundred book titled *Itthiya Mahn* (female’s might) and other short stories written by author Khaing Yin Mon (arts and science) to Ministry of Information, Information and Public Relations Department (IPRD) libraries was held yesterday morning in IPRD training hall.

First, the donor and author Khaing Yin Mon (arts and science) explained about the reason for donation and IPRD Director General U Maung Pe gave words of thanks. Author Khaing Yin Mon (arts and science) then donated to the director general 100 *Ithiya Mahn* and other short stories books, each book worth Ks. 3,000 and the director general in return presented a certificate of honor.

Author Khaing Yin Mon (arts and science) then donated Ks 100,000 to Myanmar Libraries Foundation. – Myanmar News Agency ■

Children in remote Kachin State to receive Japanese encephalitis vaccine

ABOUT 330,000 children under the age of fifteen years residing in far-flung Kachin State will receive the Japanese encephalitis (JE) vaccine through the government’s immunisation programme beginning in mid-November, according to the Myawady Daily.

The head of the Public Health Department (Kachin State) said preparations are being made prior to the Japanese encephalitis vaccination programme, which is planned to be carried out in November and December on a national scale.

According to the World Health Organization, the Japanese encephalitis virus, a leading cause of viral encephalitis in Asia, is spread by mosquitoes. The virus is primarily transmitted by the *Culex* species of mosquitoes. The first case of JE was recorded in Japan in 1871.

The symptoms of the deadly virus include fever, headaches and disorientation. Survivors may suffer permanent mental or neurological problems.

Training has been given by the health department to its staff in each township to successfully implement the vaccination plan.

According to the schedule, the school-based Japanese encephalitis vaccination programme will start on 15 November and will continue until 23 November, whereas the community-based immunisation programme will be from 11-20 December.—GNLM ■

POEM

A Work of Art

In S.T. Coleridge’s *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*:
After the Ancient Mariner had shot the albatross with a bolt,
The shipmates blamed him for his wanton, merciless act;
But they changed their views later
as the weather changed to a pleasant calmness,
and they praised him again!

The world- renown university took pride in our leader;
And proudly hung her portrait in the hall with honour;
But without getting to the root of the truth,
How the harsh realities are going on here!
Misconceived as if this Lady, who values justice and humanism
More than any one on earth, were doing horrors
to the disgrace of the university;
Their whims took her portrait off the wall.
This put me in mind
of those shipmates’ whimsical reactions
that changed with the weather changes.

But the University should be well convinced
That the Lady, the essence of Buddhism being deeply inculcated,
Remains calm, unmoved by showers of praise or scathing criticism.

A work of art is an artwork, cherished in our hearts forever,
whether it is hung on the wall or off from the wall.

Zaw Tun

Fake News are Rampant

FROM PAGE 8

I had never thought that the world community could be so gullible to believe the groundless faked news. If this trend should continue it would be very difficult to believe any individual, organization, country or the international media in the future. ■

(Khin Maung Myint (U) served as the secretary of the Sittway District Security and Administrative Committee in Sittway, from 1968 to early 1970).

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Open letter to Mr. Roger Hearing, BBC Journalist

15 September 2017

Roger! Roger! Hello!
Are you listening?
If you are listening, you must be Hearing!
Sorry, you must be Mr. Roger Hearing, BBC journalist.
Do you remember me? We met long time ago, way back in 1993. I am Maung Maung Aye of the New Light of Myanmar daily. At that time I was an editor. During your ten-day trip to Myanmar I was liaison officer as well as your part-time porter.
I hope you will not forget your visits to Bagan, Mandalay and Pyin-Oo-Lwim, the scenic hill station. There in Pyin-Oo-Lwin, you, in spite of my warning, drank sugarcane juice. We got back to Yangon and the following day on an Air Force plane bound for Lashio you felt sick. At that time you were thirst for a cup of hot green tea. But it was served only when the plane was airborne. Do you remember what you said to the sergeant after he had served you with the green tea? You said, ‘You save my life.’
We went to the town of Lashio in Shan State to cover the narcotic rugs destruction. Senior Myanmar officials and foreign diplomats flew to the destruction site in helicopters. Since you came alone, I had to carry your tripod and shoot your news coverage for some time.
Your schedule included a trip to Maungdaw district in Rakhine State. From Yangon we flew to Sittwe and then heli-

