

President U Thein Sein witnesses signing of draft nationwide ceasefire agreement in Yangon

NAY PYI TAW, 31 March—President U Thein Sein witnessed the signing of a draft nationwide ceasefire agreement between the Union Peace-making Working Committee and the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team at the Myanmar Peace Centre in Yangon on Tuesday, according to officials.

Before the signing ceremony, the president cordially greeted members of both sides, calling them the builders of peace as desired by the people.

The draft agreement came after several rounds of talks, which the president described as a significant step towards the signing of the nationwide ceasefire agreement.

The signing will pave the way for political dialogue, he said, adding that potential obstacles can be overcome through negotiations between the two sides.

The move was seen as the “Second Panglong Victory”, which is historic



President U Thein Sein attends signing ceremony of draft nationwide ceasefire agreement between Union Peace-making Working Committee and Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team.—MNA

and significant for national consolidation, he noted.

The draft nationwide ceasefire agreement was signed by the UPWC and NCCT. Signatories of the

UPWC were U Aung Min, U Thein Zaw, Lt-Gen Myint Soe, Union Minister Lt-Gen Thet Naing Win and Member of Parliament U Khet Htein Nan. Signa-

atories on the NCCT side were U Naing Han Tha, Pado Saw Kwe Htoo Win, Maj-Gen Guan Maw, Dr Salai Lianmong Sakhoung and Col Khun Okkar.

President U Thein Sein enjoyed a luncheon with members of UPWC and NCCT and left for Nay Pyi Taw in the afternoon.—MNA

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Peace negotiators vow to strengthen cooperation after approving text for nationwide ceasefire

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 31 March—Peace negotiators from the government and ethnic armed groups concluded talks on a single text for the national ceasefire accord, aimed at ending more than

60 years of internal conflicts in Myanmar, with the release of two joint statements Tuesday.

The single text will be presented to the leaders of both sides for approval, with a specific schedule and a list of signatories to

a truce deal to be set after coordination between the Union Peacemaking Working Committee and Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team, the first joint statement said.

In the second joint statement following the

seventh national ceasefire accord meeting, both sides stressed the need for further cooperation to prevent the recurrence of armed conflicts during the implementation of the peace process.

In his address, U Nai Hong Sar, who led the NCCT, said there are likely to be few amendments to the tentative agreements achieved in the single text while seeking approval of leaders at the ethnic conference which is likely to be held next month, with a specific date yet to be arranged.

The government side will seek no further amendments to the approved single text and is looking forward to setting a date for signing the pact with ethnic armed groups, said Union Minister U Aung Min, who led the UPWC.

The sooner the two sides signed the ceasefire (See page 2)

Peace deal: Not only high expectation, but also bright daybreak of peace

NAY PYI TAW, 31 March — Government-backed Union Peace-making Working Committee and Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team of 16 ethnic armed groups have made a draft ceasefire deal on Tuesday.

Regarding the draft pact, President U Thein Sein said Myanmar has seen an auspicious day with both high expectation and bright daybreak of peace, urging all the participants make more attempts for lasting peace in near future.

Union Minister U Ye Htut also said Myanmar has marked two historic milestones of Tuesday's draft ceasefire deal and inaugural speech of President U Thein Sein who vowed to open up reform efforts this day of four years ago.

The union minister added while there are a

number of presidents and armed group leaders who won the wars in the chronicles, only few number of them could ensure peace for the country, referring to President U Thein Sein and Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing with congratulation.

U Ye Htut noted that all must keep patience to be able to sign ceasefire agreement through dialogues based on the draft deal with ethnic leaders and guarantee lasting peace and ethnic rights.

He also remarked that successive governments in Myanmar tried to resolve internal conflicts in their own ways, while President U Thein Sein attempted for ceasefire with more armed groups through alternative approach.

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Peace negotiators from the UPWC and NCCT open the floor to questions from the media at the Myanmar Peace Centre in Yangon on Tuesday.

PHOTO: YE MYINT

Amyotha Hluttaw

**Education Ministry
to upgrade schools in
Kyangin Tsp**Deputy Minister Dr
Zaw Min Aung.—MNADeputy Minister
U Tin Ngwe.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 31 March — Amyotha Hluttaw continued for the 37th day session, here, Tuesday.

