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Daw Aung San Suu Kyi arrives at the airport in New Delhi to attend the 25th ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit. **PHOTO: MNA**

State Counsellor in India

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi arrived in New Delhi yesterday to attend the 25th Anniversary of the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit. **Photo: MNA (Article on Page-3)**



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Union ministers, advisors witness repatriation readiness

A DELEGATION comprised of Union ministers and members of the Advisory Board for the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State visited repatriation camps in Rakhine State yesterday.

Together with journal-

ists from independent media organisations, the delegation toured the camps in Hla Phoe Khaung, Nga Khu Ya and Taung Pyo Letwe.

The delegation consisted of Union Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw

Tint Swe, Union Minister for the Office of the Union Government U Thaung Tun, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye, and members of the Advisory Board. The independent media group included journalists

from TV Asahi, Nikkei, Kyodo, Asahi Shimbun, Fuji TV, NHK, Nippon TV, Yunnan TV, Xinhua and ZVE TV.

The delegation was met at Sittway Airport by Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu.

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.... there will be additional housing and roads built: Maungtaw District Deputy Commissioner



'BANK OF THE YEAR IN MYANMAR 2017'

Awarded by Financial Times (The Banker)

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approves 5 million euro loan from Austria

PYIDAUNGSU Hluttaw has approved a 5 million euro soft loan and grant package from Austria to fund public projects.

The loan was approved yesterday following a discussion among seven lawmakers.

"The loan is aimed at promoting bilateral friendship, assisting in projects which will directly benefit the people, buying materials which will be used for the projects at reasonable prices, and attracting investment from Austria," said Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win.

The loan, provided by Austria's Unicredit Bank, extends 25 years, with 15 per cent of the loan being a grant and 85 per cent to be reimbursed with no interest, according to lawmakers.

According to those involved



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is being convened in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

in the discussions last week, the loan will be used to build the King Chaung bridge in Yanbye, Kyaukpyu District, in Rakhine

State.

The bridge will provide direct access between Kyaukpyu and Yanbye townships and will

link up with the Yangon-Kyaukpyu Road.

The bridge will be helpful in attracting foreign investment

to Rakhine and will also benefit the socio economic development and job opportunities for the local population, said lawmakers.

The Ministry of Construction is to use the allocated funds to purchase steel for the bridge, which will be 1256 ft long and have a capacity to carry up to 75 tonnes. The bridge, which is already under construction on the Yangon-Kyaukpyu Road, is targeted to completed in more than two years. During the meeting yesterday, lawmakers also discussed a proposal urging the Union Government to sign an agreement to establish an Animal-Human infectious disease centre in ASEAN countries.

Following discussion by several lawmakers, the proposal was approved by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.—Mi Mi Phyto (Myanmar News Agency) ■

Union Minister for Information attends 27th anniversary of IPRD

THE 27th anniversary of the Information and Public Relations Department was commemorated at the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Attending the ceremony were Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint and Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun.

The Union Minister gave a speech to the civil service employees in attendance on the importance of working hard during challenges in one's career. He also said everyone should adapt to the changing technology.

The Union Minister highlighted some of the processes and workings of the IPRD such as converting their offices to community centres, facilitating children's literary festivals, co-ordinating public talks, curating museums for traditional ethnic handiworks and history, and facilitating literary festivals for ethnic literature in Hpa-an, Kayin State and Taunggyi, Shan State.

Next, the Union Minister awarded the first, second and third prizes to outstanding individuals from district-level community centers.

Afterwards, Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun awarded first, second and third prizes to outstanding individuals from township-level community centers.



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint presents prize to outstanding staff from district-level community center in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

He also handed out awards for other achievements from State and Regional Governments.

The Director General of the IPRD U Ye Naing handed out awards for outstanding students and literary works from their staff members. This was followed by a screening of a documentary video on the community centres.

