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SUNDAY SPECIAL



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Vice President U Henry Van Thio visits the silk factory in Tiddim, Chin State. PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY

VP U Henry Van Thio inspects development works in Tiddim, Falam

Vice President U Henry Van Thio, who was in Tiddim Town, Chin State, inspected development works there and in Falam Township on 18 May.

The Vice President was accompanied by Chin State Chief Minister U Salai Lian Lwal, Chin State Hluttaw Speaker U Zo Bwe, Deputy Minister Rear Admiral Myint Nwe, Deputy

Minister Maj-Gen Than Htut, Deputy Minister U Soe Aung, state ministers and other officials. In the morning, the Vice President and party visited the silk factory of the Department of Agriculture silk factory in Tiddim and silkworm plant research farm (Tiddim) and observed the thriving silkworm plants and the various stages

of producing silk.

Next, the Vice President heard a report on the factory and farm by Department of Agriculture Director U Aung Maw, with Director-General Dr. Ye Tint Tun providing additional explanations. The Vice President remarked that planting silkworm plants would increase the income of the local

families, replace the slash-and-burn farming system and reduce damage to the environment. If the silk factory were to upgrade the raw material produced from silkworm breeding and worked through cooperation with the private sector, it would be beneficial to the silkworm plant farmers, he said.

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Over 60 houses handed over to Mro ethnic people in Maungtaw

Sixty-four houses constructed by the Bago Region Government were handed over to the Kainggyi (Mro) ethnic people in the presence of Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu in Maungtaw Township yesterday.

The Bago Region Government funded over Ks600 million for construction of the houses for the ethnic people.

Construction of the houses started on 20 December. The houses are steel-structure, reinforced concrete buildings and cost Ks9.5 million each.

"We have a plan to provide school facilities, power supply and other requirements for the ethnic people here. Ethnic people are urged to live in unity, to preserve culture and to take part in building a democratic federal country," said Bago Region Chief Minister U Win Thein at the ceremony in Kainggyi Mro Village in Maungtaw, Rakhine State.

Bago Region Chief Minister also handed over solar panels and other home accessories to the villagers.

At the opening ceremony, Chief Ministers U Nyi Pu, U Win Thein and officials sprinkled scented water on the stone plaque to commemorate the site. —Zin Oo, Naing Lin Kyi ■

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Family returns after living precariously between border and fence

AFTA Alom and his family of five from Taungpyo Letya Village were living precariously on the Myanmar side of the Myanmar-Bangladesh border, between the border line and border fence (near border post 34). As they were facing health and food problems, they requested permission to return to their village in Myanmar.

After the authorities permitted them to return through the official reception centre, they arrived at the Taungpyo Letwe Reception Centre via the Taungpyo Letwe entry and exit gate near the friendship bridge on 13 April 2018.

Afta Alom and his family were interviewed by the Maung-taw District administrator and officials on 15 April 2018.

Q. Were you or any of your family members involved in the incident of 25 August 2017?

A. None of our family members were involved in that incident.

Q. When and why did you go to the area between the border line and the fence near border post 34?

A. We went there twelve days after the incident on 6 September 2017. When we left our village, there was almost no one remaining in the village. A five member committee was formed by ARSA to administer the village, which included Mawlawi Afat, Mawlawi Hait, Mawlawi Zaid Hussan, Mawlawi Ayut and Mawlawi Havat Georgie Mulla. It was led by Mawlawi Afat. I am the village administrator, but was not permitted to sit on the committee. Most of the villagers went to this area between the border and the fence on the night after the incident. About 30 villagers who remained in the village were planning to attack Taung Pyo Letya post with mines (IEDs) on August 26 and 27. Villagers gradually moved their belongings near to border post 35 and 36 and then entered Bangladesh. By 17 September no one was left in the village. (By then) BGB prevented people from entering Bangladesh. After about 20 days, ICRC and inter-

national organizations came and provided rice, cooking oil, sugar, salt and flour. As the area we are staying in is not in Bangladesh, some thought of entering into Bangladesh. Some just wanted to stay where they were. BGB told us not to go to the refugee camp (in Bangladesh) and told us to remain where we were, between the border line and the fence.

