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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye, centre, meeting with Mro and other ethnic families from Bangladesh in Maungtaw Township. **PHOTO: MNA**

Authorities assist Bangladeshi families in Maungtaw, Rakhine

A delegation representing the Union Government assisted in providing accommodation to 35 Mro and Daing Net families from Bangladesh at Thitonna Gwason Village in Maungtaw Township, Rakhine State, yesterday.

The delegation led by Dr. Win Myat Aye, the Chairman of the Committee for Implementing Recommendations on Rakhine State and Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, comprised of Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, Deputy Minister U Soe Aung and other officials, flew to the village yesterday by helicopter and met with Mro ethnic people.

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Gale storm kills one, damages over 800 houses

STRONG winds hit the Bago, Ayeyawady and Sagaing regions on 15, 16 and 17 April, killing one person and damaging more than 800 houses.

The gale winds hit four village-tracts in Paungde Township, Bago Region, on 16 April destroying 34 houses and ripping off the roofs of some 500 houses and four monasteries. One man died in the disaster.

The gale storm also hit three village-tracts in Nattalin Township in the same region on 16 April, damaging more than 150 houses and destroying two houses and five monasteries.

On 17 April, strong winds tore off the roofs of some 50 houses in seven village-tracts in Hinthada Township, Ayeyawady region.

The winds tore off the roofs of some 156 houses in three village-tracts in Homalin Township, Sagaing Region, on 15 April.

The Disaster Management Department of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement provided cash and supplies worth more than Ks7 million to the victims of the disaster.

The Meteorology and Hydrology Department issued a severe weather warning three days ago, asking the public to be alert to the possibility of thunderstorms, lightning, gale storms and hail in April and May.

Such weather patterns follow the movement of cumulus clouds in the pre-monsoon period.—GNLM ■

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Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets senior army officials in Pyin Oo Lwin

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF Senior General Min Aung Hlaing met senior army officials attending the Law Officer Diploma Course at the Defence Service Administration School in Pyin Oo Lwin yesterday morning.

During the meeting, the Senior General said that as the Tatmadaw was a legally armed organisation, its officials should obey the law and ethics of soldiers, including those stipulated in the Geneva Convention. He said it was inexcusable for Tatmadaw officials to be ignorant of military and civilian laws.

He said the Tatmadaw would recruit only those who were above 18 years of age.

The Tatmadaw is handling the cases in Rakhine according to the Geneva Convention and taking action against army personnel breaking the laws.

The Tatmadaw has been criticised severely by some international organizations, he noted.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing delivers the speech at the Defence Service Administration School in Pyin Oo Lwin. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister U Ohn Maung meeting with local ethnic Pa-O people in Nyaung Shwe. **PHOTO: MOHT**

Union Minister U Ohn Maung inspects CBT in Nyaung Shwe

HOTELS and Tourism Union Minister U Ohn Maung, Shan State Hotel and Tourism Department Director U Htein Aung Naing and other officials inspected community-based tourism (CBT) in Star Village in Nyaung Shwe township on 16 April. The CBT committee members from Star Village welcomed the minister and other officials and explained their activities. The union minister inspected the CBT buildings and highlighted the requirements.

CBT was implemented in Star Village, Nyaung Shwe, in 2016. In the 2016-2017 fiscal year (FY), Star Village accepted some 400 visitors. In the 2017-2018 FY, the village received some 546 visitors. The union minister and his delegation watched the traditional boat race of the local people and gave away cash prizes to the winners. The union minister then visited Phayar Taung Village in the evening.

Phayar Taung Village implemented CBT in 2016. It welcomed 326 visitors in 2017 and 187 visitors, as of April 2018. Star Village and Phayar Taung Village is located to the south of Inle Lake. The region government can earn revenue by implementing CBT in these villages. Besides creating job opportunities for the local people, CBT has helped revive boat racing, fishing and traditional massages, which had almost disappeared from these villages.—GNLM ■

Naga villages to get water and electricity in 2018

SIXTEEN villages in the Naga Self-administered Zone are expected to get access to electricity and water within six months of this budget year, according to the Department of Rural Development in Sagaing Region.zThe department is going to conduct village development programs between April and September this year. The Sagaing Regional Government allocated Ks.127.250 million of funds to be used for a project to provide water to six villages and another project that will furnish electricity to 10 villages is using union funds. The department will distribute 60 watt solar panels to more than 900 households in 10 villages and execute projects that will supply electricity to the same 10 villages within six months, the department said.—MDN ■

Authorities assist Bangladeshi families ...