Later in the afternoon, the Union Minister met with officials

from the IPRD and State, Regional and District authorities to give further instructions on facilitating community centres, handling public libraries and children's reading corners, facilitating literary seminars, book clubs and book reviews, holding public talks and encouraging the reading and writing of more ethnic literature.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Deputy Attorney-General receives Executive Director of European Chamber of Commerce in Myanmar

DEPUTY Attorney-General U Win Myint received a delegation led by Mr Filip Lauwersen, Executive Director of the European Chamber of Commerce in Myanmar, at the Union Attorney-General's Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

During the meeting, the role of the Union Attorney-General's Office in the law-making process, the legal framework being developed for the economic sector, the importance of maintaining law and order

in investments and economic development, the importance of the Myanmar Companies Act in accepting investments from European companies, Myanmar Investment Law and the Contract Law were discussed.

Directors-General Daw Khin Cho Ohn and U Min Swe and Director Dr Kyi Kyi Than Aung from the Union Attorney-General's Office attended the meeting.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Myanmar-Japan joint workshop on natural disaster management held

U Kyaw Myint Hlaing, Director-General of the Irrigation and Water Utilisation Management Department, attended a workshop on natural disaster management, held in the meeting hall of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, in Nay Pyi Taw, on 23 January morning. The workshop was jointly organized by the Minis-

try of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Japan.

At the workshop, they discussed and exchanged views on the process of conservation of the dams and the environment, environmental management and technical assistance.—Myanmar News Agency ■

State Counsellor arrives India to attend 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit

AT the invitation of His Excellency Shri. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi left Nay Pyi Taw on 24 January 2018 to attend the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit and the celebration of 69th Republic Day of India.

During the trip, the State Counsellor will attend the Retreat and Plenary Session of the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit on 25 January 2018 and the celebration of 69th Republic Day of India on 26 January 2018 respectively together with other ASEAN Heads of State and Government.

The State Counsellor was accompanied by U Kyaw Tin,

Union Minister for the Ministry of International Cooperation and the Myanmar Delegation was seen off at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport by the Heads of responsible Departments.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was welcomed at the Palam Airbase in New Delhi by Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Mrs. Anupriya Patel, Joint Secretary BM Division Ministry of External Affairs Mrs. Sri Priya Ranganathan, Ambassador of India to Myanmar Mr. Vikram Misri, Ambassador of Myanmar to India U Moe Kyaw Aung and wife, Military Attaché Brig-Gen Thein Zaw and officials.

The delegation proceeded to Hotel ITC Maurya where they will stay during the trip.—Myanmar News Agency ■



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi seen off by the Heads of responsible Departments at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

The day that we can commence repatriation is 23 January. We therefore made preparations and we are now ready: Dr. Win Myat Aye

Interview with Dr. Win Myat Aye over repatriation of returnees

ON 24 January 2018, a group comprising members of the Advisory Board of the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine, Secretariat staff, and members of local and foreign media went to inspect reception centers for receiving displaced persons who left the Maungdaw region of Rakhine State. These centers are Taungpyo Lat Wae reception center, Nga Khu Ya reception center and Hla Phoe Khaung transit center. They inspected the readiness of the centers fully manned with all the requisite government service personnel.

An interview was conducted with Dr. Win Myat Aye, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement regarding the arrangements already made by the Union Government for the repatriation process.

Q: Please tell us about the repatriation process for returnees.

A: I will now tell you about the repatriation process of returnees from Bangladesh. To do this we need an agreement between our two governments. We have already signed such an agreement. This agreement is for the repatriation of returnees

who left our country. On the 15 of this month we have already held a meeting of the Joint Working Group. We now have an agreement as a result of the meeting. On the 16th of this month we gave a list to the Bangladesh side of returnees we can accept for repatriation. 750 muslims and 508 Hindus. According to the agreement which has been signed with Bangladesh, we can accept repatriation within two months from the date of signature. The day that we can commence repatriation is 23 January. According to our agreement with Bangladesh, we need to be ready to begin the repatriation on that date. We therefore made preparations and we are now ready.

“We have already checked and verified this list so it is easy for us. So they have to send us a list of people who wish to return.”



