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**SUNDAY
SPECIAL**



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President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin visit the booth at the 131st anniversary Public Works Department. **PHOTO: MNA**

131st Anniversary of Construction Ministry's Public Works Department celebrated

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin attended the 131st anniversary of the Ministry of Construction's Public Works Department held at the Ministry of Construction in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

Vice President U Henry Van Thio, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than, Constitutional Tribunal Chairman U Myo Nyunt, Union Election Commission Chairman U Hla Thein, Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U T

Khun Myat, Union Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Ministers from States and Regions for communication, electricity and construction, retired officers, invited guests and officials were also in attendance.

The 131st anniversary

event of the Public Works Department was held on the lawn in front of the Ministry of Construction office, where the President pressed a button to unveil the 131st anniversary commemorative stone pillar.

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Youths to volunteer for rehabilitation in N Rakhine

TO carry out voluntary service for rehabilitation in northern Rakhine, a second batch of youths are receiving on-the-job training in Yangon conducted by the Union Enterprises for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development (UEHRD).

A total of 50 trainees from Rakhine State and other regions and states are participating in the training, which began yesterday.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the training, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye called for the youths to prepare their best to overcome possible challenges when they carry out door-to-door humanitarian service for 20 days in northern Rakhine. The Union Minister expressed delight for the success of the first batch of youths who contributed their service with diligence and perseverance.

"The UEHRD is the all-inclusive project which will be implemented with the force of the people. In providing humanitarian aid to the conflict-affected people in the region, this is a chance for youths to show their abilities with firm determination", Dr. Win Myat Aye said.

"The opportunity to take part in the campaign is of great importance and will show the characteristics of our young people". Myanmar News Agency ■

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Voices of the first group of UEHRD youth volunteers

THE first group of Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine (UEHRD) youth volunteers went to villages in Maungtaw District, Buthidaung and Maungtaw townships from 13 to 21 November for 9 days and provided humanitarian assistance.

Under the theme “20 days of youth for the people”, groups were formed comprised of youths of all faiths to provide humanitarian assistances effectively, to participate in resettling and redevelopment processes and assist in regional development and conflict avoidance.

Youths who want to participate in the “20 days of youth for the people” should be 18 to 35 years of age and able to commit to a long-term programme. More groups will be formed and sent in the coming weeks and months. The following are the voices of the UEHRD youth volunteer first batch who were interviewed by the news group while they were in Maungtaw town.

U Maung Maung Gyi,
Maungtaw Township
Relief and Resettlement
Department

Youth volunteers went to Maungtaw and Buthidaung region for nine days from 13 to 21

Although they came from different places, they treated each other like siblings and worked in unity. This is the first time in my life to see such unity :
U Ni Maung from Maungtaw

November and provided humanitarian and food assistance. They went to 19 Mro villages and two Bengali villages in Maungtaw Township, 12 ethnic national villages and two Bengali villages in Buthidaung Township. When the youths visited the villages, they collected data about the people, what is required and what needs to be done for development. In providing assistance, five persons were set as a unit and provided with foodstuff such as rice, cooking oil, salt, peas, onion, canned fish and potatoes.



U Maung Maung Gyi.



Ko Sai Thu.



U Ni Maung .



Ko Phyo Ko Ko Zaw.



Youth volunteers from the first group of UEHRD deliver humanitarian aid to villages in Maungtaw, Buthidaung. PHOTO: MNA

The youth volunteers are from all regions and are of all faiths. As locals came along to translate, language difference weren't much of a problem. Our department was involved in order to provide the necessary donated foods for the youth volunteers to distribute. Transport, food, lodging and security for the youth volunteers were provided in coordination with district general administrative department. The first batch has completed their work and we are now preparing for the second batch.

Ko Sai Thu
(Central Coordination
Team-steering group)

Seventy people came along with me when I left Yangon. Thirty-five were for Buthidaung and 35 were for Maungtaw. From there, depending on the numbers of villages to visit, they were divided into smaller groups. When we provided food to the locals here, we want the food to be the one they want. Instead of giving the food to the village elder or head, we handed out to everyone in their homes and study their way of living. Data such as family type, type of houses they are living in and their requirement were collected. I think our visits

will be more effective for them.

Although we come from different places, under UEHRD and HCYD, we are one and together. Youth from our HCYD, Wai Lu Kyaw Foundation, NLD, Brighter Future Myanmar (Kanbawza) and Rakhine Thahaya participate in the group. As we, the youths, are going on a humanitarian mission, we don't want to be criticised for providing aid to one and not to another. So we provide everything equally. What we provided now may not be all the things that they wanted. But we are arranging to provide them with basic foodstuff.

We reach many Mro, Kaman and Daingnet. Regional teams also accompany us. What I saw is that locals need job opportunities. They've lost a lot. They didn't have much money to reconstruct their lives. They need to have income. And that income should also be a regular income. That is why a lot of job opportunities need to be created. Only then can they overcome the stage they are now in. We saw challenges when we went to the Bengali villages. But their responses were good.

We will submit a report on what we've seen to Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye. Youths started this program. If we do-

nate money only, that wouldn't be a real humanitarian assistance. That is why we came.

U Ni Maung
(Hindu, Four mile ward,
Maungtaw Town)

As a local Hindu, I was in the Regional Team. We provided seven food items that include rice, cooking oil, salt, pea, potato and milk powder. We went to Rakhine villages, Muslim villages and Hindu villages. We provided fairly and equally. As a local, we also helped overcome the language problem. I can speak Hindi, Bengali, Rakhine and Myanmar languages. Youth coming in this way is very good. Although they came from different places, they treated each other like siblings and worked in unity. This is the first time in my life to see such unity.

