State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi gives address at the meeting with Myanmar community in Sweden on Tuesday in Stockholm, Sweden. Before the meeting with them, the State Counsellor also delivered an address at the Swedish parliament, sharing her fond childhood memories of the Scandinavian nationl instilled by her mother. **PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY**

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives CALD Chairman

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint received Mr. Abhisit Vejajiva, Chairman of the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD), based in Manila, the Philippines, at 3pm in the hall of the Pyithu Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. During the meeting, they discussed matters relating to democratic reform.

Also present were Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U T Khun Myat and officials from Pyithu Hluttaw's office. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Speaker U Win Myint receives Mr. Abhisit Vejajiva, Chairman of the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD). **PHOTO: MNA**

Yangon Gov't collaborates with Int'l Organisations for squatter relocation plans

THE Yangon Region Government announced it will collaborate with international organisations to relocate squatters away from the state-owned land.

At the press conference on the government's one-year performance held on 9 June, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein said they are interested in resettlement efforts for the squatters and are discussing resettlement plans with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). The government is compiling a list of squatters that will aid them in choosing an area of land for the resettlement programme.

The Yangon Region Government started compiling a list of squatters in September 2016 starting in Dagon Myothit (South) Township and has completed surveys in many other townships. The government has also issued temporary identity cards to the squatters

The number of squatters trespassing in development committee lands was initially thought to be around 300,000 people the survey revealed there is actually over 400,000 squatters. The squatters can be roughly divided into five categories, including squatting of homeless people for housing needs, squatters renting housing to each other and squatting for commercial purposes.

U Phyo Min Thein said although the population of squatters has exceeded their estimated numbers, they are investigating into whether most of them are actually homeless people or not. He said the government will allow media agencies to participate in the investigations if needed and that people lying to the government to be included in the squatters' list will be dealt with accordingly with the law. The Chief Minister said there have been increased incidents of squatters along the entrance of the Yangon highway. Some of them are selling state owned plots of land knowing that these lands may be included in future city expansion projects. From the government's side, they have been issuing warnings and taking preventive measures to combat people selling state owned lands. The Yangon Region Government has allotted Ks 64billion to City Bank, which is under the Yangon City Development Committee's administration, for use in housing projects to solve the homeless squatter problems. The regional government conducted a survey from May to June 2016 to map the areas occupied by squatters. They were able to analyze 423 areas in 19 townships with collaboration from UN-Habitat. When conducting the survey consideration was given to the socio-economic conditions of the squatters, the period of their illegal residence, the possibility of natural disasters, their effects on the local ecosystem and prioritizing which squatters should be relocated first. The collected information will be used in planning housing projects for the squatters.

The Chief Minister said temporary housing and job opportunities will be given to squatters but the government will take legal action against squatters registered in the survey if they were to be found trespassing on other state owned land again.

The police force will accompany officials conducting survey in the squatter territory for security purposes. The Chief Miniser said in a press conference on 25 May 2016 that those who fail to comply will be pressed charges under Section 188 and will be removed from the squatter list.

After cyclone Nargis in 2008, the number of squatters in Yangon increased as people migrated to the city to find jobs. — Zaw Gyi (PaNiTa) ■

Dry ration delivered to police families, locals in Rakhine State

Five philanthropic organisations teamed up and delivered aid to police families and people on 9th June affected by Cyclone Mora in northern Rakhine.

The group includes Shwe Latt Myar philanthropic group and Yarkkhita Swan Arr young philanthropic group.

The ceremony to hand over the aid to the people affected by Cyclone Mora was held in the meeting room of No.1 Border Police detachment in Maungtaw Township on 9 June.

At the occasion, U Win Maung Maung on behalf of the five philanthropic groups handed over the aid to Police Col Nyan Myint Kyaw, deputy director supervisory in the supervisory department. Then, Police Brig-Gen Thura San Lwin presented documents of honour to the donors.

The donation is for the families from No. 1 Border Police detachment and local residents in Kyeekanpyin village (south and north) affected by Cyclone Mora, said U Win Maung Maung.