Dr. Win Myat Aye speaks during the interview. **PHOTO: MNA**

Also in the agreement, when they send the people to our side, there are two methods. One method is to select the people who wish to return. That is we have to make a list of such people. When they make this list, they have to fill in forms. We have already sent these forms to Bangladesh. After they have filled in these forms, they will send these forms to Myanmar. Then we have to check these forms. We have to see if these people have lived in Myanmar or not. Also to see if terrorists are included in the list or not. After making the verifications we send

back the list to Bangladesh. After the Bangladesh side has received this verified list they can send these returnees in groups. At the moment there are two reception centers. This is also mentioned in the agreement. They are Taung Pyo Let Wae by land and Nga Khu Ya by sea. At these places, we can receive 150 returnees at one place and 300 per day in two places, 5 days per week. That is 1500 in total per week. Right now we have sent a list for 750 and 508. From this list the Bangladesh side will compile a list of people who wish to return. We have already

checked and verified this list so it is easy for us. So they have to send us a list of people who wish to return. Thus we can begin the repatriation for the first batch. On 23 January our side was ready. But no one returned. Those who were supposed to return never came. We did not receive any lists. There are many possibilities. This is how this process has to be carried step by step. Those who wish to return have to fill up forms. And this has to be voluntary repatriation. Do these people really wish to come back. It also depends on this. They have to fill in all the forms. The procedures have many steps. For them to send back these people, I wonder if the delays have been caused by these many steps. As of today we have not seen any. No lists, no people.

As far as we are concerned, we are ready. Why did we have to have everything ready. It is because according to the agreement, it is said that the repatriation process can begin from this date. So if they send the returnees on this date, we cannot refuse. We have a duty to honor this date. Our country is the receiving country.

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Union ministers, advisors witness readiness for repatriation

FROM PAGE-1

The group led by U Thaung Tun travelled to Hla Phoe Khaung camp in Maungtaw Township, a temporary home of IDPs. Maungtaw District Deputy Commissioner U Ye Htut explained future plans for the camp and said there will be additional housing and roads built. He also explained future plans for food, water, electricity and healthcare for the camp.

The group toured the camp and the Union Minister talked with several Islamic villagers from nearby villages and asked them about their current state of affairs.

Hla Phoe Khaung camp sits on a 124.84 acre plot and contains 640 housing units for over 30,000 people. There are also over 500 reserve tents in case of emergencies.

The group then travelled to Kanyin Chaung Economic Zone, where they were briefed by the Chairman of the Association for Border Trade and Merchants U Aung Myint Than on the history and current status of the economic zone. Afterwards, the Union Minister and entourage met with local residents and visited the economic zone.

The group then travelled to Nga Khu Ya, a temporary centre for repatriation. There, they inspected the inspection process for repatriation and the process for issuing NVC cards. The group also inspected the sites for construction of temporary clinics, buildings for the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department for Health, the Department for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, the Department for Labour and Immigration, and other offices of the Rakhine State Government.

Later, the Union Minister and entourage travelled to Kyaukpyu from Sittway by air. There, they visited the Onshore Gas Terminal from Posco Daewoo, where officials explained the nature of the work and the ongoing processes.

In the evening, the Union Ministers and entourage travelled to Thandwe.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Nga Khu Ya Camp is ready to accommodate returnees from Bangladesh as from 23 January, 2018. **PHOTO: MNA**



Hla Phoe Khaung Camp contains 640 housing units for accommodation of more than 30,000 returnees from Bangladesh. **PHOTO: MNA**

“We are ready to accept the first batch of returnees today as agreed, because under the agreement with Bangladesh, we must start the repatriation within two months and today is the day we slated to launch the repatriation,” said Dr. Win Myat Aye, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement.



Union ministers and chairman and members of Advisory Board for the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State visit Taung Pyo Latwe Camp. **PHOTO: MNA**



Union Ministers and Advisory Board for the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations visit Onshore Gas Terminal from Posco Daewoo in Kyaukpyu. **PHOTO: MNA**



Chairman and members of Advisory Board for the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State visit Nga Khu Ya Camp. **PHOTO: MNA**



Union Ministers and Advisory Board for Committee for Implementation of Recommendations visit onshore Gas Terminal of Posco Daewoo. **PHOTO: MNA**



Union Ministers and chairman and members of Advisory Board for the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State stroll on the friendship bridge at the border with Bangladesh. **PHOTO: MNA**

Our two countries have to act in accordance with the agreement. Now on 23 January, we are ready:
Dr. Win Myat Aye, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement.