Ko Phyo Ko Ko Zaw
(Wai Lu Kyaw Foundation)

Our Wai Lu Kyaw Foundation participate in this programme as volunteer. Upon arrival here, we went to southern part of Maungtaw. We collect data and distribute food. Next we went to northern part of Maungtaw to collect data and distribute food. Language is the only difficulty. But this is resolved by the Regional Team. The trip

was quite tiring for us because of the different in weather from our places of origin as well as the rough roads. We mostly went to ethnic villages. In addition to Rakhines there were Mro and Khami. There were some difficulties because this program is being done for the first time. May be it is because this is the first batch. I want more youths to participate in the next batches.

The country is joining hands with youths because they trust us. That is why youths like us should participate in this. As this is the first batch, we collect information on their requirements. The requirement of their families, houses, all requirements were collected in detail. Some asked whether they are going to receive all that they need. If we provided the information of their requirement their region and economies can be improved. That is why we collect information even if we are tired. The trip is very tiring. But it is worth it as we feel good for what we've done. Language barrier sometime unexpectedly create a happy and memorable incidences. Smiles on their faces when receiving the foods made us feel good. This is the happy memories that we had from this trip.—News Team ■



Daing Net women stroll at the village of Yanaungpyin Village. PHOTO: MIN THIT



Mro women return home carrying firewood. PHOTO: MIN THIT

Sein, 28, managed to escape and said that security forces arrived in Yankar Zaydi village on Sunday and rescued 38 tribespeople who had remained. The surviving 16 villagers who were attacked near Kyaungdoe village arrived at the district police station the next day. Ma Oo Khin Khin, 27, suffered slash wounds and was hospitalised.

The scene yesterday of school children at the Yanaungpyin Village school is evidence that shows the situation is improving.

"The situation is normal at present. But, we want to urge the authorities to emphasise the security of our villagers living in the hills," said Ko Win Zaw, from Yanaungpyin Village.,



A Mro woman washes clothes in the creek as her children take bath. PHOTO: MIN THIT

Mro village of Gyaikchaung

Mro village of Gyaikchaung was our next stop. In a field outside the village, we were treated to a scene of two women traditionally reaping rice with sickles.

Rice fields and forests are the workplaces for the villagers. Even women over 70 go into the forest and pluck vegetables that grow naturally, sharing the duties of survival. Everyday, men go to cultivation fields, which they establish with the traditional slash and burn method in the hills.

But since the terrorist attacks in 2016 and 2017, the villagers are fearful to go their fields in the hills, as they believe they are working

at risk of their lives.

They have noticed that their relatives living in the hills have moved to open areas beside the road to Maungdaw.

"For our livelihood, we need just food. But we don't want to work in hills today. We need plots near our village where we can grow crops," said Shwe Nge, 38, a father of six.

The Mro villagers are proud of their lifestyle and of wearing their traditional dress. They take pride in the culture which has been passed down to them by their ancestors.

They are all healthy and strong due to fresh air and daily work.

There are no fly-proof toilets in this village and in other Mro villages. The nearby forest is their toilet, said a villager.

Most of the villagers have not been to Sittway, the capital of Rakhine State.

They wish to stay in their village in northern Rakhine.

"What we need today is a rural dispensary for our health care," said U Shwe Nge before he said goodbye to us. ■



A couple of Mro harvest rice traditionally at the village of Gyaikchaung. PHOTO: MIN THIT

A visit to a Daing Net ethnic tribe village



School children learning at the school in Yanaungpyin Village. PHOTO: MIN THIT

By Nay Htet Khaung

SINCE arriving in Maungdaw two weeks ago to cover the development activities in Rakhine, we, reporters from the Myanmar News Agency, were hoping to visit the villages of ethnic people in Rakhine.

It was on Friday 24th November when our wishes came true. We woke up on Friday morning and set off on our trip to the hilly areas by car. After a one-hour drive, we arrived at Kyeinchaung Village, then we proceeded to the Yanaungpyin Village of the Daing-net people.

Daing Net is the one of the many ethnic tribes in Rakhine State. In the hills in northern Maungdaw, the Daing Net, Mro and Rakhine live peacefully together, relying on the slash and burn cultivation method that is a traditional livelihood.

The Daing Net people are also found in the border areas in India. They are also known as Chakama in Bangladesh.

Asked which challenges they faced after the 25 August terrorist attacks in northern

Rakhine, Daing Net villagers expressed their hopes for "security for their safety".

"We heard that some Daing Net villagers were killed by ARSA (Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army) terrorists in the latest attacks. So we have anxiety for our safety. We want to urge authorities to make arrangements for our security," said one villager.

The villagers have already heard the fate of some of their tribe in the terrorist attacks.

On 28 August, security forces evacuated 55 surviving members of the Daingnet ethnic tribe from Yankar Zaydi Village who were attacked by extremists, resulting in the death of five villagers, according to the Information Committee of the State Counsellor's Office.

On that day, 22 Daingnet ethnic villagers left their village on Saturday for Aungzan Village in an effort to ensure safety for their people after the violence in northern Rakhine rapidly escalated the previous day.

When they neared Kyaungdoe Village, they were attacked by about 100 terrorists who were armed with sticks and machetes. U Maung Ba

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