

Press Release on Conclusion of the Official Visit of the State Counsellor to the Commonwealth of Australia and her attendance to the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit

Myanmar delegation led by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has attended the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit held in Sydney on 17 - 18 March 2018 and paid an official visit to the Commonwealth of Australia on 19-20 March at the invitation of the Hon Malcolm Turnbull, Prime Minister of Australia.

The State Counsellor, together with other ASEAN leaders, attended the related events of ASEAN-Australia Special Summit, ASEAN-Australia Special Summit's Plenary Meeting and Leaders' Retreat held from 17 to 18 March 2018.

The State Counsellor apprised the meetings on the complexities of Myanmar's democratic transition, peace and national reconciliation as well as challenges including the situation in Rakhine State, and stressed the need to help Myanmar to help itself in resolving these challenges, especially in strengthening human resource development.

The State Counsellor also emphasized that with a view to facilitate ASEAN integration, it is important not only to narrow the development gap among member States, but also to bridge the gap in their

perceptions on the challenges. She also stressed the need for peace makers to be first at peace with themselves and to cope with the emotion of hate, anger and fear and urged that in countering terrorism, member States need to address those negative emotions which create divisions between different communities. She also highlighted the need to maintain ASEAN's unity, consensus approach and mutual respect among member States.

During the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit, an MOU on Cooperation to Counter International Terrorism was signed between ASEAN and Australia, as well as a Sydney Declaration was adopted outlining to promote cooperation between ASEAN and Australia under 3 pillars such as Regional Security, Future Prosperity and People.

In the evening of 18 March, State Counsellor and Party left Sydney to Canberra by air to pay an official visit to Australia at the invitation of the Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, Prime Minister of Australia.

On 19 March, State Counsellor attended the welcoming Ceremony by the Hon Malcolm Turnbull, Prime Minister of Australia and held

the bilateral talks with Prime Minister the Hon Malcolm Turnbull. During the meeting, the two sides discussed in further promoting bilateral relations, trade and investment, and the continued provision of assistance to Myanmar in capacity building projects including in education sector and in resolving the situation in Rakhine State. State Counsellor also received Mr. Bill Shorten, Leader of the Australian Labour Party, and planted a tree at the National Arboretum in commemoration of her official visit to Australia. In the afternoon, State Counsellor met with Myanmar Community in Australia at Albert Hall.

The State Counsellor successfully attended all major official functions during the official visit. Some of the scheduled appointments, however, have to be cancelled as it is necessary for the State Counsellor to take rest for her return trip to Myanmar as she suffered acutely from motion sickness due to long air journey and boat trip.

The State Counsellor and Party arrived back to Nay Pyi Taw by air in the evening of 20 March 2018.—Ministry of Foreign Affairs ■

VP U Henry Van Thio attends Myanmar Rubber Forum 2018

VICE President U Henry Van Thio attended the Myanmar Rubber Forum 2018 held by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation at Hotel Max in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the opening ceremony, the Vice President delivered a speech elaborating the aim of the rubber forum.

The government and the private sector must cooperate to develop the rubber sector and work together with foreign businesses, as well, he said. A strategic plan must be in place to produce natural rubber and develop the midstream (logistics) and downstream (distribution and selling) sectors of the rubber industry, as well as encourage more research on natural rubber, he stated.

The rubber industry is rated second among the most important industries in the world after the iron and steel industry, he noted. Rubber products are essential components in the production process at factories, especially in the production of automobile tyres. Rubber plants are top-buyer raw materials for factories in Myanmar and a commodity that generates high income through exports, he said.

The Vice President said the government was supporting the development of the rubber indus-



Vice President U Henry Van Thio delivers the speech at the Myanmar Rubber Forum 2018 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

try to increase production and exports. Associations concerned with the rubber industry should be strengthened and collaboration with farmers and experts increased to further develop the rubber industry, he stated. The quality and production rate of Myanmar's rubber industry is low compared with other producers such as Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and Viet Nam. Therefore, Myanmar rubber does not fetch a good price in the international market. To remedy this situation, stakeholders must increase their capacity building, adopt effective technologies from other countries and share research materials and areas of

expertise. He said the government would help develop the rubber industry to create more job opportunities and prevent local talent and workforce from migrating to foreign job markets. The forum will be a platform for all stakeholders to discuss and find solutions to problems and areas of development in the industry, he noted.

