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Hailing Union Peace Conference —21st Century Panglong (Second Session)



A woman in the ethnic dress of a hill tribe in Shan State takes a selfie with State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi after the opening ceremony of the 21st Century Panglong Conference held yesterday at the Myanmar International Convention Centre 2 in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

A second chance for peace

The Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong 2nd Session held

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi opened a second round of talks with the country's many ethnic armed groups yesterday, looking to renew a quest for peace after a year

in which fighting continued in some northern regions.

The Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong 2nd session that began yesterday came after a challenging year

during which tensions between ethnic armed groups intensified. But the State Counsellor said she remained upbeat about the future.

"During the first year of

our new government, we experienced many highs and lows, progression and regression", Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

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သဒ္ဓါထက်သန် မြန်မာအားမာန် ကမ္ဘောဇဘဏ်

Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw makes opening address at the Opening Ceremony of Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong - Second Session

U WIN MYINT, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw made an opening speech at the Second Session of the Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong.

The full text of his speech is as follows:

First excerpts, I would like to send my heartfelt prayer to you all—national brethren to be blessed with physical and mental well-being on this auspicious opening ceremony of Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong Second Session.

Our respected national brethren,

Our country is a country in which civil war had existed for over 60 years due to different doctrines and beliefs. Because of the civil war, many lost their lives, with most rendered homeless and amputated. Whatever it is, they all are our national brethren and our citizens. So long as the country cannot get internal peace, our national brethren will yet have to lose their opportunities in the field of economy, politics, social affairs, education, health and etc. Stability will never emerge in their respective areas, void of internal peace. I assume that development programmes cannot be implemented without stability in the region.



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint delivers a speech at the Opening Ceremony of Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong—second session. **PHOTO: MNA**

A political stage has been created in accord with the changing times and situations and efforts were being made to achieve internal peace under the leadership of the State Counsellor. We are to find solutions in just and fair ways with a view to achieving peace, stability and development of the country through political dialogues. I firmly believe that the right solutions will be found if discussions are based on fair attitudes in finding out solutions to the problems of the country through political means and ways. As long as the civil war lasts long, I am afraid we will be deprived of democratic and human rights. I want you to re-

alize that building up a federal democratic union will be delayed as long as the civil war exists. For this, provided that we really want democracy, human rights and a federal democratic state, we must exert our concerted effort to achieve internal peace.

Our respected national brethren,

We are presently being blessed with an opportunity for us to make epoch-making Myanmar political history. I believe that the best time for internal peace is neither the past nor the future. As for me, I firmly believe that the present time is the best time for implementing internal peace. We encounter this kind

of opportunity only once in our life time. We are all responsible to shape such a rare opportunity to achieve peace for present and future benefits of our country and our people. The whole populace is enthusiastically hoping for the light of peace. Internal peace is of great vitality for the State.

If conflicts and wars are taking places due to disagreements among groups all the time, peace cannot be gained and the country will never be stable and peaceful. Such disagreements can be overcome just through patience, forgiveness and broadmindedness. No group nor organization will ever find peace and pleasant existence if we still have hatred and grudges over past events. Much as their aims and objectives may be good, such hatred and wars will never bring about peace. Likewise, they will beget further hatred and wars. Accordingly, our Lord Buddha says, “Enmity cannot be extinguished through revenge attack. Instead, peace can be achieved through patience without revenge.” It is a noteworthy word for us to keep in our minds.

It is of great necessity to help and make concerted efforts to build mutual trust if worries and anxieties arise among parties, to

get agreements if disputes arise, to bring about stability in conflict areas in working for peace hand in hand with each other. Instead of discussing by holding dogmatic beliefs, efforts to reach a compromise are better. I want to express my pleasure to hear that the goal of building the federal democratic union we greatly want is coming near, by assembling, discussing and negotiating for internal peace.

We hope that internal peace can be achieved by cooperating and wiping the slate clean without blaming each other. Keeping fair attitudes is serving the interest of the country and people's wishes. The aim of our negotiations is not for getting what we want, but to fulfill the needs of the country.

I hereby conclude my speech by reciting the noteworthy words of Manlei Sayadaw,

“Even a hint of loving kindness is not cast,

Truth is deprived in us,
Amounts of war will be vast, and

The country will live in fear and disgust.

Lastly, it will be greatly hurt.

Thank you very much, Sir.
—Myanmar News Agency ■
(Unofficial Translation)

Opening Speech of Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than at the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong (Second Session)

Following is a brief summary of the opening speech delivered by Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than at the opening ceremony of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong (Second Session).

First of all, Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than thanked State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, ethnic leaders and personnel at the event.

Nowadays, the actions and voices of people of all regions and ethnic races expressing their desire for peace could be seen and heard. This showed the desire for peace of everyone in the Union. Because peace could not be achieved, the people, women and children faced great losses and many difficulties. Everyone knew that the country slipped from the top to the bottom of Southeast Asian countries because we were unable to undertake development work as there was no peace.

We had many resources that were required for national development. These resources existed



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than delivers a speech at the Opening Ceremony of Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong—second session. **PHOTO: MNA**

mostly in the regions of the ethnic nationals. But they were unable to use these resources effectively and even lost them because there was no peace. We were in a situ-

ation where our families did not even know where to live and what to eat. That was why everyone had a huge desire for peace.

Developing trust was the

most important thing in working for peace. Only when trust has been rebuilt will the long rooted suspicion and hate disappear. If there was a will for peace and a determined belief to achieve it, peace would surely be obtained although it might be difficult. Once peace was achieved, the federal union that all of us wanted could be established.

According to the Hluttaw's motto of “People's voice, Hluttaw's voice, people's will, Hluttaw's will, People's Expectation, Hluttaw's Implementation” the Hluttaw listened to the people's voice and implemented the hope and wishes of the people. The distinguished persons of the organizations attending the Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong (Second Session) were urged to listen to the voices of

the people and work with strong determination to attain the peace desired by the people. Forget and forgive the past events, take lesson from the miseries and adversities the people faced for ages, attain peace and form a federal union. Write a grand history of ourselves by attaining the invaluable peace and leave it as legacy for our future generation of nationals.

Now was the best time to achieve peace, he said, adding that people from organizations attending the peace conference are to discard their egos, suspicions and hates, find solutions with trust, unity and cooperation to achieve the peace desired by all nationals in order to form a Democratic Federal Union.—Myanmar News Agency ■
(Unofficial Translation)

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's speech at the Opening Ceremony of the Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong 2nd Session

Specially Invited Guests, Delegates, Observers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to see you here today, and may I wish you all health and happiness.

What I see here before me, in this hall, is the potential of our country. Here, together, are the foundations upon which we can build our dream of peace.

All who are participating in this Conference enjoy the privilege of, and bear the responsibility for, turning the dreams so long cherished by our people into reality. Peace and stability will enable our nation to realize its potential as a strong, prosperous democratic federal Union, a Union that will be the refuge and the pride of all our peoples.

The next few days will witness intense discussions, exchanges of views, debates and difficult decisions. This Conference will be a forum where hopes and fears can be aired, and from thence, ways and means found to fulfil the one and to dispel the other. If we all face this challenge, one of the greatest we have had to face in the history of our country, in a spirit of Union, with faith in our ability to forge an honourable future, our triumph will be a triumph not just for the Conference or for our nation but for all the peoples of our world who long for peace, who value harmony above dissension, friendship above enmity, prosperity above devastation.

At this Union Peace Conference we have now reached the stage where we are able to discuss the basic federal principles that are so important for our country and our people. Together we are embarking on a new chapter in our history that will help us to realise the long-held aspirations of our people.

At this opening ceremony I would like to apprise the people of our Union of our three paramount aims.

First is the goal that we are striving to achieve. Almost everyone accepts that the resolution to our country's long-running armed conflicts is a federal system that is acceptable to all. Our goal is therefore the "emergence of a democratic federal union based on democracy and federalism". Whether or not we will achieve this goal rests in all of our hands. It is a responsibility that falls on all of our shoulders. I do not think that any of us would wish to avoid, reject or shrink away from this responsibility. The energy, faith and effort that we put in to achieving peace can be a beacon of light for our country, our Union, and all of our peoples. Whether this light



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi speaks at the Opening Ceremony of the Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong 2nd Session. **PHOTO: AUNG SHINE OO**

will fade or brighten in the months and years ahead will determine Myanmar's place in this world.

This Conference will have to discuss and approve the basic principles that will form the foundations for the establishment of our democratic federal union. In the months since the completion of the first Union Peace Conference - 21st Century Panglong, we have worked to draw up these basic principles.

If we look back at our country's history, soon after the 20th Century Panglong Agreement and our Independence, we succumbed to the fires of internal conflict. For nearly seventy years, peace, stability and development in Myanmar have fallen victim to conflict. Our people over successive generations have seen their socio-economic situation and morale undermined, while our country's future has been gradually corroded. Even today, Myanmar has not yet been able to escape from the trap of poverty and conflict, and great efforts will be needed if we are to catch up with the rest of the world. Our people have been waiting for almost seventy years to witness the ray of hope for a better future that this conference represents.

The second issue is the signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. The NCA opened the door to the holding of this Union peace conference and to the emergence of political dialogue. The NCA itself came about through negotiation with our ethnic nationalities.

If we look back throughout our history, many different ceasefires have been signed, but there were no guarantees that the ceasefires would be maintained firmly and that there would be a subsequent political dialogue. The NCA came about through the belief that it was necessary to have an agreement, to which both sides were committed, that would provide such guarantees.

We were not part of the discussions while the NCA was being negotiated. But we fully accepted the duties and responsibilities of government, and after discussion and consultation with individuals and organisations involved in the peace process, we ourselves took this path.

Compared to peace processes elsewhere in the world, Myanmar's NCA, with its strong ceasefire process and guarantee of political dialogue, can be seen as an acceptable ceasefire agreement. But our intention is not to stop at the ceasefire stage. It is to achieve lasting peace through political dialogue. In our country's history, we have had many different types of ceasefire. But, as everyone is aware, for a variety of reasons these ceasefires fell apart. We recognise that ceasefire negotiations can address surface problems, but only political dialogue can address underlying grievances. As such the NCA itself is not the ultimate destination. The NCA opens the door to political dialogue. I would here like to take this opportunity to thank all those people who have worked hard to bring about the NCA that marks the start of this path.

Thirdly, I would like to discuss the principles on which we base dialogue. Our government was chosen by the people in the 2015 general elections. As our country moves forward, we determine the steps we need to take after discussions with all stakeholders, in accordance with our principle of national reconciliation. We will not resort to exerting pressure through populist politics, or coercing others through political means to achieve our goals. We will instead strive to reach an agreement that is acceptable to all, based on open, frank and inclusive dialogue.

As we negotiate to reach common agreements on issues where our views differ, we must recognise that courtesy

is not weakness, negotiation is not concession. Honesty, trust, awareness and wisdom are necessary for negotiations to succeed. We should not be afraid of negotiating with anybody. Rather than focusing on the problems that can exacerbate our differences, we must seek to identify the issues which can help to strengthen unity between us. Through dialogue, we can develop understanding, friendship, and empathy. We are better able to identify common ground if we meet face to face and negotiate, rather than if we listen from afar to the words and speeches of others and seek to draw conclusions from them. Our government, the Tatmadaw, ethnic armed organisations and political parties have had to negotiate long and patiently to identify basic federal principles.

As in peace dialogues across the world, during the first year of our new government we have experienced many highs and lows, progression and regression. But at today's conference, it can be said that our collective efforts have started to bear fruit. We have now held a series of dialogues based on the submissions resulting from national political dialogues and from various groups. The recent UPDJC meeting discussed and approved 41 basic principles that were accepted by all. Now we must all embark together, hand in hand, on the long journey ahead. Through unity, empathy, solidarity and the Panglong spirit, we will strive to overcome the challenges that we will encounter along the way.

As we look ahead, I hope that 2017 can be designated the "Year of Peace", and that as we pursue political dialogue, we can work towards identifying the principles that will form the basic foundations of our federal system. At the same time, we will keep open the door to dialogue with non-signatory ethnic armed organisations, and strive to bring them under the umbrella of the NCA.

In conclusion, I would like to express my deep appreciation to those who have made it possible for us to gather here today in hope and fellowship, our people who have been with us all along the way on this arduous road, and our friends who, in the timeless spirit of friendship, have been staunch in their understanding, steadfast in their trust and unflagging in their efforts to help us overcome the many difficulties with which we are faced. The best way in which we can thank them is by keeping true and resolute in our quest for peace, and this we shall do.

Thank you.

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Almost 5.6 million school uniforms to be provided free of charge

SCHOOL CHILDREN across the nation from kindergarten to the 4th standard will soon receive uniforms, textbooks and exercise books under the government's free education programme for the coming academic year.

In 2017-2018 academic year, the Ministry of Education is planning to offer nearly 5.6 million traditional Myanmar school uniforms to primary students, including 1,352,880 uniforms to kindergarten students, 1,151,749 to 1st standard students, 1,078,850 to 2nd standard students, 1,047,378 to 3rd standard students and 969,126 to 4th standard students.

The ministry will also deliver 1,170,000 textbooks plus 567,847 notebooks to 1st stand-

ard students, 1,094,811 textbooks plus 531,398 notebooks to 2nd standard students, 1,062,709 textbooks plus 515,661 notebooks to 3rd standard students and 982,892 textbooks plus 476,535 notebooks to 4th standard students.

Students in the 5th to the 10th standard will also be presented notebooks free of charge.

Also, students do not need to pay fees for the parent-teacher association's fund, the sports fund or the library fund during the school enrollment period that begins on 25 May and ends on 31 May.

According to the latest 2014 census, about 80 per cent of the country's 10-year-olds attend school.—200 ■



Uniforms, textbooks and note books will be provided to students free of charge for the coming academic year. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

Myanmar free of elephantiasis by 2020

THE Ministry of Health and Sports held a meeting in Mingalar Thiri Hall in Nay Pyi Taw on Monday to discuss the 2016 elephantiasis project and where to provide drugs against the debilitating disease in 2017.

To root out elephantiasis by 2020, the health department will provide multi-drug treatments for five years to all people, the-

oretically reducing the occurrence of elephantiasis to one in 1,000 patients, said Dr. Than Win, the Director-General of the Public Health Department under the Ministry of Health and Sports.

The meeting was also attended by medical superintendents and officials from the department under the Ministry of Health and Sports and depart-

ment heads and officials from states and regions.

The health department has provided anti-elephantiasis drugs in Thayet and Minbu districts in Magway Region since 2001. The health department has also provided the drugs in Sagaing, Mandalay regions and Rakhine and Chin states in 2012, Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon, Bago, Ay-

eyawady, Taninthayi regions and Kayin and Mon states in 2013.

The health department will stop providing the drug in Kalay, Tamu, Katha, Pyin Oo Lwin, Minbu, Myitkyina, Bhamo and Nyaung U districts out of 45 districts in 2017. The other remaining 37 districts will be provided with the drug starting from October 2017.—200 ■



A man packs medicine at a pharmacy. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

BPI pharmacies to be opened in five towns

State-owned BPI pharmacies will be opened in five towns including Nay Pyi Taw in the coming months, according to the Union Minister for Industry.

The BPI pharmacies will be opened at Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Taunggyi, Magway and Monywa. More recently, BPI pharmacies were opened in Insein and Pansodan township in Yangon. The authority

is planning to open similar BPI pharmacies in South Okkalapa, North Okkalapa townships, Bosompat street and other townships.

To open the BPI pharmacies in every township, the state-owned BPI pharmaceutical factory located in Yangon's northern Insein township is doubling its production, it is learnt.—Min Thu ■

One stop Services to be provided for HIV/AIDS patients in 85 townships

The Ministry of Health and Sports will provide one stop services in 85 townships which has the highest occurrence of HIV/ AIDS, it is learnt.

Moreover, the ministry will conduct the HIV prevention activities in 90 townships and create the good environments and resting centers in 151 townships, said U Tun Nyunt Oo, project director of Anti-AIDS/anti-VD. Over 10,000 HIV infected patients in 2016, down from over 30,000 HIV infected patients in 2000.

HIV infection mostly occurs among the age group 20-40. The rest of the HIV/AIDS infections are 0.6 per cent being children infected from mother; 8.5 per cent were drug users,

14.5 per cent were sexually transmitted and 11.6 per cent were homosexuals.

The government provides the ART drugs which stop the progression of AIDS starting from 2015 under the anti Anti-AIDS/ Anti-VD programme. Currently, there are 99 ART center across the country and 140 ART center in township levels. According to 2016 statistics, there were over 250,000 (0.6 per cent of population) HIV patients. To control the HIV/AIDS, INGO and NGO will collect the data to provide the treatment to the HIV/AIDS patients. The Ministry of Health, and Sports aims at ending the threats of the HIV across the country by 2030.—200 ■



A taxi driver working for Uber uses the Uber app in his car in Yangon on 11 May. PHOTO: REUTERS

More foreign taxi service companies likely to enter Yangon market

FOLLOWING Grab and Uber's entrance into Myanmar, more foreign taxi service companies are expected to enter Yangon market, said economists.

Currently, there are two foreign taxi services — Singapore-based ride-hailing platform Grab and US-based Uber — while the local taxi services

are Hello Cabs and Oway Ride.

There are over 70,000 taxis in Yangon and only 20 per cent of the population uses taxi service, according to a survey of JICA.

The strong points of taxi service companies are the ease in hailing a taxi, a smooth payment system, and safety of commuters. Commuters are

expecting to have more convenient transportation with foreign taxis entering the domestic market.

The Southeast Asian taxi market in 2015 earned US\$1.5 billion, whereas the income from the taxi market is expected to hit up to US\$13 billion by 2025.—200 ■

Myanmar businessmen and China Co cooperate for seed distribution

A company from China (Taipei) and Myanmar businessmen will cooperate to bolster seed distribution, said U Min Zaw Oo, the director general of Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.

GAC (Myanmar) Limited from China (Taipei) and Myanmar entrepreneurs are reportedly joining forces to conduct seed production and distribution, which plays a crucial role in local agriculture.

Primarily, production and marketing of coffee beans (Arabica) and vegetable seeds will be conducted in Pyin Oo Lwin, Mandalay Region.

Eighty per cent of produc-

tion will go to foreign markets, while 20 per cent will be sold domestically.

The joint venture with foreign investment is permitted to enable the local agriculture sector to export seeds. GAP (Myanmar) Company will put forward 80 per cent of investment, while Myanmar businessmen will invest 20 per cent, with a total investment of about US\$1 million.

Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) permitted joint venture investment of GAC (Myanmar) limited for production and marketing of coffee beans (Arabica) and vegetable seeds, according to MIC meeting held on 19th May.—200 ■



Drumstick tree seeds. PHOTO: NWE NWE TUN

Oil and Gas sector topped in FDI

The oil and gas sector ranked first in foreign investment sectors with overall investments of US\$22.41 billion in 154 projects as of 30th April 2017, according to the statistics of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The oil and gas sector accounted for over 31 per cent of foreign direct investment (FDI), followed by the power sector in second place with investments of over US\$20.5 billion. The transportation and

communication sector and the manufacturing sector follow behind the power sector, each with investments of over US\$8.2 billion.

The real estate sector received FDI of over US\$3.7 billion, while the mining sector attained over US\$2.89 billion so far. The hotel and tourism sector placed seventh with investments of US\$2.85 billion in 68 projects.

Additionally, foreign investments are also entering other

sectors such as livestock and fisheries, agriculture, industrial estate, construction and other services. A total of US\$71 billion in FDI flowed into the country so far, with over US\$656 million in April 2017. This FY 2017-2018 is expected to attain US\$6 billion of FDI, it is learnt.

Nearly US\$1 billion of FDI was permitted to invest in Myanmar as of the third week of May during the current FY, according to a recent meeting held at DICA.—Htet Myat ■

Plan underway to set up peas processing plants

INDIA's merchants are planning to establish pea processing plants in Myanmar and export value-added products instead of importing the various peas produced from Myanmar, said U Zaw Min Win, the president of Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI).

The Southern India Cham-

ber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI) and UMFCCI entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 3rd May, promoting bilateral trade.

Indian merchants stressed the importance of valued-added pea processing plants, shoes, handbags, etc. The trade value between Myanmar and India in the 2015-2016 Fiscal Year

reached about US\$2 billion, which was up by only two per cent compared to that of FY 2014-2015.

Currently, Myanmar's agricultural products are mainly flowing into China's market. India has made attempt to gain a market share in Myanmar to fulfill the country's requirements.—200 ■

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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

သတင်းစာများကို ဤဆိုင်များတွင်ဝယ်ယူဖတ်ရှုနိုင်ပါပြီ

● Market Place by City Mart (6.5 Mile)	● City Mart (Junction Square)
● Market Place by City Mart (Damasidi Road)	● City Mart (Junction Maw Tin)
● City Mart (Aung San Stadium)	● City Mart (Sule Square)
● City Mart (47th street)	● City Mart (Star City - Thanlyin)
● City Mart (Yankin)	● City Mart (Waizayandar)
● City Mart (China Town)	● City Mart (Hledan)
● City Mart (Myay Ni Gone)	● City Mart (Myanmar Plaza)
● City Mart (FMI)	● Ocean North Point (9 mile)
	● Ocean Shwegonedine

The greetings extended by Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing

OFFICIALS of the State, personnel of the respective armed ethnic groups and local and foreign guests attending this second session of the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong with full confidence, I wish you all health and happiness.

First and foremost, let me express my belief that the ultimate aim of the conference is to generate progress through peace and stability by restoring it in terms of politics and security after removing the years-long misjudgments and misunderstandings among our ethnic peoples who have been living in the Union in harmony since yore and who have built the Union together and the armed conflicts that have sprung up from those wrong opinions. Foundation is an essential element of every action and structure. Only the firm and durable foundation ensures their success and progress. I hope you all here will fully realize the aspiration of the entire people after firmly laying the foundation of peace, which is the country's dire need.

Peace and stability can be found as the core of every developed country. As for our country armed conflicts must be ended without fail to restore peace and stability. We must prioritize the work of restoring internal peace in our cohesive march towards the multiparty democracy under the unified goal. During the first five-year term of the multiparty democracy era, the former government started extending olive branch to armed groups on 18 August 2011. Accepting the armed conflicts as the political issue whose answer can be found through the political dialogue, the government, the Tatmadaw and the armed ethnic groups met again and again with much patience for days and months to solve the problem. As a result, the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement-NCA could be signed with eight armed ethnic groups on 15 October 2015. Coordination meetings for the NCA started with participation of 21 ethnic armed organizations. At the time of signing, only eight ethnic armed organizations signed the NCA due to various reasons. Therefore, it can be said that subjects and facts included in the NCA have been agreed by ethnic armed organizations.

The emergence of NCA was based on two concepts proposed by ethnic armed organizations. The first one was that as the government, the Tatmadaw and ethnic armed organizations which have ceased fire had agreements signed by the organizations individually, it needed to have a national level ceasefire agreement in order to start political dialogues at the national level. The second one was the ceasefire agreements in successive eras were based on the stage of ending attacks. As there was no exact process for monitoring the agreements and no guarantees and agreements for continuously holding political dialogues after ending



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing speaks at the Opening Ceremony of the Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong 2nd Session. **PHOTO: MNA**

fire, many events happened for cancelling ceasefire processes. As such, the second concept indicated that it needed to comprehensively implement these points on the time schedule. That is why it can be found that the NCA fully granted for these concepts. Mutual trust is of great importance between both sides in implementing the peace processes. Such a "trust" is also a great impetus for achieving success in the peace processes. The NCA consists of guarantees for politics, ethnic affairs, religious affairs and security which can grant for the trust, and the processes of discussions, coordination and seeking solutions which is essence of democracy can be obviously seen in the NCA.

Opposite of "trust" is "worry" which may cause the bad hindrance to implementation of the peace processes. I would like to clearly explain the NCA is not an accord to surrender the ethnic armed organizations. In this regard, principles in the Chapter I of the NCA mention that it needs to establish new political culture for holding discussions and seeking solutions in order to end armed conflicts and for solving the political problems with the political ways without using military ones so that it is necessary to carry out ceasefire the whole nation on the first priority. However, as any democratic country does not allow demanding political rights with holding arms, it needs to perform DDR, SSR processes according to the reconciliation programme for security measure resulted from political dialogues in line with the NCA's political roadmap. If they want to actually secure the peace and walk on the way of multi-party democracy which is essence of democracy, they will solve all things peacefully. It can be seen that only when armed conflicts ended, were political dialogues held in any democratic country in realizing democracy. So, I would like to say trustful and brave performances with guarantees from the NCA will create smooth peace processes.

Furthermore, I would like to explain the stand of Tatmadaw over the State and

the people for the peace. The Tatmadaw is not a political organization. Only then, will political parties and people's representatives chosen by the people perform the politics. The Tatmadaw is cooperating in politics, economy, and administrative reforms of the country in line with law, with an eye to attaining three objectives—stability of the State, national unity, and socio-economic development of the people. The standpoint of Tatmadaw on peace process is to stand firmly on the NCA path, which is the peace strategy of our country. In implementing NCA, the Tatmadaw will adhere to its six-point peace policy. I would like to reiterate what I said at the NCA Anniversary last year that the six-point peace policy of the Tatmadaw is its 'consciousness' developed from peace efforts in successive periods as well as the 'reality' for the current peace process. For the sake of permanent peace, the termination of clashes and armed conflicts is the dearest wish of the Tatmadaw. In accordance with objectives and intentions of NCA, we always keep the peace's door open and extend a welcome to ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) which should participate.

Today, we face not only the problem of internal peace, but also external threats. Therefore, now is the time we are in critical need of solid unity and seamless unanimity among the government, Parliament, Tatmadaw, and entire national people, which are the major forces of the country. All the national people are responsible to protect our motherland. Therefore, we need to boost more and more forces including the Tatmadaw that can protect the country. We have found that some actions sap the defense power of the country. As unity can bolster up the 'strength' of the country, disunity can also weaken this 'strength'. The strength of the country lies within, and we therefore must build the united power of all institutions inside the country. I would like to say that Tatmadaw is actively joining the national reconciliation process initiated by the

government besides peace process.

After the NCA was signed, the Union government and NCA signatories, according to objectives and intentions of the NCA and the political roadmap, developed framework for political dialogue and joint monitoring committees (JMCs) through negotiations. The Tatmadaw and ethnic armed organizations have also adopted through negotiation ceasefire regulations and military code of conduct. In the current multi-party democracy system, the Tatmadaw has been engaging in the peace-making processes constantly for more than 2,000 days (69 months) since the date (18 August, 2011) on which the ethnic armed groups were invited to the peace table to achieve the eternal peace. We have been holding a series of discussions and negotiations since the first five-year tenure of the government until the second five-year tenure of the government. We carried out the works for further cementing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement and the matters pertaining to political dialogues step by step.

Ethnic armed groups which have signed the NCA station in the previous conflict-affected areas. But the fact that these regions see development after the NCA has been signed is a dramatic result of the NCA. Both sides could reduce the number of conflicts to a greater extent and there are nearly no clashes in those regions. Trilateral trust, understanding and cooperation between the armed groups and locals could be promoted. We need to continue working on it with added momentum as well as to spread it to other organizations. For that, special emphasis should be placed on the implementation of interim-period plans described in the NCA. It can be seen that the plans have opened the door for ethnic armed groups to coordinate with local authorities in their respective ceasefire regions during the peace dialogue period, in accord with the existing rules and laws. Locals would enjoy the fruits of peace only when the regional development tasks are effectively implemented in ceasefire areas during the ceasefire period through cooperation with local authorities, in accordance with the existing rules and laws. Only then, would they have a trust in peace-making process. This is the strength for our peace-making process. Nothing is as important as peace at a time when the country is working on the peace-making process. For that, it needs to avoid the matters which may lead to misunderstanding at the first place, interference in the government's administrative works and going beyond the capacity.

In implementing peace making processes, the political roadmap described in the NCA is an exit for the Union to be exactly followed by all those involved.

SEE PAGE-7

Saw Mutu Sae Poe, KNU Chairperson delivers opening address at 2nd Session of UPC-21st Century Panglong

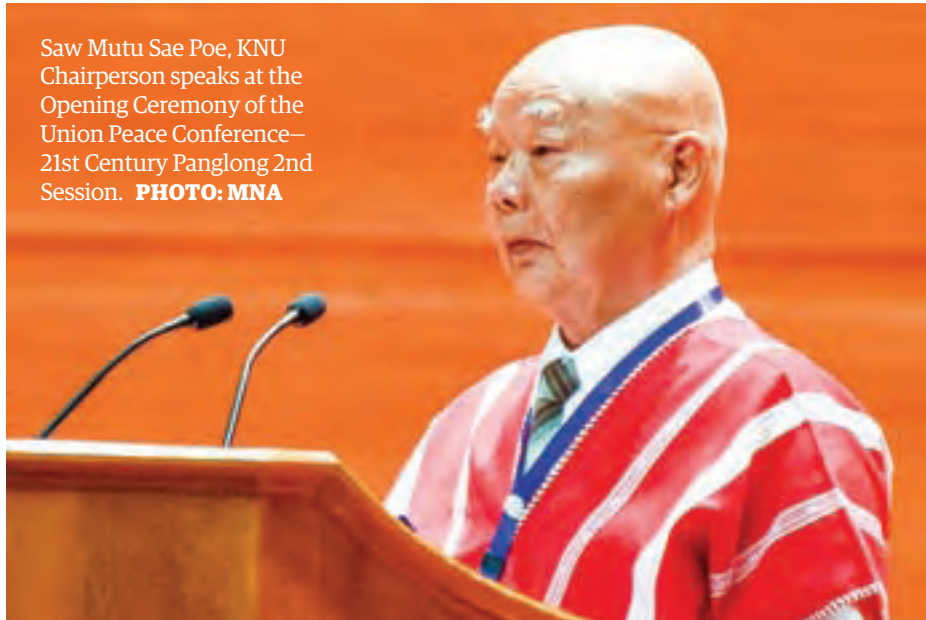
The opening address made by Saw Mutu Sae Poe, Chairman of the Karen National Union at the 2nd Session of Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong is as follows:

Firstly I send my heartfelt wish for you to be blessed with physical and mental health and wealth, the State leaders, Hluttaw representatives, leaders of the Tatmadaw, political parties' leaders, national ethnic armed groups' leaders, Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations and diplomats, representatives from international organisations and representative leaders from various sectors and groups, present at the 2nd meeting of UPC-21st Century Panglong, on behalf of the leaders representing national ethnic armed groups.

The first meeting of the UPC was held at the time of the former government's reign, laying down a foundation for a peace process. During the reign of the incumbent NLD-ruling government, all-inclusive peace processes were targeted to commence, and 2nd UPC was held. At the present 3rd time (the second session of the 21st Century Panglong), the meeting is being held for achieving basic principles on political agreement which can be accepted by all.

Holding the 2nd session of 21st Century Panglong is in compliance with the prescriptions included in the NCA and it is of great political need. And it has

Saw Mutu Sae Poe, KNU Chairperson speaks at the Opening Ceremony of the Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong 2nd Session. **PHOTO: MNA**



reached an important stage as it is implementing the fact of holding political dialogues included in the NCA. We must acknowledge the fact that we can manage to build mutual trust among us after overcoming difficulties through patience and repeatedly made negotiations. It is not just enough for us to mutually understand. The whole populace needs to understand. Accordingly, it is urgently needed to get favourable results from the present peace process, as expected by all the national people, because smooth political transformation of Myanmar and success of peace process can be said to be likened to the head and tail of a coin.

So it is necessary to strengthen trust among participants. Plus, we wish for the emergence of mutual trust among those who did not take part in the peace process yet. We hope results which will come out from the present second session of UPC-21st Century Panglong will help further the peace process. We are required to take inclusion of all those concerned into consideration without excluding any others. According to our experiences, we have learned that three basic foundations need to be laid down to solve political problems through political dialogue.

First, in political meetings, stakehold-

ers - the government, Hluttaw, Tatmadaw, institutions, national ethnic armed groups who signed NCA, other armed groups, political parties, and representatives from social societies are those who need to take part.

Secondly, it is necessary to create a situation free from any influences so that thorough negotiations can be made. It will be difficult to get long-lasting peace if we do not have sufficient preparation, exchange of news and information and satisfactory discussions among respective organisations. Lastly, it is necessary to hold political discussions depending upon race, place and matters. We think that hastily-made political negotiations cannot help the national reconciliation and it cannot solve any problems.

I want to stress that there are still other national ethnic armed groups who are stakeholders in building up a future federal nation. We cannot solve the problem covering the whole nation with only those who signed the NCA.

In conclusion, long-lasting peace which will come out of the implementation of the NCA, and national reconciliation must be a win-win situation. I hereby conclude my speech with my heartfelt wish that we can discuss so that meaningful agreement will be reached, for national consolidation and peaceful cooperation.

Thank you very much.—Myanmar News Agency ■ (Unofficial Translation)

The greetings extended by C-in-C of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing

FROM PAGE-6

The remaining peace-making processes can be done trustfully only when the ongoing armed conflicts come to an end. In practice, the current peace-making processes go beyond the basic principles of the NCA and the roadmap. In cooperation with respective organisations, the Tatmadaw sought the solution to the problems, with a burning desire to get the peace, trust and understanding that respective organisations want peace like the Tatmadaw and sympathy towards the armed groups of the two sides and locals who bear the brunt of armed conflicts on the ground.

So the preliminary agreements were reached at the 10th UPDJC meeting. Such an agreement with the real requirements of the State and wishes of national races has resulted from the active participation and genuine goodwill of all stakeholders. By nature, all human beings have their respective desires. But I would like to say

that without putting our own desires in the fore, we must cultivate the spirit of constantly protecting Our Three Main National Causes, the absolute requirement of the State and the people, and pursuing our path to multi-party democracy.

It is agreed in the NCA that we will build a democratic federal Union with the results from political dialogue based on freedom, equality and justice, Panglong spirit and the rights of self-administration and guarantees with the aim of ensuring non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty in building a future state. It is the goal of NCA which has already covered all the points demanded by national races.

Ignoring this and pursuing other or the second way will be an attempt to loathe the establishment of a Union based on peace, democracy and federalism. As such, we have to assume that the attempt is tantamount to grabbing

power and splitting from the Union through armed struggle line. Studying 72 papers submitted at the previous conference, we came to notice that the discussions, activities and basic concepts of some ethnic groups are far beyond the federal system, which is the right of autonomy. Such acts go against the desires and interest of the people who have high expectations of the democracy cause and peace process.

As an institution responsible for protecting the interests of the State and the people, the Tatmadaw has to face any organisation committing destructive acts in line with its responsibility.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the Tatmadaw will actively participate in the peace process with our loyalty to the State and the people and duty conscientiousness based on responsibility, accountability and transparency by adhering to Myanmar's peace strategic NCA and the Tatmadaw's six-point peace policy.

Thank you all. ■

First-day meeting of Union Peace Conference (Second Session) begins

The first-day meeting of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong (Second Session) began yesterday afternoon at Myanmar International Convention Centre 2 in Nay Pyi Taw.

Dr. Tin Myo Win, Chairman of the Peace Commission, delivered an opening speech and presided over the meeting together with co-chairs U Nyan Win, Lt-Gen Tin Maung Win, Khaing Soe Naing Aung and U Saw Tin Win.

Members of secretariat of the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) clarified the format of the conference and submitted a work process report of the UPDJC. Afterward, a political party group, a hluttaw representative group, a Tatmadaw group, a government representative group and an ethnic armed organisation group held discussions.

In the evening, the participants of the conference met with local and foreign media in MICC-2 and explained the work done in the first day meeting of the congress.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Clear process of political dialogues is essential to end decades of civil war

Tha Sein

THE Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong (Second session), a high-stakes initiative to end decades of debilitating civil war, is being held in Nay Pyi Taw with the ultimate aim of ensuring the emergence of a democratic federal Union based on democracy and federalism.

The ongoing meeting, where hopes and fears can be aired, and from thence, ways and means found to fulfill the one and to dispel the other, witnessed a series of intense discussions, exchange of views, debates

and difficult decisions. Therefore, it has become more essential to have a clear process of political dialogues, non-contradictory understanding, and progress and changes our people have been waiting for almost seventy years to witness.

However, it is important that all the stakeholders need to be well aware of the fact that the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement-NCA is not an accord to surrender the ethnic armed organizations but is to establish new political culture for holding discussions and seeking solutions in order to end armed conflicts.

Representatives to the conference have now reached the stage where they are able to discuss the basic federal principles and they are embarking upon a new chapter in their history that will help them to realize the long-held aspirations of their people, and they are urged to strive to reach an agreement that is acceptable to all, based on open, frank and inclusive dialogue.

As peace process used to experience many highs and lows, progression and regression, all delegates are to be staunch in their understanding, steadfast in their trust and unflagging

in their efforts to overcome the many difficulties ahead and to ensure that prospects for ending the war will not remain dim.

Since the outcomes and upshots of this gathering would be a supporting mechanism for the remaining stakeholders to join in and will be pivotal to the democratically elected administration to go forwards, we firmly believe that all the participants will discuss and negotiate with the right attitude towards a change for the new generation, that is, to establish a genuine federal union based on unity and coexistence. ■

2nd Session of Union Peace Conference, 21st Century Panglong—Reflection of National Brethren's Desires

Maung Thaung Win
(Ex-Diplomat)

THE word, "Peace" pleases every individual's heart. An environment of peace & stability brings about rule of law and development. All developed democratic countries across the world had already strengthened peace in their countries, hence making concerted efforts to gain eternal peace among the government, Tatmadaw and armed national ethnic groups, with a view to building up a federal democratic union with full peace & stability.

Eternal peace is a major root for the development of a country. It will be of a vital need to build up mutual trust in honest and straightforward ways by getting rid of doubts among our national brethren so as to acquire the eternal peace of vitality.

Eternal Peace

Developed countries in the world reached present stages of living free from armed conflicts because of having built up eternal peace. In other word, we will still be far away from eternal peace so long as doubts are conceived among citizens.

Armed conflicts which happened since before gaining the Independence had lasted for over 70 years in Myanmar. Accordingly every citizen is responsible for gaining internal peace, especially the government, Tatmadaw and respective armed national ethnic groups. Though concerned should find solutions through negotiations for the sake of the nation and its people without prioritizing their personal interests.

Successive governments which governed Myanmar made peace talks with armed national ethnic groups. Due to making peace talks continually based on mutual trust, understanding, patience and forgiveness among those concerned, the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) could be signed on 15th October 2017.

Though it was named Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, there are still armed national ethnic groups remaining to sign NCA. Provided that the remaining groups will continue to sign NCA it will be of great benefit for all the nationals.

1st Session

To my great elation, the incumbent government is laying great stress on achieving eternal peace nationwide. Especially, 1st meeting of UPC, 21st Century Panglong was successfully held from 31st August 2016 to 3rd September 2016, in which our national brethren managed to freely and openly discuss their outlooks and attitudes.

The UPC is a dawn of hope for displaced people and those living in warring areas. Especially, good results from the UPC will become invaluable heritages of peace for new generations.

2nd Session

UPC—21st Century Panglong's 2nd session will also be held for 5 days from 24th May to 28th May 2017, in Nay Pyi Taw. Especially, 21 facts achieved under the title of 6 political sectors, 10 facts in 7 economic sectors, 4 facts in social sectors and 6 facts in land and natural environment sectors, 41 facts

altogether which were born of UPDJC meeting held on 12th May 2017, are to be submitted to 2nd session of UPC—21st Century Panglong for approval.

And, a total of 21 facts agreed under 6 political categories are the federal principles which had never been achieved in Myanmar history. These are for national brethren to be elated. I firmly believe the UPC will bring about constructive results.

Desire can achieve success

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor addressed at the meeting of UPDJC held on 12th May 2017, "As regards the peace process, success or failure depends wholly upon desires,

but nothing apart from desire. 4 causes of success start from desires. If we really desire, peace can be achieved in any ways. Otherwise, we can delay peace process. Do we have actually desires? Only if we have genuine desires, can peace be achieved through our enthusiasm, determination and acquired knowledge added to our desires."

Armed conflicts have been taking places in Myanmar for many decades. So, if armed groups really want to bring about the benefits of their national ethnic brethren and they are really patriotic ones, they should sign NCA, without delay. Had they delayed the peace process, by demanding for unreasonable and one-sided claims, innocent nationals would suffer a lot. If peace is promptly achieved, our people will enjoy the fruits of peace, stability and development overnight.

Especially, armed national ethnic groups remaining to sign NCA are necessary firstly to sign NCA, so that they can take part in political negotiation round-tables, thence move to the process of building the federal democratic union.

Firm determination

Political dialogues and negotiations have been being made for over 7 decades. It should not be delayed any longer. It needs to be implemented with firm resolution. Simultaneously we have honesty and openness to relay inheritance of peace for our future generation. Especially we are urgently required to prove with our work done, that we want to serve our country and our people.

SEE PAGE 9

POSCO Yoewa Steel Bridge benefits people in Hmawbi Township

A steel bridge constructed with the contribution of POSCO 1% Foundation, a foundation operating by 1% of POSCO Group employee's salary, completed in Yoewa Village, Hmawbi Township, yesterday.

The Yoewa steel bridge is a prefabricated structure and it was designed and manufactured in Korea and assembled in Myanmar.

Yoewa village is a one of 100 villages KOICA is working on Samaeul (New Village) movement.

The wooden bridge which had been located in steel bridge site, was so old that it had holes on wooden plates.

The newly built steel bridge is durable enough to secure safe commute of children even in rainy season and can withstand trucks.

The new bridge was commissioned into service yesterday, with the attendance of more than 150 people including Deputy Director-General Aye



A man and young girl crossing the Yoewa steel bridge built from 1% of POSCO Group employee's salary. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH**

Ko Ko from Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation of Myanmar, Chief Representative Shin Eui-Chul from KOICA (Korea International Cooperation Agency) Myanmar, Deputy Director General U San Myint from MIC (Myanmar Investment Commission), employees of POSCO group and villagers, gathered for Bridge construction completion ceremony to celebrate the completion of the

project.

POSCO Executive Vice President, Kwak Jeong-Shik said "I sincerely appreciate all the villagers who cared for our project and helped construction. And I hope POSCO Steel bridge can help villagers' daily life for long time." in his speech. POSCO is a steel making company in South Korea and POSCO Group is doing many businesses in Myanmar.— GNLM ■

Japan's Calsonic Kansei opens development base in Myanmar

A local subsidiary of Japanese auto parts manufacturer Calsonic Kansei Corp. has set up a software development facility in Myanmar's commercial capital of Yangon to meet growing demand for electronic control components, parts and software development.

Calsonic Kansei Engineering Yangon Co., known as CK Engineering, opened the facility Friday with initial investment of \$250,000.

Hirofumi Aoki, president of CK Engineering, said Myanmar has become the third development base for the company after Japan and Shanghai, citing the Southeast Asian country's escalating software demand and skilled human resources.

"We considered Vietnam and Cambodia as candidates but we chose Yangon because of the diligence of the Myanmar people, the large number of

IT engineers graduating from universities and the high Japanese-language education level," he said.

In cooperation with the Japan and Shanghai bases, the Yangon facility will develop software for Calsonic Kansei's auto components such as body control modules, air-conditioners, meters and lithium-ion battery controllers.

CK Engineering, which has about 130 engineers in Shanghai, has employed 23 engineers in Myanmar, including two Japanese experts, and plans to triple the number in three years.

Calsonic Kansei, established in 1938, has about 50 manufacturing centers all over the world. Its major clients are Japanese and foreign automobile manufacturers, including UD Trucks, General Motors, Renault and Volkswagen.— Kyodo News ■

2nd Session of Union Peace Conference, 21st Century...

FROM PAGE 8

Now, our readers are living in peace together with your families and relatives without anxiety and worry, in war-free zones. Contrariwise, displaced people in refugee camps are suffering a lot, passing their miserable hours daily. Children losing their future without having an access to the acquisition of education, helpless females and aged & feeble ones are hoping for peace, with great expectation. It had been a long time since they had been suffering great sorrow.

Genuine Patriotism

Myanmar gained its Independence for many decades but living standards of national ethnic people in warring areas are still very low. We all are responsible to enjoy every benefit by joining hand in hand with these innocent people. For this, we should implement the tasks of peace process with true patriotism, but not just for show.

If the incumbent government can bring about the peace which the whole populace longed for, it will be able to make Myanmar stand tall in the midst of the global countries. At the time of taking office of the democratic government, even superpowers came to make relation with Myanmar, acknowledging its importance. If a political system of a country is well-organized, its people will be prosperous and contrariwise if the system is not in a favourable condition, flames of civil wars will be burning, causing the country and its people to ashes.

Straightforward & open discussions

What ever it was in the past, the incumbent governing figures, bodies and organizations should perform their duties with genuine intentions for the sake of the country's future.

In doing so, it is necessary to carefully avoid the matters that can harm 3

responsibilities we must keep in our mind. Common destination of the whole populace is the acquisition of eternal peace, that being so there will be no reason for not achieving peace if we will negotiate with honest and open minds.

Provided that we will be able to build up the eternal peace by keeping ceasefire, Myanmar will develop so much so that its status will rise up to the high level of the global totem pole beyond the regional boundary.

Voices of bombardment and fire-shooting in border areas will go silent, and simultaneously school bells will toll across these areas. If so, it will be a welcoming one for the nation.

As the infrastructure of the border areas—matters on education, health, transports and so on, will be able to be built in these areas, due to coming out of hibernation under the threatening clouds of war. In accord with these favorable conditions, strengthened foundations

for future generations will be able to be created. As the saying, "With rising water, beauty of hyacinth in the lake will be more pleasant" goes it is dead sure that all citizens in the country with developed infrastructures will have high IQ, with the acquisition of basic education and knowledge enough.

Imminent prospect of future

Here, I want to assert that all are nationals born of the Union, regardless of whether they are living under cease-fire agreement or not. If our national brethren will thoroughly discuss the pros & cons between each other, our country will reach the destination of peace in the very near future.

To sum it up, eternal peace is of vital importance for all the nationals born of the Union. Accordingly, the government, Tatmadaw and armed national ethnic groups who have signed truce are urgently making efforts

for gaining internal peace. And it is time up for armed national ethnic groups which are reluctant to sign NCA to take part in the framework of political dialogues.

It should not be delayed any longer without reasonable causes. Apart from their own egos and pride, interest and benefits of the region and its people should be prioritized. Especially, respective persons and organizations should find out solution by negotiating openly with good intentions.

On 24th May, 2017 2nd session of Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong is going to be held till 28th May. 41 facts agreed at the UPDJC's meeting need to be approved unanimously, so that eternal peace in the country will be brought about. However it is, I hereby want to urge to build up a federal democratic union, the edifice of our national brethren's great expectation.—*Translated by Khin Maung Oo (Tada-U)*■

A second chance for peace

FROM PAGE-1

“But at today’s conference, it can be said that our collective efforts have started to bear fruit.”

One of the most positive signs came days before the conference began when it was reported that several ethnic groups that had recently clashed with government troops, and whose attendance had been in question, would be joining the negotiations.

Three previously excluded groups — the Kokang, Ta’ang and Arakan armed ethnic groups — are attending the Union Peace Conference for the first time as special guests.

The development drew praise from expert analysts.

“The fact that there will be more of them in the room is a positive development”, said Yangon-based analyst and former United Nations diplomat Richard Horsey.

In her opening speech yesterday, the State Counsellor said she had three main goals for the conference.

Ending decades of near-constant civil war and then establishing a federal union is her top priority, which she sees as key to unlocking the resource-rich country’s potential and guaranteeing basic development for its more than 50 million people.

“Almost everyone agrees that the resolution to our country’s long-running armed conflicts is a federal system that is acceptable to all,” she said yesterday in her opening speech. “Our goal is therefore the emergence of a democratic federal union based on democracy and federalism.”

The State Counsellor’s second goal would be for all parties to sign a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).

“Our intention is not to stop at the ceasefire stage,” she said. “It is to achieve lasting peace through political dialogue.



Delegates to the Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong 2nd Session pose for documentary photo at the Myanmar International Convention Centre—2 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

The NCA opens the door to political dialogue.”

The final goal of the conference, the State Counsellor said, would be to discuss the principles on which political dialogue will be based.

“Our government was chosen by the people in the 2015 general elections. As our country moves forward, we decide on the steps we need to take after discussions with all stakeholders, in accordance with our principle of national reconciliation”, she said.

“I want to hope for the best. But this is not an easy process,” an ethnic Shan woman told Reuters in Yangon. “No side wants to change their current position and lose or reduce their power and opportunities.”

But the State Counsellor said peace could be achieved if all participants kept an open mind and were amenable to negotiation.

“The next few days will witness intense discussions, exchanges of views, debates and difficult decisions”, she said. “This conference will be a forum where hopes and fears can be aired, and from thence, ways and means found to fulfil the one and dispel the other”.

The opening ceremony of the second session of the Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong was attended by President U Htin Kyaw, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Vice-Presidents U Myint Swe and U Henry Van Thio, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint, Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than, Chief Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the Constitutional Tribunal U Myo Nyunt, Chairman of the Union Election Commission U Hla Thein, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, deputy speakers of Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw, the chairman of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission, Union ministers, Union Attorney-General, Union Auditor-General, the chairman of the Union Civil Service Selection Board, the chairman of the Peace Commission, Chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Council Dr Myo Aung, chief ministers of regions and states, Chief of Staff (Army, Navy and Air), senior military officers, chairmen of Hluttaw committees, representatives of the

government, Hluttaw and the Tatmadaw, representatives of the ethnic armed organisations, chairmen and representatives of the political parties, representatives of the signatories to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement including Chin National Front (CNF), All Burma Students’ Democratic Front (ABSDF), Arakan Liberation Party (ALP), Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS), Karen National Union (KNU), Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army (Peace Council) (KNU/KNLA {PC}), Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), Pa-O National Liberation Organization (PNLO), and representatives of non-signatories to the NCA including Wa National Unity Party, United Wa State Army (UWSP/UWSA), Arakan Army (AA), Ta-ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA), Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army-MNDAA, Shan State Progressive Party-SSPP/SSA and Kachin Independence Organization/Kachin Independence Army, diplomats and personnel from the UN agencies and non-governmental organisations.

The conference resumes today and will continue until Sunday. — GNLM/Reuters contributed to this report ■

Opening speech of U Than Htay at Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong (Second Session)

Following is a brief of the opening speech delivered by U Than Htay, Chairman, Union Solidarity and Development Party at the opening ceremony of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong (Second Session).

Today’s Union Peace Conference is the result of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). Nationwide Ceasefire Coordinating Team (NCCT) representing 16 armed ethnic organizations met with government’s UPWC about 30 times in 17 months and NCA Single Text (draft) could be signed in the presence of the President on 31 March 2015. After stages of discussion and negotiation, NCA

was finally agreed on 7 August 2015 and leaders of 8 armed ethnic organizations signed the NCA at Nay Pyi Taw in the presence of foreign and local witnesses on 15 October 2015. It is not the right way to talk peace while fighting according to the saying “you can enter my hut if you want to talk with me but leave your sword outside the hut”. It is absolute necessity to stop fighting and follow the NCA track to work out for peace. It is to be noted further that ceasefire is not disarming or surrendering. Both sides must not pressure the other with fighting while discussing at the table. Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) is a good establishment

that will monitor and resolve any outbreak of hostility due to misunderstanding and insufficient exchange of information at the lower level and thus all should follow and abide by the NCA. Deviating from the NCA and prioritizing the will of own organization will make the peace desired by the people unreachable and far off.

In the first Union Peace Conference of 12-16, January 2016, 7 groups discussed 5 main sectors and the main discussions, which were suggestions and not decisions, were transferred to the Vice President.

During the meeting of 31 August to 2 September 2016, people heard of discussions that include matters that are against



U Than Htay, Chairman, USDP, speaks at the Opening Ceremony of the Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong 2nd Session. **PHOTO: MNA**

unity and the three main causes outlined in the NCA and people were concerned for peace as well as future of the union.

SEE PAGE-11

Press conference on first day of Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong (Second Session)

By Ye Gaung Nyunt

Following the first day meeting of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong (Second Session), members of the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) secretariat Dr. Hlan Hmon Sar Khaung, Sai Kyaw Nyunt, U Hla Maung Shwe, Lt-General Khin Zaw Oo (retired) and U Zaw Htay held a press conference with local and foreign media.

Lt-General Khin Zaw Oo (retired) said papers resulting from six state and regional level political dialogues were combined by various work committees in March and papers on five sectors were coordinated and discussed in the UPDJC secretariat. These matters will be discussed in detail by sections on the second day of Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong (Second Session).

During the 12 May UPDJC meeting, decisions and agreements were reached on 21 points in six titles on the political sector; 10 points in seven titles on economic sector; four points in the social sector; and six points in the land and environmental sector for a total of 41 points. These matters will be discussed in detail on the second day of Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong (Second Session). The UPDJC secretariat will record the discussion and will work to confirm it at the final day of the congress.

Dr. Hlan Hmon Sar Khaung said this conference is different from the previous one where proposals can be submitted.

“Especially in the political sector, points in the six basic principles can be submitted. Things that our ethnic nationals asked for both military and politically for years were combined in the national



Lt-General Khin Zaw Oo (Retired) (centre) talks to media at the press conference. PHOTO: PHO HTAUNG

level political dialogue and UPDJC meeting in order to achieve agreement were submitted. If some sort of agreement is reached from these submissions in the congress, it will be a valuable and important milestone. We will have to continue discussions”, he said.

Foreign and local media then asked about the seven armed groups from the northern alliance taking a path outside of the NCA, the status of the United Nationalities Federation Council’s (UNFC) continued participation in the peace process and NCA path, the matter of the Arakan Army (AA), the Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) previously not invited by the Government and the Tatmadaw attending the conference and their opinion about it.

On the matter of the UNFC, U Zaw Htay said the UNFC met many times both officially and unofficially with the Delegation for Political Negotiation (DPN). They

participated in drawing up the framework and involved in the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) process. At the same time, the path is to discuss nine points proposed for inclusion in the NCA. We will continue discussions in this way and will keep the door open, he said.

On the difference between the NCA and the northern alliance group taking a path outside of the NCA, Lt-General Khin Zaw Oo (retired) said, “We will go along the NCA path. There is no path outside of NCA. UPDJC could not discuss with the northern alliance group and the Peace Commission is discussing this matter. Higher authorities will decide on this matter.”

U Zaw Htay said the State Counsellor in her conference opening speech mentioned about expanding the coverage of the NCA and the government expanding the NCA to keep the peace door opened for participation of ethnic groups who hadn’t signed it. On the matter of northern

alliance group members AA, TNLA and MNDAA, U Zaw Htay said, “Our nation is a sovereign state. This is taking the form of an internal discussion. China is involved as a consultant. The northern alliance group and China are connected geopolitically. We are invited as a special invitee. Initially, the three northern alliance groups were not invited. We invited the two groups that were not in the UNFC. Later, the United Wa State Army (UWSA) and National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA) (Monglar) were invited. After inviting each group, the remaining three northern alliance group proposed their wish to attend, and the government and Tatmadaw coordinated and invited them. The invitation was made by the decision of the UPDJC secretariat.

Sai Kyaw Nyunt said this congress came about from the NCA and commented further that the attendance of the northern alliance group is certainly progress and not too far from the NCA. ■

Opening speech of U Than Htay at UPC – 21st Century Panglong

FROM PAGE-10

The three main causes had been specified since the Tatmadaw government period. It is for the national cause and is not Tatmadaw, or SLORC or SPDC propaganda. Viewed objectively without any personal and organizational attachments, the three main causes can be seen as the truth of the union. Do you want your country to go into disintegration, Fight to the end to wipe out other ethnics? Hand over the sovereignty to those who are alien to this land?

It can be seen that the three main causes are not propaganda but a necessity that will benefit the union and people regardless of whoever is the leader and the government.

The present conference, discussing on the 5 suggested main sectors confirmed by UPDJC will result in an outcome that will start implementing the dream of establishing a federal union

and on behalf of political parties, we like to express our happiness for the peace process in Myanmar.

After this event, representatives of the people from different places of the country will start discussion expressing their views and beliefs. Discussion must be based on equality without any hint of bullying and commanding. Search for the possible and achievable between what is actually happening and what is wanted.

State and region constitutions drawn should be consistent with the Constitution. There mustn’t be any deviation or difference. USA, Australia, Germany and Switzerland grant self-determination to states, regions, landers and cantons but the state constitution does not deviate or differ from the Constitution. The constitutions of the 50 states of America are in accordance with the constitution of the United States of America.

The main aim of this conference

is national reconciliation, stopping the conflicts and forging the unity. While aiming for this, there shouldn’t be any thought of secession. Of the more than 190 constitutions of the countries in the world, only the constitution of the Soviet Union and Myanmar constitution of 1947 had clauses allowing the secession. That is why Soviet Union was split into small countries and despite the abolishing of the 1947 constitution with new constitution, it is to be noted that there were still some demand for secession.

It is to be noted that we are neighboring two highly populated nations, far stronger in military, economy and technology than our country. We need to be stronger and it is strength that we must aim for instead of weakening ourselves.

According to the latest census we have many different races and ethnics. It is not possible to determine which

race and ethnic are to be included or excluded. This is to be noted.

Today’s conflicts are not the result of lack of equality, oppression of difference, being federal or not as ordinary people think. It is the result of geographical and historical near and far causes. As such, it is a far-fetch dream to stop conflict and achieve peace at set-time like within a year or within a government term. A timetable is not important. Love for the union, unity, and sovereignty of the nation must be in everyone’s heart and mind. The union and the people of the union, in other word, everyone attending the conference, must have in their mind and heart the non-disintegration of the union, unity of the nationals and sovereignty of the nation in order to achieve the peace in the union. Only when there is peace will we get the fruits and benefits of a democracy.—Myanmar News Agency ■ (Unofficial Translation)

State Counsellor hosts dinner in honour of participants, guests of 21st Century Panglong

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi hosted a dinner in honour of participants of the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong and guests at Myanmar International Convention Centre 2 (MICC-2) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday evening.

President U Htin Kyaw, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Vice Presidents U Myint Swe and U Henry Van Thio, Pyithu Hluttaw speaker U Win Myint, Amyotha Hluttaw speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than, Union Chief Justice U Tun Tun

Oo, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union U Myo Nyunt, Chairman of the Union Election Commission U Hla Thein, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Hluttaw Deputy Speakers, Chairman of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission, union ministers, Union Attorney



The dinner hosted by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. **PHOTO: MNA**

General, Peace Commission Chairman, Chief-of-staff (Army, Navy and Air), Chief Ministers of States and Regions, senior Tatmadaw officers, Chairmen of Hluttaw Affairs Committees,

representatives of government, hluttaw, Tatmadaw groups, representatives of ethnic armed organizations, representatives of political parties, representatives from stakeholder group,

foreign diplomats, representatives of UN organizations, local and international non-government organizations and invited guests attended the dinner.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Peace Soccer match held in Nay Pyi Taw in honour of UPC-21st Century Panglong

President U Htin Kyaw and the First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi watched the Peace Soccer Match held in honour of 2nd session of the Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong at Wunna Theikdi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw at 5:30 pm yesterday.