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After the meeting, the Union Minister inspected the progress of construction of housing for the Mro ethnic people and for their resettlement at the village.

Following the visit to Thitonna Gwason Village, the delegation went to Khontaing Village and inspected the progress of construction of houses by the Daw Khin Kyi Foundation and Ministry of Border Affairs. The Daw Khin Kyi Foundation is a non-profit charitable organization that seeks to achieve its goals of promoting the health, education and living standards of the people of the country irrespective of ethnicity, race or religion, In the afternoon, Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye and officials visited Ngakhuya Village, which saw a fire outbreak on 12 April, and inspected a temporary settlement for the fire victims. At the meeting with the fire victims, the Union minister pledged that his Ministry would assist in rebuilding houses for them as soon as possible. During the visit to the village, the authorities also inspected the Ngakhuya Reception Centre. The delegation also visited the Hla Phoe Khaung Transit Centre and inspected its readiness for repatriation and progress in completing the remaining houses for returnees.

When the delegation arrived back in Maungtaw, Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye, Chief Minister U Nyi Pu and other officials met with a five-member family, which had recently returned from Bangladesh at the Maungtaw District General Administration Department and provided cash assistance to them.

During his tour of Sittway, Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye and party visited the Khaungdokkar camp for displaced persons and held a meeting with officials of the camp over closing the camp and resettling displaced persons.

In the evening, the Union minister held a meeting with the Rakhine State Cabinet and departmental officials at the state government's meeting hall relating to development matters in Rakhine State. He called for local authorities to step up efforts for the closing of the camps for IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons), which were opened in 2012, and for raising awareness about the benefits of holding National Verification Cards in the state. Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye and local authorities also discussed promoting efforts for better education, resettlement, livelihood and farming for NV card holders in the state. They also discussed matters related to implementation of projects to which the Indian government would fund US$5 million annually for five years.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Maungtaw celebrates Rakhine traditional Thingyan festival

DESPITE the unseasonal rain, Maungtaw celebrated the second day of the Rakhine traditional Thingyan festival yesterday.

Artists from Yangon and local Rakhine vocalists entertained the revelers with songs and music. "It is a lovely custom of this region that local damsels grind the sandalwood with water to make a fragrant liquid first, and then clean the Buddha images before celebrating the water festival," said singer Athin Chay.

"This year's celebration has attracted more revelers than last year," said Rakhine ethnic singer Win Ko Khaing. Local people from rural areas and wards in Maungtaw Township erected small pandals to celebrate the festival.—Aung Kyaw Oo ■

Thingyan revellers enjoy water festival in Maungtaw, Rakhine. **PHOTO: MNA**

19 APRIL 2018
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Groundless accusations are not helpful for resolving Rakhine issue

ACCUSATIONS without any strong evidence are dangerous, and it makes it difficult for any government to handle sensitive situations.

When the international community views the issues in Rakhine, the use of sensitive terms should be considered only after there is solid evidence.

The Annual Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence acknowledges important steps taken by Myanmar to protect the rights of women and children. However, it is most regrettable that the Tatmadaw has been in the annex of the report based on unverified allegations in spite of Myanmar's attempts to interview the alleged victims in the camps of Cox's Bazar to investigate the case. The denial of Myanmar's request for proper investigations has dashed the hopes of the Government of Myanmar.

We call for a constructive approach and understanding on the complexity of the challenges in Rakhine State. We also seek support from the international community to help our efforts in finding a durable solution.

Myanmar has made its position very clear -- that it will not condone any human rights abuse. If there is concrete evidence, we are ready to take action against any perpetrator in accordance with the law without impunity.

The recent sentencing of seven military personnel to 10 years in prison with hard labour who were involved in the Inn Din incident is a clear demonstration of the Government's strong commitment to the rule of law.

Myanmar categorically rejects the groundless accusations that sexual violence had been used as a strategy to force the Muslim people to flee their homes.

