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Press conference of the Investigation Commission on Maungdaw in Rakhine State in progress. PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY

No evidence of crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing

A GOVERNMENT commission looking into allegations by journalists and international human rights advocates that Myanmar's security forces have committed abuses

against Muslims in Rakhine State found those allegations to be groundless.

The Investigation Commission on Maungdaw in Rakhine State found there was no

possible evidence indicating any crime against humanity or any act of ethnic cleansing in support of allegations by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner

for Human Rights (OHCHR), according to a press statement delivered by Vice President U Myint Swe yesterday in Yangon.

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The Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Counsellor Office

Thank you message to the people
14th Waxing of Wagaung 1379 ME
(6 August 2017)

1. Some members of the Sangha and persons under the name 'patriotic group' staged a sitting demonstration in Yangon, Mandalay and Taunggyi from 2 August to 5 August with the intention of destroying peace and stability of the State and the rule of law.
2. People have not supported or participated in the demonstration. Besides, the governments of the regions and the state concerned have handled the problem in a gentle manner in accordance with the law.
3. We express heartfelt thanks to the people for their stance and conviction that serves the long-term interest of the State.



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Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than attends Shwe Parami Education Foundation's donation ceremony



Donation ceremony of Shwe Parami Foundation in progress. **PHOTO: MNA**

STUDENTS in Thaton Township have been given school uniforms from scholars of Shwe Parami Foundation.

Uniforms sharing ceremony was held yesterday at Thuwana Bumi Thathana Beikman in Thaton, Mon State, with the presence of Shwe Parami Foundation Leader Sayadaw Ashin Sandda Deka, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than, Mon State Chief Minister Dr Aye Zan, scholars and students in Thaton.

Scholars bought school uniforms by saving Ks 1000 per month from their fund supported by Shwe Parami Foundation, it is learnt.

At the ceremony, U Win Shain, chairman of Shwe Parami Foundation explained about the sharing program. Then, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker and Mon State Chief Minister gave honor appreciation speeches to the scholars.

Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than added his praise to scholars that it was a very noble deed

of sharing money which used for poor people than personal uses.

Afterwards, scholars presented 573 school uniforms, 600 story books, 100 dozens of textbooks and 143 bicycles to 573 students from 15 schools in Thaton Township.

The attendees received the Dhamma administered by Shwe Parami Tawya Sayadaw Ashin Sandda Deka. —Thet Oo (Thaton) ■

Press Conference held by Maungtaw Investigation Commission



Dr Hla Maung.
PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

The answers to the questions raised in the press conference held in Yangon on the morning of 6 August by Maungtaw Investigation Commission is described below.

Q. Please explain what are in the commission's report concerning the plan how to undertake the development of Rakhine including northern Rakhine which is poverty-stricken and low in living standard.

A. By Dr Hla Maung, Rtd.



U Aung Kyi.
PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

Ambassador, member of commission

The most important point of the root cause of conflicts often happened in Rakhine State including Maungtaw is found to be the extreme poverty and very low socioeconomic conditions of the above-said area. It is found out that if the socioeconomic condition of the Rakhine State is extremely low compared to that of the whole country. Rakhine is the second last in line

of poverty in Myanmar, Chin State being the last in the line. Moreover the agricultural sector and the sector of animal and fishery products, and other infrastructures such as transport, electricity, schools and hospitals are impoverished compared to other States and Regions.

Currently, agricultural sector and fishery sector take the vital part of the commodity production of the Rakhine State. If the means of production in those two sectors can be switched from the conventional to modern and scientific production, the production will become two to three times higher than the previous production. Likewise promoting the economic infrastructures including transport, electricity, schools and hospitals in Rakhine State should be planned and implemented accordingly.

