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Leaders of the Union Government and stakeholders in the peace making process pose for a photo taken after the NCA signing ceremony yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

State Counsellor: Do not waste this opportunity

Two ethnic armed groups sign ceasefire agreement in Nay Pyi Taw

THE New Mon State Party (NMSP) and the Lahu Democratic Union (LDU) signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement at the Myanmar International Convention Center -II in

Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, an event that State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi described as “only the beginning” of a long quest for peace.

“The NCA is not the end of

the peace process. The NCA is the beginning of the peace process”, the State Counsellor said.

“The beginning of political dialogues, the beginning of reduction of armed conflicts; it is the

beginning of the political process that will result from the resolution of political problems through negotiations, discussions and the joint search for solutions”.

Myanmar gained independ-

ence from Great Britain 71 years ago, but the country has endured fighting between ethnic armed groups and government troops for decades.

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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw 7th regular session 7th day meetingKyaw Thu Htet
(MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY)

The 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw 7th regular session 7th day meeting was held yesterday morning at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw meeting hall.

During the meeting, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than announced the placing on the record the bill to repeal the municipal law and the bill to repeal the Dock Workers (Regulation of Employment) Act 1948 that were confirmed by Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw as being approved by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

Next, the Hluttaw put on record the reorganization and extension of 3 wards in Rezua Town, Matupi Township, Matupi District, Mo Paing Lut town in Leshi Township, Sagaing Region, Naga Self-Administered Zone to be placed in Homalin township under the same name, reorganization and extension of a ward in Homalin Township and KhinU Township, along with the



Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win. **PHOTO: MNA**

renaming and reorganizing of 4 wards, 3 village tracts and 9 villages. Further there was the reorganization and extension of 34 villages and removal of 177 villages in Shan State Loilem District Laikha Township, along with the reorganization and extension of a village in Kunhing Township, as sent by the President's Office.

Afterwards, utilization of Ks 13,595.166 million from the emergency fund in the 2017 Union Budget Law sent by the



Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin. **PHOTO: MNA**

President's Office was explained by personnel of union level organisations, and the Hluttaw put it on record.

In the explanations, Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin, representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Aung Soe, Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy Dr. Tun Naing and Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Tha Oo,



Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy Dr. Tun Naing. **PHOTO: MNA**

representing Shan State government, explained about using the fund for works urgently required for the security of the Myanmar Embassy in Cairo, for setting up 4 border police force groups, constructing 230 KV Mawlamyine-Myawady power lines and the river bank erosion preventive works on the Myanmar side of Tachileik Township.

This was followed by Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win

explaining to the Hluttaw about the matter of loans from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) sent by the President. The Deputy Minister explained that the ODA Loan of Japanese Yen 14.949 billion from JICA was for Small and Medium Enterprises development project stage 2. The Deputy Minister added that the loan period is 40 years and interest is 0.01 per cent payable in two installments per year and, once the grace period is over, the loan amount will have to be paid back in two installments per year.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker then announced that Hluttaw representatives who wish to discuss the matter need to list their names.

During the day's meeting, Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win submitted the 2018 Union Tax Bill to the Hluttaw, and the decision of the Hluttaw on the bill for amending the Drugs and Psychotropic Drugs Law was obtained and approved. ■



Central Women's Affairs Committee of the NLD holds Bogoyoke Aung San's birthday. **PHOTO: ZAW GYI (PANITA)**

Bogoyoke Aung San's birthday, Myanmar Children's Day events held at NLD HQ

THE 103rd birthday of independence architect and father of the Tatmadaw Bogoyoke Aung San and Myanmar Children's Day were celebrated at the National League for Democracy (NLD) headquarters yesterday morning. At the event, Yangon Region Hluttaw Speaker U Tin Maung Tun narrated the biography of Bogoyoke Aung San, and Yangon Region Hluttaw representative U Nay Phone Latt conducted a question-and-answer (Q&A) ses-

sion with the youth on historical facts about Bogoyoke Aung San.

Kindergarten children recited poems and gave speeches in honor of Bogoyoke Aung San, and officials presented the children with gifts. The event was held by the NLD Central Women's Committee and the attendees were provided with Charity food.

Similarly, to commemorate the 103rd birthday of Bogoyoke Aung San and Myanmar Chil-

dren's Day, wards and townships in Yangon Region conducted various activities such as Q&A sessions about Bogoyoke Aung San and provided Charity food that included boiled peas and naans (a favorite of Bogoyoke Aung San).

Taxis also transported people for free between Bogoyoke Museum in Natmawk Road, Bahan Township, Yangon and Maha Bandoola Park. —Zaw Gyi (Panita) ■

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee meeting

A JOINT bill committee meeting for the National Planning Bill and 2018 Union Budget Bill was held yesterday afternoon at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Building D, in the second floor meeting hall.

The meeting was attended by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker, the Joint Bill Committee and Public Account Joint Committee chairman U

Aye Tha Aung, Joint Bill Committee and Public Account Joint Committee deputy chairmen, secretaries, joint secretaries and committee members, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission members and officials from the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Office. — Myanmar News Agency ■

US Embassy in Yangon praises NCA signing

THE US Embassy in Yangon issued a press release yesterday praising the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and Lahu Democratic Union (LDU) for signing the Nation wide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).

Though they warmly welcomed the new signatories,

the US Embassy acknowledged that this is only the first step towards sustainable peace.

The US Embassy expressed their hope to see more dialogue in the future, and the forming of a federal union in Myanmar. —GNLM ■

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Two ethnic armed groups sign ceasefire agreement in Nay Pyi Taw

FROM PAGE-1

Dr. Tin Myo Win, Chairman of the Union Peace Commission (UPC) spoke first at yesterday's ceremony, noting that it was a long process that resulted in yesterday's signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). He said the UPC held multiple meetings with the Delegation for Political Negotiation (DPN) of the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC), of which the NMSP and LDU are members, over the course of 17 months. He said it started off with heated discussions but eventually all participants were able to build trust and focus on one vision throughout the rest of the meetings. The meetings started off with seven groups, but due to various circumstances only two groups made it to today's signing. However, the UPC Chairman said they will continue working and meeting with the other non-signatories until they are able to participate in the NCA.

Kyar Solomon, the Deputy Chairman of the Lahu Democratic Union, said yesterday was a day that benefited Myanmar's peace process.

"Only after signing the NCA is it possible to participate in political dialogue, and the LDU is motivated to be a part of each level of dialogue", Kyar Solomon said.

The State Counsellor said a ceasefire that will result in long-lasting peace will lift the country out of poverty and allow Myanmar to compete on the global stage.

"Since the time we gained independence, we have lost much energy due to armed conflicts. Because there was no peace, there was no stability, and we lagged behind many areas of development", she said.

"As a result, our country became one of the least developed countries. The universe, which is changing every second, and today's world will not wait for our country. Are we going to leave behind the same country with armed conflicts for our new generations, or are we going to leave behind a unified and strong country worthy of respect by others?"

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi concluded her speech yesterday with an admonition that this was a favourable moment that should not be squandered.

"I wish to remind all of you not to waste this opportunity. Do not be timid to take a step forward. What we have to fear is the

fear that lingers in our minds", she said.

"However, behind us are people who have yearned and longed for peace for many years. Although their dreams have dimmed, their desires and hopes are still as brilliant as ever. Let us step forward bravely together with them".