icoptered to Maungdaw. You saw how the local people led their lives. I don’t know how you viewed the situation then and there. What I would like to point out is the problem of the so-called ethnic minority of Bengalis did exist then. In fact, it originated decades before. Why?
Bangladesh, formerly, East Pakistan, shares borders with India in the west and Myanmar in the east. As you know its border with India is heavily guarded. In the north stands the Himalayas with little space for human settlement and in the south the vast water body of the Bay of Bengal.
The size of Bangladesh is about one-fourth of Myanmar whereas its population (2016 estimates) stood over 163 million compared with the population of the latter over 51 million (2014 estimates). Due to rapid increase in its population Bangladesh has no solution to the problem except Myanmar’s porous border. Myanmar’s border section some 40 miles long is yet to be fenced. The Naf River between the two countries is narrow enough for every able-bodied person to swim across to Myanmar and back to Bangladesh.
On Myanmar side have lived mostly Rakhine people or Arakanese. As far as I know they are devout Buddhists. They would not like to take the lives of even creatures, leave alone human lives. You may describe them the majority if you meant in the distant past. Today, their number is very much reduced to just a small minority with little chance to earn their living. As a result they have been displaced by the new arrivals who have entirely different family planning.
This is only food for thought to have the perspective of the problem. These days, however, the world media and even some Nobel laureates see things differently. You had been there and seen yourself, at least at a glance. If you were Daw Aung San Suu Kyi what would you say or do?
Please say something about the issue so that I can see which side you are on. ■

*Yours truly,
Maung Maung Aye
(The New Light of Myanmar)*

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Sorry, you must be Mr. Roger Hearing, BBC journalist.

Do you remember me? We met long time ago, way back in 1993. I am Maung Maung Aye of the New Light of Myanmar daily. At that time I was an editor. During your ten-day trip to Myanmar I was liaison officer as well as your part-time porter.

I hope you will not forget your visits to Bagan, Mandalay and Pyin-Oo-Lwim, the scenic hill station. There in Pyin-Oo-Lwin, you, in spite of my warning, drank sugarcane juice. We got back to Yangon and the following day on an Air Force plane bound for Lashio you felt sick. At that time you were thirst for a cup of hot green tea. But it was served only when the plane was airborne. Do you remember what you said to the sergeant after he had served you with the green tea? You said, ‘You save my life.’

We went to the town of Lashio in Shan State to cover the narcotic rugs destruction. Senior Myanmar officials and foreign diplomats flew to the destruction site in helicopters. Since you came alone, I had to carry your tripod and shoot your news coverage for some time.

Your schedule included a trip to Maungdaw district in Rakhine State. From Yangon we flew to Sittwe and then helicoptered to Maungdaw. You saw how the local people led their lives. I don’t know how you viewed the situation then and there. What I would like to point out is the problem of the so-called ethnic minority of Bengalis did exist then. In fact, it originated decades before. Why?

Bangladesh, formerly, East Pakistan, shares borders with India in the west and Myanmar in the east. As you know its border with India is heavily guarded. In the north stands the Himalayas with little space for human settlement and in the south the vast water body of the Bay of Bengal.

The size of Bangladesh is about one-fourth of Myanmar whereas its population (2016 estimates) stood over 163 million compared with the population of the latter over 51 million (2014 estimates). Due to rapid increase in its population Bangladesh has no solution to the problem except Myanmar’s porous border. Myanmar’s border section some 40 miles long is yet to be fenced. The Naf River between the two countries is narrow enough for every able-bodied person to swim across to Myanmar and back to Bangladesh.

On Myanmar side have lived mostly Rakhine people or Arakanese. As far as I know they are devout Buddhists. They would not like to take the lives of even creatures, leave alone human lives. You may describe them the majority if you meant in the distant past. Today, their number is very much reduced to just a small minority with little chance to earn their living. As a result they have been displaced by the new arrivals who have entirely different family planning.

