President U Win Myint receives UN Special Envoy to Myanmar

PRESIDENT U Win Myint received a delegation led by UN Special Envoy to Myanmar Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Among the topics discussed were the Rakhine situation, the peace process, democratic transition, democracy and human rights, rule of law and national peace.

Present at the meeting were Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye and other officials.—Myanmar News Agency ■

President U Win Myint poses for a photo together with a delegation led by UN Special Envoy Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Vice President U Myint Swe welcomes UN Special Envoy Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Vice President U Myint Swe meets UN Special Envoy to Myanmar

VICE President U Myint Swe met with UN Special Envoy to Myanmar Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener and her delegation at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

They discussed national reconciliation, the peace process, and national level operations for the development and stabilisation of Rakhine State.

Present at the meeting were Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Myint Thu and other officials.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker receives Malaysian ambassador

AMYOTHA Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than received Malaysian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Zahairi Baharim at the guest hall of the Hluttaw in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they cordially discussed promoting bilateral relations between the two countries, legislation processes of the parliaments of the two countries and development issues in the economic and education sectors. Also present at the meeting were Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung and officials from the Amyotha Hluttaw office.—MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives outgoing Hungarian ambassador

PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat received outgoing Hungarian Ambassador to Myanmar Dr. Peter Jakab at the Hluttaw building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed cooperation between the Myanmar and Hungary parliaments, along with exchanging views on issues relating to cooperation in the economic and education sectors. Also present at the meeting were Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Tun Hein and officials from the Pyithu Hluttaw office.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat meets with Hungarian Ambassador to Myanmar Dr. Peter Jakab in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Day Two of Union Peace ...

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Hluttaw representatives U Pyone Cho @ U Htay Win Aung, Naw Chris Tun @ Dr. Arr Kar Moe, Mi Kun Chan, U Lwin Ko Latt, U Myint Lwin, Daw Zin Mar Aung, U Min Oo, Daw Nan Htwe Thu, U N Hton Kha Naw San, Daw Ni Shwe Hlyan, U Tin Thit @ U Yi Mon, U Aung Soe, U Zaw Min Latt and U Soe Lay @ U Soe Win policy proposals on political sector, economic sector, social sector, security sector and land & environment sector respectively and group members discussed and made suggestions on the sector-wise policy proposals.

At the Tatmadaw group meeting, chairman Lt-Gen Tin Maung Win delivered an opening speech and members of discussion committees on political, economic, social, security and land & environment conducted sector-wise discussion on policy proposals. At the ethnic armed organisations group meeting, UPDJC Vice Chairman Dr. Salai Lian Hmung Sakhong delivered an opening speech.

Second day of the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong Conference at the Myanmar International Convention Centre II in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

At the group meetings, explanations on the programme of the discussion and work guidelines were conducted and group members discussed and made suggestions on the political, economic, social, security and land & environment policy proposals.

At the political parties group meeting, UPDJC Vice Chairman U Thu Wai delivered an opening speech and group-wise meetings were conducted, where programmes of the discussion were explained, work guidelines read and sector-wise discussion subjects explained. Group members discussed and suggested on the political, economic, social, security and land & environment policy proposals.—Myanmar News Agency ■

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Second earthquake forum to be held in Yangon

By Nyein Nyein

A tourist takes a picture of the damaged ancient Tayoke Pyay Temple on 26 August, 2016, after a 6.8 magnitude earthquake hit Bagan. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE second earthquake forum, organised by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and the government of Yangon Region, will be held at Yangon Technological University today and tomorrow (13 and 14 July).

The forum will be held with the aim of sharing information about earthquakes, increasing community awareness on earthquake preparedness and response, ensuring earthquake preparedness among stakeholders concerned, organising key players for strengthening earthquake preparedness and response capacity through emergency planning and organising key players to establish quick and effective earthquake response mechanisms and plans for Yangon Region.

Moreover, to be able to prepare and respond to massive earthquakes, a mechanism system will be set up so that different departments remain connected.

According to current situation, the government needs to review the survey, preparedness and response over earthquakes to reduce the damage caused. Small and medium earthquakes frequently hit Myanmar in the first three months of 2018.

Previously, there was no major damage caused by earthquakes in Yangon Region because of the small population and only a few high-risk buildings. But now, if a massive earthquake hits, it can cause a major disaster and loss of life because of lower capacity to respond, lack of preparedness, lower-quality high-risk buildings and a growing population.

The key to surviving an earthquake and reducing the risk of death or injury lies in identifying potential quake areas, establishing a proper building code and putting in place comprehensive disaster response plans that involve families, schools, government agencies, the police and security forces.

According to Myanmar's geographic position, being located on geological faults, such as the Sagaing, Kyaukkyan and Rakhine faults, earthquakes are significant hazards here. According to the history of Myanmar, some of the earthquakes have led to the loss of human lives and caused major damage to the affected regions. Myanmar's biggest earthquake, measuring 8.2 on the Richter scale, took place in 1912 along the Kyaukkyan fault in Shan State. In April 2016, there was an earthquake of 6.8 magnitude in some townships of Sagaing Region. Again, in August 2016, there was another earthquake of the same magnitude near Chauk Township in Magway Region. It caused lots of damage to many pagodas and temples in Bagan in central Myanmar. Last January, there was an earthquake of a magnitude of 6 near Pyu Town of Bago Region.

Due to massive and frequent earthquakes in Myanmar, it is necessary that all those who are involved should be prepared and have proper systems, plans and actions in place which can safeguard people, cities and communities in Myanmar. ■

Gov't, World Bank discuss speeding up Myanmar economic policy reformation

By Nyein Nyein

MYANMAR government and World Bank officials discussed the Myanmar economic policy reformation process for the implementation of the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP) at Hilton Hotel, Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday.

The discussion was jointly organised by the Ministry of Planning and Finance and the World Bank, and focused on the MSDP.

"As described in the MSDP, economic stability and macroeconomics management are essential to achieving the objectives of peace, stability and other sustainable development goals. The MSDP is drawn up to rally all necessary resources to achieve the goal of bringing stability to our nation," said U Maung Maung Win, Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance.

Moreover, the discussion was held with the aim to exchange ideas over the recent economic policy and analysis of the Myanmar Economic Monitor (MEM), which was released in May.

According to MEM, the gross domestic product growth rate in Myanmar has increased to 6.4 per cent in 2017-2018 from 5.9 per cent in 2016-2017. The report indicates a favorable outlook with growth expected to increase to 6.8 per cent in 2018-2019.

But, there are many risks in Myanmar's economic sector. Among them is the uncertainty in global trade and commodity prices.

"Myanmar has the potential to grow even faster than its current rate. The MSDP provides the framework to realise this potential by building human and physical capital and by harnessing the nation's innovative and creative power, including mobilising a dynamic private sector, said Gevorg Sargsyan, World Bank Myanmar Representative.

The MEM also indicated some risks related to concerns over the slow pace of reforms and limited progress in addressing the humanitarian crisis in Rakhine State. There also remain perceptions of practical inefficiency, centralised decision–making and emerging protectionism. ■