The signing ceremony was attended by monks led by Mawlamyine lower Bago Pariyati Monastery Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Thilasara, President U Htin Kyaw, National Reconciliation and Peace Center Chairperson State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and Vice Presidents U Myint Swe and U Henry Van Thio. Also in attendance were Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Mahn Win Khaing Than, Union Chief Justice U Htun Htun Oo, Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Constitutional Tribunal of Myanmar Chairperson U Myo Nyunt, Union Election Commission Chairman U Hla Thein, Tatmadaw Deputy Commander-in-Chief Vice Senior General Soe Win, Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U T Khun Myat, Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung and Chairman of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Thura U Shwe Mann. The ceremony was also attended by National Reconciliation and Peace Center Vice Chairman Union Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe, Union Ministers, Union Attorney General, Union Auditor General, Union Civil Service Board Chairman, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, Peace Commission Chairman, Mon State Chief Minister, Shan State Chief Minister, Central Bank of Myanmar Governor, Chief of Staff (Army, Navy, Air) and Tatmadaw high-ranking officers, Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC), representatives of political parties, Union level Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC-U) members, Nay Pyi Taw Command Commander, Deputy Ministers, ethnic affairs ministers, Hluttaw representatives, representatives of ethnic armed organizations (EAOs), NMSP Chairperson Nai Htaw Mon and party, LDU Chairperson Kyar Kun Sar and party, international witnesses signing the agreement, foreign diplomats and invited guests.

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President U Htin Kyaw and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi sign Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA



NMSP Chairperson Nai Htaw Mon signs Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA



LDU Chairperson Kyar Kun Sar signs Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

I wish to remind all of you not to waste this opportunity: State Counsellor

Following is the full text of the speech delivered by State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at the signing ceremony of New Mon State Party and Lahu Democratic Union in Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement-NCA.

Today's ceremony is the signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement – NCA between the Union Government and the Ethnic Armed Organizations.

Although the number of Ethnic Armed Organizations is not that many, the journey to make this happen successfully is not that easy. This is the decision to make the first step to jointly lay the foundation stone of the Democratic Federal Republic that will emerge in the future for national reconciliation and union peace.

I therefore solemnly wish to honor and warmly welcome the New Mon State Party and the Lahu Democratic Union who have bravely taken this step.

NCA - the beginning of the Peace Process

NCA is not the end of the Peace Process. NCA is the beginning of the Peace Process, the beginning of the political dialogues, the beginning of reduction of armed conflicts; it is the beginning of the political process that will result from the resolution of political problems through negotiations, discussions and the joint search for solutions. Our internal armed conflicts were born together with our independence. Today it is now over 70 years. Those countries which gained independence the same time as us and those countries which have become independent after us have now gone far ahead. As for our ethnic nationals, and our people, we are still living in fear and instability amidst the internal armed conflicts. They had to flee their hearths and homes because of the conflicts. The sounds of reciting lessons have ceased and the farms have become overgrown with weeds. The most important thing is the fact that the children of our ethnic nationals had to flee for their lives.

Because of mistrusts, hatred and the evil effects of armed conflicts, these regions could not develop, could not progress and to this day have still lagged behind. Our people have to confront and live in fear on a daily basis. Up to this day in the 21st century, darkness still envelops the future of our ethnic nationals' children. This situation has lasted for so many years. We have not been able to achieve peace. This is sorrowful as well as pathetic. Our future, and the future of our new generations have not seen the rays of light up to this day. It is said in the world at large. Those countries which achieved great progress after suffering the effects of war have said that after suffering the effects of war, the spirit and desire to work hard and struggle with unity becomes stronger. As for our country, this has not happened. It



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivers the speech at the signing ceremony of New Mon State Party and Lahu Democratic Union in NCA. **PHOTO: MNA**

has not happened up to this day.

As the news of the signature ceremony came out today, the people in those regions were feeling joyous and happy. We heard the good news. The first significant change for the people is the disappearance of the fears that have resulted from the armed conflicts. The knowledge that they are no longer unlawful associations and no longer terrorist organizations, there is less fear in talking to them and relating with them. The knowledge that conflicts will end make them see a happy future. By looking at the other states which have seen peace and development, hopes have arisen for socioeconomic progress and change. We have seen the emergence of areas which are free from fear.

It is true that there have been bilateral agreements between the two organizations. However, there were no provisions as to how negotiations would be made, and no mechanisms for negotiations. I wish to call the NCA a new beginning. It has been initiated to reduce armed conflicts; if there are disagreements, instead of resorting to fighting, to solve the problems at the negotiating table through discussions and negotiations.

At the same time, in the NCA there are agreements for formulating policies and frameworks for political dialogues and for initiating various steps of political dialogues for the emergence of political dialogues that will result in the establishment of the Democratic Federal Republic. In our country, throughout the ages, there have been various efforts to organize round tables for political dialogues, but without success. All of us accept that the root cause of internal armed conflicts is the failure to solve political problems through political means. During the administration of President

U Thein Sein, he made arduous efforts to initiate the peace process which resulted in the NCA. For these efforts I wish to express again my thanks on behalf of the country and the people from this podium. During the term of our Government, we have not only initiated the political dialogues but also as part of the Union Accord, we have been able to sign (37) political agreements at the Second Session of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong.

If we look back at our history, this is not only the first political dialogue but a new political paradigm which has been achieved through our efforts. Political agreements were reached only after establishing policy frameworks and procedures systematically. Although this is our first experience, I have been greatly encouraged by the way our Government, the Hluttaw, the Tatmadaw component, the EAO's component, the political parties component and component for those that should be included have participated in the UPDJC – Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee, sector-wise meetings, working group meetings and at the conference meetings. They participated with heart and soul immersing themselves in the issues. They deliberated, assessed and negotiated with eagerness and passion on the basic principles for the establishment of the Democratic Federal Republic. It may be regarded as the first step in our history.

However, there are those organizations which have not joined the peace process and some organizations still remain to join. They are those who have participated all along in the negotiations but have not joined the peace process due to various reasons. In the north, there are still armed conflicts in some areas. Although the light of peace is shining brightly in southern Myanmar, this light has been unable to cover the whole

country. All of us need to continue working individually.

Firm resolve to establish the Federal Republic

Since the time we gained independence, we have lost much energy due to armed conflicts. Because there was no peace, there was no stability and we lagged behind in many areas of development. As a result, our country became one of the Least Developed Countries. Our country suffered, our people suffered and the future of our Union suffered. Today at this time, our country is facing many challenges and difficulties. As all of you know, in the community of nations, our country is facing many pressures and criticisms; inside the country differences of opinions and arguments are still going on. These are the bad effects of our inability to unify diversity and transform it into strength. The universe which is changing every second and today's world will not wait for our country. Are we going to leave behind the same country with armed conflicts for our new generations or are we going to leave behind a unified and strong country worthy of respect by others. I want to urge you all, today, from this podium, that you should think about this seriously.

For how much longer do our people have to wait? For how much longer will our country's armed conflicts continue to dominate? For how much longer will we have to exist as a disunited country? Those who started these armed conflicts are now no more. We have to endure their evil legacies. In our time, do we have to live amidst war, the smell of gunpowder and the absence of green pastures? We need to ask ourselves.

The time has come for all of us make concerted efforts for a federal system for establishment of a Union which our founding fathers yearned for; a Union with Justice, freedoms and equal rights, and untainted by political ideologies. Our country has borne the brunt for long; and the hopes of our people have dimmed and diminished for more than 70 years. That is why I wish to solemnly state here that we should bring forth the NCA which is the prelude to National Unity.

The mistrusts and hatreds of the past can cast a shadow on the present. This is human nature. However, I wish to say that we should take the lessons of the past and for the future of our country and the future of our people, let us take one bold step forward. Leaving aside our weapons, let us meet at the negotiation round table and try and discuss candidly like family members. I wish to urge you to make a new initiative for the establishment of the Federal Republic. Our National League for Democracy has made a solemn resolution to walk on the path of the 21st Century Panglong Conference with resolute spirit for the emergence of the Democratic Federal Republic which will be acceptable to all. I wish to solemnly state here that no matter what difficulties and no matter what challenges we may have to encounter, we will not lose sight

of the Federal goal and we will take firm and measured steps forward.

Future plan for national reconciliation

I said this at the NCA Anniversary celebration event. In the coming (s) sessions of the conference, we will be striving to establish fundamental principles and to lay a firm Federal foundation. That is why I wish to say again to join hands with us and work with us with trust.