Dr. Aung Thu said the development efforts would be focused on increasing the per acre production in plantations, improve the quality of rubber to meet international standards, and produce more end-products and furniture from rubber tree wood.

Following this, the participants viewed a video on the history of Myanmar's rubber industry. Next, Dr. Yu Sein, Chairperson of Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association (MRPPA), gave a presentation on the differences between natural rubber and rubber from plantations in the Taninthayi region, as well as the difficulties and shortcomings of the industry.

Next, World Wildlife Foundation-Myanmar Country Director Dr. A. Christy Williams talked about sustainable rubber plantations, followed by Centre for Economic and Social Development Executive Director Dr. Zaw Oo providing an explanation on

Myanmar's rubber value.

After the opening ceremony, VP U Henry Van Thio took a commemorative photograph with the participants, before viewing the exhibits of rubber products and furniture displayed by the rubber companies at the hotel.

The second part of the forum continued in the afternoon, where the participants discussed developing the production of natural rubber, forming a lasting network to work on the development continuously, intensifying the research on rubber, as well as the workings and accomplishments of MRPPA, the rubber market in Mon State, training of skilled workers, establishment of a rubber plantation zone, and the development of the rubber sector in the Ayeyawady region.

Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr. Aung Thu, Union Minister for Commerce Dr. Than Myint, chairpersons of the Hluttaw committees, the Hluttaw representatives, state and regional ministers, departmental heads, representatives from the MRPPA, businesspersons, local and foreign experts, and other officials attended the forum.

The Myanmar Rubber Forum 2018 will continue today at Hotel Max.—Myanmar News Agency ■

MRF urges government to reopen old ports to reduce transaction costs

THE Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) has requested the government to reopen old ports, in a bid to reduce transaction costs, as high charges at Yangon International Port are forcing international traders to move to other countries, according to a recent report in the Myanmar Alinn.

“The port charges are high, and we need immediate action to compete with other countries in a highly competitive market,” said U Ye Min Aung, general secretary of MRF.

The MRF has submitted the request to reopen the Mawlamyine, Patheingyi, Sittway and Dawei ports, which were trading hubs during the colonial-era. Currently, the general port charges have increased by some US\$30, compared with India, Thailand, Viet Nam and Pakistan, forcing international buyers to move to foreign markets.

From April 2017 to early February 2018, some 3 million tonnes of rice and broken rice, worth \$948 million, were exported to foreign trade partners. Also, 4 million tonnes of rice are expected to be shipped by 2020. Therefore, the MRF wants more



Sittway port in Rakhine State. PHOTO: MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

sea ports and waterways to be developed.

To reuse old ports, preparedness is needed to improve the waterways, port facilities and the export/import process, U Win Khant, Permanent Secretary of the Transportation and Communications Ministry, told Myanmar Alinn.

Earlier, Myanmar's rice was exported to 40 countries. The rice export market has now penetrated some 62 countries, including China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Belgium and Poland.

Last month, the export price of rice was between \$356 to \$430 per tonne, depending on its quality. Some rice varieties bring in more profits through

the sea trade, while others fetch a higher price through the border trade, according to rice merchants.

The main challenges in the rice industry are the availability of pedigree seeds, high input costs, high production costs, the lack of technology, high transaction costs and logistics problems, said U Mann Kyaw Win, Deputy Chairman of MRF.

Rice is integral to Myanmar's agricultural products. Some 75 per cent of the production is used for domestic consumption, while the remaining is exported. Last fiscal year, some 1.7 million tonnes of rice and broken rice, worth \$554 million, were exported.—Phyo Lwin Aung (AMIA) ■

Myanmar, Japan promote cooperation in SME development

A Myanmar-Japan SME Seminar and Business Exchange session was held at the office of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) last Monday to promote cooperation in the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

At the session, Japanese businessmen shared their experiences and best practices for SME development.

Technology and financial assistance is needed for SME development. Japan will contribute through development aid to enhance the SME sector, said Noriyuki Yonemura,

chairman of Japan-Myanmar Economic and Investment Centre (JMEIC).

The development of SMEs is hampered by illegal trade. For this, human resources development activities and entrepreneurs must be encouraged, said U Saw Dino Ku from Ayeyawady Farmers Development Bank.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency has provided a two-step loan facility across the country to facilitate the SME businesses.