Interview with Dr. Win Myat Aye over repatriation of returnees

FROM PAGE-3

Those who have lived in our country legally went over to the other side. It is the duty of this Union Government to receive them. Our Union Government cannot act unilaterally. Our two countries have to act in accordance with the agreement. Now on 23 January, we are ready. But I have explained earlier the reason they did not return. There can be many reasons. We do not wish to say anything about this. But it is certain that from our side we are ready.

The Advisory Board for the Committee for implementation of the recommendations for Rakhine has arrived. I am the Chairman of the Committee for implementation of the recommendations for Rakhine. In the advisory board there are five international professionals and five local professionals. Coincidentally this advisory board arrived on the 23rd January, the day the repatriation process was supposed to begin. So they decided to come here and that is why they are here today. So they have seen with their own eyes. They saw that our repatriation centers are ready. The transit center which is to serve as a holding place was also ready. They will not be kept here for a long time. Only for a short while. If you ask me how long, we have to build houses for the Muslims. Their houses had burnt down.

So they will have to stay in the transit center until the houses have been built. They will leave the transit center as soon as the houses have been built. If they

ask me how long they will have to stay in the transit center, that is my answer. They will have to stay in the transit center only while the houses are being built. They will move to the houses as soon as the houses are ready. They will have to stay in the transit center only while the houses are not yet ready. I don't think it's going to be long, only a few months. Why? We want to get this done before the monsoon arrives. We want the construction work done. That is why the first group of returnees will be repatriated quickly. This is how we will receive returnees. We can receive 300 per day. We can receive about 1500 per week. This is how we have made full preparations.

Q: Since they have to live in the transit center till the houses are built, I want to know what arrangements have been made by the Myanmar side for their food, lodging and health.

A: We call this "Physical Arrangement". In cases where we receive returnees, first they are received at the reception center, and then they are moved to the transit center. We have made detailed arrangements for each of the stages.

Q: Please let me know about arrangements for livelihood and health care for the returnees from Bangladesh.

A: Under our Physical Arrangement, we will verify the returnees at the gate here first. If it is found that returnees had lived in Myanmar according to our documents and list, they will stay this



Union ministers and chairman and members of Advisory Board for the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State visit Taung Pyo Latwe Camp. **PHOTO: MNA**



Union ministers and chairman and members of Advisory Board for the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State visit Nga Khu Ya Camp. **PHOTO: MNA**

We are ready for repatriation. So, we just need to wait for day they will send the list of returnees to us.

Q: In your capacity as the Chairman of the Committee for Implementing the Recommendations on Rakhine State, please say something for the repatriation.

A: Since our government took office, we have been striving and giving priority for harmony between the two communities. We must find the root cause of the conflict and must settle it. When we do it, we have considered recommendations of Mr. Kofi Annan and findings of the investigation commission led by Vice President U Myint Swe. Now, we are implementing the recommendations. The first priority is national verification in accordance with the 1982 citizenship Act. We have to take steps for scrutinizing the displaced people. They would get freedom of movement and would gain access to education and health care services and would get job opportunities in accordance with the status granted after the scrutinization. If they are okay, no more conflicts will happen again here. That's why, we are implementing the recommendations giving priority to this step. —Myanmar News Agency

camp for just one night, and they will be transported to Hla Phoe Khaung transit camp where they will be accommodated and will be supplied with food and provided with health care services. Staff from departments concerned are ready here to perform their duties.

Staff from Ministry of Health and Sports, from Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Immigration Department and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Because, in case we find wrong doings, we need to contact with Bangladeshi officials to solve these issues.

Q: Bangladesh is not ready for repatriation of returnees though the two countries agreed to begin the repatriation on 23 January. So, please let us know how the two govern-

ments will jointly carry out the repatriation process.

A: We are ready to begin the repatriation as from 23 January. But, they sent the list of displaced people who want to return and we scrutinized the list and sent it back to them. The returnees need to fill forms in Bangladesh. They need to take some time to complete the process.

I think that the reason why they were not ready to begin the repatriation is due to delays for repatriation process on their part. We sent the list of first batch of returnees on 16 January after the two countries agreed. I think that If they take two weeks for the repatriation process, they might not be ready for the repatriation. We are ready for repatriation. So, we just need to wait for day they will send the list of returnees to us.