However, our national reconciliation and journey to Federalism is not going to be smooth and peaceful. Since the journey to peace is a long distance journey, it is based on resolute spirit and faith. Up till now there have been ups and downs, fits and starts and there have been many twists and turns. But we are not disheartened. We will never give up. We will walk on and strive on. For our next generations, for our ethnic national, for our country which has lagged behind, we will continue our march on the path of national reconciliation with indomitable spirit.

We knew from the beginning that it was not easy. It was going to be difficult, and that there were going to be many challenges. If it were easy, our country would have achieved peace a long time ago. Our history has said it. Ethnic nationals have said it. Everyone has said it. Observing professionals have said it. We can achieve peace only when we have established a Federal system which is acceptable to all our people and the whole country. As you all know, today, at this time, history calls for Federalism. This is the path of liberation for our Union.

If so, people will ask what kind of federalism. It is none other than a federalism which can build and sustain a united Union that will last long and endure for our country and our peoples. In this world, there is no such thing as a federal system which fits all countries. We have to build according to the country, its history and, its society, as needed. We have to design the federal system of the future Union collectively and through discussions and consultations. Our country and our peo-

ples need to be united. Only Unions which are united are capable of practicing and maintaining a federal system firmly for the long run. To establish unity, we need to firstly build trust and understanding. That is why we have been inviting and negotiating with the remaining organizations to come to our political negotiation round tables.

Even after new organizations have signed the NCA, our future programme is clear. We will continue to work with organizations which have already signed the NCA to consolidate the ceasefire processes. We will continue with the political dialogues. If differences of opinion crop up among us, we will sit down and meet face to face to discuss and seek solutions with Panglong spirit. With the organizations which have not signed the NCA, we will work to reduce armed conflicts by meeting them and seeking solutions. We will strive to bring all these organizations under the NCA umbrella and urge them to participate in the political dialogues. We are going to carry out all these operations at the same time in tandem.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I wish to say with great seriousness that we need to bring forth National Unity which has been lost in our country for many years. If we can achieve National Unity, there is nothing we cannot accomplish together. In the same way, if we cannot achieve National Unity, we will meet many difficulties when we have to overcome huge challenges. Resilience is not weakness. Negotiation does not mean giving in. It is important not to be afraid of meeting for negotiations. As we march towards National Unity, we need to reduce issues that could cause disunity and discord among us. We need to seek out common points of agreement that could bring us together and make us more united.

Today, there are many things we need to fulfill and work for people and our country. The time has come for us to be united to solve the problems of the people, to remove instabilities that arise from anx-

ieties due to unrest, and to give them a safe and secure future. Our joint action will surely go a long way to eliminate the mistrusts and hatred that originated in the past.

At the moment, our people are watching the 21st Century Panglong with high hopes. Our people will be judging our competitive maneuvers, our egos and our revengeful attitudes, and how they have increased over time. If we carry with us our successes and failures, it will harm our unity even further. The opportunity to dispel the darkness caused by our inability to achieve peace due to lack of unity is right now before our very eyes. This is the opportunity given by history. This is the opportunity given by our people.

I wish to remind all of you not to waste this opportunity. Do not be timid to take a step forward. That we have to fear is the fear that lingers in our minds. No one can know for sure what will happen in the future. We wake up every morning not know what will happen. All of us do not know what we will have to face on our path to national reconciliation. However, behind us, there are people who have yearned and longed for peace for so many years. Although there dreams for peace have become dim for many years, their desires and hopes are still as brilliant as ever. Let us step forward bravely together with them, with our people. We will face whatever comes. Solve any problem we encounter.

For the emergence for a Democratic Federal Republic that can stand tall and strong amidst the countries of the world, for a bright future for our next generations, as we work hard together with our people, we will need "cetana" (goodwill), wisdom, and bravery. With the kind of "cetana" that we should have for the country, the kind of wisdom that can bring forth the fruits of "cetana", with the brave heart that dares to accomplish as directed by wisdom, let us work for peace and national development tasks dutifully. This is what I wish to urge and request you.

Thank you all.



A signing ceremony of New Mon State Party and Lahu Democratic Union in Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement-NCA held in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

All ethnics are urged to cooperate in the efforts for the emergence of the peaceful, modern and developed Union: Senior General Min Aung Hlaing

Greeting speech delivered by Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at the signing ceremony of New Mon State Party and Lahu Democratic Union in Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement-NCA

First and foremost, I would like to extend greetings that may all State level officials, officials from ethnic armed organizations, guests from local and international organizations and all national brethren have mental and physical well-being and enjoy peace and prosperity.

As today's ceremony is for the New Mon State Party and Lahu Democratic Union to sign the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement-NCA, it is delightful for all the people residing in the entire nation through thick and thin as well as an auspiciously significant day in 2018 because eternal peace ray is strongly shining over the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Everybody knows the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) is not only for the ceasefire but also for a path of the genuine and firm eternal peace which can practically implement the wider aims and desires of all national people. So, I warmly welcome the New Mon State Party and the Lahu Democratic Union which will walk along the path with trust and farsightedness, and the correct and brave have decision for the people who have been living in the country since yore through thick and thin. Their signing activities will reduce doubts and worries of the signatory ethnic armed organizations to some extent as well as will create anticipations of the organizations which remain to sign the agreement in order to make continuous cooperation without wrong decision and doubts and with trust.

If we calculate the term of the NCA which started successful signing from 15 October 2015, today it turns two years and four months. Peace offer started to ethnic armed organizations on 18 August 2011, so now is six years and six months term of the peace-making process. At the ceremony to mark the 2nd anniversary of the NCA, I would like to further urge the signatory organizations to rapidly implement the points of the agreement which should be done and which can be done to be able to enjoy results and fruits of the peace while always giving an olive branch to the remnant ethnic armed organizations in order to make collaboration. I would like to note that the government, the people and the Tatmadaw are expecting to see more and more similar ceremonies in the future.

For the emergence of the NCA, individuals, groups and organizations with a view to achieve real peace held coordination meetings patiently many times to seek mutual understanding, trust and consensus. The agreements included in the NCA were not drawn by an individual or a group but drawn by the government, the Tatmadaw and all ethnic armed groups



C-in-C Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing delivers the speech at the signing ceremony of New Mon State Party and Lahu Democratic Union in NCA. **PHOTO: MNA**

with a combination of each chapter, section, paragraph and usage based on prior suggestions made by the ethnic armed groups after heated discussions and negotiations. The NCA was drafted after all had agreed to march towards the path of multi-party democracy aspired by the people in view of Our Three Main National Causes – non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of the national solidarity and perpetuation of the sovereignty – as earlier agreed when the preparation for the agreement was made.

The second point of the NCA basic principles says “Reach a negotiated settlement to end protracted armed conflict in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar; secure a nationwide ceasefire as a first step to end armed conflicts and establish a new political culture of resolving political conflicts through political dialogue instead of force of arms.” In order to end armed conflict, officials from ethnic armed organizations who paid occasional overseas study visits on the topic of peace have learned from practical mutual discussions that ways and means have to be sought step by step in accord with procedures. Therefore, I don't think it is necessary to reiterate it. We have found that some ethnic armed organizations with personal feelings cast doubts and illusions by mistakenly thinking that security sector reform is for them to surrender. Moreover, some hold the concept that ethnic armed groups' signing of the NCA does not mean giving in to the government and the Tatmadaw. I would like to say that the ethnic armed organizations themselves should not have such doubts, illusions and concerns. The NCA signing is a political culture in which political problem is peacefully solved on a roundtable. It means that concerned groups meet each other to seek a solution to 60 or 70 years of unsolved political conflict. It is necessary to understand that one's own demands cannot be made by picking up arms in contrast with democracy. And it is only the NCA that can guarantee to end 60 or 70 years of armed struggle. This agreement describes exact procedures with a

ceasefire put in an initial stage. We will not find it difficult to implement the agreement if we go step by step and in a correct and sincere manner. In so doing, what we need to notice is that we need to make preparations in security sector reform in advance in accord with the international peace process. This process is a point that must be implemented in achieving eternal peace. In implementing the peace process from the NCA to eternal peace, an exact timeframe is necessary and we will overcome all difficulties through coordination and negotiation.

