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Officials from Myanmar and Bangladesh discuss the repatriation of refugees at a meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

## Repatriation of refugees to commence next Tuesday

A repatriation plan was signed yesterday that will allow the return of Muslims who fled to Bangladesh to escape conflict in Myanmar last year, following a meeting of the neighbouring countries in Nay Pyi Taw.

Myanmar would receive the returnees who fled Rakh-

ine State five days per week, according to the statement released by Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The first meeting of the Joint Working Group on the Repatriation of Displaced Myanmar Residents from Bangladesh was held on Monday at

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and continued yesterday.

The Myanmar delegation was led by U Myint Thu, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar. The Bangladeshi delegation was led by Mr. Shahidul Haque, Foreign Secretary, Ministry of

Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh. The Physical Arrangement for Repatriation of Displaced Myanmar Residents from Bangladesh under the Return of the Displaced Persons from Rakhine State agreement was signed by the two sides yesterday.

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### Security agencies warned not to use State security garb

THE Ministry of Home Affairs has warned private security companies and organisations not to wear clothing or carry badges used by State security units.

“Action will be taken against those who wear similar uniforms of State security units under the law,” said the statement released by the ministry yesterday.

The ministry said it has learnt that private security agencies and organisations are using the uniforms of the State security bureau or similar uniforms.

According to Penal Code 171, wearing garb or carrying tokens used by public servants with fraudulent intent can be punished with a three-month jail sentence or a fine of Ks20,000.

**Action will be taken against those who wear similar uniforms of State security units under the law.**

The statement also quoted the Myanmar Official Secrets Act that reads: A person guilty of an offence for intruding into prohibited places, for helping others to intrude prohibited places or damage State security, for wearing uniforms of State security bureaus or similar uniforms shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years, or a fine, or both.—GNLM ■



**‘BEST BANK IN MYANMAR’**

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## Vice President U Myint Swe inspects progress of Chindwin Bridge

VICE President U Myint Swe yesterday inspected a bridge under construction over the Chindwin River in Khamti, Sagaing Region.

The Vice President arrived at the site yesterday afternoon along with Sagaing Region Chief Minister Dr. Myint Nang, Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Phone Myat, Deputy Ministers Maj-Gen Aung Soe and Maj-Gen Than Htut. They arrived in Khamti Township from Nanyun Town, where they attended

a New Year Festival in Naga Self-Administered Zone.

The Vice President inspected the Chindwin Bridge which is 92 per cent complete.

The bridge situated on Khamti-Hsintey-Lahe Road is 449.5 metres long, 8.5 metres wide and is flanked by one-metre wide pedestrian walkways.

After the inspection tour of the bridge, U Myint Swe and party returned to Nay Pyi Taw by a Tatmadaw Air Force special plane — Myanmar News Agency ■



Vice President U Myint Swe arrives Khamti to inspect Chindwin Bridge (Khamti) yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

## Trade volume at Maungtaw Trade Zone exceeds target



Workers unloading rice bags at the jetty in Maungtaw Trade Zone. PHOTO: AUNG MIN

BORDER trade in Maungtaw, Rakhine State, exceeded the target of the 2017-2018 FY, reaching more than US\$9 million up to 14 January, according to an official of the trade zone.

The trade zone set the target of US\$6 million, with US\$5 million from exports and US\$1 million from imports in this current fiscal year, which started on 1 April and ended on 31 March.

“We did not have high expectations for the trade volume due to the situation here,” said U Cho Htwe, In-charge of Maungtaw Trade Zone.

So far, the trade zone has seen more than US\$5 million from exports of agricultural products, more than US\$3 million from fishery products, more than

US\$500,000 from forest products and more than US\$400,000 from industrial products, according to trade zone statistics.

Myanmar’s main exports to Bangladesh are rice, ginger, silk, cotton, onions, fish, prawns, dried fish, bamboo, sugar cane and industrial goods.

Imports arriving through the Maungtaw Border Trade Zone from Bangladesh have ceased since the terrorist attacks of October 2016.