The philanthropic groups also donated to reconstruct the damaged Pagoda near the police detachment. The groups donated 50 rice bags to the Rakhine State government for the local people from townships in Rakhine State affected by Cyclone Mora. This is a fifth donation to natural disaster victims in Rakhine State reaching a total of Ks 80 million.— Min Thit/ Myanmar News Agency ■

The officer of border guard police force in Maungtaw presents the certificate of honour to a philanthropic group. **PHOTO: YE HTUT**

Remove fears that have kept two communities apart

By Tha Sein

A curfew imposed recently in Maungtaw and Buthidaung Townships, Rakhine State with a view to ensuring the prevalence of peace and stability in the region is a welcome move. The curfew should be helpful as an early warning in case of any signs of further violence in the northwest part of the country. A shift from attacking soldiers and police to targeting local people has become a potential turning point with more people killed and many others who have gone missing.

The government has decided to enforce the law rigorously, which would be a supporting mechanism for reining in violent acts. The terrorist threat continues to evolve with new groups taking the place of previous ones, and each brings with them their own brand of violence. The curfew is a direct response to an upsurge in terrorist activities, which are more than enough to create a climate of fear to shake public confidence which may affect people's everyday lives.

The 9-10-2016 violent armed attacks which put the government on a heightened state of alert reminds us how complicated the situation in the border is. In the context of the scope and nature of these attacks, what is happening in the deep West cannot be seen in isolation, with an increase of atrocities perpetrated by a terrorist group in order to increase its leverage and gain more international attention.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in meeting with Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Lofven said that a United Nations decision to send an international fact-finding mission to look into allegations of abuse by security forces against Muslims in Rakhine State was not in keeping with the needs of both communities, and they did not feel it was in line with the needs of the region where they were trying to establish harmony and understanding and to remove the fears that have kept the two communities apart.

As regards communal tensions in the region, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had also released a statement that the presence of an international fact-finding mission would do more to inflame rather than resolve the issue and it was also not in accord with the situation on the ground and prevailing situations.

To be fair, new models of collaborative and inclusive governance are required to successfully address the simmering communal tensions. At a time when the world is watching what is going on in the country with grave concern, we have reacted positively to the call of the people in distress and took proactive steps to bring peace and harmony in the region. ■

Let us listen together, with open hearts forever

By Thabyay

IT is heart-breaking to hear a series of true tragic stories of modern-day slavery presented by a group of young people.

The young man and women who escaped from human trafficking in person shared their own experiences with deepened sadness and heart-felt grievances. The Forum for the victims of Human Trafficking in Person under the title "Let us all listen together, with open hearts forever" was organized at Horizon hotel in Nay Pyi Taw in the morning of 9th June. In this event both male and female youths (victims) were actively cooperating in the combat against human trafficking by taking part in enactment demonstrating and narrating their own experiences in the hands of human traffickers.

The scripts and plots of the true story play of modern-day slavery came out from the discussion and suggestions made by 34 attendants to the forum held from 5 to 9 June.

"Human Trafficking has been growing rapidly and now becomes a serious and common issue for most of the countries. Actually human trafficking is a capital offence to human rights and it is rampant and affects most in underdeveloped and developing countries." said the Police Brigadier General Myint Htoo of Myanmar Police Force at the opening ceremony of the forum.

The forum for capacity building for the victims of human trafficking in person was held by Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in cooperation with an NGO World Vision – Myanmar.

The meeting was attended and discussed by the responsible personnel from Myanmar Police Force, Social Welfare and related departments, World Vision, other friendly organizations, survivors from human trafficking and special invited guests.

" As human trafficking usually takes place as transnational crime, cooperation among the countries is crucial to the suppression and eradication of human trafficking. Therefore, Myanmar has actively taken part in the combat on human trafficking in accordance with the regional and international agreement" added Police Brigadier General Myint Htoo.

Myanmar has been the signatory of the agreement contract on prevention of human trafficking by land, by water and by air, of United Nation Convention on fight against transnational crime and later agreement on prevention of human trafficking.

The law of Prevention of Human Trafficking in Person was ratified on 13 September 2005 and Central Committee and three working Committees were formed in accordance with the law. The fight against human trafficking was implemented at the national level with 2 terms of 5 year project from 2007 to 2016 and it is now undertaking with greater momentum. Now the third 5 year term from 2017 to 2021 is being implemented.

" By holding such a forum the survivors from the scourge of human trafficking can share their bitter experiences and

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