The one-sided accusations will only impact negatively on the existing cooperation between Myanmar and the United Nations, as well as the ongoing bilateral cooperation with Bangladesh in the efforts to find a lasting solution to the current humanitarian problem as well as the complex situation in Rakhine.

We call for a constructive approach and understanding on the complexity of the challenges in Rakhine State. We also seek support from the international community to help our efforts in finding a durable solution.

Myanmar hopes that the international community will constructively contribute to our efforts to advance the democratization process and promote and protect human rights in line with the country's circumstances and needs.

We all condemn conflict-related sexual violence; we should also deplore the exploitation of this sensitive issue by certain groups as a tool to achieve their own political goals. The problem of sexual violence cannot be resolved through naming and blaming.

History, not the United Nations, will be the ultimate judge of what has occurred in Rakhine State. ■

Offering Myanmar fishermen some kind of assistance

By Khin Yadana

PAING Paing earned his living as a fisherman in Thai deep-sea fishing. He gazed out to sea and the open sea was his world and it was a hard life. He dreamt of staying with his family, investing a lot of energy in fishing for his family. " A living reality was worse; frankly speaking , we had to work outside the law, struggling more than 16 hours a day," he recounted his personal experience.

Brokers came to our villages to look for those who are eager to work to earn some money domestic or foreign. In addition, family members and relatives believed easily in those human traffickers, falling right into their traps. Some brokers sent them directly to the owners of fishing trawlers; some had to contact them indirectly. Through different links some Myanmar youths went to Thailand , shouldering heavy burden of debts. Very few fishermen knew they had been working under fake documents. These occurrences happened during 1990s.

Fishing trawlers are still found to fish illegally near the Thai borders or Myanmar territory, according to some estimates of International Labour Organization. Due to collective investigations, some Thai owners showed three or four fishing trawlers for the sake of taxation; the rest are stationed permanently to continue illegal deep-sea fishing at sea.

Isara is a group which helps the employees including fishermen who have lost their basic human rights. The group interviewed 15 Myanmar fishermen who had been trafficked to work in Thai deep-sea fishing; they were sent back to Myanmar society after recalling their experiences and difficulties : the brokers faked their salaries and work and contact with family members; brokers tricked on the employees in collaboration with boat owners; corrupt police sold them back to human traffickers and bullying, threatening and frightening them, according to a survey by International Labor Organization.

" In 2015, Thai government allowed registered fishing trawlers in their waters. For example, before letting the trawlers go out for fishing , examination of a number of crew is carried out; Myanmar crew were left behind in the sea; in this way they had to spend in sea or on islands for months; and through a lack of extensive search and arrest, the crew secretly came to land. Some crew while on land and thinking of abandoning the boat, they realized they had no legal documents to go anywhere. Once the trawlers dock into dock, the crew are closed or cornered." In accordance with investigations by the Associated Press about the Bungina accident, as many as 1000 sailors or crew were sent back to their respective countries in cooperation with their governments.

Fishing trawlers are still found to fish illegally near the Thai borders or Myanmar territory, according to some estimates of International Labour Organization.

Free but without getting any chance

After spending several years on the islands , fishermen were swindled out of five-year earnings by promising in a matter of few months; after rescue they had to spend some years for the second time in guest-houses. " we were rescued as we were in trouble. We were put in guest houses if something happened. This is the second time I had been trafficked and stayed at a guest house more than a year. We had to abide by strict laws; we had to deal with officers cleverly; while in court, we had to restrain ourselves from saying something rude. Again under investigation we had to rely on the interpreters. When Myanmar authorities concerned came to us, we were very happy. For most of the time strict actions were not taken against us. After all, our salaries amounted to more than a million Baht. Not settled yet, but legal proceedings went on as usual. Little support from our side. It all happened in Thailand. Thanks for authorities who brought us back to our homeland." Ko Myo recounted his personal experiences while he stayed in a guest house facing charges against him.

Existing standards for fishermen for those fishermen working in fishing trawlers, they are allowed to take a rest for an hour a day and seven hours within a week according to Thai Laws. Myanmar workers are not in a position to know these rules and regulations: duration of working hours, overtime earnings and cut-backs in salaries.

Why are we suffering like this?