Also among the spectators were U Henry Van Thio, Vice President, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint, Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than, Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Aye Tha Aung, Chairman of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission, Union Ministers Lt General Ye Aung, U Kyaw Tint Swe, Dr Myo Thein Gyi, Chairman of Union Civil Service Selection Board Dr Win Thein, Chairman of Peace Commission



Daw Aung San Suu Kyi shakes hands with U Min Ko Naing at the peace soccer match in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Dr Tin Myo Win, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, Chief Ministers of Yangon, Mandalay and Magway Regions, Tatmadaw high-ranking officials, Hluttaw representatives, representatives from political parties and local

people who love football games.

Firstly, vocalists entertained with songs, followed by the soccer match played between Amonemyaryat team and Chitkyapar team. The match ended in one-one draw.

Afterward, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi presented certificates of honour, with the certificates accepted by U Min Ko Naing, manager of the team—Chitkyapar, Okkar U Thar on behalf of musicians, U Myo Hlaing, director-general of sports and physical education on behalf of ministries and organizations that helped for soccer and chairman of Shwe Than Lwin media company that helped the competition respectively. In addition, State Counsellor gave words of thank to persons, teams and organizations which helped for the success of the matches held in commemoration of 2nd session of the UPC—21st Century Panglong.

Then, Htarwara played against Nyeinchanyay teams and Kanyarpyo & Pyawtawset teams.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Man caught breaking curfew in Maungtaw

Security forces detained a man from Ngakhuya police station in Maungtaw for breaking Section 144 in Maungtaw on 22 May.

Mummad Sardin, aged 23, was found on a road in Ngakhuya about mid-night, according to the local security force. The police are taking action against him.

—Myanmar News Agency ■

Fire destroys shops, houses in Sittway

A fire started from the wire shock in a meter box at the solar panel selling shop of Nodia at Thechaung market on 23 May. It spread to 40 other shops and 20 bamboo-walled houses. Nodia has been learnt to have been taken action against, for carelessness.— Myanmar News Agency ■

2 illegal migrants arrested in Buthidaung

Security forces arrested two suspects on Tuesday in Buthidaung, Rakhine State, for illegally migrating to Bangladesh.

Marmataryup, aged 56, and Marmautnue, aged 49, from Meekyaungzay village track, Buthidaung Township, absconded to the neighbouring country in 2015 and 2016. The local security forces found them near Taungbazar market on Tuesday and arrested them. Measures are being taken to take action against them in accordance with the law.—Myanmar News Agency ■

U Kyaw Tin meets UN Assistant Secretary-General

U Kyaw Tin, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar received the delegation led by Mr. Miroslav Jenča, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs of the United Nations at 1400 hrs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, both

sides discussed matters pertaining to the continued support of the United Nations on Myanmar Government's efforts on democratic transformation process, socio-economic development, peace process and national reconciliation. —Myanmar News Agency ■



U Kyaw Tin welcomes Mr. Miroslav Jenča, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs of the United Nations. **PHOTO: MNA**



US President Donald Trump. PHOTO: REUTERS

Trump tells Duterte of two US nuclear subs in Korean waters-NYT

MANILA — US President Donald Trump told his Philippine counterpart that Washington has sent two nuclear submarines to waters off the Korean peninsula, the New York Times said, comments likely to raise questions about his handling of sensitive information.

Trump has said “a major, major conflict” with North Korea is possible because of its nuclear and missile programmes and that all options are on the table but that he wants to resolve the crisis diplomatically.

North Korea has vowed to develop a missile mounted with a nuclear warhead that can strike the mainland United States, saying the pro-

gramme is necessary to counter US aggression.

Trump told Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte Washington had “a lot of firepower over there”, according to the New York Times, which quoted a transcript of an 29 April call between the two.

“We have two submarines — the best in the world. We have two nuclear submarines, not that we want to use them at all,” the newspaper quoted Trump as telling Duterte, based on the transcript.

The report was based on a Philippine transcript of the call that was circulated on Tuesday under a “confidential” cover sheet by the Americas division

of the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs.

In a show of force, the United States has sent the nuclear-powered USS Carl Vinson aircraft carrier to waters off the Korean peninsula, where it joined the USS Michigan, a nuclear submarine that docked in South Korea in late April.

According to the Times, a senior Trump administration official in Washington, who was not authorised to publicly discuss the call and insisted on anonymity, confirmed the transcript was an accurate representation of the call between the two leaders.

US officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, have said Trump

discussed intelligence about Islamic State with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Russian Ambassador Sergei Kislyak at talks in the Oval Office this month, raising questions about Trump’s handling of secrets.

Trump also praised Duterte for doing an “unbelievable job on the drug problem”, the New York Times reported, a subject that has drawn much criticism in the West. Almost 9,000 people, many small-time users and dealers, have been killed in the Philippines since Duterte took office on 30 June. Police say about one-third of the victims were shot by officers in self-defence during legitimate operations.—Reuters ■

UK Independence Party to resume election campaign on Thursday

LONDON — Britain’s UK Independence Party (UKIP) said on Wednesday it would re-start its election campaign with the launch of its policy pledges on Thursday, three days after a suicide bomber killed 22 people at a concert venue in Manchester.

Political parties agreed to suspend cam-

paigning for the 8 June election until further notice after Monday’s attack. While high-profile events remained cancelled on Wednesday and were not expected to re-start for several days, some individual candidates have said they are resuming campaigning locally.

Opinion polls, the

publication of which has also been paused, suggest Prime Minister Theresa May’s ruling Conservatives are on track to win the election, although her double-digit poll lead had been narrowing before the attack. UKIP had been due to launch its manifesto, setting out its election policy promises, on Wednesday

but postponed it after the attack. “We are all horrified by the horrific events that took place in Manchester. Following those events it is right and proper that political parties suspended their campaigns for a short period as a mark of respect,” UKIP leader Paul Nuttall said in a statement.—Reuters ■

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

MV SEA DRAGON VOY. NO (-)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SEA DRAGON VOY. NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.5.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MSTL-2 where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim’s Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

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Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim’s Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

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Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim’s Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

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Party's over as Korean rapper Psy shelves 'Gangnam Style' and returns to roots

SEOUL — South Korean rapper Psy has gone back to basics with his eighth full-length album, paying greater attention to his home fans while doing what he loves most — “going crazy” on stage.

The “Gangnam Style” star said he had moved on from the success of the 2012 smash hit that sent him flying to the top of music charts around the world and shaped him into the internationally recognized artist he is today.

“‘Gangnam Style’ gave me fame while as a creator, some rough times, but I’m not one to linger in the past and make two, three, four versions of (Gangnam Style) because I’m hung up on its fame,” Psy told Reuters.

“It was probably the biggest trophy the world could have given me. It’s now something on the shelf I can admire from time to time.”

His voice hoarse from performing for days on end at universities, Psy, 39, or Park Jai-sang, said he had forgotten his roots with the popularity of “Gangnam Style”, which holds the world record for most watched video with 2.8 billion views on YouTube as of 22 May.

He currently has more than 10 million subscribers on his official YouTube channel, a record for a non-group individual in Asia.

“It was like an addiction,”



South Korean rapper Psy speaks during an interview with Reuters in Seoul, South Korea on 19 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

said Psy. “Like when you throw a party, it takes some time for that excitement to die down after it’s over. I think it took a while for that exhilaration to subside. Now I’m back to my normal life.”

Then where are Psy’s roots? Performing on stage, he said. All his appearances are linked to the latest album, “4x2=8”, with singles “I LUV IT” and “New Face” carrying that message.

Psy, who made his debut in 2001, wants to stay on stage for as long as he can, but his biggest dream is to retire just before people start telling him

he’s washed up.

“I think the pain from being called that would be far greater than not being able to be on stage,” Psy said.

Psy, who has two children, said he wants to focus more on production and helping younger artists grow. As a singer, Psy said he had achieved all he could ask for — and more.

When asked if his “Gangnam Style” fame had deprived him of his privacy, he laughed and said no.

“Without my sunglasses and hair gel, I obtain freedom,” he said.—Reuters ■

Fans beg Justin Bieber to cancel dates as fear grips pop’s youth

LOS ANGELES — Fans of Justin Bieber pleaded on Tuesday for his upcoming British tour dates to be canceled, underscoring the potential repercussions to music acts with a young fan base from the suicide bombing at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester.

Canadian heartthrob Bieber, 23, is due to play an open air concert at London’s Hyde Park in July. But fans flooded social media saying his appearance should be axed for the safety both of fans and the singer himself.

“Cancel Justin’s concert in the UK, please! We want him to be safe, please,” a person using the handle marhrukhh wrote on the Instagram account of Bieber’s manager, Scooter Braun. Braun also manages Grande, also 23, a former Nickelodeon star whose huge female fan base, many of them tweens, were out in force for her concert in Manchester on Monday night when a suicide bombing killed 22 people and injured dozens.

The “Problem” singer flew to Florida on Tuesday to spend time with her family, People magazine reported. Braun and her record company did not return calls on whether the re-

mainder of her world tour, with stops in London and Europe, would go ahead.

Leanne Murray, 20, who lives in Ireland, has tickets to see Bieber play in Dublin next month. But she said that after Monday’s bombing she is contemplating selling them.

“I just don’t want what I would hope to be a great night to end in something like last night,” Murray, who paid 180 Euros (\$200) each for two tickets told Reuters.

“It’s frightening to think that it could have been any of us and it really shows that you never know what’s around the corner,” Murray added.

Touring has been one of the top sources of income for musicians in recent years. The top 10 worldwide tour acts grossed a combined \$1.67 billion in 2016, according to music industry publication Pollstar, with Bruce Springsteen bringing in \$268.3 million alone.

Pop acts like Taylor Swift, Bieber, One Direction and Grande are also among the top earners. Grande grossed more than \$25 million from touring between April 2016-April 2017, according to Pollstar figures, while Bieber grossed \$163 million in 2016.—Reuters ■



Cast member Ariana Grande. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Ariana Grande returns to US following Manchester bombing-report

LONDON — Ariana Grande returned to the United States on Tuesday, one day after a suicide bomber killed 22 people at the pop singer’s concert in Manchester, England, People magazine reported, as questions lingered over whether she would continue her European tour.

Grande, 23, was photographed landing at an airport in her hometown of Boca Raton, Florida, and being met by family members, the magazine said.