There will not be armed conflicts if agreements enshrined in ceasefire chapter are followed to the letter. Even if small clashes occur because of misunderstanding, the NCA clearly states means and methods to solve them, so no problem will arise if those steps are followed. Since the Tatmadaw is an institution that upholds the four oaths including “We will be loyal to the people and the State” and has to abide by existing laws issued by the State as well as Tatmadaw Acts and rules, it will not say one thing and do another. It has strictly implemented provisions in the NCA without deviating from six-point peace policy since peace process was initiated. It also takes strict and due action against those who do not follow existing laws, adopted policies, orders and instructions. The NCA and the six-point peace policy of the Tatmadaw is the way paved in the interests of the people and the Union for the armed struggle to proceed to peace, and then to a Union based on genuine democracy and federalism without causing troubles to any force. The Tatmadaw has been patiently striving to solve political problems – which have existed in the country for nearly 70 years and were previously solved by means of armed struggle – through peaceful political dialogue around the table in order to achieve eternal peace, as well as stability for development of the country. The Tatmadaw is taking an active part in peace process with honesty and great anticipation not only for personalities of New Mon State Party (NMSP) and Lahu Democratic Union (LDU) who

attend the NCA-signing ceremony today but also for eternal peace aspired by all the national brethren residing in the country and strengthening multi-party democracy which has emerged in accordance with the wishes of the majority. Therefore, I would like to urge all the national brethren in the Union to join hands for the long-term interests of the country.

In accordance with democratic practices, we have opened ways for seeking the solutions to the problems peacefully through discussions on the desires of organizations and negotiations. If they turn a blind eye to these ways, the path to the democratic goal which helps the country in marching towards a peaceful, stable and developed country will face a delay. As long as the processes take longer time, the socioeconomic status of the country and the people will not keep abreast with those in other countries. The main duty of the Tatmadaw is to defend the country. The state defence duty is to ensure the safety of the country, safeguard the life and property of every citizen and protect the people's desires which are in accord with the laws. Here I would like inform the fact that in accord with the obligations assigned, the Tatmadaw would perform its duties for every act and organization that may hamper the life and property of citizens after going against the people's desires, oppose and damage the interests of the country and the people. And the Tatmadaw would stand by and protect the people firmly.

In conclusion, nowadays technology is growing at a rapid rate. The peaceful developed neighbouring countries and the majority of world countries see rapid economic growth. It is an undeniable fact that development is the fruit of the peace and stability. For the time being, our country is would have to redouble our efforts to keep abreast with other countries even if our country had seen peace and stability without armed conflicts. The future socioeconomic status of the people would remain dim if the country lacks peace and stability. Tatmadawmen and the people stranded in the conflicts between armed organizations first suffer the evil consequences of armed conflicts. I would like to reiterate that we must continue to make efforts to quickly reach the genuine, lasting and eternal peace with genuine desire and patience as all citizens would certainly bear the brunt of it. The country may face a variety of different threats at any time. I would conclude my speech here that holding our three main national causes for the perpetuation of independence and sovereignty and avoiding two extremes, all ethnics are urged to cooperate in the efforts for the emergence of the peaceful, modern and developed Union based on the democratic and federal system, in accord with a word “Success would be achieved through collective efforts”.

Thanks to all of you.

State Counsellor meets with China, India UNESCAP representatives

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi met separately with Mr. Sun Guoxiang, Special Envoy for Asian Affairs of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Rajinder Khanna, the Deputy National Security Advisor of India, and Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, the Executive Secretary of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) at the Myanmar International Convention Center -2 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Present at the meetings were Union Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin.

The State Counsellor spoke with Mr. Sun Guoxiang about future plans for Myanmar's national reconciliation and peace efforts. They also discussed China's plans for continued support to Myanmar.

The State Counsellor then talked with Mr. Rajinder Khanna about the bilateral relationship between Myanmar and India and cooperation for anti-terrorism efforts.

The State Counsellor then spoke with Dr. Shamshad Akhtar about continued regional development and increased cooperation between Myanmar and UNESCAP.—Myanmar News Agency ■



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holds talks with Special Envoy for Asian Affairs of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr. Sun Guoxiang in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Press conference on NMSP and LDU signing NCA

A PRESS conference on the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and Lahu Democratic Union (LDU) signing the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) was held yesterday afternoon at the Myanmar International Convention Center-2 (MICC-II).

At the press conference Union Peace Implementation Department Director-General U Zaw Htay, Peace Commission's secretary U Khin Zaw Oo, Lt-Gen Tin Maung Win, Nai Aung Mangae of NMSP and Navis Bon of LDU replied to the questions raised by journalists.

In his brief explanation about the NCA, U Khin Zaw Oo said Peace Commission and Delegation for Political Negotiation (DPN) of United Nationalities Federation Council (UNFC) held a total of 18 meetings, 9 formal meetings and 9 informal meetings within an 18 months period. Meetings were also held periodically with ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) which have not yet signed the NCA.

Replying to a question on EAOs remaining to sign the NCA, U Khin Zaw Oo said "If asked whether other groups can sign the NCA in 2018, I will have to say yes. I can't say which group but there are many possibilities of more groups signing the NCA. We still have more than 10 months left and we'll negotiate to reach a consensus."

On the matter of Arakan National Council (ANC) unable to sign, U Zaw Htay said "We were negotiating with them until the evening of 11th. ANC, LDU and WNO were permitted by (for-



Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement-NCA press conference held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

mer) President U Thein Sein to attend the peace conference directly without signing the NCA. During the present government, they came in with UNFC group. We negotiated with ANC to sign the NCA until the last minute. But when the time came to sign the NCA, ANC didn't come along."

With regards to status of holding the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong 3rd session U Zaw Htay said "Peace Process Steering Team (PPST) consisting of EAOs that had signed had said the peace conference will be held after national level political dialogues were conducted. We are having informal meetings with Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS) to hold national level political dialogues and once this issue is resolved, the conference can be held. In their negotiation with the State Counsellor, NMSP requested one thing. They'll sign the NCA and after signing it, they want sufficient time to participate in

the conference. NMSP will hold national level political dialogues. Only after this, the conference will be held. RCSS is also striving toward holding the national level political dialogues."

On the status of holding UPDJC meeting, U Khin Zaw Oo said the UPDJC will start in the coming few days. Holding national level political dialogues will be discussed. We will also continue to work with groups who are unable to hold national level political dialogues. Once this part is done, Union Peace Conference can be held. Rakhine is in a different situation so national level political dialogues can't be started there yet. We were also meeting with eight groups that had signed the NCA informally said U Khin Zaw Oo.

Adding on to this subject, U Zaw Htay said "UPDJC meeting will be held for NMSP to hold national level political dialogues. The original plan was to sign today, UPDJC secretariat meet-

ing to be called on 14th. UPDJC meeting is to be held on 15th. We proposed this but this is not possible for the other side so we'll start the UPDJC in the coming few days."

Commenting on the fighting in northern Myanmar, Lt-Gen Tin Maung Win said "We already explained that there is no reason for the Tatmadaw to conduct an offensive. If EAOs stay in their assigned places, there wouldn't be any problem. Promises and pledges were made. But if those are not kept and the life and properties of the people are affected, the Tatmadaw will have to act. We are not conducting an offensive."

Nai Aung Mangae of NMSP said it will assist other EAOs that hadn't signed the NCA into signing the NCA. He said "Our NMSP will take the path of NCA. We will urge the remaining groups to participate. NCA is not only a ceasefire but a path toward establishing a federal union. We'll tell this to the others. We'll approach and

appeal to the northern groups as well as the Tatmadaw."

U Zaw Htay then spoke about signing a bilateral agreement with Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP). He said a bilateral agreement had been reached with KNPP. Peace process with KNPP will be a stand-alone. It was not possible to do this with ANC. We provided many opportunities to them. ANC didn't have an armed organization. Only two groups are left in UNFC. KNPP will be on a bilateral basis. ANC may be difficult to sign the NCA anymore. But they can participate in the peace process in some other way said U Zaw Htay.

Responding to the matter of the Tatmadaw not allowing public meetings at national level political dialogues in Shan State Lt-Gen Tin Maung Win said "RCSS was permitted to conduct national level political dialogues in Langkho. But public meetings were not permitted. It was learnt later that this was conducted with the permission of the Shan State government. However, it was not according to ToR and that is why it was not permitted. We have said repeatedly in UPDJC meetings to hold the national level political dialogues in designated places only." On LDU being not permitted to hold national level political dialogues U Zaw Htay said "ANC and LDU don't have areas like ABSDF. That is why they are not permitted to hold national level political dialogues. LDU accept this. ANC didn't accept this and thus they didn't sign."—News Team ■

Federalism, the path to liberation for our Union

WITH the signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) between the Union Government and the ethnic armed organizations yesterday, the rays of hope for peace and for a better future are shining in the regions of the ethnic armed groups.

The NCA is the beginning of the peace process that will result from the resolution of political problems through negotiations, discussions and the joint search for solutions.

Our ethnic people are living in fear and instability amidst the internal armed conflicts that have been occurring in our country for more than 70 years. We have not been able to achieve peace and the future of our new generations has not seen the positive rays of light until today. We are sure that the signing of the NCA by the New Mon State Party and the Lahu Democratic Union will bring joy and happiness.

The NCA is a step toward solving the political problems at the negotiating table through discussions and negotiations, instead of through armed conflict. All of us accept that this is the Panglong spirit.

We can achieve peace only when we have established a Federal system which is acceptable to all our people and the whole country. Today, history calls for Federalism.

During the time of the incumbent government, not only political dialogues but also as part of the Union Accord, the government has been able to sign 37 political agreements at the Second Session of the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong.

Stake-holders are participating in the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) with their heart and soul, immersing themselves in peace-making issues.

However, some armed groups have not joined yet the peace process and some still remain to join. They are those who have participated all along in the negotiations but have not joined the peace process due to various reasons. In the north there are still armed conflicts in some areas. Although the

light of peace is shining brightly in southern Myanmar, this light has been unable to cover the whole country.

In fact, our country has lost much energy due to armed conflicts which have occurred since independence. Our people suffered and the future of our Union suffered.

Today, Myanmar is facing many challenges and difficulties at home, facing many pressures and criticisms in the community of nations and differences of opinions and arguments are still going on inside the country.

These are the bad effects of our inability to unify and transform it into strength. Today is the time to take lessons of the past for the future of our people. Today, we need to take more steps forward and continue our march on the path of national reconciliation and laying a Federal foundation. We can achieve peace only when we have established a Federal system which is acceptable to all our people and the whole country. Today, history calls for Federalism. This is the path of liberation for our Union.

A day of significance in the pursuit of peace in Myanmar

By Maung Thauing Win
(Ex-Diplomat)

IT was heartening to read the newspaper which read: "The New Mon State Party (NMSP) and Lahu Democratic Union (LDU) have signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) on 13 February 2018".

As the news of the signing ceremony came out on 13 February, all the Myanmar nationals were feeling joyous and happy. This good news is one of the significant changes in the country and all the national races across the country are rejoicing to hear this auspicious news. As a result, they can enjoy the fruitful results of peace which we yearned for a long time has come true indeed.

A day of significance

13 February is a day of significance in the history of Myanmar because a boy by the name of Aung San was born in a village in Magway Region, central Myanmar, in 1915.

Early Life

Being a lawyer, his father provided a comfortable but unremarkable middle class upbringing and an education that enabled the young man to attend the University of Yangon.

Young Aung San received his primary education at a Buddhist monastic school in Natmauk, and secondary education at Yenangaung High School. After he entered Yangon University in 1933, he quickly became a student leader and was elected to the executive committee of the Yangon University Students' Union. He then became an editor of the Oway (Peacock's Call) Magazine.

During his university days, he was loyal to nothing and no one apart from a single-minded, immovable dream of an independent Myanmar. In October 1938, Ko Aung San left his law classes and entered national politics.

When he entered Dobama Asiayone, the "We Burmese Association", he acted as its general secretary until August 1940. While in this role, he helped organise a



The Ceremony for Signing of Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement by New Mon State Party and Lahu Democratic Union. PHOTO:MNA

series of countrywide strikes that became known as the 1300 Revolution, named after the Burmese calendar year.

He was known as a nationalist and the founder of the Tatmadaw as well as an architect of Myanmar's Independence due to his unwavering spirit.

Bogyoke Aung San and the Panglong Agreement

It was on 12 February, 1947, that Bogyoke Aung San and representatives of ethnic races, including 23 signatories, signed the Panglong Agreement, with the determination of living in unity and with equal rights.

Hence, all indigenous people residing in the union are urged to participate in building a democratic federal union while valuing our unity as life.

The Panglong Agreement is the result of the struggle made by Bogyoke Aung San and ethnic leaders with farsightedness.

With the Panglong Agree-

ment, Myanmar, with more than 100 ethnic tribes, showed their unity and strength in regaining independence. Thanks to the unity of all ethnic peoples, Myanmar became a sovereign independent country on 4 January, 1948.

Making Sacrifices

Although Bogyoke Aung San was instrumental in bringing about Myanmar's independence, he did not live long enough to see the flag hoisting ceremony of the Independence Day. Tragically he was assassinated on 19 July, 1947, six months before Myanmar's independence. His sudden death at the age of 32 was a great loss to the country.

70 years after Independence Day

Though Myanmar gained independence over 70 years ago, some ethnic groups still take up arms and remain in the past. They are in need of focusing on the present time in order to set

up as a democratic union and a Democratic Federation Republic that is acceptable to the majority.

Progress on the Peace Process

After regaining independence in 1948, Myanmar suffered the consequences of insurgencies and unrest mainly due to mistrust, hatred and the evil effects of armed conflicts. Successive governments spoke with ethnic armed groups to halt the unrest, which lasted for many decades. As a result, the government and ethnic armed groups agreed to sign the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) in 2015.

Unity is Strength

That is why every year on the 13th of February, Myanmar nationals all around the country honour Bogyoke Aung San and celebrate his birthday as if he were still with us.

As we march towards National Unity, we need to reduce

issues that could cause disunity and discord among us. Moreover, we need to seek out common points of agreement that could bring us together and make us more united.

For the emergence of a Democratic Federal Republic, we ought to stand tall and be strong amidst the countries of the world, for a bright future for our next generations.

Ultimate Aim

The ultimate aim should be for the next generation to live in a stable, peaceful and developed nation. It is of crucial importance to set up as a democratic union and a Democratic Federation Republic that is acceptable to the majority.

Hence, all indigenous people residing in the union are urged to participate in building a democratic federal union while valuing our unity as life.

Translated by
Win Ko Ko Aung

New Mon State Party Chairman gives speech after signing NCA



New Mon State Party Chairman Nai Htaw Mon delivers the speech at the signing ceremony of New Mon State Party and Lahu Democratic Union in Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. PHOTO:MNA

In light of the agreement by the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and Lahu Democratic Union (LDU) to sign the National Ceasefire Agreement, NMSP Chairman Nai Htaw Mon gave a speech on the occasion.

Nai Htaw Mon started his speech by expressing his gratitude to all the individuals present at the signing ceremony and all those who have made it possible. He said that the concept of peace is correlated to three key components: ceasing of armed conflicts, regional development, and national dialogue. Two components personally important for him were ceasing armed conflicts and equal representation.