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INTERFAITH DIALOGUE - SAMVAD II FOR PEACE, HARMONY AND SECURITY OF THE WORLD

Sitagu International Buddhist Academy-SIBA (Yangon, Myanmar)
5 - 6 August 2017 (14th Waxing Day of Wagaung 1379 ME)

DECLARATION

The Interfaith Dialogue for Peace, Harmony and Security of the World, jointly organized by the Sitagu International Buddhist Missionary Association (SIBMA), Myanmar; the Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF), India; and the Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies (Myanmar ISIS) in association with The Japan Foundation, Japan, was held at the Sitagu International Buddhist Academy (SIBA) on 5 and 6 August 2017 in Yangon. The Spiritual Masters of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Sikh and more than 100 delegates from 30 countries participated in the Dialogue Prime Minister H.E. Shri Narendra Modi of the Republic of India and Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Shinzo Abe of Japan sent their video messages to the inaugural session of the Dialogue. H.E Thura U Aung Ko, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture of the Government of Republic of the Union of Myanmar, H.E. U Thaung Tun, National Security Advisor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, H.E Shri Ram Naik, Hon'ble Governor of Uttar Pradesh, India and H.E Mr Nobuo Kishi, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan delivered special addresses at the inaugural session. Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, India Mahant Yogi Adityanath delivered a valedictory address.

Spiritual / religious leaders of all religions, and scholars of all the religions actively participated in the discussion. We unanimously agree and declare on this Sixth of the Month of August, Two Thousand and Seventeenth that:

1. All the people of the world have to cooperate and endeavour together, without any fear, in order to obtain harmonious social life with full security assurances.
2. We denounce all kinds of hate speech, false propaganda, conflict and war under the pretext of religion and strongly condemn those who provide support any such activities.
3. We, leaders of all religions of the world, resolve to be builders of the harmonious human society by religious teachings and involve ourselves in consolidating peace and security of the world.
4. We, members of different faiths, need to build mutual understanding, respect and trust among ourselves in order to obtain a peaceful, secure and prosperous human society.
5. We resolve to exercise restraint and refrain from interfering in matters of other religions and to cooperate in building bridges for world peace.
6. It is our inherent duty to conserve the environment before it is too late for the survival of humankind.
7. All religious leaders from India present at this Samvad II have unanimously decided to meet once in every four months (and as and when it is required), starting from 4 December 2017 to build bridges and harmony.
8. We shall collectively initiate programmes to enhance environmental consciousness and undertake awareness/ protection projects.
9. To strengthen understanding and trust, we shall organize an interfaith camp for meditation.
10. All the spiritual paths and religious traditions are equally valid.



No evidence of crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing

FROM PAGE-1

The allegations of abuses by security forces came after an attack on a government checkpoint in October sparked a crack-down in Maungtaw region. A number of Muslims of northern Rakhine State left their homes.

The report of OHCHR Mission to Bangladesh interviewed 204 persons who fled Rakhine State for Bangladesh. Many of the stories of abuse included in the report were unsubstantiated.

The Vice President, who chaired the commission, said that accusations of genocide and ethnic cleansing were part of a smear campaign by “external forces.”

“Sadly, we found that OHCHR report fails to describe the brutal acts and murders by terrorist organizations against members of security forces in the first instance in the Maungtaw area in October last year, or the indiscriminate killing and intimidation of natives and Muslim villagers, or the terrorist trainings by terrorist organizations, or the arrival of domestic and international assistance to Maungtaw villages,” he said.

“Based on interviews with individuals who ran away from Maungtaw region, OHCHR’s report exaggerates the number of deaths and injuries and displaced persons, the amount of destruction, the amount of property loss and damage resulting from armed engagements between terrorists

and security forces – who were only trying to restore peace, stability and the rule of law – with the intention of tarnishing the image of Myanmar internationally,” said the Vice President.

The Vice President said that although OHCHR interviewed some ethnic people, who are minorities in Maungtaw, the UN’s report “ignored” their perspectives.