Union ministers and chairman and members of Advisory Board for Committee for Implementation of Recommendations on Rakhine State met with local people in Kanyin Chaung Economic Zone. **PHOTO: MNA**

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs receives Chinese delegation

PYIDAUNGSSU Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Chairman Thura U Shwe Mann received Ms Qu Boqian, Vice President of the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs (CPIFA) and party, at the building of Hluttaw affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During their meeting, they exchanged views on matters of their bilateral relationship and cooperation, China's experiences in developing its country, as well as international relationships.

Also present at the meeting were Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Hong Liang, former Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Guan Mu, School of International Studies of Peking University's Prof Zhai Kun, and officials from the PRC, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission's Secretary U Khin Maung Tun, commission members U Ko Ko Naing and U San Shwe Aung, and officials from the commission.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Chairman Thura U Shwe Mann, right, receives Ms. Qu Boqian, Vice President of the CPIFA in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Deputy Information Minister calls on international media to help ensure smooth transition to democracy



Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun, fourth from right, with officials and media in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

AT his meeting with the top-level officials of some U.S. based media at the Ministry of Information yesterday morning, the Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun called on the international media to keep supporting Myanmar to ensure its smooth transition to democracy.

U Aung Hla Tun received Ms. Libby Liu, President of Radio Free Asia; Mr. Matthew Schuck, White House Liaison and Special Communication Advisor to the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG); Ms. Oanh Tran, Managing Director of the BBG and U Than Lwin Tun, Head of Washington-based Voice of America (Myanmar) and U Win Naing, chief of RFA

Yangon Bureau at the Ministry yesterday morning.

He expressed sincere thanks to the international media for the important role they had played in the nation's struggles for the emergence of democracy and human rights.

"We couldn't have reached present position without the support of the international media. Now, we're already on the right track to democracy. Our top priority at present is to make sure that we keep moving towards the right direction."

He said that Myanmar's transition to democracy was full of challenges.

"We shouldn't let anything disrupt our smooth transition to democracy so I'd like to re-

quest all the international media through you to understand our position and refrain from sensationalizing and setting agendas in carrying out Myanmar narrative," he added.

He then explained the plans for further reforms of the media to be in harmony with democratic transition and on-going plans to send media teams to Rakhine State. The two sides also discussed the possibility of promoting bilateral cooperation in producing programmes and training staff from the State-owned Myanmar Radio and Television.

Responsible heads of departments were present at the meeting.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Sitagu Asia Royal eye specialist team provides eye treatment in Maungtaw, Rakhine State

THE Sitagu Asia Royal eye specialist team visited Maungtaw People's Hospital in Rakhine State yesterday morning.

The eye specialist doctors provided medical treatment to patients in the region, some of whom had never received ophthalmic care previously.

"From 23 to 26, January 2018, we have provided special treatments to eye patients free of charge in Maungtaw region", said Asia Royal Managing Director Dr. Myat Thu. "The team brings necessary equipment to the eye patients who are in need of treatment of their diseases. Prior to the surgeries, testing for cataracts, blood pressure, diabetes, infectious diseases and other diagnostic measures were done," Dr. Myat Thu said. He added that patients who want to undergo eye treatment, have to register at the counter. "We have already performed operations on over 500 patients so far. We will see about 1,100

patients in the first two days", he said. "Of the 1,100 patients seen so far, about 10 to 20 per cent of them will be found to need eye treatment and surgery. There are six eye specialists in our team, and I think about 100 patients are going to undergo surgery tomorrow". "In 2002, Venerable Sitagu Sayadaw said he wanted to start giving medical treatment in Natnauk, Magway Region, and Panthanaw, Ayeyawady Region, the birthplaces of General Aung San and former UN Secretary General U Thant, respectively. Accordingly, we performed it, and our mission is gaining momentum. Medical treatments are being conducted in 32 townships in 14 regions and states.

We have been giving medical treatment to the eye patients for over 10 years, and we have cured 100,000 patients who regained their eyesight."—Aung Ye Thwin ■



Eye specialist doctor gives medical treatment to patients in Maungtaw, Rakhine State yesterday. **PHOTO: AUNG MIN**

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