The trade zones between Myanmar and Bangladesh mostly rely on the swell and ebb of the river, and the Kanyin Chaung trade zone is being developed to pave the way for larger cargo vessels, according to officials.— Aung Ye Thwin, Ko Min ■

## Myanma Foreign Trade Bank (MFTB) expands financial services

THE Myanma Foreign Trade Bank (MFTB) provides international banking services for the State as well as for the private sector, co-operatives and joint ventures in Myanmar.

Besides international banking services, the MFTB offers additional monetary services for Myanmar currency banking sectors.

The MFTB conducts domestic and external trade, promoting the role of the private

sector and promoting foreign investments.

The MFTB is doing business in accordance with the Financial Institutions of Myanmar Law to conduct international banking and financial services, to provide external trade and non-trade foreign exchange operations in harmony with the market-oriented economy.

The MFTB contributes annual income tax to the state as

follows; In the 2014-2015 fiscal year, Ks5.42 billion together with Ks8.38 billion as a contribution to the state. In the 2015-2016 fiscal year Ks9.89 billion together with Ks18.54 billion as a contribution to the state. In the 2016-2017 fiscal year, Ks5.92 billion together with Ks9.48 billion as a contribution to the state, for a total over three of Ks57.65 billion, according to the MFTB. — Myanmar News Agency ■

## Repatriation of refugees to commence...

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According to the Physical Arrangement agreement, Myanmar will receive verified returnees at Taung Pyo Letwe reception centre for those who will be dispatched by land routes, and Nga Khu Ya reception centre for those who will be sent back by river routes.

Myanmar side will also use Hla Pho Kaung as transit camp for the returnees. Bangladesh will establish five transit camps. Myanmar will receive the returnees five days per week. Bangladesh will provide, in advance, the list of prospective returnees and duly filled verification forms to Myanmar side for smooth verification process, according to the agreement.

At the end of the meeting, Myanmar provided to Bangladesh detailed lists of 508 persons of Hindu faith and 750 persons of Muslim faith who

Both sides agreed that the repatriation process will commence on 23 January 2018.

have been verified as Myanmar residents and suggested the latter to include them in the first batch of repatriation.

Both sides agreed that the repatriation process will commence on 23 January.

The meeting also deliber-

ated on the current activities of ARSA terrorists. Myanmar had already provided a list of over 1,000 ARSA terrorists to Bangladesh at the BGP-BGB Central Meeting held in Nay Pyi Taw on 14 November 2017.

During the JWG meeting, Myanmar handed over the list to the Bangladesh delegation and requested that they be extradited in compliance with the Agreement on Border Arrangement and Cooperation (Border Ground Rules) signed in 1980. Myanmar also spoke of preventive measures to be taken in anticipation of possible attacks by ARSA terrorists during the course of the repatriation process. The crisis in Rakhine State erupted after Islamic terrorist attacks on security posts on 25 August. — GNLM ■

# Permanent Secretary of Foreign Affairs Ministry discusses repatriation efforts of displaced persons from Bangladesh

By News Team / MNA

THE first meeting of the Joint Working Group (JWG) for the repatriation of displaced Myanmar residents from Bangladesh was held on January 15 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw. An official of the group explained the status of the efforts undertaken for the repatriation of displaced Myanmar residents from Bangladesh.

## U Myint Thu, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Yesterday, we discussed the repatriation of the displaced Myanmar residents from Bangladesh with the Permanent Secretary of Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I want to explain this further. On November 23, 2017, a meeting at the level of the Minister of Foreign Affairs was held. Myanmar's side was led by Union Minister for the Ministry of State Counsellor's Office U Kyaw Tint Swe, and the Bangladesh side was led by its Minister of Foreign Affairs. During the meeting, a framework arrangement for the return of displaced persons from the Rakhine State was signed at the ministerial level. Based on this framework arrangement, a high-level meeting was conducted in Dhaka. I led the Myanmar delegation to the meeting, and the Bangladesh side was led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Secretary. The terms of reference (TOR) for the repatriation was signed at that meeting. The framework agreement signed on November 23, 2017, stated that the repatriation process will start within two months of the signing of the framework agreement.