The Vice President also emphasized the gravity of the 9 October attack that sparked the area-combing operations. He described the attack against Border Guard Police Force Headquarters No. 1 and other police stations as an act of rebellion.

The Vice President said that foreign interference had worsened the situation and made its resolution more complicated. The commission’s report was completed on 31 January, but its publication was delayed in order to wait for the OHCHR report, which included interviews of Maungtaw Muslims who left Rakhine for Bangladesh, he said.

The government commission visited Maungtaw and refugee camps in Bangladesh to verify the OHCHR report, the Vice President said.

“Moreover, the government commission waited for all possible responses, so that anyone at refugee camps in Bangladesh filing lawsuits could make their claims. Hence, it took more than six months to complete the commission report,”



he said.

“The seizure of large caches of narcotic drugs in Maungtaw region indicates the likelihood of the rise of illicit drugs trafficking in the area in connection with the armed

insurgency and illegal business,” he warned.

The Vice President said that the commission report provides recommendations to improve the political, cultural and economic situation

in Maungtaw to prevent such challenges in the future.

The press conference was attended by commission members including U Aung Kyi, U Tun Myat, Dr Aung Tun Thet, U Nyunt

Swe, Dr Daw Thet Thet Zin, Dr Hla Maung, U Zaw Win (retired Police Maj-Gen), U Saw Thalay Zaw, Daw Kyeik Ngaik Man, U Aung Naing and Dr Tha Nyan.—Myanmar News Agency ■





Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla and party pose for the photo. PHOTO: MNA

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing hosted dinner on board cruise ship

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla and party who were in Kyoto, Japan on a working visit viewed State Guest House in the morning of 6 August.

After visiting Kinkakuji

(Golden Pavilion) Temple, the Senior General and party left Kyoto for Tokyo by Shinkansen bullet train and arrived at Tokyo at noon.

Afterwards, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing met with Military attaché families at the

Myanmar embassy in Japan.

Later at night, the Senior General and party were hosted a dinner by Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, chairman of Nippon Foundation on the ferry cruise on the Sumida Gawa River. —Myanmar News Agency ■

54th Myanmar Jade and Gems Emporium closes second day of auctions



Local and Foreign merchants viewed, display of Jade lots. PHOTO: MNA

THE annual Myanmar Jade and Gems Emporium completed its fifth day yesterday at Mani Yadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw.

This year the government is selling 20 lots of fine jade and 20 lots crude jade. Joint government and private sellers are selling 2,900 lots of crude jade. Private owners are selling 25 lots of fine jade, 3,545 lots of crude jade and 16 lots of other crude minerals.

Between 2-4 August, 105

out of 326 lots of jade were sold at set prices for proceeds worth Euros3.06 million.

Auction sales began on Saturday and by the end of business yesterday 1,100 lots out of a total of 6,561 lots were auctioned off.

The Myanmar Jade and Gems Emporium has been held since 1964 and will continue for a total of nine days.

The jade emporium is a reliable source of foreign currency for Myanmar, which

benefits from direct sales and by levying tax: 15 per cent for crude jade, 10 per cent for crude gems and three per cent for service fees. For fine gems and jade, a five per cent special commodity tax and a one per cent service fee were charged.

Incomes from gems comprised 56 per cent Myanmar's mineral trade for FY2011-2012 and 83 per cent for FY2016-2017. —Myanmar News Agency ■

146 patients found H1N1 positive

Of the 387 persons hospitalized during the period from 21 July to this day, 146 patients were found H1N1 positive, and of them 15 died.

Of the 387 persons 87 were under-fives, and two of them died. Two of the 26 infected persons between ages 5 and 12 died; and 11 of the 248 persons between ages 12 and 65 died. Twenty-six persons between 65 and above are also infected, but there is no death. Thirteen hospitalized persons found H1N1 positive died of other causes, and not of the effectiveness of the seasonal influenza. Majority of the H1N1 64 patients – 25 receiving treatment at Waibagi Hospital and other 39 at hospitals in regions and states –

are recovering from illness and may be discharged soon.

Yangon, Ayeyawady and Bago regions are designated as priority areas because of their high infection rate.

The Ministry of Health and Sports held talks on H1N1 awareness in Yangon yesterday where discussions were held from the health and medical points of view. Participants sought means to raise health awareness, advise clinics to inform about the situation of flu patients, timely transfer the patients to hospitals and distribute the model procedures, work guidelines, treatment prescriptions of the central to hospitals around the country. —Myanmar News Agency ■

One village administrator killed in Maungtaw Township

A body near Shwe Zarr Kapakaung Village was discovered by Myanmar security forces on patrol in Maungtaw, Rakhine State yesterday morning.

During the area clearance, a body was found together with

cut and pierced wounds.

The victim was identified as Hu Saung, an administrator from Shwe Zarr Kapakaung Village and further investigation is ongoing. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Seven dead toll of seasonal influenza confirmed at the Waibargi Specialist Hospital

THE statement of Ministry of Health and Sports in Yangon Region said that the number of death toll has confirmed seven at 7am yesterday, total 178 patients were receiving treatment

for the severe acute respiratory infection at the Waibargi Specialist Hospital, of them 56 are contracted with the swan flu by the laboratory tests. _ Myanmar News agency) ■

Sagaing University of Education students march in protest over unqualified teachers

AN estimated 300 Sagaing University of Education students went on strike in Mandalay yesterday to demand a greater role in setting qualifications and selecting teachers.

The students complained that the hiring process is not transparent and that unqualified teachers are offered positions

at the schools. The education students were also protesting hiring practices that will make it more difficult for them to find teaching jobs once they graduate. The students marched to the corner of 80 and 27 streets from 79th Street located between 32nd and 33rd streets. — Tin Maung (Man Ko Bwar) ■



Students from Sagaing University of Education protest in Mandalay. PHOTO: TIN MAUNG (MAN KO BWAR)

Innovation and Intellectual Property Rights

Khin Maung Oo

THE protection of intellectual property rights is of great importance for a country, along with invention and innovation. In other countries of the world intellectual property is protected by its relevant laws and inventions and innovation are encouraged by making sure that the rights of people who invent new things are protected by law. The more inventions are created in a country, the more it gains in terms of innovation creations and designs. In this case, the inventor should be rewarded fairly for his invention.

Myanmar is a country that greatly needs protection for intellectual property for inventions. As for products, we greatly rely upon imported products from other countries due to scarcity of our own creations. That being so

we must exert our efforts to produce our own-created products—large and small, as much as we can. At the same time, inventors and people with new and practical innovations should be encouraged.

Producing a new product for the first time out of one's own idea is called an invention or creation. Production of the same thing by a third party by imitating the original is copying only. So as to avoid such copying, we need intellectual property rights entrusted by law to protect our creations such as music, lyrics, literature, poetry etc. Until now, we have not yet had any definite and strengthened intellectual property rights.

Intellectual property rights include various kinds, inter alia those in literature, artistic works, industrial inventions, designs and trade-marks. It can

be said that Myanmar still lacks those kinds of rights in industrial inventions and production of other products, compared to that of literary works. It requires enactment of laws and rules on intellectual property rights as well as encouragement and support to increase amounts of inventions, in order to lessen our existing weakness.

Presently, law on intellectual property rights of industrial designs is under legislation. Provided that the said law has effectively been implemented after approval, fruitful prospects will emerge in the country. Due to lack of access to rights and guarantees over own creations, the country is only satisfied with imitation and reliance over others' products, albeit abundant with technicians, skilled laborers and inventive youths.

Producers buy a new design of

excellence for their industrial trade mark for a tidy amount. Likewise, many prestigious companies from developing countries as well retain the service of inventors and the avant-garde. At the Expos held under the sponsorship or acknowledgement of respective governments belonging to WTO (World Trade Organization) or Paris Convention Countries, industrial designs are usually put on exhibitions which bring about benefits for inventors.

