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SUNDAY SPECIAL



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A tanker is seen at the Made Island in July, 2017 after the first transport of crude oil to China through pipeline. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

Vice President U Henry Van Thio visits Rakhine's projects

VICE PRESIDENT U Henry Van Thio, the Chairman of the Central Committee for Myanmar Special Economic Zones, toured Rakhine State yesterday, visiting the Made Island Crude Oil Terminal, the area

chosen for Kyaukpyu Special Economic Zone and the On-shore Gas Terminal in Kyaukpyu Township.

During his visit to the project on Made Island between the South East Asia Crude Oil

Pipeline Company-SEAOP/SEAGP, in which Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise of the Ministry of Electricity and Energy is a shareholder, and China National HK Corporation Limited, the Vice President

inspected storage of crude oil, piping to China and worksite safety. Crude oil makes its way through Rakhine State, Magway Region, Mandalay Region and Shan State.

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Aid reaches to people who returned to their villages in Maungta

OFFICIALS from Maungta District Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Department delivered food and mosquito nets to the local ethnic people and Hindus at Kyeinchaung Village, northern Maungta, Rakhine State yesterday.

The aid which includes rice, cooking oil, pulses, fish cans, coffee mix, mosquito nets and dried noodles were distributed to about 154 households.

The total households include 24 Maramagyi ethnic households with 82 people from Phaw Ki Taung Village now staying in Kyeinchaung Monastery and 75 households of Rakhine ethnic people with 388 people and 55 Hindus households with 550 people who return their Kyeinchaung Village after displacement.

The people are now staying in Kyeinchaung Village, northern Maungta, Rakhine State after returning from IDP camps in Sittway.

The Union Government has focused its efforts on northern Rakhine and launched a project last month to help rehabilitation and resettlement in Rakhine. The Union Government has also offered to provide vocational training to local people. —Myanmar News Agency ■

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Vice President U Henry Van Thio visits Rakhine's projects



Vice President U Henry Van Thio inspects the control station at Made Island Crude Oil Terminal, in Kyaukpyu Township. **PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY**

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At a meeting with personnel, the Vice President heard reports on employment of Myanmar nationals and social corporate responsibilities in the region.

In the afternoon, the Vice President and party went the site chosen for the Kyaukpyu Special Economic Zone.

The decision to establish Kyaukpyu SEZ was made in 2011 and the SEZ includes a

deep seaport project, an industrial zone and housing projects.

Following the visit to the SEZ, the Vice President went to the Onshore Gas Terminal and heard a report by officials of the POSCO DAEWOO company on discovery of natural gas and distribution, job creation for local people and the company's corporate social responsibilities including education, health and transportation and environmental conservation.

Before leaving for Yangon, the Vice President also inspected Kyaukpyu's 230-KV sub-power station which supplies electricity to Kyaukpyu Township.

During the visit, Vice President U Henry Van Thio was accompanied by Union ministers U Win Khaing, Dr Than Myint, Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, Deputy Ministers U Sat Aung and Dr Tun Naing and members of the Rakhine State Cabinet.—GNLM ■

Maungtaw mobile team provides health care to Hindus

A mobile medical care unit consisting of Maungtaw township health department personnel and specialists from Magway University of Medicine went to a relief camp in Kanyintan No. 1 Basic Education High School yesterday and provided health care to Hindus who were staying in the camp.

A total of 205 people were

treated at the mobile clinic. Vaccinations against the H1N1 virus were administered to 113 patients. Others were given general health care. The Ministry of Health and Sports is providing health care using mobile units so that Rakhine State residents will have regular access to health care, officials said. —Tin Tun (IPRD) ■



Mobile team medical officer checks up to children in Maungtaw, Rakhine State. **PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY**

“Youth and Job Opportunity” talk to be held at Yangon University

A public talk titled “Youth and Job Opportunity” will be held today at 1pm in the Recreation Centre of the University of Yangon. This public talk is organised by the Information and Public Relations Department of the Ministry of Information.

The panelists in today's public talk will be members of the Yangon cabinet, Kay-in Ethnic Affairs Minister Naw Pan Thinzar Myo, Yangon Region Hluttaw Insein Township (constituency) 2

representative U Wai Phyto Han, Information and Public Relations Department Deputy Director-General Dr Thida Tin, Department of Labour Deputy Director-General U Aung Htay Win, U Win Naing JPE Everest Ltd. (Local Employment Agency) and U Than Soe, the CEO & Chief Editor of 7 HR Business Group and Two Four DMA Media Group. Interested persons are invited to attend the public talk. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Academy Swe Zin Htike presented with Order of the Arts and Letters

UNION Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint yesterday evening attended a ceremony by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication to present the Order of Arts and Letters award to Academy Swe Zin Htike, a Myanmar actress and media spokeswoman.