A bilateral discussion on the physical arrangements for the repatriation process, which will begin on January 23, 2018, was held yesterday. The format of the verification form that will be used during the repatriation was also exchanged at the meeting, with the other side presenting their suggested format while we presented them with our suggested format. The (repatriation) process can be said to have started today, as the high-level officials signed the agreement this morning. At the meeting, we also provided them with a list of 508 Hindus

from the Myanmar who were displaced to Bangladesh, as well as a list of more than 700 persons who are known to be residing in the northern Rakhine State. We provided these lists so that their side can make the necessary preparations to start the repatriation as soon as possible. As we all know, the international media has severely criticised Myanmar for going slow with the repatriation work. We want to show them that this is not the case. We have already arranged to have two repatriation camps ready. People returning via the land route will be accepted at Taungpyawetwei camp, and those returning via water will be accepted at Ngakhuya camp. After the repatriated persons are checked, they will be temporarily held at Hla Pho Khaung camp, where they will be provided with all the necessary accommodations and support.

This is being arranged by the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development Rakhine in (UEHRD) and the Rakhine State government. At the same time, buildings are being constructed by UEHRD in the villages where the repatriated persons will finally be resettled. The construction work for the buildings started on January 7. The concerned officials from UEHRD also conducted periodic field visits to the Rakhine State to inspect the preparation efforts. On my part, I coordinate with the Bangladesh side as a responsible person from Myanmar in the JWG, so that the repatriation process can be carried out smoothly. The repatriation process will start on January 23, 2018. When this begins, the immigration and population department will assess the verification form sent by the other side. Once it is assessed, it will be returned, and the assessed persons will return via a transit camp. Officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from the other side, as well as officials from ministerial departments, have been assigned to repatriation camps since 15 and 16 (January) and are making the necessary preparations.

We also discussed the matter of Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) terrorists at yesterday's meeting. We heard that these terrorists



U Myint Thu, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

are attempting to disrupt the repatriation process. We also have photographic evidence of this. At the same time, this is a matter that can be handled only through bilateral cooperation, and we have again requested the extradition of these terrorists, in accordance with the 1980 Myanmar-Bangladesh Border Agreement. The Bangladesh Permanent Secretary has also confirmed that Bangladesh will do its bit, as part of the bilateral cooperation with Myanmar. We will accept the voluntary return of the displaced Myanmar residents. As this is a safe and voluntary return, the necessary security arrangements will also be made.

We have specified our requirements within the framework signed on November 23. Those applying for repatriation need to provide some sort of evidence of having resided in Myanmar. In the past, we had issued a white card. Later, the national verification cards (NVCs) were issued. Some family members hold these cards. We will consider anyone who has such evidence of residence. They will also be issued with supporting documents, such as Form 10. We will consider family lists for repatriation as well. Thirdly, there is the matter of split families, as well as those of children. If the Bangladesh court provides recommendations, they will be considered for repatria-

tion. Finally, there is the case of orphans. If orphans meet the set criteria, and if evidence is provided of their parents having lived in Myanmar, we will accept them. Assessments will be made based on the criteria of these categories.

We have formed two groups for this. At the JWG level, the Bangladesh Permanent Secretary and I are the chairmen. Technical working groups, with officials from the Rakhine State, General Administration Department, Immigration and Population Department and the Myanmar Police Force, will be formed at the two repatriation camps.

The assessment and repatriation will be done by the two technical working groups. If a meeting is required during the repatriation process, it will be done through the Flag Meeting mechanism that already exists between the two countries. We will also contact each other through communication channels such as telephones, as well as by holding meetings in the camps.

The United Nations, as well as other international organizations, has been exerting pressure on Myanmar over the people who fled to Bangladesh from Myanmar. Under the framework agreement, we will conduct the repatriation in three months. We have also signed TORs to conduct the physical repatriation. This morning too, we signed an

agreement on the physical arrangements for the repatriation. These are the positive things our country has done. We are providing proof that we are not slow in cooperating internationally. The successful conclusion of today's meeting is the result of bilateral cooperation.

We have not set a deadline for the repatriation. The repatriation camps will be open five days a week. Each camp will repatriate 150 persons per day. Thus, there will be 300 repatriated persons per day, totalling 1,500 per week, in the initial stage. We will continue the process according to the verification form sent by the other side and based on the results of the assessment conducted on it after actually receiving the repatriated persons.