Inventions result in benefits. Had it been imitated just after its invention, it may cause great loss. In our country intellectual property rights on artistic works and literature are still being violated, causing a great hindrance for the development of art and literature. In brief, we must welcome and help the implementation of the intellectual property rights. ■

On Wakhaung Fullmoon Day Lord Buddha delivered Metta Sutta for Peaceful Co-existence

Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja,
Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

In essence, Buddhism is the way to and the guide for liberating sentient beings from the whirl pool of Samsara, the endless cycle of birth and rebirth for sufferings, cravings and defilements. But Buddhism is also concerned with problems of daily life of mundane world. During his life time of 80 years and 45 years of Dhamma mission [Dhamma duta]. Lord Buddha personally participated in the peaceful settlements of international, inter-ethnic and inter-clanish disputes or assigned his disciples on his behalf to settle such disputes peacefully. His hagiography records the histories of such cases and events. All 12 fullmoon days of the 12 months of lunar calendar are sacred days on which either his Suttas [discourses] were delivered or important events took place which peacefully settled disputes.

These Suttas and events have significant relevance in the context of our present day life of the Age of Globalization. We have the United Nations Organization [UNO] marking the UN Days of solving our international problems and disputes. The World Environment Day, The World Peace Day, The World Water Day, The Old Age Day, The World Teachers' Day, The World's Mother Day, The World Father Day etc, etc, etc. Most of such UN Days of our time have their precedents in the time of living Buddha. To mention but a few —Maha Samaya Sutta Day

on Fullmoon of Nayone was The Water Day of Buddha's time. Wazo Rain Retreat and Dhammacakya Sutta Day on Fullmoon day of Wazo are the Environment Day of Buddha's time and Metta Sutta discoursed on the Fullmoon day of Wakhaung was the Peaceful Co-existence of all sentient beings of Buddha's time.

Since the topic and theme of this Article is Metta Sutta, the origin, the background history and profound and far-reaching beneficial effects of this Sutta are highlighted as follows.

During the lifetime of Lord Buddha, a party of Buddhist monks repaired into a forest for their Rain Retreat [Lent] for religious practices there. The guardian spirit of the forest and guardian spirits of trees [Yoke ka soes] had to come down and move away from their dwelling places for the monks. They thought that their habitats were invaded by these monks. So they created fearful visions to frighten the monks away. The monks reported the matter to Lord Buddha Whereupon Lord Buddha gave them Metta Sutta [Discourse on Loving Kindness to be recited or chanted so that all sentient beings humans, animals, spiritual worlds hear and listen to understand and appreciate the importance of living peacefully together without malice and harm, but only Loving kindness to one another. At Buddha's advice, the monks returned to the forest and chanted Metta Sutta. Upon hearing and understanding Metta Sutta the spirits of the

forest and trees realized that these monks were friends, not enemies who came there only for religious practices during Lent and they would leave after Lent. They had no intention to invade their domains and settle there. So human monks and guardian spirits of the forest and trees became friends. They peaceful co-existed.

Metta Sutta delivered in Pali language was translated into English by the late Rector Sayadaw Venerable U Silanandabhivamsa of the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University, Mayangone Township, Yangon, Myanmar. English translation is reproduced as follows:

Metta Sutta [Loving Kindness Discourse].

1. By the power of this Sutta, the Yak-khas who do not show fearful visions and a person who makes efforts regarding this Sutta day and night [by reciting and practicing], sleeps comfortably and when he is asleep he does not have bad dreams oh good people. Let us recite this protective Sutta which is endowed with these qualities and others as well.
2. He who wants to dwell penetrating the state of calm [Nibbana] and who is skilled in his good, should practice the three kinds of training. He should be able, upright, very upright, obedient, gentle and not conceited.
3. He should be contented, easy to take care of have few activities, have light living, have few possessions and be controlled in his senses, he should be wise and not impudent and not be greedily

attached to the families [devotees].