Due to lack of knowledge about Thai laws; working rules and regulations for Myanmar workers; Very few people go to Thailand with work permits; easily falling into a trick of lies and deceits, according to estimates of Isara Institue. On the Myanmar workers' side when in trouble, they are very weak in solving their problems; they haven't made any enquiries about the work and salaries and not conversant about working conditions when they are in need. Myanmar workers should be prevented not to go without any preparations and documents.

"Our workers are highly exploited in terms of workforce, services, trafficking and other matters; The standard of accountability and responsibility. For instance a certain brand cannot measure the only quality of the material. Where do they get raw materials from? Step-by –step inspection is carried out to put the end products on the shelves in the market.

That is why fishermen as well as factory workers could send their complaint about how raw materials are obtained and which brand belongs to whom. The end products made with full rights should go to real consumers. This kind of practice is being done internationally" said Daw Ei Ei Chaw, Excutive director from Myanmar Isara.

Isara Institue in cooperation with Departments of Labor, Immigration and Manpower have held workshops since 3 April for migrant workers on how to avoid dangers and health hazards; to submit a survey report on them and ways and means of protecting Myanmar migrant workers with a close cooperation with civil departments.

In this way, ways and means of protecting Myanmar migrant workers including fishermen and their working conditions in fishing trawlers and factories will soon be successfully carried out in the near future. ■

Translated by Arakan Sein

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

It is shocking to read the article "when red silk trees bloom, rabit dogs roam" on your esteemed newspaper dated on 23rd March 2018 It is surprising to know that 75 % of stray dogs in this country have rabies."uncomfirmed report". It is too alarming that Myanmar ranks second with 1000people dying from rabies infection, While India stands first with 20000 deaths anually.

Myanmar is a home of 50millon, sharing a living space with a dog population of 4 million , Sadly enough, out of these, 60000 people, mostly childen are fallen prey to dog bites each year. Does the authorities know it? The answer is yes. Then why these stray rabid dogs are roaming unchecked. Mostly our residantial areas are swarming with stray dogs and hence dogs poo and feces are littered everywhere on pavements. Serenity of night and dawn are overwhelmed with barking, hawling and whining. The parade of venerable monks in the morning, school childen, pedestrains are manytimes a hinderance and feel disgustful due to littered feces. Many dogs lovers blindly feed them on walking street, somtines at door step. Some let their pets to pee and poo in the street indiscriminately. Feeding them is appreciative and meritorious but disturbing others is dismerit. Once solve it, taking injection after bite is not a solution for rabies. If bitten, how would not be able to find owners. Nobody comes out to wonder why not a sustainble long term solution such as registering the dogs vaccination of the dogs, leashing area for the dogs and shed for the dogs.

I am not an opponent of dogs. I am not with the dogs killing and culling by poisoning them.

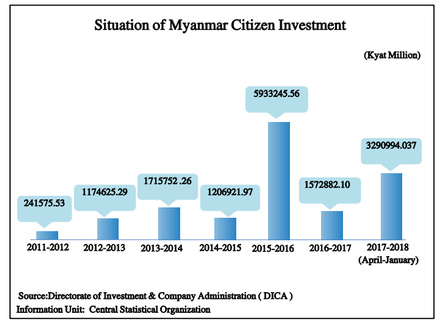
I love pets especially dogs but not with the stray dogs.

My concern is with valueable life of a man, school children.

Hope authority would beef up fight and find ways for it.

Sincerely

Maung Ni
44, 89 th Street 2nd Floor
Kandaw Kalay
M.T.N.T T/S, YGN



Invitation to young writers for Sunday section

The Global New Light of Myanmar is accepting submissions of poetry, opinion, articles, essays and short stories from young people for its weekly Sunday Next Generation Platform. Interested candidates can send their works to the **Global New Light of Myanmar** at No. 150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon or by email to **dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com** with the following information: **(1)** Sector you wish to be included in (poetry, opinion, etc.), **(2)** Real name and (if different) your penname, **(3)** Your level of education, **(4)** Name of your School/College/University, **(5)** A written note of declaration that the submitted piece is your original work and has not been submitted to any other news or magazine publishing houses, **(6)** A color photo of the submitter, **(7)** Copy of your NRC card, **(8)** Contact information (email address, mobile number, etc.).– Editorial Department, The Global New Light of Myanmar news office