This is only food for thought to have the perspective of the problem. These days, however, the world media and even some Nobel laureates see things differently. You had been there and seen yourself, at least at a glance. If you were Daw Aung San Suu Kyi what would you say or do?

Please say something about the issue so that I can see which side you are on. ■

*Yours truly,
Maung Maung Aye
(The New Light of Myanmar)*

India's Today Ground Report from Bangladesh

Many Hindu women forced to remove sindoor, read namaz: Horror engulfs Hindu women in Bangladesh camps

In an exclusive chat with India Today, many Hindu women from Maungtaw revealed that they were harassed, forced to remove sindoor, break bangles among other things in Bangladesh relief camps.

HINDU people living in Bangladesh relief camps have purportedly become a soft target for Muslims in the country. Both have taken shelter after coming from Myanmar but the difference is in the numbers, and that is the key.

Hindu women say they were forced to remove sindoor, break bangles and even tie the Puja calls herself Rabia now- the change happened this month. She is a Hindu Rohingya who left Myanmar in hope of a refuge.

But circumstances turned her life upside down. Puja, now Rabia, lost her husband to violence in the last week of August in Myanmar. She says he

I was told I would be allowed to live only if I changed my religion. I was made to wear burqa and stay with them to learn their traditions for almost three weeks. I was made to read namaz... I had to say Allah, but my heart was beating for Bhagwan... My co-dwellers started searching for me and came to know that I was living in a Muslim camp."

The red saree is the only one she has now and her three-year-old son has no clothes at all. This reporter met many more such women in the Hindu Rohingya camp in Kotupalong area of Cox's Bazar



This image captured from the Indiatoday's interview with Puja alias Rabia.



Twenty-eight-year-old Rica Dhar. PHOTO: MANOGYA LOIWAL

was not killed by the Army but by men clad in black with their faces hidden, who were abusing in the name of religion. Theoman says her husband and entire family were shot in front of her but she was left alive to live as a captive.

"They took us to the forest and said I would have to read namaz or they would release me... My sindoor was removed and my religious shakha pola bangles broken.

district of Bangladesh.

If Puja became Rabia, Rica was being turned into Sadia. Twenty-eight-year-old Rica Dhar adjusted her orange saree to feed her year-old son as she narrated a similar tragic tale.

"On Friday (August 25) they entered all the Hindu residences and attacked. First the mobile phones were taken away and then men were tied and beaten brutal-

ly. My husband worked as a goldsmith. They took away all my jewellery and began beating me. All Hindus were identified and taken to a nearby hill. They were then killed in a row. Only eight women were allowed to stay among them mostly young and beautiful. They were told 'You will have to turn Muslim and marry us' We had no option but to surrender and go with them... We were taken to the forest and left without food to weaken us mentally also. Then we were brought to a camp in Bangladesh... Once my Hindu relatives heard about it they brought me to this place."

Both Rica and Puja say there were six more women

besides them who shared their fate. After they could not be traced anywhere in Myanmar or Bangladesh, they were identified at the Kotupalong Rohingya camp where they were kept under close watch by those who were allegedly executing this forcible conversion.

The government officials were clueless about what was going on till India Today Group brought this to their notice. "We do not have any such information," said Md. Ali Hossain, Deputy Commissioner of Cox's Bazar. "If it has occurred, we will take necessary action." Men hailing from the same Rakhine state went out in search of these women and allegedly faced torture themselves.

Puja alias Rabia can now breathe easy. "I am back in the Hindu camp for the past three days after being rescued by my some women," she says. Around five lakh Rohingyas have entered Bangladeshi territory and are scattered in different parts of this district.

Among them, a significant number is of Hindus. When this reporter apprised Bangladesh's information minister Hasanul Haq Inu about the situation, he promised action. "The news is very bad and astounding... we have taken all measures to put Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Buddhist families in separate camps," he said. "We will be investigating this and we will be very tough."—Indiatoday



Hindu villagers react as they identify the bodies of their relatives found by government forces in a mass grave near Maungtaw in Northern Rakhine state, on 27 September, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS