

Thai religious foundation contributes cash to construction of Eternal Peace Pagoda

A CEREMONY to donate cash for the construction of Eternal Peace Pagoda was held at Office Building 35, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture Union Minister's Office guest hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning and Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko accepted the cash donations.

At the ceremony Sayadaws from Thai Dhammakaya Foundation donated K 45 million cash donation and Thai Baht 3 million worth of gems and jewelries to

be embedded in the pagoda. Donors U Hla Tun and Thiri Thudhamma Theingi Daw San San Wei (Shan Pyo May) family and Professor Dr. Hnin Hnin Aye donated K 2.5 million and K one million respectively. The donations were accepted by Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko and Deputy Minister U Kyi Min who in return presented certificates of honors.

An Eternal Peace Pagoda will be constructed near Gan-

gaw Flower Roundabout on Yazathingaha Road, Dekkhinathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw, Union Territory and donors who wish to make donations are to contact U Thaung Win (Director), U Maung Maung Myo (Director), U Kyin Khaing (Director) and U Kyaw Sein Win (Director) at phone 09420701463, 09-2132191, 09-8600113 and 0943125373 respectively.—Han Lin Naing ■

(Translated by Zaw Min)



Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko accepts cash donations for construction of Eternal Peace Pagoda from Thai Sayadaws. **PHOTO: MNA**

Myanmar Permanent Representative responds one-sided report of High Commissioner for Human Rights, urges her to provide technical assistance to Myanmar at Human Right Council in Geneva

THE High Commissioner for Human Rights presented the annual reports and oral update on 20 March 2019 at the on-going 40th Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

During the session, Permanent Representative of Myanmar U Kyaw Moe Tun delivered a statement in response to the High Commissioner's report on Myanmar submitted to the Council in pursuant to the Council's resolution S-27/1.

In his statement, the Permanent Representative affirmed that Myanmar shall not be obliged to accept the one-sided report of the High Commissioner and its recommendations.

He pointed out that the report reflected one-sided narratives and ignored government's efforts and visible progress. It has shown complete lack of understanding on the complexities and challenges on the ground.

He also stated that impartiality and inclusiveness are of fundamental importance for multi-ethnic and multi-religious Myanmar in the promotion and protection of human rights as well as in building a democratic federal union.

Speaking of the situation in Rakhine State, he said, "The issue of Rakhine State is hugely complex with many challenges" and that Government is fully committed to find a sustainable solution for all people in Rakhine State.

He informed the Council the speeding up of the implementation of Kofi Annan Advisory Commission's recommendations under an Action Plan, covering five priority areas

namely issuance of citizenship, freedom of movement, closure of IDP camps, education and health.

The Permanent Representative shared Myanmar's concern over the plight of all affected communities after the ARSA terrorists attack and reiterated Myanmar's readiness to receive verified returnees in accordance with the bilateral agreements with Bangladesh. Myanmar informed Bangladesh side to resume the Joint Working Group Meeting in April to commence repatriation of verified displaced persons including 444 Hindus who of their own volition are desperate to return. He added that Myanmar has been working with UNDP and UNHCR, ASEAN friends and regional partners to create conducive environment for the returnees.

The Rakhine State Investment Fair was held recently to generate job opportunities, income and long term development and a number of on-going projects were implemented to strengthen social cohesion in Rakhine State, he said.

The Permanent Representative expressed his disappointment at the irresponsible comments of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar on Rakhine State Investment Fair which is aimed for bringing prosperity to all people in Rakhine State.

He reaffirmed Myanmar's position on FFM that Myanmar categorically objected its establishment, as well as its narrative-based report. However, Myanmar takes allegations of human rights violation serious-

ly. He updated on the Independent Commission of Enquiry as well as the recent establishment of an investigation court by the Armed Forces of Myanmar to investigate all alleged violations of human rights in Rakhine State. He emphasized, "The Government is willing and able to address the accountability issue. Therefore, we strongly reject any move to bring the issue to international judicial system."

He pointed out that the world's attention narrowly and only focused on the negative aspects relating to the issue in Rakhine State. Notwithstanding positive developments, Myanmar has been unfairly targeted and disproportionately put under scrutiny of multiple mechanisms of the UN.

He stressed that understanding the situation in Rakhine State requires deeper analysis and wider perspective. It should not be seen in isolation with narrow perspective.

He expressed Myanmar's readiness to renew cooperation with OHCHR and urged the High Commissioner to extend the technical assistance to Myanmar for promotion and protection of human rights under the work plan proposed by the OHCHR last year.

He concluded by saying that Myanmar participated in the interactive dialogues in good faith and that only through constructive dialogue and cooperation, we can achieve our common goal of promotion and protection of human rights of people all over the world, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—MNA ■

Union Minister U Thein Swe receives Japan Myanmar Association Chairman

UNION Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe received Japan Myanmar Association (JMA) Chairman Mr. Hideo Watanabe at the ministry meeting hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting matters relating to assessments conducted by JMA for sending on-job-training workers and work-

ers for elderly care to Japan, cooperation provided since 2012 on the matter of demand letters for workers, arrangements made for systematic transfer to Japanese Embassy in Myanmar a detailed information of Myanmar on-job-training workers in Japan and works to be conducted in accordance with the enacted law were discussed.—MNA ■



Union Minister U Thein Swe holds talks with Japan Myanmar Association (JMA) Chairman Mr. Hideo Watanabe in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Agro exports up by \$100 mln over past five months

MYANMAR'S exports of agricultural products between 1 October, 2018 and 8 March, 2019 in the current fiscal year exceeded US\$1.4 billion, which is an increase of over \$100 million compared with the corresponding period of the 2017-2018 FY, according to the data of the Ministry of Commerce.

In the similar period of last FY, agro export earned \$1.34 billion.

In the exports sector, the agriculture industry performed the best along with the natural gas sector.

The chief items of export in the agricultural sector are rice and broken rice, pulses, corn, and rubber.

Fruits and vegetables, sesame, dried tea leaves, sugar, and other agro products are also shipped to other countries.

The Commerce Ministry is working to help farmers deal with challenges such as high input costs, procurement of pedigree seeds, high cultivation costs, and erratic weather conditions.—GNLM ■

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(Translated by La Wonn)

NRPC, eight EAOs hold peace talks in Nay Pyi Taw

FROMPAGE-1

Dr. Tin Myo Win said many organizations announced their approval for the Tatmadaw's announcement and the truce has helped to set up this meeting. He said everyone must accept that using military means has never resolved any of the country's issues. He said the root causes of all armed conflicts are political issues and failing to resolve them will keep the cycle of armed conflicts in perpetual motion.

Fundamental principles require inclusivity to be complete

Dr. Tin Myo Win said everyone has accepted the belief that establishing a democratic federal Union, based on mutually agreed upon fundamentals, is the answer to resolving our political issues. He said we must work together to develop the type of federal system we will be establishing and this is why the modern Panglong conference is being held.

Dr. Tin Myo Win said the 21st Century Panglong has convened three times during the NLD government administration and has agreed on 51 fundamental democratic federal principles. However, since there are still EAOs who have not signed the NCA, the principles still have some requirements to them. He said if all the EAO non-signatories participate then the much-anticipated political conference will emerge. He explained his hope for all EAOs to eventually participate in the 21st Century Panglong in unison.

Dr. Tin Myo Win said the Union Government is working towards having all the EAOs in attendance sign the NCA and participate in political dialogue while halting all armed conflicts. He said the Union Government is intends to hold the political dialogues to produce agreements based on a democratic federal Union so as to achieve Union peace.



National Reconciliation and Peace Centre members and representatives from eight ethnic armed organizations held a meeting at the NRPC office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

He said the government and Tatmadaw have accepted and agreed to establish a democratic federal Union. The political dialogues will then decide what form the federal system will take.

Armed conflicts are not the answer

Dr. Tin Myo Win explained that the conflicts in Rakhine State are not associated with which groups will be accepted and which will be not. He said Rakhine State is designated as a white area and the government has taken appropriate security measures to prevent armed groups from establishing their bases there. He said it is important to understand this fact.

He said we must reflect upon the 70-years of internal armed conflicts and look to the current situation of the Rakhine people to see that it is crucial to take things to the political discussion table rather than demanding rights through use of arms.

The government and Tatmadaw always have the door to peace open to join in the NCA path and the peace process, said Dr. Tin Myo Win. He said the NCA is not an end result but the first step to engaging in political dialogue. He said EAO non-signatories are

encouraged to voice their worries and challenges regarding the NCA.

He said holding a face-to-face meeting like this used to be a fanciful notion but has now become a reality. He urged everyone to have mutual respect and trust towards each other as we negotiate for solutions to achieve lasting peace and for ways to include everyone in the peace process.

The actual discussions commence

Next, leaders and representatives of the United Wa State Party (UWSP), Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), Mongla's Eastern Shan State Peace and Solidarity Committee (PSC), Shan State Progressive Party (SSPP), Kokang's Myanmar National Truth and Justice Party (MNTJP), Palaung State Liberation Front (PSLF), United League of Arakan (ULA), and Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) discussed future tasks for the peace process by group.

The NRPC and EAOs then discussed the role of NCA-NS EAOs in the pre-2020 and post-2020 periods, development affairs, regional residents' affairs, holding separate meetings with the Tatmadaw, issuing agreements, and

other general matters.

NRPC Vice Chair's closing speech

Dr. Tin Myo Win then delivered the closing speech. He said it is a historical day for the NRPC and the 8 NCA-NS EAOs to hold their first meeting. He said the meeting between the government, Tatmadaw, NRPC and leaders of the 8 NCA-NS EAOs can reduce the number of armed conflicts, and this will in turn reduce the fear and losses the people are suffering from.

Dr. Tin Myo Win said he believes good or bad luck are a person's own treasures. He said how much the suffering and fear of yourself, your environment and the people are reduced is an answer. He said if there is goodwill there will be good luck and it is important to have the desire to practice goodwill. He said if we truly want peace then our peace process will be successful.

Dr. Tin Myo Win said he believes holding meetings between the government, Tatmadaw, NRPC and the 8 NCA-NS EAOs is the best path to seeking solutions for peace. He said we need to find an answer that bring about decision-making. He said these meetings should be held at least

once every two months and if the results make improvements then they should become the basis for discussion concerning our respective state or region's residents.

List of meeting participants

NRPC members Union Attorney-General U TunTunOo, Lt-Gen YarPyae, Lt-Gen Min Naung, secretary Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Tin, Peace Commission Vice Chairman U Thein Zaw, secretary Lt-Gen (retired) U Khin Zaw Oo, member Pyithu Hluttaw MP U Aung Soe, support group member U Moe Zaw Oo, Director-General U Zaw Htay of the Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor, and the leaders and representatives of the United Wa State Party (UWSP), Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), Mongla's Eastern Shan State Peace and Solidarity Committee (PSC), Shan State Progressive Party (SSPP), Kokang's Myanmar National Truth and Justice Party (MNTJP), Palaung State Liberation Front (PSLF), United League of Arakan (ULA), and Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP). —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

NRPC, eight NCA-NS EAOs issue joint declaration

AFTER a meeting between National Reconciliation and Peace Center (NRPC) and eight Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement Non Signatory Ethnic Armed Organisations (NCA-NS EAOs) a joint declaration was issued.

Following is the unofficial translation of the joint declaration.

Peace Talks between eight NRPC, NCA-EAOs Joint Declaration (21 March, 2019)

1. NRPC and representatives of 8 NCA-NS EAOs held a meeting at NRPC, Nay Pyi Taw on 21 March 2019.

2. At the meeting matter relating to future works of the peace process was discussed openly

and cordially among participants who were of equal statuses.

3. NRPC and the 8 NCA-NS EAOs agree to strive toward sustainable national reconciliation and peace as follows:

- Continuing the coordination and efforts toward reducing the ongoing armed conflicts.
- Continuing the coordination and efforts toward maintaining stability and peace.

- Both sides to place emphasis on regional development and the benefit of the people in the region.
- To solve the political problems, the basis for national reconciliation and peace, through political means peacefully.
- To continue holding frequent meetings with the participation of decision makers.

AA members found planting landmines, arrested



The two suspects captured near Yesochaung Village. PHOTO: MNA

SECURITY forces conducting an operation on 20 March in Rakhine State found three members of the AA group planting landmines. One of them was killed and two were arrested.

On the evening of 20 March, security personnel conducted a proper security operation in Yathedaung Township, Rakhine State, and found a man planting a landmine two miles north-west of Yesochaung Village. The AA

member was shot dead as he fled away when he saw the security forces. He was found carrying two improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and one knife.

Following the incident, the security forces conducted a search around the village during which, two remote-controlled mines exploded.

Security personnel found two men near the site where the mines went off and arrest-

ed them.

According to the head of Yesochaung Village and villagers, the two men were not from the village and were strangers. One of them was reportedly under the influence of drugs.

The two men were handed over to the concerned authorities for interrogation, according to the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.—MNA ■

World Bank targets 12 townships in Sagaing for education project

A total of 12 townships across Sagaing Region have been chosen for an education project financed by the World Bank, following a recent meeting with the Ministry of Education, said U Myat Khine from World Bank.

U Myat Khine said the project aims to develop basic education in six townships and promote non-formal education in six townships of Sagaing Region through a collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the World Bank, an international financial institution.

Under the project, basic education will be developed in Lahe, Shwebo, Kalewa, Homma-

lin, Lashi, and Nanyun townships, while non-formal education will be accelerated in Shwebo, Kanbalu, Lahe, Nanyun, Homalin, and Wetlet townships. The project will include school development programmes, student stipend programmes, capacity-building training for school teachers, non-formal education, and ethnic education, said U Myat Khine. The World Bank is continuing its support to the education project to help refine and expand Myanmar's School Grants Program and Student Stipend Program.—Myo Min Tun (Monywa) ■ (Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

One civilian shot dead by AA

ACTING on information, security forces recovered the body of a man with gunshot wounds to the head from a boat on the evening of 19 March at the Chanmyay Nadi Park Jetty in Kyauktaw.

The man has been identified as U Aung Kyaw Nyunt, 53, the son of U Maung Ba Kyaw of Htarunai Village, Paletwa Township, Chin State. He was shot in the head.

According to investigators, U Aung Kyaw Nyunt was reportedly alone in the boat at the time he was killed. Another man from his village,

Maung Tun Min, who had accompanied him had gone to Kyawtaw to fetch U Aung Kyaw Nyunt's wife, Daw Khin Than Hlaing. She was on her way back from Nay Pyi Taw, where she had dropped their son off to school.

U Aung Kyaw Nyunt and Maung Tun Min had arrived in Kyauktaw by boat on the morning of 19 March to buy grocery items and to fetch Daw Khin Than Hlaing.

According to people with knowledge of the incident and accounts of villagers from Htaronai Village, U Aung Kyaw Nyunt was reportedly

killed by AA as he did not support the group.

In the past, AA reportedly sent bullets in envelopes to the heads of villages and departmental officials, and villagers who did not support them were abducted, tortured, and killed.

The local people expressed their displeasure over the actions of the AA group.

The local authorities have also asked people to send information about the group to help prevent their acts of terrorism, according to the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.—MNA ■

Netanyahu hails Trump 'historic' pledge on Israel sovereignty of Golan

JERUSALEM — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday welcomed US President Donald Trump's "historic" pledge to recognise Israel's disputed annexation of the Golan, which it seized from Syria in 1967.

"At a time when Iran seeks to use Syria as a platform to destroy Israel, President Trump boldly recognises Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights," he wrote on his personal Twitter account. "Thank you President Trump!" Trump's statement of intent on the strategic plateau Israel seized in the 1967 Six-Day War came after US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visited Jerusalem and stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Netanyahu at the Western Wall in the city's Israeli-annexed eastern sector.

It was the first time such a high-ranking US official visited

the site in mainly Palestinian east Jerusalem alongside an Israeli premier. Both US gestures serve to boost Netanyahu's campaign for a fifth term, less than three weeks before Israel's April 9 elections.

Netanyahu's office said that he spoke to Trump by phone and thanked him personally for his decision, telling him: "You made history." Netanyahu has been pushing for the White House to recognise Israel's sovereignty over the Golan and Trump tweeted Thursday that "it is time" to do so.

Pompeo's visit with the premier to the Western Wall, one of the holiest in Judaism, could be taken as tacit approval of Israel's sovereignty over the city's eastern sector, which is claimed by the Palestinians.

Israel sees the entire city as its undivided capital.—AFP ■

11 dead, 50 rescued after India building collapse

ELEVEN people were confirmed dead on Thursday three days after a building under construction in southern India caved in, officials said.

Building collapses are frequent in India. Many firms use cheap materials and bribe officials to evade regulations, while on-site safety is lax.

Around 400 rescuers have been scouring through tonnes concrete and steel after the latest tragedy in Karnataka state on Tuesday.

Fifty-three people have been rescued from the rubble of the five-storey building in Dharwad district, but three more bodies were pulled out on Thursday.

"At least 15 people are possibly still under the debris and it's unlikely they will survive," emergency official Srikant, who goes by one name, told AFP.

Heavy earth-movers and



Around 400 rescuers have been scouring through tonnes concrete and steel after the building collapse. PHOTO: AFP

rescuers with specialised equipment and sniffer dogs were deployed in the increasingly desperate operation.

The victims were mostly from northern Indian states who came to the region for work.

Police have charged the builder with manslaughter but he remains free, with investigators saying he will be arrested after

the rescue operation is over.

Last September, five people were killed after a Delhi apartment block collapsed. Months earlier, a six-storey building in the capital had given way, killing nine.

Millions of Indians, who will vote in elections in April and May, live in dilapidated old buildings, many of which are susceptible to collapse during rain.—AFP ■