These tasks will be done systematically by the Rakhine State government and UEHRD. We have already implemented the plans for the villages. Further, security will be provided by the Myanmar Police Force and Border Police Force.

Regarding the ARSA terrorists, a bilateral Border Guard Police level central committee meeting was held in Nay Pyi Taw. Our focal ministry, the Ministry of Home Affairs, has provided to the other side a list of more than 1,000 terrorists, inclusive of personal information and photographs. At today's meeting too, I spoke again about extraditing them and taking action according to the law. The other side is also not accepting these terrorists. They will cooperate and work with us. We will conduct coordinated patrols along the border. They will take the necessary action to ensure these terrorists cannot stay on their land. On our part, we will take action according to the law.

The Ministry of State Counsellor's Office will lead this programme. Occasionally, the diplomats will be given a briefing. Further, our Union Minister, Dr. Win Myat Aye, will provide information on some of the work completed by UEHRD. Yesterday's meeting was attended by officials from the Rakhine State government. We will work together with the officials from the concerned ministries, UEHRD and the Rakhine State government. ■

(Unofficial Translation)

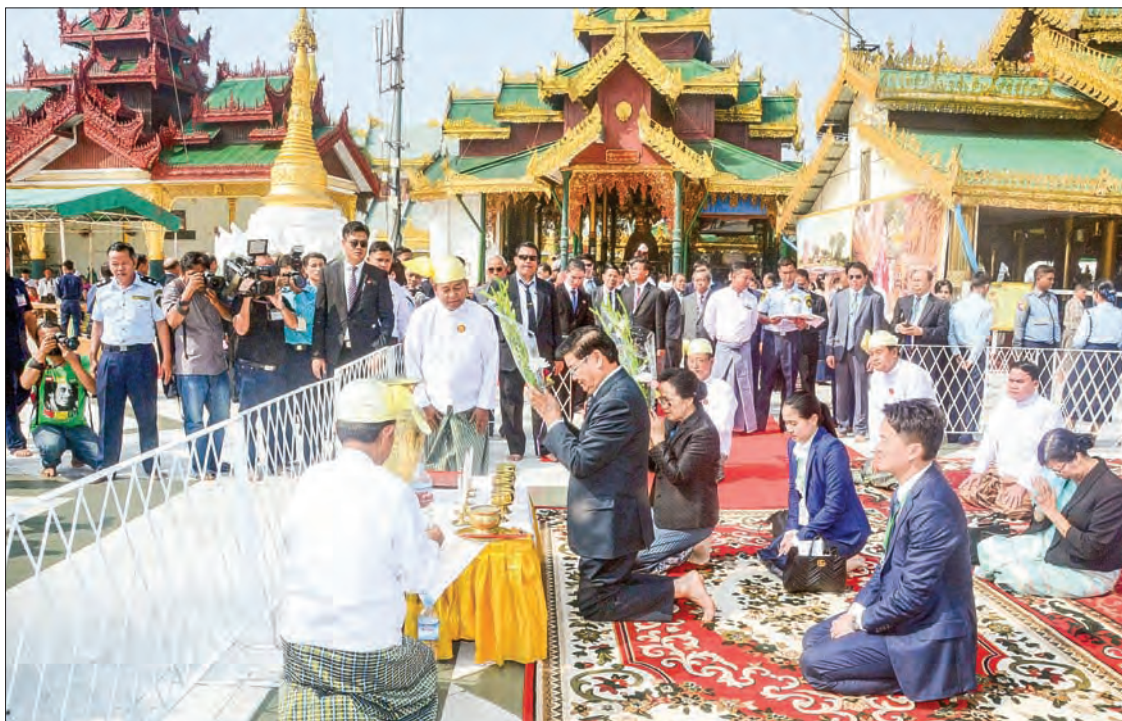
# Lao PM visits Shwedagon, Thilawa SEZ

AT the invitation of President U Htin Kyaw and his wife Daw Su Su Lwin, Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR) Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith and his wife Naly Sisoulith visited the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon yesterday morning.

The Laotian Prime Minister and his wife signed the guest book and offered flowers, water, candles, joss sticks and cash donations to the Shwedagon pagoda. They walked clockwise around the pagoda and viewed the religious pavilions in the pagoda.