Q. What rank is the BGB official who told you to remain where you are?

A. He was the commander of a BGB post.

Q. What do you think was the reason behind this?

A. I think they wanted to show the world that Myanmar is not accepting back the people from the Myanmar side of the border.

might be forced back into Myanmar, so they went to Bangladesh.

Q. When we were there, we saw some INGO's preparing to send foodstuffs. Is the other country permitting them to do this? What was provided?

A. INGO provides supplies after reporting to BGB. A group was formed for distribution. The group included Nur Hak (Taungpyo Letya), Nay Lin Aung (Taungpyo Letya) and someone from Mede village and another village. The group distributes to about 25 leaders, who then distributed to households in their group. Once every 15 days ICRC regularly provided 24 kg of rice, cooking oil, flour, 4 kg. of beans and salt. A family has about 10 to 15 members, but these families are sub-divided into 3, 4 and 5 families, so the provisions were ad-

area?

A. About six elderly people and a youngster died. Their remains were buried on a hill near a Daingnet village north of the area. If there were any health emergencies, patients were sent to a hospital after receiving a document from the ICRC.

Q. Whenever the authorities came, Dil Mahmat and Nay Lin Aung met as representatives. What do you know about them?

A. Dil Mahmat and Nay Lin Aung do interpretation when there is a meeting between the two countries. As BGB came and talked through them, and they gradually become leaders. BGB also appointed them as leaders, and the people accepted them.

Q. As a former administrator of Taungpyo Letya

occurring.

Q. What are the difficulties you face when you stay in the place?

A. We can eat only things provided by INGOs. We could not have meat and fish. Language was also a problem. We only understand a few officials. People from Bangladesh are also spreading fear about us.

Q. Did the INGO prevent people from going to refugee camps?

A. No. UNHCR said people should not stay in the place and said they'll construct living areas in refugee camps.

Q. Were there people who lived in the refugee camp and then came back to stay in the village?

A. Of the 1,050 households staying in the place, half had registered in the refugee camps. When it was time to receive rations from the refugee camp, they went to take it. As they were receiving aid from both places, they collected more.

Q. How do you survive in the area without any income?

A. My son worked in the ICRC office on the other side and earned about 35,000 Taka (more than Ks 500,000) a month, and we survive on this. But others are facing difficulties.

Q. Now that you came back, how do you plan to live?

A. I will depend on my son's income for now. Once the situation becomes stable, I will work on a farm near the village.

Q. What do you want to say about people living in the place?

A. They don't agree with one another. On social media sites, like Facebook, I read about their complaints. Some were threatening my son for working in the ICRC office there.

Q. What do you want to ask for your family?

A. I want to be safe and have something to do to earn our livelihood.— Myanmar News Agency ■

Earlier, there were more than 50 (ARSA terrorists). Now there are only about 20 left. They are from villages in southern Maungtaw. I heard that they have some homemade guns. But they mostly use mines (IEDs).

Q. Did the people who stayed in that area know that they were inside Myanmar?

A. At first they did not know, but now they do.

Q. When top officials from this side came and talked with representatives, was everything explained to the rest?

A. There were some explanations, but it was not clear.

Q. After the Union Minister for Home Affairs came, why did many people go to Bangladesh?

A. After the flag meeting, held on 20 February 2018, the BGB 34 battalion commander told people to return to Myanmar and live according to the law there. Some thought that they

equately provided. Sometimes, there were aids from Saudi and Turkey. But everything was provided only after the Bangladesh government permitted it.

Q. Is there any health care service?

A. ICRC came once a week. BGB came once every two days.

Q. Were those staying between the border and fence told they could go to refugee camps without showing any documents?

A. A person can go without being required to show any documents. However, nowadays permission is required. But even then, we were not allowed to go to any town. There are police and military in the towns.

Q. Were there any deaths for any reasons in the

Village, did you suffer any intimidation?

A. I reached the village only after many villagers had arrived there. Mawlawi Zaid Hussan threatened me. A month later, I was reported to be a drug dealer and interrogated.

Q. Are there members of ARSA in the area?

A. Earlier, there were more than 50 (ARSA terrorists). Now there are only about 20 left. They are from villages in southern Maungtaw. I heard that they have some homemade guns. But they mostly use mines (IEDs).

Q. Is there any violence against women?

A. No. But some human traffickers are luring women into brothels. Some youngsters were said to have been abducted for their organs, but this is no longer