U Khin Maung Yi of Ayeyawady Region constituency No 6 asked plans for upgrading basic education middle school branches to BEMs in Alon and Hteinbinmyaung villages in Kyangin Township. Deputy Minister for Education Dr Zaw Min Aung replied that upgrading of the schools depends on number of students, school furniture, land plot, transport and regional development. Ayeyawady Region Education Directorate enlisted upgrading of BEMs branches in Ahlon village and Hteinbinmyaung village in 2015-16 academic year.

With regard to a question on upgrading of solar electrification to supply of electricity in Pyaebin Village of Chauk Township raised by U Aung Nyein of Magway Region Constituency No 2, Deputy Minister for Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development U Tin Ngwe explained that the ministry allotted K132.4

million to electrify 662 houses in five villages in Chauk Township through solar panels in 2014-15 FY. The village was allowed to change solar electrification to electricity supply in cooperation with Myanmar Electric Power Enterprise.

The deputy minister replied to a question raised by U Salai Khwe Yan of Chin State Constituency No 12 that the ministry has no plan to build four suspension bridges and four wooden bridges in 2015-16 FY in Paletwa Township.

The session approved salaries and allowances for the chairman and members of Anyotha Hluttaw Political, Economic and Legal Affairs Commission.

The Hluttaw approved the farmers' rights protection and raising interests rules with amendments of the Pyithu Hluttaw.

The Hluttaw agreed to discuss the proposal tabled by U Saw Maw Tun of Bago Region Constituency No 1 on participation of entire people in reducing use of plastic for public health and environmental conservation.—MNA

Courts to win trusts of people

NAY PYI TAW, 31 March — Courts at different levels in the country are striving for winning trusts of the people while creating fairness and justice to every person, Supreme Court Judge U Tha Htay, who chairs strategic plan implementation committee, told the opening of Judicial Public Information Workshop at the hall of the Supreme Court of the Union, here, Tuesday.

The Supreme Court Judge added that the ma-

chinery of the court and judicial affairs must be transparent and release information to the people.

Communication Director Mr John Kostouros of Minnesota Judicial Branch of the US and Communications and Public Affairs Analyst Ms Sarah Vance Guenther of Superior Court of California discussed function of information section of the court, relations between the courts and media, polling court visitors, public

information, expertise of public relations and services and work guidelines of the information counter of the court.

A total of 63 public information officers and court information officers are attending the workshop up to 2 April.

The workshops, jointly organized by Supreme Court of the Union and USAID-PRLP, will be held in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay six times.

MNA

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approves Union Budgets bill

NAY PYI TAW, 31 March — The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approved the Union Budgets bill of 2015 on Tuesday, following a proposal made by Union Minister U Win Shein, who urged the parliament to agree with the entire bill.

Union Minister Dr Kan Zaw explained steps the central government took in relation to the appointment of permanent secretaries in line with the State Constitution.

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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw representatives discuss Union Budget Bill for 2015.—MNA

**Netherlands' Queen Máxima says mobile
technology key to financial inclusion**

By Aye Min Soe

YANGON, 31 March — Queen Máxima of the Netherlands on Tuesday urged Myanmar to capitalize on the rapid increase in mobile phone services and other digital technologies, saying the country has a "unique opportunity" to overcome challenges and expand its recently adopted Financial Inclusion Roadmap.

Visiting as the UN Secretary-General's Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance for Development, the Dutch royal told a meeting of ministers, professors and students at the Convocation Hall of the University of Yangon that "Myanmar has an exciting chance to leap far ahead with financial inclusion thanks to the rapid rise of mobile phone services and other digital technologies."

"Other countries have relied on traditional infrastructure such as physical

banks," she said. "But Myanmar may have a unique opportunity to skip this costly and difficult step by using mobile phones to provide financial services."

"This isn't to say that financial inclusion will happen easily. It will take strong leadership, close cooperation, and careful planning."

Queen Máxima called for cooperation between ministries, the central bank, regulators, commercial banks, mobile phone companies, payment service providers and knowledge institutions to work together on the delivery of financial services at affordable prices to less-advantaged sections of society.

