

Myanmar Delegation attends the Second Joint Working Group Meeting on the Repatriation of Verified Displaced Persons from Bangladesh

A Myanmar delegation led by U Myint Thu, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar visited Dhaka, Bangladesh from 15 to 18 May 2018 to attend the Second Meeting of the Joint Working Group (JWG) on the Repatriation of Verified Displaced Persons. The delegation included representatives from various Ministries and the Rakhine State government.

The Second JWG Meeting was held at the State Guest House of Bangladesh on 17 May 2018. The meeting was co-chaired by U Myint Thu, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar and Mr. Shahidul Haque, Foreign Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh.

During the Meeting, both sides exchanged views on the repatriation process, including conducive environment, safety and security for the prospective returnees, current situation of displaced persons in Bangladesh, updates on the displaced persons from the international boundary line, dissemination of information among the returnees and confidence building, and the involvement of the United



Myanmar delegation led by Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Myint Thu (Right) attends the meeting of JWG on the Repatriation of Verified Displaced Persons in Dhaka. **PHOTO: MNA**

Nations Agencies in the process of repatriation and resettlement.

The Myanmar side informed the Meeting on its concerted efforts and preparations for the repatriation and resettlement process, including the UEHRD's activities, verification process, the issuance of the National Verification Card (NVC), and the ongoing discussion between the Myanmar Government and the UN agencies for cooperation in the repatriation, resettlement and reintegration process.

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The Myanmar side reiterated its readiness to receive the verified displaced persons from Bangladesh and urged the Bangladeshi side to commence the repatriation of the earlier verified 778 Muslims and 444 Hindus as well as 1101 verified persons (as of 2 May 2018) out of 8,032 persons received from the Bangladeshi side.

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ladesh side in terminating and demolition of structures recently built in the non-construction zone of the border line, since the construction of those structures breached Article 14 of the "Treaty between Myanmar and Bangladesh on the Demarcation of the Land Section of the Boundary

North of the Naaf River signed in 1998.

Furthermore, the Myanmar side urged the Bangladeshi side to provide information on its readiness to commence the repatriation process including the completion of transit camps at the Bangladeshi side as well as the promotion of awareness among the prospective returnees on the bilateral agreements between the two countries and the agreed verification forms to be shared with them.

The Myanmar delegation called upon the international community to work together to create a conducive environment to restoring peace and stability, harmony and sustained socio-economic development for all people in Rakhine State.

The Myanmar side shared its belief that mutual understanding and constructive cooperation based on the principles of objectivity, mutual respect and bilateral agreements would bring about a positive outcome in the repatriation process.

The third Joint Working Group meeting will be held in Nay Pyi Taw and the dates and venue will be communicated through the diplomatic channel.—MNA ■

Four ministries hold press conference on second one-year performance

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The ministry also adopted the Myanmar Elephant Conservation Action Plan (MECAP) 2018-2027.

In the second one-year period, the ministry confiscated 42,893.4316 tons of teak and hardwood and arrested 6,591 persons, including 19 foreigners. As part of efforts for greening the arid region, more than 3,888 acres of cultivation and 37,000 acres were designated as forest reserve.

U Khin Latt Gyi, Director-General of the Mining Department, has suspended granting permits for new mining blocks since 1 March, 2016, and also granted extensions of permits for mining blocks which expired on 1 April, 2016.

In accordance with the new by-law of the Myanmar Mines Law enacted on 13 February, 2018, small- and medium-sized mining businesses are allowed in regions and states.

Regarding the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative

(EITI), the ministry formed the leading committee for EITI with four members led by the Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation. There is also a tripartite group for EITI comprised of the leading committee, companies and civil societies.

The ministry set its target of earning at least more than Ks540 billion from mining, gems and the pearl sector in the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year, and achieved its target with earnings of more than Ks740 billion.

Ministry of Health and Sports

Afterwards, Ministry of Health and Sports permanent secretary Prof. Dr. Thet Khaing Win explained the work done on raising health knowledge among the public, and how to reduce expenses incurred by the public on health care.

A nationwide immunization campaign against 11 childhood diseases was conducted. There are about 8.7 million students all

over the country, and health inspection in schools was conducted in 97 per cent of the schools nationwide. Deworming of students was conducted twice in basic education schools and, as this is beneficial for health, it will be conducted as priority work.

Malaria is targeted to be eliminated in Myanmar by 2030. Annual campaigns against elephantiasis are also conducted, and 4,888 new leprosy patients were being treated. Across the country, 222,730 patients were given cataract operations, Seven public hospitals in Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw provided free anti-viral medicines to 2,000 patients, while 1,671 patients were treated up to 31 December 2017.

To identify severe and highly infectious diseases, two multi-million dollar laboratories were opened in Taunggyi and Insein.

National Strategic Plan (2017-2021) for non-infectious diseases and Myanmar National Cancer Control Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

were drawn and the Population Based Cancer Registry was also started in Nay Pyi Taw.

Open-heart surgery was performed on 1,287 patients in Yangon People's Hospital, Mandalay People's Hospital, North Okkalapa Hospital and Yankin Children Hospital and the success rate was more than 95 per cent. Cardiac Cath Labs were opened in Yangon People's Hospital, Mandalay People's Hospital and North Okkalapa Hospital, where a total of 8,162 patients were treated. An additional 18 rural health clinics and 22 sub-rural health centres were opened and 1,796 Community Health Clinics were opened, where various health care services were provided.

A total of 241 traditional health hospital and clinics were opened, where 1,512,300 out-patients and 29,868 in-patients were treated.

International-standard laboratories were opened and these labs were accredited with the ISO 17025 Certificate by US-

based ANAB (ANSI-ASO National Accreditation Board).

Twenty-four district FDA offices are under construction, and all will have modern laboratories to test food and medicines.

Sports sector development was increased within the available budget, while development of the health sector is being done. Six-hundred and seventy-five sets of Outdoor Fitness Equipment were installed in locations where the public can conduct physical exercise. Sports and Physical Education Institute Loi-kaw and Monywa were opened, making for a total of six Sports and Physical Education Institute, where more sports personnel will be produced.

For the first time in Myanmar, there were 70 students who graduated from the B.Sc (Sports) course and, at the moment, a total of 207 students were attending this course in Dagon and Yatanabon University, explained the permanent secretary.—Han Hmwe, Lin Naing (MNA) ■