In the afternoon, Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith and party attended a luncheon hosted by Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and Yangon ministers at the Sedona Hotel.

The Laotian Prime Minister and delegation then visited Thilawa Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Yangon. Vice President of Thilawa SEZ's



Lao Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith and his wife Naly Sisoulith pay homage at Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Management Committee and Minister of Electricity, Industry, Transport & Communication Daw Nilar Kyaw and Chairman of Thilawa SEZ Development

Ltd. U Aung Soe Tha greeted the Laotian Prime Minister and explained the Thilawa projects.

Director / Sales and Marketing Officer of Myanmar-Ja-

pan Thilawa Development Mr. Kazuaki Shirozono and officials explained to the Laotian Prime Minister and party how the Thilawa projects are gaining

momentum.

Zone A of Thilawa started on 1 December, 2013 and 100 hectares of Zone B was implemented on 24 February, 2017. There are investors from 17 countries among the 89 registered factories, 39 of which are being operated.

The visiting Prime Minister said that he will urge Laotian businessmen to invest in Myanmar and inspected the One-Stop Service Centre in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone.

The wife of the Laotian Prime Minister Naly Sisoulith also visited the renowned Bogyoke Aung San Market in the afternoon.

They were seen off at the airport by Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Deputy Minister for Commerce U Aung Htoo, the Laotian Ambassador to Myanmar and other officials. —Myanmar News Agency ■

## Lisu traditional New Year festival and 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Putao Lisu Literature and Cultural Committee

THE Lisu traditional New Year festival and the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Putao Lisu Literature and Cultural Committee was held in Kachin State, Putao Town, Lisu traditional field yesterday morning. The event was opened by Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs Nai Thet Lwin and was attended by ethnic affairs ministers from states and regions, Hluttaw representatives and ethnic Lisu nationals.

Lisu artistes entertained with a Peace Song and the minister for Lisu Ethnic Affairs and Kachin State cultural troupes

presented Union Minister Nai Thet Lwin with a Lisu traditional headdress, cloth and crossbow.

Next, in his address to the event, the Union Minister told of being proud and happy for Lisu ethnic nationals on holding the Lisu traditional (Khawshi) New Year festival and the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Putao Lisu Literature and Cultural Committee.

"The Ministry of Ethnic Affairs was formed by the union in order to protect the rights of ethnic nationals and to develop the social economic situation of the ethnic nationals. To

date, six director offices of the ministry were opened in states and regions and works had commenced. Some of the regions where ethnic nationals live are in far-off areas and the development of education, health and economy in those areas depends mainly on peace, and thus there is a need to put an emphasis on achieving peace. The union is striving toward the establishment of a democracy federal union, and ethnic Lisu nationals are urged to participate in this", the Union Minister said. — Myanmar News Agency ■



Union Minister Nai Thet Lwin delivered the speech at the Lisu traditional New Year Festival in Putao. **PHOTO: MNA**



## Names of more than 1,300 ARSA terrorists sent to Bangladesh

ACCORDING to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a list containing names of more than 1,300 Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) terrorists members had been sent to Bangladesh. It was done at the 4<sup>th</sup> Myanmar-Bangladesh Central-Level Meeting on Border Security and Law Enforcement Cooperation held in Nay Pyi Taw on 14

November 2017, it is learnt.

In addition, it is learnt from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that Bangladesh was also informed to extradite the ARSA extremist terrorists according to the 1980 Myanmar-Bangladesh Border Agreement so that action can be taken against them according to the law. — Myanmar News Agency ■

## U Myo Nyunt, the Chairperson of the Constitutional Tribunal, receives the Ambassador of Singapore in Nay Pyi Taw

H.E. U Myo Nyunt, the Chairperson of the Constitutional Tribunal, received Singapore's Ambassador to Myanmar H.E. Ms. Vanessa Chan Yuen Ying at the Meeting Room of the Constitutional Tribunal, yesterday 10:30 a.m.

In that meeting, duties and functions of the Constitu-

tional Tribunal, the activities of the Constitutional Tribunal and providing support for the Constitutional Tribunal were discussed. Members of the Constitutional Tribunal Daw Hla Myo Nwe, U Kyaw San and Director General attended the meeting. —Myanmar News Agency ■