4. He should not commit any anything wrong by doing which he might be censured by wise men. May all beings be happy, and safe. May their hearts be happy.
5. What soever living beings there be, feeble or strong, long or big, or medium, or short, small or fat [round] seen or unseen, those the dwelling far or near those who have been born and those who are yet to be born, may all beings without exception be happy.
6. Let none deceive another or despise any person in any place. Let him not wish any harm to another with insult or ill will.
7. Just as a mother would protect her only child at the risk of her own life even so let him cultivate a boundless heart toward all beings.
8. Let his thoughts of boundless love pervade the whole world, above, below, and across, making them unrestricted, free of hate and free of enemy.
9. Whether he is standing, walking, sitting or lying down as long as he is awake he should develop this mindfulness in loving kindness. This is the Noble Living here in the Dispensation of the Buddha, they say.
10. Not approaching [taking wrong views, being virtuous and endowed with vision the first Path Knowledge] and discarding attachment to sensual objects he definitely does not come again to lying in a mother's womb. [End of Metta Sutta]

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Press Conference held by Maungtaw Investigation Commission

FROM PAGE 2

Regarding the labour wages, Myanmar is much lower than those of other neighbouring countries and the wages in Rakhine State including Maungtaw area is the lowest in Myanmar. However the cheap labour wages can attract the investment of industrial works in Rakhine State. So, if the Special Economic Zones including Export Processing Zones and Small and Medium Scale industrial works can be established near the sea ports in Rakhine State, many foreign direct investments will come in and it can boost the GDP and export value resulting in the emergence of job opportunities. It then will raise the per capita income of the State and consequently conflicts become abated.

Q: UN accused Myanmar of racial discrimination and ethnic cleansing or genocide. If there is any response to that accusations? If any please explain. A plan for administration for Rakhine State is suggested, it is learnt. If it is true let us know the plan.

A: By U Aung Kyi, Union Minister (retired), member of commission

There is no special discussion denying the accusations. The rebellious acts of them can be legitimized according to the international law if there appear firm assessment on occurrence of genocide in an area. I can answer they have such an intention.

When we scrutinize the sequence of their action it is found that; firstly they collected the arms and attacked the security forces; they looted the arms and ammunition from the quarter of security forces; they employ different methods to prevent the arms from retrieving by government force; they tried to concoct a make-up story of existence of genocide or racial cleansing in Rakhine State using the media. Those sequence of actions indicate that they intend to fabricate a story in trying to support the accusations. That is my personal view.

Actually the mission of the commission includes the freedom and security of the people. Therefore we have taken immediate action on scrutiny



U Zaw Win. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH**

of nationalization works in accordance with the existing law. We have also strived to exercise the freedom of religion, freedom of worship, freedom of movements (travel), freedom of livelihood and freedom of trade.

Vice President himself went to the river port and supervise the opening of the port. When the local and foreign media visited the area of incidence they were granted the freedom of securing the information from the public.

Some people who had met direct with the media and had talk freely were later killed by the attackers of other side. News were also released in due course of time. Special judicial courts were also opened for quick trial in a proper way. Families of the arrested were also allowed to meet the arrested person concerned.

The crime of attacking a place like Border Guard Police Force headquarters which was taking the duty of enforcing the rule of law and security and taking away arms and ammunition equals to a terrorist act threatening the State sovereignty. In the video clip, terrorists said they were going to fulfill the years-long desire. It is a matter involving human rights, humanity, and other wider issues such as security and politics.

Internationally they declared themselves the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA). The leader is Habat Dula. Although he was a villager of Kyaukpyinseik Village in Maungtaw Township, he was brought up abroad. He had lived in Saudi Arabia and received military training together with armed militants in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Group trainings and funds are provided by some who are living in certain Mid-



Dr Tha Nyan. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH**

dle East countries after leaving Maungtaw. It is found that the financial management group is managing the monetary affairs systematically.