At the event held at the Sule Shangri La Hotel in Yangon, the French Ambassador to Myanmar H.E. Mr. Olivier Richard explained the reason why Academy Swe Zin Htike was given the award, and then presented the Order of Arts and Letters award of the French Ministry of Culture and Communication. Academy Swe Zin Htike gave a speech of appreciation.

The event was attended by the Union Minister for Information and his wife, the French Ambassador to Myanmar, officials from the French



Academy Swe Zin Htike accepts the French medal of Knight in the Order of the Arts and Letters. **PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY**

Embassy, officials from the Ministry of Information, artists, literary figures and invited guests.

The Order of Arts and Letters award, or the “Chevalier de L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres”, is one of the four main awards presented by the French gov-

ernment.

In a 21 April letter, the French Ministry of Culture and Communication informed Daw Swe Zin Htike of this award for the principal role she played in the development of the Myanmar-France cultural sector.—Myanmar News Agency ■



We will deal with Rakhine State affair in all perspectives!

Khin Maung Oo

IF we are desirous of implementing peace and stability in Rakhine State, we need to take into consideration the importance of security. To provide security in Rakhine State, the role of the Tatmadaw and security forces need to be recognized. If the Tatmadaw and security forces are subjected to targeted sanctions, it would be difficult to get their full cooperation in security matters. A weakened Tatmadaw and Police force is not in the national interest as their duty is to protect the country from foreign enemies and safeguard our national sovereignty. For any army, the morale of the army is very important and the Myanmar Tatmadaw is no exception.

It should be understood by the international community that although security is important to bring peace and stability in Rakhine State, other factors are equally important. The events that unfolded in the Rakhine State is not solely due to commu-

nal problems based on religion or race. The muslims of Bengali extraction living in the Rakhine State were recruited and encouraged by ARSA terrorists to attack the Border police forces. The soldiers of the Myanmar Tatmadaw were under strict orders to use maximum restraint in the performance of their duties. Their orders were to seek out the terrorists and clear the area of these armed militants. However it should be understood that fighting terrorism is not as straight forward as engaging in a conventional war on the battlefield. In the case of the ARSA terrorists, they had no hesitation whatsoever to use women and children as human shields. It seems that the international press in their eagerness to lay blame on the Myanmar Tatmadaw had perhaps forgotten how difficult it is to ferret out the terrorists when they hide in the villages and mingle among the villagers. The events in Rakhine State are not isolated cases if one were to take a global perspective. Terrorism, especially militant Islamic jihadists have

been cropping up in many places all over the world in places such as the Philippines, southern Thailand and even Bangladesh which is a Muslim country.

At present, the urgent need for solving the Rakhine State affair is to accept the Bengalis who have fled from Rakhine State to Bangladesh after careful scrutiny. The International news media has made exaggerated statements that the fleeing population has now reached up to nearly one million. This type of irresponsible reporting can damage the dignity and image of Myanmar. In fact the UN system and the international community should provide help to the Myanmar authorities in the process of scrutiny and verification so that those refugees who wish to return will be able to return in safety and dignity.

Provided that a computerized data collection system has been implemented, the whole process of scrutiny and verification should go smoothly with the minimum of delay.

It is necessary for the international

community to definitely acknowledge the national policy that those who comply with rules and laws will be granted citizenship rights. At the same time, those who decide to live in Myanmar should live as law abiding residents without making any demands for setting up a separate Islamic entity. This sort of attempt would not be tolerated by the present Union Government. As law abiding citizens they should live in harmony with other ethnic races and refrain from any attempts to impose their religion on other ethnic races. Due to these considerations, the Rakhine State affair should be viewed from many points of view and from all perspectives.

Concurrently, they are required to definitely express their disagreement over demands for ethnic rights under the name the whole populace cannot accept so that worries conceived in the minds of national populace will be erased. Accordingly, Rakhine State affairs full of different kinds of fronts must be dealt with in different corners of perspectives. ■

Myanmar looks to catalyse river transport as growth driver

Proposals to encourage investment in Myanmar's inland waterways could help ease road congestion, as well as provide a cost-efficient route to economic development.

Patrick Cook
Managing Editor
Asia, Oxford Business Group

In July the government announced plans to begin consultations with regional authorities to develop six inland maritime port terminals – four on the Ayeyarwaddy River and two on the Chindwin River.

The Ayeyarwaddy ports will be built at Mandalay, Pakkoku, Sinkham and Magway, while the Chindwin ports will be located at Kalewa and Monywa, U Thant Sin Maung, minister of transport and communications, said in a statement.

Private investment needed to bridge transport infrastructure deficit

Closing the transport infrastructure gap is a key focus area of the National Transport Master Plan, of which the new inland ports are a part.

Launched in 2014, the plan outlines a series of investments, infrastructure projects and reforms that aim to reduce shipping costs and expand transport capacity, with the ultimate goal of increasing transport sector investment from 1-1.5% of GDP to 3-4%. This would put Myanmar roughly on a par with Thailand and Vietnam.