The pop star has not been seen publicly since an explosion ripped through the packed Manchester Arena at the end of her performance there. Some of the 22 people who died in

the attack were teens or young girls. Grande was apparently unharmed.

British police have identified the man suspected of carrying out the massacre as 22-year-old Salman Abedi, who was born in Manchester to parents of Libyan origin. Islamic State claimed responsibility for what it called revenge against “Crusaders,” but there appeared to be contradictions in its account of the operation.

In her only statement so far, Grande took to Twitter some five hours after the bombing to describe herself as “broken” in the aftermath of the attack.

“from the bottom of my

heart, i am so so sorry. i don’t have words,” she said in the tweet.

Grande was performing in Manchester during the European leg of a tour to promote her third album, “Dangerous Woman,” which also has her scheduled to perform in London, Belgium, Poland, Germany and Switzerland in the coming weeks.

Despite speculation that she would cancel the rest of the tour, no formal announcement had been made as of Tuesday afternoon. Grande’s manager, Scooter Braun, did not respond to requests for comment by Reuters.—Reuters ■

Thousands throng to bow to St Nicholas relics in Moscow

MOSCOW — Thousands of people lined up for hours in Moscow on Monday to venerate the relics of Saint Nicholas, believed by Orthodox Christians to have miraculous powers, after his remains were sent to Russia on loan from their permanent home in Italy.

The remains of Saint Nicholas had never previously left the Italian city of Bari in the 930 years since they were brought there. After arriving by plane on Sunday, they were installed in Moscow's gold-domed Christ the Saviour Cathedral, and put on public display. The loan was agreed during last year's historic meeting between Russian Patriarch Kirill and Roman Catholic Pope Francis. It was the first time a pontiff and head of the Russian Orthodox church had met since the Eastern and Western branches of Christianity split apart nearly 1,000 years ago.

The line of people queuing to see the relics stretched for several kilometers from the cathedral

along the embankment of the Moskva river.

"I want to touch the relics, to ask for health for my children, for my relatives," said one woman in the queue, who gave her name as Natalia and said she was from Ukraine. "I want health and peace on earth. Nothing else."

Saint Nicholas, who lived in the fourth century in what is modern-day Turkey, is one of the most revered saints in Russian Orthodoxy. Numerous churches and cathedrals bear his name in Russia, and Nikolai is a popular name in the country. Russia's Orthodox Church and its clergy suffered bloody purges and it was separated from the state after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.

After the Soviet Union's demise in 1991, the church has experienced a revival. Although Russia is still formally a secular nation, state media often show Russian Orthodox priests blessing new nuclear submarines and space rocket launches.

—Reuters ■



People queue to venerate the relics of Saint Nicholas being shown in the Christ the Saviour Cathedral, after his remains were sent to Russia on loan from their permanent home in Italy, in central Moscow, Russia on 22 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**



Expedia begins offering online booking for hotels in Cuba

HAVANA — US online travel services company Expedia (EXPE.O) said on Tuesday it had started offering online booking for hotels in Communist-run Cuba, hoping to capitalize on a boom in tourism to the Caribbean island.

Expedia joins a dozen US airlines and cruise operators that have already ventured into the Cuban market since the United States announced a détente with its former Cold War foe in 2014 and eased travel and trade restrictions.

"I see a lot of potential. We are talking about the largest country in the Caribbean with significant hotel expansion plans," Veronica Vega, Expedia area manager for Caribbean, said in an interview.

The number of visitors to Cuba rose 13 per cent to a record 4 million in 2016, driven by a 74 per cent jump in US travelers. A survey recently showed the number of American visitors alone could multiply sevenfold to 2 million by 2025.

Expedia's move comes as US President Donald Trump's administration conducts a full review of US policy toward Cuba. During his campaign, Trump had threatened to roll back the normalization of relations.

That does not seem to have dampened US interest in the Cuban market. Analysts and corporate executives said it was hard to imagine Trump, a former businessman, taking measures that would harm US companies already in Cuba.

US law still bans general tourism to Cuba, but former President Barack Obama's administration allowed Americans to travel more easily to Cuba for educational, cultural and other authorized purposes without having to go on organized group tours.

Expedia said Americans would simply have to certify that their trips fell under one of the 12 categories of authorized travel.

"We are very excited about being able to facilitate travel and give people the independence to select their itinerary," said Vega.

Expedia said it would offer both hotel and BnB options and that customers would be able to pay online at the time of booking.

Americans previously had to reserve Cuban hotels principally through travel agencies or tour groups. Since 2015, American tourists have also been able to book properties in Cuba on Airbnb Inc. The online home-rental marketplace said last year the island had become its fastest growing market ever.

Expedia said that for US travelers, it was operating under a general license right for all travel service providers. For non-US travelers, it was operating under a specific license granted by the US Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control in December 2016. —Reuters ■



Myanmar International

Programme Schedule

(25-5-2017 07:00am ~ 26-5-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News	10:51	Am	A Precious Gift from Waste
07:26	Am	Paper Products... Plain but Pretty	(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) -Wednesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		
07:47	Am	A Historic Town: 9 Pagodas	(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		
08:03	Am	News	Prime Time		
08:26	Am	The Man and The Elephant (Part - I)	07:03	Pm	News
08:41	Am	The Man and The Elephant (Part - II)	07:26	Pm	A Visit to Kyauk Kyi
08:56	Am	Dances of Myanmar "Gaybar Kayin Traditional Dance"	07:44	Pm	Shan Novices To Be.....
09:03	Am	News	08:03	Pm	News
09:27	Am	Myanmar Handicrafts	08:27	Pm	Pride of Myanmar - Bagan arts and handicrafts
10:03	Am	News	08:42	Pm	The Storytellers
10:26	Am	Myanmar's Traditions and Culture Novicehood in Myanmar	08:48	Pm	Living in Off-Season

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) -Wednesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

(For Detailed Schedule - www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)

Champion of KBZ Bank Cup 2017 to be awarded \$10,000 with trophy

CHAMPION of the KBZ Bank Cup 2017 will be awarded US\$10,000 with trophy while \$5,000 will go to the second prize winner, according to an event organizer.

It is announced that most valuable player award and golden boot award will also be given to the winning players.

Organised by the Myanmar Football Federation, the country will host a four-nation invitational football tournament that will take place from 28 June to 2 July at Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon. This is a part of preparation for Myanmar team to successfully compete in the 29th Southeast Asian Games to be held in Ma-

laysia.

The U-22 Myanmar national football team will play against counterparts from Hong Kong, Cambodia and Japan in the round-robin contests.

Myanmar team will meet with its Cambodian counterparts on 28 June. The team will play against with Hong Kong U-22 on 30 June and with Japan team on 2 July.

Kanbawza Bank, the country's leading private commercial bank, will act as a main sponsor of the tournament.

The Myanmar team will also take part in the Asia U-23 championship qualification to be held in Yangon next month.—200 ■

Allardyce 'quits as Palace manager' — British media

LONDON — Sam Allardyce has resigned as Crystal Palace manager days after ensuring the club's Premier League survival, British media reports said on Tuesday.

The 62-year-old former England manager, who signed a two-and-a-half-year deal on his appointment last December, was due to hold talks with club owner Steve Parish this week over summer transfer signings.

On Sunday he spoke freely about the need to bring in the right quality players after a season in which Palace came close to relegation, surviving largely because of an impressive run which saw them win four successive games in March and April.

But he appears to have had

a change of heart, according to multiple media reports.

Allardyce was immediately linked with the vacancy at his former club Sunderland, whose manager David Moyes resigned on Monday.

Some reports suggested Allardyce is not intending to look for another managerial job after a rollercoaster season which began with a 67-day stint in charge of the England national team. He eventually resigned in the wake of a newspaper sting, later joining Palace when they were in relegation trouble. Palace's Premier League status was confirmed after the 4-0 win over Hull City earlier this month and they eventually finished 14th on 41 points.—Reuters ■



Crystal Palace manager Sam Allardyce.—Reuters



Real Madrid newly-signed player Vinicius Junior, who is playing with Brazilian side Flamengo, is pictured at Santos Dumont airport in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 23 May 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Madrid sign Flamengo starlet Vinicius Junior

MADRID — Real Madrid have reached an agreement with Brazilian side Flamengo to sign 16-year old forward Vinicius Junior in July 2018, the two clubs announced on Tuesday.

"Real Madrid and Flamengo have reached a deal for the transfer of Vinicius Junior from July 2018," a statement published on the Flamengo site said.

Madrid said the pacy striker will remain at Flamengo until July 2019 unless both sides agree he can move earlier.

Although the clubs did not say how long his contract was for or how much the fee was, reports in Spain suggest Madrid would shell out around 46 million euros (39.6 million pounds), which would make him the second most expensive signing from the Brazilian league.

The most costly is Barcelona star Neymar, who moved from Santos in 2013 for an estimated 86 million euros and is a player Vinicius has been likened to by the media.

Vinicius, who will turn 17

in July, only made his first-team debut for the Rio club 10 days ago but his decisive performances for Brazil's Under-17 side singled him out as one of the game's hottest prospects.

The forward lifted the top goalscorer and player of the tournament awards in March when he helped Brazil to their 12th South American Under-17s title.

He is expected to lead Brazil in India in October at the Under-17 World Cup.

—Reuters ■

Hockey Challenge Cup of Asia to be held in Myanmar later this year

MYANMAR will host the 2017 Hockey Challenge Cup of Asia organised by the Asian Hockey Federation at Yangon's Theinbyu Hockey Field in November, according to the Myanmar Hockey Federation.

U Saw Lu Lu Htaw, President of the MHF, said the Myanmar hockey team will be trained diligently in preparation for the Asian Games, plan-

ning to take part in consecutive international tournaments to get experience.

At the present time, both men's and women's teams are practising for the 29th Southeast Asian Games to be held in Malaysia, hoping to bring prizes back for their motherland.

The country also hosted Asian-level hockey tourna-

ments in 2009 and 2011.

The Myanmar Hockey Federation is putting forth concerted efforts to turn out a new generation in the sport.

The Asian Hockey Federation was founded during the Asian Games in Tokyo in 1958. The five founding members were India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia and Pakistan.—200 ■