The first component, he said, is directly linked to security and is thus a ceasefire agreement, which he believes is the goal of the NCA. He acknowledged that it will not be

a straight route, but one filled with obstacles that they are prepared to overcome. He also acknowledged that there are individuals who do not agree with their decision to sign the NCA but he believes that they still have the same objective: peace and reconciliation.

He said that the decision to sign the NCA is not to dodge responsibility or choose an easy path, but it is in the interest of working towards the equality of all ethnic brethren. He said they will work to make the NCA an inclusive path towards a united federal nation.

He ended his speech by requesting the leaders of the nation and of the military to be patient with the ethnic groups who have a long history of worry and suffering and may be reluctant to readily agree with their plans. -GNLM

Invitation to young writers for Sunday section

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



The ceremony to sign an agreement to ink the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement is in progress. **PHOTO: MNA**

New Mon State Party and Lahu Democratic Union sign NCA

The Union Peace Commission, New Mon State Party (NMSP) and Lahu Democratic Union (LDU) signed an agreement to ink the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) at the Myanmar International Convention Centre -II in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Dr. Tin Myo Win, Chairman of the Union Peace Commission (UPC) spoke first at the occasion. He said the UPC held multiple meetings with the Delegation for Political Negotiation (DPN) of the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC), of which the NMSP and LDU are members,

over the course of 17 months. He said it started off with heated discussions but eventually all participants were able to build trust and focus on one vision throughout the rest of the meetings. The meetings started off with seven groups but due to various circumstances only two groups made it to today's signing. However, the UPC Chairman said they will continue working and meeting with the other non-signatories until they are able to participate in the NCA.

Afterwards, Kyar Solomon, the Deputy Chairman of Lahu Democratic Union, spoke at the

occasion. He said today was a day that benefited Myanmar's peace process. Only after signing the NCA is it possible to participate in political dialogue and the LDU is motivated to be a part of each level of dialogue. He said the LDU and the NMSP will sign both the 8-point proposal and the NCA agreement to end the internal conflicts that have lasted for more than 70 years.

This was followed by UPC Secretary U Khin Zaw Oo and LDU Leading Committee member Narvis Bon each reading sections of the signed agreement. —Myanmar News Agency ■



Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung holds talks with Singaporean Ambassador Ms. Vanessa Chan yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung receives Singapore Ambassador to Myanmar

Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung received Singapore Ambassador to Myanmar Ms. Vanessa Chan in the Union Minister's guest room yesterday morning.

During the meeting, matters relating to internal peace and national reconciliation, long term stability and peace in Rakhine State, rule of law, security and socio-economic

development were discussed.

Other concerns included Myanmar border regional developments, human resources development conducted with United Nations and international organisations, as well as training courses jointly conducted by Singapore and Myanmar for the development of human resources.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Ministry of Foreign Affairs Permanent Secretary U Myint Thu meets with US Department of State delegation in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

First consular affairs coordination meeting held between Myanmar and US

THE Ministry of Foreign Affairs held the first consular affairs coordination meeting yesterday afternoon with the United States Department of State in Chindwin Hall, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

Present at the meeting were representatives, led by the Min-

istry of Foreign Affairs Permanent Secretary U Myint Thu and representatives, led by US State Department Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs H.E. Mr. Carl C. Risch.

In the meeting, matters relating to improving bilateral consular relations and authorizing

citizens from the two countries to conduct consular and visa matters were discussed.

This is the first time the bilateral consular affairs coordination meeting was held, and there are plans to continue these meetings in the future. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Witnesses of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement signing in Nay Pyi Taw



Mr. Virasakdi Futrakul, Deputy Foreign Minister of Thailand, signs as a witness of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. **PHOTO: MNA**



Mr. Kristian Schmidt, Ambassador of EU, signs as a witness of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**



Vice President U Myint Swe signs Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**



Vice President U Henry Van Thio signs Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint signs Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Mahn Win Khaing Than signs Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. **PHOTO: MNA**



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing signs Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**



Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe signs Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**



Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo signs Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. **PHOTO: MNA**



Peace Commission Chairman Dr. Tin Myo Win signs Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. **PHOTO: MNA**



NMSP secretary general Nai Aung Min signs Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Two ethnic armed groups sign ceasefire agreement in Nay Pyi Taw

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Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's message was followed by a speech by the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

Next, NMSP Chairperson Nai Htaw Mon delivered a message on behalf of NMSP and LDU.

Afterwards, a documentary film on the peace process was shown. An extract from the NCA was then read by Peace Commission Chairman Dr. Tin Myo Win and NMSP Secretary General Nai Aung Min.

The signing ceremony was held at the conclusion of the speeches, where President U Htin Kyaw, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Vice President U Myint Swe, Vice President U Henry Van Thio, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than, Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Tatmadaw Deputy Commander-in-Chief Vice Senior General Soe Win, National Reconciliation and Peace Center Vice Chairman Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe, Union Attorney-General

U Tun Tun Oo, Peace Commission Chairman Dr. Tin Myo Win, NMSP Chairperson Nai Htaw Mon, Secretary General Nai Aung Min, military chief Nai Layi Kaung, LDU Chairperson Kyar Kun Sar, Vice Chairman Kyar Solomon and central committee member Navis Bon signed the agreement.

Union Minister Nai Thet Lwin; U Khin Zaw Oo and U Khun Maung Thaung of the government; Hluttaw and Tatmadaw groups of UPDJC; U Thu Wei, Dr. Tuja, U Thein Tun of political groups UPDJC; U Thein Zaw and U Aung Soe of

the Peace Commission; Lt-Gen Yar Pyae; Lt-Gen Min Naung; U Pyae Sone; U Maung Maung Nyein; Thura U Bo Ni; Rev. Saw Mathew Aye; Sai Myo Thant; U Ko Ko Gyi of JMC-U; Mon State Hluttaw representative Dr. Min Soe Lin; Minister for Mon Ethnic Affairs U Min Tin Win; Minister for Lahu Ethnic Affairs U Yaw Thet; and Minister for Shan Ethnic Affairs Daw Hmwe Hmwe Khin signed the agreement as in-country witnesses.

Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP H.E. Dr.

Shamshad Akhtar, Special Envoy of Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China H.E. Mr. Sun Guoxiang, Special Envoy of the Government of Japan for National Reconciliation in Myanmar H.E. Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, Deputy National Security Advisor of the Republic of India H.E. Mr. Rajinder Khanna, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand H.E. Mr. Virasakdi Futrakul, and European Union Ambassador to Myanmar Kristian Schmidt signed the agreement as international witnesses.—Myanmar News Agency

Witnesses of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement with Union Government, New Mon State Party, Lahu Democratic Union



Nai Thet Lwin, Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs. **PHOTO: MNA**



U Khin Zaw Oo, Government, Hluttaw, Tatmadaw group of Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee. **PHOTO: MNA**



U Khun Maung Thaung, Government, Hluttaw, Tatmadaw group of Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee. **PHOTO: MNA**



U Thu Wai of the political group of the Union Peace Dialogue Committee. **PHOTO: MNA**



Dr. Tu Jar, Political group of the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee. **PHOTO: MNA**



U Thein Tun, Political Group of the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee. **PHOTO: MNA**



U Thein Zaw, Peace Commission. **PHOTO: MNA**



U Aung Soe, Peace Commission. **PHOTO: MNA**



Lt-Gen Yar Pyai, Union Level Joint Monitoring Committee for Ceasefire. **PHOTO: MNA**



Lt-Gen Min Naung, Union Level Joint Monitoring Committee for Ceasefire. **PHOTO: MNA**



U Pyai Sone, Union Level Joint Monitoring Committee. **PHOTO: MNA**



U Maung Maung Nyein, Union Level Joint Monitoring Committee. **PHOTO: MNA**

Witnesses of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement with Union Government, New Mon State Party, Lahu Democratic Union



Thura U Bo Ni, Union Level Joint Monitoring Committee. **PHOTO: MNA**



Saw Mathrew Aye, Union Level Joint Monitoring Committee. **PHOTO: MNA**



U Sai Myo Thant, Union Level Joint Monitoring Committee. **PHOTO: MNA**



U Ko Ko Gyi, Joint Monitoring Committee of the Union Level Ceasefire. **PHOTO: MNA**



U Min Soe Lin, MP of Mon State Hluttaw. **PHOTO: MNA**



U Min Tin Win, Mon Ethnic Affairs Minister. **PHOTO: MNA**



U Yaw Thet, Minister for Lahu Ethnic Affairs. **PHOTO: MNA**



Daw Hmwe Hmwe Khin, Minister for Shan Ethnic Affairs. **PHOTO: MNA**



Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Under Secretary General of the United Nations. **PHOTO: MNA**



Mr. Sun Guoxiang, Special Envoy for Asia Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China. **PHOTO: MNA**



Mr. Rajinder Khanna, deputy adviser for the National Security Affairs of India. **PHOTO: MNA**



Mr. Yohel Sasakawa, Japanese Government's Special Envoy for national reconciliation in Myanmar. **PHOTO: MNA**



The banquet honouring New Mon State Party and Lahu Democratic Union. PHOTO:MNA



Cultural dance troupe performs at the banquet in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO:MNA

Banquet honoring new signatories of NCA held in Nay Pyi Taw

A banquet was held in Nay Pyi Taw's Myanmar International Convention Center-II to honor the New Mon State Party and Lahu Democratic Union on signing the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement last night.

Attending the event were President U Htin Kyaw, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the 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, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairperson of the Constitutional Tribunal U Myo Nyunt, Union Election Commission Chairman U Hla Thein, Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Chairman of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann, Union Ministers, Chairman and members of Peace Commission JMC-U members, Union Attorney-General, Union

Auditor-General, Chairman of the Union Civil Service Board, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, Chief Ministers from Shan and Mon States, the Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, Chief of General Staff (Army, Navy and Air), Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission, Chairman of the Human Rights Commission, Chairpersons of NMSP and LDU and their Vice-Chairpersons, Representatives and community elders, Chairpersons of Hluttaw Affairs Committees,

Deputy Ministers, Tatmadaw officials, Hluttaw Representatives, Ministers for Ethnic Affairs, representatives of Political Parties, Government Department heads, representatives of armed ethnic groups, foreign ambassadors, UN representatives and other invited guests.

Performers from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Cultural performed various dances including Panglong faith dance, Mon Traditional Natkarnar dance, Lahu Traditional

Bu Palway Myay Wine dance, Lahu Lu Taing Thi Par Say dance ("Everyone should know" dance), Mon Traditional Hinthar dance and the Tarswar Myanmar (United Ethnic) dance during the banquet.

After the banquet, President U Htin Kyaw and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi greeted the Chairpersons of the NMSP and LDU, responsible officials, and the artists and performers cordially. —Myanmar News Agency

Mytel SIM card begins distribution at end of February

Myanmar's fourth telecom company, operating under the brand name Mytele, is planning to begin distributing their SIM card at the end of February, according to a report yesterday in the City News Daily.

Myanmar National Tele & Communication Co., Ltd (MNTC) is a company jointly invested in by two companies in Myanmar, Myanmar National Telecom Holding Co., Ltd. and Star High Public Co., Ltd., and the Vietnam telephone company VIETTEL.

VIETTEL, which operates in nine countries, will have a 49 per cent stake in the new joint venture, while the companies from Myanmar will collectively hold a 51 per cent share.

Concerning the selection of the fourth telecom operator license, an official from the transport and communica-

tions department said, "The fourth telecom operator license project is being managed by the Joint Venture Formation and Tender Selection Work Committee. The committee has conducted the selection process with transparency.

"Mytel has set a goal of becoming the biggest and best operator, and its objective is to provide the best Internet services at a fair price. MNTC prioritizes local villages, and their SIM card will begin being distributed at the end of this month," said U Zaw Min Oo, the Chief internal relations officer of Myanmar National Tele & Communication Co., Ltd.

A nationwide telecommunications license (NTL) was issued to Mytel by the Ministry of Transport and Communications. —GNLM

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V MAENAM-1 VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MAENAM-1 VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13-2-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT 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.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S INTERASIA LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V TOVE MAERSK VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V TOVE MAERSK VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13-2-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T 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.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT
(S'PORE) PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

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For **Iluka Resources Limited.**,
C/o **Kelvin Chia Yangon Ltd.**,
Level 8A, Union Financial Centre (UFC),
Corner of Mahabandoola Road & Thein Phyu Road,
Botahtaung Township,

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
Dated 14th February 2018 lmm@kcyangon.com

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V ARCA VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ARCA VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 14-2-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T 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.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT
(S'PORE) PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

Obamas reveal unconventional portraits in Washington

WASHINGTON — Former US first couple Barack and Michelle Obama unveiled their portraits at Washington's National Gallery on Monday, two contrasting works by African American artists that shocked and delighted.

The paintings by Kehinde Wiley and Amy Sherald, commissioned by the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, were revealed at a star-studded event that is a rite of passage for most former American presidents.

The museum holds portraits of all American ex-commanders in chief, but these latest additions stand in stark contrast to the more buttoned-down approach of traditional presidential portraiture.

Both show their subjects — America's first black presidential couple — looking cool and confident, a stark contrast to the bubbling swamp of anger and braggadocio that is political Washington today.

Wiley painted the ex-president against a signature lush botanical backdrop.



Barack and Michelle Obama attend the unveiling of their new portraits with their respective artists, Kehinde Wiley (L) and Amy Sherald (R), at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington. **PHOTO: AFP**

Obama, in a serious seated pose at the edge of a wooden chair, is enmeshed in a thicket of leaves and flowers that recall the tropical hues of the 44th president's home state of Hawaii.

"How about that? That's pretty sharp," Obama joked, as he thanked staff and friends in attendance.

The internet quickly got busy making jokes about him

being stuck in a bush.

- 'Charm and hotness' -

Obama also praised Sherald for "so spectacularly capturing the grace and beauty and intelligence and charm and hotness

of the woman that I love."

The Baltimore-based artist rendered Michelle Obama in her trademark grayscale, with only a few splashes of coral, pink and yellow, against an eggshell blue backdrop.

The resulting image makes the subject's race almost an afterthought.

Obama's dress — true to form for a first lady whose wardrobe was often the focus of attention — dominates the frame.

As in Sherald's previous paintings of African American subjects, Michelle Obama appears poised and powerful as she looks down on the viewer.

Obama's portrait will be hung alongside those of former presidents, including the Lansdowne portrait of George Washington by Gilbert Stuart.

Michelle Obama's likeness will hang at the gallery until November this year.

The official portraits of the Obamas, which will be displayed the White House, have not yet been commissioned.—AFP ■

Horse and carriage for Prince Harry and Meghan's wedding

LONDON — A horse-drawn carriage will take Prince Harry and his American bride Meghan Markle down Windsor's main street after they marry in the town's castle in May, Kensington Palace said on Sunday.

Following a noon ceremony in St George's Chapel the newlyweds will make a "short journey" in the carriage, leaving the castle at around 1 pm

(1300 GMT), it said.

"Prince Harry and Meghan Markle are hugely grateful for the many good wishes they have received since announcing their engagement," the palace said in a statement.

"They are very much looking forward to the day and to being able to share their celebrations with the public.

"They hope this short jour-

ney will provide an opportunity for more people to come together around Windsor and to enjoy the atmosphere of this special day."

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby will officiate on 19 May as the couple make their marriage vows, while the Dean of Windsor, David Conner, will conduct the wedding service, the palace also confirmed.

After the ceremony the pair and their guests will move to St George's Hall for a reception, which they will rejoin after the carriage procession.

Later that evening Prince Charles will host another reception for the couple and their "close friends and family", it added.

Harry and Markle announced their engagement in November and have since made a series of public appearances, drawing crowds of well-wishers.