SMEs are critical to Japan's economy. It is important to create a business environment, which has a high score in the

ease of doing business index.

Japanese businessmen working in the plastic, agriculture, water pipeline and related accessories, auto parts and construction materials, and interiors decoration businesses, as well as wire networks and event arrangement services, human resource development schools and financial corporations participated in the business exchange session.

Some 27 Japanese businessmen and more than a hundred Myanmar businessmen, officials from the industry ministry and the UMFCCI attended the SME Seminar and Business Exchange.—GNLM ■

YSX to hold educational talk, panel discussion

By May Thet Hnin

THE Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) will celebrate its second anniversary on 25 March at the YSX office, during which it will hold an educational talk and a panel discussion.

At the ceremony, the Planning and Finance Deputy Minister, Myanmar Loan Implementation Sub-committee Chairman U Maung Maung Win and YSX Managing Director U Yin Myo Zaw will deliver the opening speeches.

Author and financial advisor U Kyaw Myo Tun will give an educational talk on the topic “Capital Market Development in Frontier Economies and Equity Investment”, while the YSX's listed company officials will mod-

erate the panel discussion on the topic “Future Outline of Listed Companies”, said U Thet Htun Oo, executive senior manager of YSX.

Moreover, the securities company will open the securities account between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. for those who want to invest in stock and share trading for the first time. Discussions will also be held on the stock-share trading issue.

Those interested in attending the ceremony have to register by calling the following numbers: 01-371274, 07-371276 and 09442739797.

Currently, there are more than 100,000 shareholders, but only 33,000 are listed. Only 300 to 500 participate in trading each day, said U Thet Htun Oo. ■

Thilawa SEZ attracts \$20 million more than last year

FOREIGN investments worth some US\$400 million flowed into the Thilawa Special Economic Zone prior to the end of this fiscal year, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.

This figure is up by \$20 million compared with last year. Japan, Singapore, Thailand, South Korea, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands were the largest investors.

The manufacturing sector absorbed most of the foreign

direct investments (FDI), accounting for 73 per cent of the total FDI in the zone. Capital was also injected into the trading, logistics, service, real estate and hotel sectors. Japan invested the highest in Thilawa SEZ, followed by Thailand.

Of the 2,400 hectares of land allotted to Thilawa SEZ, 400 hectares have been demarcated for Zone A. The construction work in Zone A has been completed and construction in Zone B on 101 hectares has begun.—Ko Htet ■

Lobsters bring good price due to low supply in Rakhine

THE scarcity of lobsters in Rakhine State has set prices soaring, according to a report in the Myawady Daily.

The scarcity of lobsters is attributed to unsystematic and illegal fishing methods, and the decreasing number of fishermen. Fishermen use boats and vessels to catch lobsters, while others dive to reefs. Moreover, the fishing period set by the government coincides with the hatching time, noted U Khin Aye Maung from the Kyaukpyu Lobster Businessmen Association.

The fishing period is from

June to September, while the hatching period for lobsters and prawns is at about the same time of year.

Earlier, the price of lobsters soared to Ks73,000 per viss. The prevailing price of lobsters remains steady at Ks63,000 per viss. More than 100,000 viss of lobsters were previously supplied to Yangon, while Rakhine fishermen currently supply only 50,000 viss, said a lobster businessmen.

Agriculture and fishery enterprises are the main businesses in Rakhine State.—GNLM ■

People should be aware of heat and UV risks

MARCH, April and May are the hottest months in Myanmar. During this time, the country experiences a high ultraviolet (UV) index and unfavourable weather conditions for a period of three months until the rainy season, which begins in mid-June.

UV indexes between 10 and 11 can be harmful and pose several health risks. A UV Index reading between 8 to 10 means very high risk of harm from unprotected sun exposure. Take extra precautions because unprotected skin and eyes will be damaged and can burn quickly. Experts suggest liberal use of sunscreen, sunglasses and protective clothing

People should also avoid direct sunlight between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., by seeking shade and wearing headwear and long-sleeved clothes at all times.

While a UV index reading between 0-2 poses little danger from the sun's UV rays, an index between 6-7 poses considerate health risks, with severe damage to the eyes and skin if unprotected. Any measurements above 11 mean extreme risk of harm from unprotected sun exposure, with skin and eyes burning within minutes.

People are urged to follow instructions of the Health Department to protect themselves against UV rays.

Another potentially harmful weather condition is the formation of cumulus clouds in the summer season. Lightning, thunder, isolated heavy rainfall, gale force wind, lightning strikes and hailstones can occur due to cumulus clouds.

Thunderstorms mostly happen in April and May in Myanmar.

Since 1980, the country has seen an increase in the number of thunderstorms, which have killed over 100 people in some years, weather experts said.

Some like it hot, but heat in the summer months can be fatal. In 2016, the world experienced its hottest year since the 1880s when modern records began to be kept, marking the third consecutive year of record-high temperatures. Less than four months into 2017, parts of Myanmar, India and Australia were already in the throes of heat waves.

Researchers have established a direct link between global warming and heat-related deaths from killer heatwaves.

People should pay attention to the daily weather forecasts of the Meteorology and Hydrology Department and should be alerted to adverse weather conditions.

Over the past 25 years there have been 24 costly disasters in Myanmar, once every year on average. Victims numbering about 4 million suffered losses of approximately US\$4.7 billion.

According to the 2016 index for potential losses due to natural disasters, Myanmar is ranked number 8 out of 191 countries with a 6.8 score. As per the study of past events, natural disasters in the past two decades claimed heavy casualties totaling over 600,000, in which earthquakes stood first, followed by storms, heatstroke and drought.

The devastating natural disasters that have occurred in recent years have alerted the people and authorities to cooperate in reducing the risks of natural disasters for the sake of the safety of the people.

The value of our volunteers

Organizational Development
Department
MRCS

Executive Summary

In June 2012, inter-communal violence in the Rakhine State erupted with a series of violence conflicts between Buddhist and Muslims causing deaths and displacing 150,000 people. The sensitive environment made it very challenging for the Myanmar Red Cross to access all communities. In order to deliver its mandate of serving the most vulnerable from all sides of the conflict, MRCS mobilized a total of 320 volunteers from other states/ regions and deployed them to Rakhine for a 25 to 30 day mission.

The study highlights the economic value of volunteers based on the volunteering hours they have rendered during the same period. The study underscores as well the key role of volunteers as front liners in the inter-communal conflict- translating Movements as they went about helping those in need, giving priority to most urgent causes regardless of race, religion and parties involved in the conflict. The unwavering courage of volunteers has heightened people's respect for Myanmar Red Cross as an impartial and neutral humanitarian organization that is capable of helping everyone and anyone in need even in times of communal conflict.

This study focuses on this significant volunteer mobilization covering the period from June 2012 to April 2013.

Key Findings

- Total number of beneficiaries reached 70,651 of beneficiaries reached
- 847 people were assisted for emergency evacuation.
- Total number of volunteers mobilized: 320
- Total number of volunteering hours: 87,320 hours at an average of 273 hours per volunteer
- Equivalent full paid staff :45
- Total volunteers investment: MMK 151,684,550 or CHF 166,853.00 and average of investment of MMK 474,014/ CHF 521.40 per volunteer
- Total volunteer value of the Rakhine operation is MMK 295,164,315.97/ CHF 324,660
- VIVA ration: 1:2, meaning that for every one MMK spent for each volunteer, MRCS received two MMK's worth of services from each volunteer.

"Red Cross volunteering is very interesting and inspiring and gives me a long term commitment to support the lives of the vulnerable"

U Thet Naing, volunteer with 35 years of RC experiences.

Objective of the studies:

1. Determine the economic value of the services rendered by the volunteer mobilized for the MRCS Rakhine operation.

2. Provided evidence based recommendation to improve volunteer management in MRCS Myanmar Red Cross Society

Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) was established in 1920 as the branch of Indian Red Cross Society. Burma (Former name of Myanmar) separated formally from India in 1937 and in 1939 the society obtained national status. The organization was renamed MRCS in accordance with legislative change of Burma to Myanmar in 1989. Today MRCS is the leading humanitarian organization in Myanmar and it is committed to improve the lives of the most vulnerable to promoting humanitarian values and community based Health and Care and Disaster Management.

Volunteer development for the Rakhine operation

Description of situation in Rakhine

The unrest in Rakhine State in Myanmar began in June 2012 with a series of violent conflicts primarily between Buddhists and Muslims. The Myanmar government authorities have responded to the conflicts by imposing curfews and by deploying their troops in the region. The government announced a state of emergency on 10 June 2012 allowing military to participate in the administration of the region. The conflicts have caused approximately 240 casualties and about 150,000 people have been displaced due to the unrest.

The sensitive environment in Rakhine made it very challenging for local MRCS volunteers to access all communities affected by the ethnic conflicts. In order to deliver its mandate of serving the vulnerable from all sides of the conflicts, MRCS mobilized volunteers from other states/ regions and deployed them to Rakhine for a 25 to 30 day mission. This caused the increase in transportation and per diem costs for volunteer mobilization. However, this also made the MRCS the only recognized and respected aid organization that could access to all areas without needs for armed escorts. Red Cross volunteers are doing their utmost best to preserve their acceptance among all communities by providing impartial aid.

In the Rakhine conflicts, MRCS is demonstrating the seven fundamental principles in action, emphasizing neutrality and impartiality, by providing aid to both sides of the conflicts regardless of the ethnicity, religion, sex, age and beliefs. This is essential ensure safe access to the conflicts site in Rakhine and in order parts of the country at all times.

Rakhine Operation volunteer profiles

A total of 320 RC volunteers participated in the Rakhine operation between June 2012 and april 2013. The volunteers were divided into four groups, each doing different role depending on their previous experience and skills. The four groups were: First Aiders, relief workers, health educators and administrative and reporting volunteers.

While a lot of female MRCS volunteers wanted to participate in the Rakhine operation, they were deliberately not include in favour of male volunteers. The focal point for volunteers cited the following reasons in making this decision:

1. The accommodation place in hall type, 80'

x 70' extension of relief warehouse, only one room for 35 volunteers.

2. There if no separate bathroom and latrine for male and female.

3. Deploying female volunteers in this specific situation will require a different safety and security arrangement which the organizers are not yet able to do.

A significant majority of those who volunteered for this operation are under 30 years old. Majority of them were longtime volunteers of the MRCS. But there were newly recruited volunteers as well. They all come from different races.

The recruitment of Red Cross volunteers deployed in Rakhine

The minimum requirements for a volunteer to be mobilized in the Rakhine operation are:

- Between 18 and 65 years old.
- Has completed Basic First Aids training within the last two years.
- Physically, mentality and emotionally fit.
- Willing to work with both sides of the conflict according to the 7 Fundamental principles.
- be able to work at least 30 days in Rakhine.
- Must act according to the Volunteer Code of Conduct.

In addition, it is preferred that the volunteer:

- Has undergone Emergency Response Training or National Disaster Response Training/
- Is a First Aid Instructor of health educator:

Volunteer management

The MRCS-OD Department has the responsibility of recreation, briefing, deploying, supporting and debriefing volunteers for the Rakhine Operation. The key tasks of the department include:

1. Deciding how many Red Cross volunteers are needed, what kind of experience and skills they should have and how long they will be volunteering.
2. With approval from the secretary general, coordination with the state/region Red Cross Committees to recruit volunteers that fits the deployment criteria.
3. Developing security guidelines for Red Cross volunteer working in communal conflict situation.
4. Developing and implementing a volunteer deployment pal for each state/reion to ensure sufficient number of volunteers are available in every batch that is sent to Rakhine .
5. Sending of letter of reminder to state/region Red Cross to keep local authorities always properly informed and updated to MRCS could get their full support.
6. Collecting of Red Cross volunteer data and making practical preparation for their deployment (accommodation, transportation, local support ect.) and for their going home.
7. Calculating budget and ensuring financial support to the deployed team.
8. Getting insurance coverage for the deployed team.
9. Organizing a briefing (before deployment) and debriefing (after they have completed their

mission) for Red Cross volunteers at Yangon office.

10. Organizing a briefing session in Sittwe on the tasks ahead for each volunteer.

11. Ensuring that OD Department will actively participate in the monitoring an evaluation of volunteer management issues raised in Rakhine.

12. Ensure that all deployed volunteers are well appreciated and recognized.

Volunteer duty hours

The Rakhine operation volunteers work form 8 am to 4 pm seven days per week. All volunteers have one or two recreation time visits to view point, Sittwe during 30 days of deployment. The recreation time visits were organized after a full day volunteer work and to ensure they did not affect the actual volunteering hours.