Stakeholders and officials agree that greater spending will be needed to boost domestic connectivity. U Phyo Min Thein, chief minister of the regional government of Yangon, cited road and rail link upgrades as priority areas, along with development



A vessel is operating ferry services on the Ayeyawady River. PHOTO: NYI ZAW MOE

of inland waterways, which could become Myanmar's main freight artery.

"Another point of intervention will be the improvement of the navigability of our rivers, since water transport is the most competitive transport solution," Phyo Min Thein told OBG.

However, given limits on state spending, much of the infrastructure development for maritime, road, rail and air set out in the government's plans will need to rely on public-private partnerships (PPP).

"The ministry still has difficulties ... implement[ing] the master plan due to budgetary constraints," U Win Khant, permanent secretary for the Ministry of Transport and Communications, told an investment seminar in late September. "With ... very poor infrastructure, very limited budget and weak legislation, the one and only way to carry out the master plan is through PPPs."

The transport sector as a whole will require some \$60bn worth of investment over the next 20 years to support economic development, according to estimates from the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

This represents approximately half of the \$120bn officials project is needed to close the overall infrastructure deficit, with the balance split between the energy and power industries, which require a combined \$40bn, and the telecoms sector, which is in need of \$20bn.

Inland maritime projects offer attractive returns on investment

In a report issued in July 2016, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) identified investments in river transport as offering some of the best returns. The extensive river network is well placed to serve the primary transport corridors, including

the link between the economic centres of Yangon and Mandalay.

"Cost reduction by up to a factor of three seems possible, with only limited-scale investments," the report said. However, relatively little has been done to date to utilise inland shipping as a means of transport, and the necessary supporting infrastructure remains underdeveloped.

In particular, key inland channels like the Ayeyarwady are hampered by shallow depths, limiting the size of vessels that can use them.

Among the development priorities cited by the ADB is deepening the stretch of the Ayeyarwady flowing north to Mandalay to at least 1.5-2 metres. This would allow 500-tonne vessels to navigate the river year-round at higher speeds. According to the bank, investing roughly \$100m in such improvements could generate \$3bn in transport cost savings. ■

Village administrators voice their opinions on situation in Maungtaw

Interviews with various village administrators on 31 October in Maungtaw

By Han Linn Naing and Aung Kyaw Oo, Photo: Nay Thit Oo



U Mya Aung Kyaw (Yaymyattaung Village Administrator, North Maungtaw Township)

Most of the villagers who fled have returned to the village. Officials from regional and district administrative bodies are currently providing food and shelter for us and we have received about 150 sacks of rice. Businesses are still at a standstill and schools are still closed. We still haven't gotten a replacement for the last health official who transferred away. Hence, we have to travel to Ngakuya for health related cases. There are currently over 200 people in the village and many more have not returned. We need better security or else the residents here will always be living in anxiety. When will another terrorist attack happen? That's what they all worry about. I think food and clothing will be resolved slowly but the roads are in such bad conditions that what should be a 45 minute trip to Maungtaw takes around 2 hours. We want better roads.

U Aung Hlaing (Thatchaung Village Administrator, Maungtaw Township)

We have Mro and Thet ethnic people in our village. Our roads and phone lines are in bad shape and we're having difficulties purchasing foodstuffs since the market is still closed. We're currently relying on the rice grown in our area and humanitarian aid, which we have to go carry for ourselves. The appointed teachers for our schools have still not arrived yet. The schools in the cities are opening but our village schools are still closed. Health officials arrive periodically and we haven't reaped our crops yet. What we would like to ask for is better roads and phone lines so that we can be up-to-date with the news and relay information.



U Zaw Htoo (Alethankyaw Village Administrator, Maungtaw Township)

There aren't any particular problems right now. The Tatmadaw, regional and district administrative bodies and humanitarian organizations are providing us with food and safety. The people who fled during the incidents are regrouping. Schools in our village are closed so we have to send our kids to Mawyawadi school. We wish for our schools to reopen soon. Health inspections come every month and we have doctors in our hospitals. The district and township officials are discussing with the agricultural department to reap our crops.

U Gyor Gyi Aung (Ngakuya Village Administrator, Maungtaw Township)

Currently, everyone is coexisting peacefully and we have Rakhine, Hindu and Muslims in our village. There is a need for teachers here but thankfully we have one health specialist here. We are receiving food and aid from District officials and humanitarian organizations. We're hoping to reap our crops next month.



U Hla Thein (Temporary Administrator of Maungtaw Myoma North Ward)

The situation is calm in Maungtaw and the various administrators are working together to ensure there are no problems. We've given the people vaccination pills and there were announcements that schools for children will be opened soon. The different communities are coexisting peacefully right now. Only then will the region develop.

U Nur Islam (Tayetout Village Administrator, Maungtaw Township)

Our village is peaceful right now and we have security forces here. We also get aid regularly. Rakhine and Muslim people are living side by side here and there are no problems. There is a problem for the children to get an education since all the schools are still closed. Businesses have also stopped running and there are no health officials at the local health department office.