A royal spokesman confirmed soon after the announcement that the couple had chosen to marry in Windsor, Queen Elizabeth II's weekend residence.—AFP ■



"Prince Harry and Meghan Markle are hugely grateful for the many good wishes they have received since announcing their engagement," the palace said in a statement. **PHOTO: AFP**

Japan's average adult height declining for those born in 1980 or later

TOKYO — While the average height of Japanese adults had grown some 15 centimetres over the past century with improved nutrition and public health conditions, it has started to decline for those born in 1980 or later, research showed.

A research team at the National Center for Child Health and Development in Tokyo analyzed data on some 3.15 million adults in Japan and concluded the declining trend in average height may be attributed to increases in low-birth-weight infants in the country, or those who weighed 2,500 grams or lighter at birth.

The findings by Naho Morisaki and other researchers were published last year in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health.

According to the study, average adult height in Japan peaked for those born in 1978 and 1979 at 171.46 cm for men and 158.52 cm for women, while the figures for those born in 1996 stood at 170.82 cm among men and 158.31 cm among women — 0.64 cm and 0.21 cm shorter

than peak levels, respectively.

The researchers found "a strong inverse correlation" between the rate of low-birth-weight infants and adult height. While the decline of the average height started among people born in 1980 or later, the number of low-birth-weight babies sharply increased since around that time.

Health ministry statistics showed the ratio of low-birth-weight babies in Japan stood at 5.1 per cent in the latter half of 1970s, but it jumped nearly twofold to 9.7 per cent in 2007.

Past research has indicated that the height of people with low birth weights tends to be shorter when they grow into adult.

Morisaki, chief of the centre's division of life course epidemiology, and other team members studied trends in average height of Japanese adults born between 1969 and 1996 and observed trends in birth characteristics using data of around 64.1 million live births in the vital statistics between 1969 and 2014. —Kyodo News ■

The master Ronaldo against the pretender Neymar

MADRID — With Cristiano Ronaldo on one side and Neymar on the other, Wednesday's heavyweight Champions League showdown between Real Madrid and Paris Saint-Germain sees two of the game's biggest global superstars collide.

Ronaldo, the current world player of the year, has rediscovered something like his best form just at the right time for Real.

PSG, meanwhile, are placing their hopes in Neymar, the world's most expensive player and a Ballon d'Or winner of the future, as they chase the European glory that has thus far eluded them.

The Brazilian left Barcelona for Paris to step out of Lionel Messi's shadow. But, exactly seven years Ronaldo's junior, he is already being talked about in the Spanish capital as a possible successor to the Portuguese.

- Ronaldo back to his best? -

So far Neymar's route to the Ballon d'Or has been blocked by the Messi-Ronaldo duopoly - they have won the prize five times each in the last 10 years.

If Neymar inspires PSG to victory in this tie, and then on to glory in the final in May, he will stand a good chance of ending their domination. But while Ronaldo turned 33 last Monday, he is far from finished.

He scored just four times in Real's first 18 La Liga games, his slow start to the season following a summer overshadowed by accusations of tax evasion. But a weekend hat-trick in a 5-2 win over Real Sociedad took him to seven goals in his last four league outings.

Suddenly, 'CR7' now has 23 goals in all competitions this season, more than at the same stage a year ago. "I am always

looking to perform at the highest level and sometimes things don't work out the way we would like," Ronaldo told realmadrid.com. He may be beginning his decline, but there is life in him yet. And Ronaldo also lives for the Champions League, a competition he has won four times before.

The Portuguese scored nine times in this season's group stage and his next goal will be his 100th in the competition for Real.

- Neymar: Some downs, mostly ups -

Neymar's first six months in France have at times been overshadowed by reports of an uneasy relationship with Edinson Cavani, the other idol at PSG and the club's all-time record goal-scorer.

Doubts are still raised about how much the French scene motivates him, too.

Last week he sat out a French Cup tie at Sochaux, just 48 hours after hosting a lavish party for his 26th birthday near Paris' Place Vendome.

But Neymar can almost do and say what he wants, as long as his performances on the field satisfy PSG's Qatari owners after they invested a world-record 222 million euros (\$264 million) to sign him.

And he is delivering on the pitch, scoring a goal a game in a Paris shirt.

"We have lots of great players, but our leader on the pitch is Neymar," said PSG coach Unai Emery recently.

- One day in Madrid? -

In France, persistent speculation about a potential Real bid to sign Neymar, possibly as early as this year, has been seen as an attempt to unsettle PSG

ahead of this tie. "Would Neymar fit at Real Madrid? He would fit, for sure," Real's Marcelo, a Brazil team-mate of Neymar, told Brazilian channel Esporte Interativo.

"I think Neymar will one day play for Real Madrid."

PSG signed Neymar after he masterminded Barcelona's incredible 6-1 win when the teams met in the Champions League last season. It is not too big a stretch to imagine Real doing something similar should Neymar oversee their downfall. He will surely not be at PSG forever, and Madrid president Florentino Perez cannot wait too much longer to sign another global superstar, and a successor to Ronaldo. "I hope Neymar will stay. He still has a lot of things to achieve with us," PSG skipper Thiago Silva told Canal+. —AFP ■

Hazard double eases pressure on Chelsea's Conte

LONDON — Eden Hazard's double eased the mounting pressure on Chelsea manager Antonio Conte as the English champions bounced back to winning ways and moved into the Premier League top four with a 3-0 win over rock bottom West Brom on Monday.

Three-goal defeats at the hands of Bournemouth and Watford saw odds slashed on Conte becoming the latest Chelsea boss to be dismissed just nine months on from winning the Premier League.

However, the Italian who claimed in the build-up to the game it would be "stupid" to sack him was handed a reprieve by the brilliance of Belgian Hazard, with Victor Moses also on target for the hosts.

Chelsea climb into fourth with the gap between Manchester United in second and fifth-placed Tottenham Hotspur now just four points in the race to join runaway leaders Manchester City in next season's Champions League.

At the other end of the table, a third straight defeat is another huge blow to West Brom's chances of survival with the Baggies now seven points adrift of safety and just 11 games remaining.

Crucially for Chelsea ahead



Eden Hazard's brace eases the pressure on under-fire Chelsea manager Antonio Conte. PHOTO: AFP

of a huge month on three fronts, Conte's forward options were replenished as Olivier Giroud was handed his full debut, whilst club record signing Alvaro Morata made his return after nearly a month out with a back injury as a second-half substitute.

West Brom were dealt an injury blow themselves inside three minutes when former Chelsea striker Daniel Sturridge

limped off to be replaced by Jay Rodriguez.

Alan Pardew insisted he had no problem fielding Rodriguez, who was charged by the FA on Thursday with using racist language towards Brighton's Gaietan Bong last month, but has vowed to clear his name.

Rodriguez had by far the best chance of a bright start from the visitors when he latched

onto Moses's wayward defensive header, but dragged his shot wide with just Thibaut Courtois to beat.

Giroud passed up a huge opportunity to mark his Stamford Bridge bow in Chelsea blue with a goal when his weak right-footed effort was easily smothered by Ben Foster on 20 minutes.

But the French international made amends by providing

the pass for the opener as a neat one-two opened the space for Hazard to fire his 14th goal of the season into the bottom corner.

West Brom only had themselves to blame for not getting back into the game early in the second period.

Salomon Rondon fired too close to Courtois after outmuscling Andreas Christensen despite Chelsea claims for a foul on the Dane.

And, from the resulting corner, Jonny Evans headed inches over the bar.

Moments later, Pardew's men were 2-0 down as Moses latched onto Cesc Fabregas's deflected pass to slot low past Foster.

Hazard then capped a welcome win when he cut inside before drilling a left-footed shot inside Foster's near post.

Conte's name was loudly sung by the Chelsea faithful in a clear show of support for their manager.

However, far tougher tests await following Hull City's visit in the FA Cup on Friday.

Firstly, Barcelona visit the Bridge in the Champions League last 16 in eight days time before back-to-back Premier League visits to Manchester to face United and City.—AFP ■