"We facilitated and educated group of children and woman at IDP camps on personal hygiene and hand washing practice. We heard that community people said "they are getting more confident than before." This makes me happy and I promised to join again the deployment team going to Sittew."

The duties of Red Cross volunteers in the Rakhine IDP (Internally displaced persons) camps:

1. Provided First Aid services and health care education.
2. Organise mobile health clinics.
3. Organise water and sanitation activities such as water collection, distribution, water purification, installation of water tanks and fumigation of latrines.
4. Conduct hygiene promotion.
5. Relief goods distribution (participation in rice distribution donated by Qatar Red Cross Crescent, Turkish Red Crescent and World Food Programme.)
6. Emergency medical evacuation, when necessary.
7. Provided psychosocial support to IPs.
8. Gather relevant data and prepare report to be submitted to team leader.

Services delivered by volunteers in the Rakhine between June 2012 and April 2013

For the period under study, the volunteers have reached 70,651 beneficiaries, broken down as follows:

- 35,400 people received First Aids treatment.
- 25,347 people received health education.
- 9,030 people got psychosocial support.
- 847 people were assisted during emergency evacuation.

Analysis of the volunteer investment and value audit

A. Total volunteer investment

The total volunteer investment shows all the expenses associated with having volunteers. It must be emphasized that these expense, were incurred by MRCS because of the involvement of volunteer in the Rakhine operation.

TO BE COUNTINUED

In a Horrifying New Twist, Myanmar Elephants Are Being Poached For Their Skin

In Asia, the biggest threat to elephant survival has long been habitat loss. That may be changing

By Brian Handwerk
SMITHSONIAN.COM

For three years, the postdoctoral fellow at the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute had been working with a team of researchers to track Asian elephants in Myanmar using GPS collars. By learning how the massive animals moved in areas they shared with humans, they hoped to find ways to help pachyderms and humans coexist. But the researchers soon began noticing something strange.

After affixing GPS collars to 19 elephants, many of those elephants began dropping off the map. What the team found when they investigated signals from elephants that had stopped moving was horrifying: Dead, rotting carcasses strewn throughout the jungle.

And something about these corpses stood out to them immediately. They'd been skinned.

"When they are finding these carcasses they've been professionally butchered, the skin is removed and the trunks, sometimes the feet and the ears," McEvoy says. "It's quite a harrowing thing to see that in the field, particularly for the Burmese people who have quite a connection with these elephants."

Within a year of being fitted for a collar, seven elephants the team had tagged were dead. When the team's Burmese contacts started asking local people questions, they realized that they'd unintentionally uncovered a disturbing new problem: These elephants were poached for their skin.

Different Threats

It's no secret that human lust for ivory has decimated African elephants. Savanna-dwelling populations have declined by 30 percent in just the last seven years, and forest elephant numbers plunged a staggering 62 percent from 2002 to 2013. Moreover, a recent study found that 90 percent of the market's ivory is from elephants dead less than three years, proof that ongoing poaching is intimately linked with the African elephant crisis.

But what researchers found in Myanmar wasn't about ivory. Most of the elephants found dead didn't even have tusks. So what was driving this?

In Asia, where around 50,000 wild elephants live scattered across 13 nations, the biggest challenge to elephant survival has historically been habitat loss. The region's already dense human populations continue to grow, expanding into elephant territory and forcing the pachyderms into smaller and smaller spaces. "Of course they will raid the crops," says McEvoy. "They can eat quite a lot, but even just walking through a rice paddy can destroy the livelihoods of a lot of people. They occasionally raid houses if there is food stored inside a small house."

Altercations spurred by elephants eating or trampling crops result in the deaths of people and elephants alike. According to the Myanmar Elephant Conservation Action Plan, more than a dozen people are killed by elephants each year. Still, there's no doubt to McEvoy which species is impacted most. "By and large it's the elephants who lose out," he says. "They lose their habitat, and they often get killed."

Part of the reason poaching isn't as big in Asia is that tusks aren't as common among Asian elephants. Only 25 to 30 percent of male Asian elephants have tusks (percentages vary by region) and no females have them.

SEE PAGE-10