Persons coming from Bangladesh are providing military training. Definitely, there are foreign connections. But we cannot say exactly whether those organizations are terrorist groups or not. I clearly say that financial provisions and trainings have foreign connections.

They established their ideology since 1942. We have found that they are using four ways. The first one is that they launched attacks with the use guerrilla tactics even before the establishment of a firm unit. They attacked three places simultaneously at night, looted arms and then disappeared. In some engagements they used force. But in many cases they used guerrilla tactics.

The second is they applied the tactic of terrorist groups. They used car engines as mines. We had seized some of them. In May 2017, village militants demonstrated mine installation. They used international terrorist tactics in launching mine attacks.

The third is they intimidated the persons they thought were government supporters or non-supporters of their movement through the internet. They then murdered such persons day by day. Up to 30 June, they have already killed 44. They slit the throats of 27. They are applying those brutal methods with the intention of weakening the government administration, and terrifying the locals. They have long-term aims.

The fourth is propagandizing through social network which is dangerous. Some may become extremists by just read-



U Tun Myat. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH**

ing the ideologies on the social network. The recent incidents were aimed at attacking the government administrative machinery. It is worrisome for the nation in the long-term.

Q: Your view on the accusations saying that there are religious persecution and racial discrimination in Maungtaw area. Does the commission also face such accusations?

Dr Tha Nyan:

General Secretary of YMCA (commission member)

A: According to the Constitution Myanmar permits the freedom of worship for Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Christians and animists. There is freedom of worshipping and practicing religious deeds. We have not found any religious persecution in Maungtaw region and no accusation in connection with religion. We arrived at Myothugyi village in Maungtaw Township. Because of the lack of education and knowledge and fear, they misunderstood the Section 144. We allowed worshipping. They could say prayers at day time except in the early morning and evening under curfew. There were Arabic religious schools. Maungtaw region alone had 1278 Mosques and 1657 Mawlawis, 17 Hindu temples, seven churches, and 121 monasteries. These figures prove that there is no religious persecution and racial discrimination.

Q: What did the commission do for the security and for ensuring human rights of the people of Maungtaw Township and what are its future plans?

U Aung Kyi, Former Union Minister (commission member)

A: The first point is that human rights is a much broader issue. If there is weakness in a sector of human rights, we

must find the root cause. There must mutual respect of human rights between communities. If there is respect, they will be no problem. Likewise the administrative bodies and others must have respect for human rights. We need to understand it as a duty for every person. We need to further promote human rights in this region. We have already submitted the 48-point work program to the president. We have requested to form a body to implement the program. We have also made a request to always support the body to observe and safeguard human rights. I have already explained about the security. As it is a border area, the border guard will continue to take the security duty. So it should be reinforced. We have to hold discussion and put forward suggestions to beef up security at the areas where transport is poor. Our discussions were centred on securing the area mainly with the police force.

Q: Time and again we have heard that there is no genocide, ethnic cleansing or rape and that there are only invented accusations after the commission had looked into the matter thoroughly. But what we have heard is totally different from the points issued by watchdogs including the UN. Why?

A: It is difficult prove what really never exists. Let alone people living in Myanmar even the persons who know about Myanmar well will not believe exaggerated accusations such as the act of molesting, gang raping, kicking the belly of a pregnant woman, or killing parents right in front of their children. But we have never turned a blind eye to the matter. We are looking into the matter carefully.

Some of the cases are caused by misunderstanding, some are totally untrue and some are group-wise hatched lies. We are reluctant to make quick conclusions. But the international community is making hasty decisions. If OHCHR waited for our report, its own report would be helpful. Unfortunately the report was issued in haste. This has enlarged the problem rather than solving it. —News Team ■