Mobile penetration in Myanmar is growing fast and is expected to reach 90 per cent of the population by 2019. Currently, about 10 per cent of the population transfers money through a formal institution.

"We know that sustain-

**Peace negotiators vow to
strengthen cooperation. . .**

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accord, the sooner the people's wish for peace will be fulfilled, added the Union minister at the press conference.

Pado Kwe Htoo Win, a deputy leader of the NCCT, expressed his belief that approval of ethnic leaders on the single text is possible, asserting that ethnic groups

Queen Máxima of the Netherlands gives a key
note speech at the Convocation Hall of Yangon
University.—PHOTO AYE MIN SOE

able and inclusive development never happens overnight, but we also know that by taking lessons from other countries, you can go faster and evade mistakes made elsewhere," Queen Máxima said.

Today's students will be the first generation to benefit from the financial inclusion that will be central to making a lasting leap forward for Myanmar, she said.

During her opening

address, Queen Máxima also expressed her delight at Myanmar's efforts for developing a detailed road map to significantly expand financial inclusion responsibly, taking into account the needs of customers as well as banks and government.

After her address at the University of Yangon, Queen Máxima visited the World Vision which is conducting a microfinance programme in 10 villages/wards in Myaungdagar in Hmawby Township.

She began her three-day visit to Myanmar on Monday and held talks with representatives of banks, microfinance institutions and telecom providers in Yangon.

The UN Secretary-General's Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance for Development will attend the launch of the Financial Inclusion Roadmap in Nay Pyi Taw Wednesday.

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President U Thein Sein.—MNA

Peace deal: Not only high...

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He said his congratulation to all the participants of supporting groups and policymakers in peace-making efforts.



Union Minister U Ye Htut.
MNA



Union Minister U Khin Yi.
MNA

Union Minister U Khin Yi, a member of UPWC, recounted peace broker body's efforts to overcome many differences and disputes to sign the peace deal after nearly four years through eagerness of participant groups and peace roadmap laid by state leaders.

He remarked that development and peace are interdependent, saying 'No peace will bear no development', with the expectation of political dialogues after 60 days of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement which is expected to realize on.

U Saw Kwe Htoo Win of Karen National Union also commented the draft agreement was resulted from mutual understandings among the participants, saying he felt hopeful that prospective changes could be made for the welfare of the State.

MNA



U Saw Kwe Htoo Win of Karen National Union.—MNA

Myanmar, Pakistan to promote cooperation in trade and maritime security

Vice President

Dr Sai Mauk

Kham greets

Admiral

Muhammad

Zakaullah

NI (M), Chief

of Naval Staff

of Pakistan.

MNA



NAY PYI TAW, 31 March—Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham held talks with Admiral Muhammad Zakaullah NI (M), Chief of Naval Staff of Pakistan and party at the Presidential Palace, here, Tuesday.

They discussed further strengthening friendly ties between governments and

peoples between the two countries and promotion of cooperation in trade and maritime security.

Also present at the call were Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Thura Thet Swe, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brig-Gen Kyaw Kyaw Tun, Deputy Minister for Defence Maj-

Gen Kyaw Nyunt, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Tin Oo Lwin and Deputy Minister at the President Office Dr San Lwin.

The Pakistani admiral and party were accompanied by Pakistani Ambassador Mr Ehsan Ullah Bath.—MNA

Presidential Palace opens door to journalists

NAY PYI TAW, 30 March— Journalists who have been permitted for covering Presidential Palace on Tuesday visited the state building.

Officials of Presidential Palace, Ministry of Information, and Myanmar Police Force explained media persons the required process and procedures for reporting.

On behalf of the Union Minister for Information, Director-General U Ye Tint of Information and Public Relations Department confirmed the registered journalists would be

able to enter the Presidential Palace to cover news.

Director U Zaw Htay of President Office and Police Colonel Myint Htoo, Deputy Commander of Special Branch of Myanmar Police Force elaborated arrangements for the reporters at the Presidential Palace.

A total of 45 international journalists have been approved for covering news and the other eight reporters will be allowed after they have submitted the required documents.

MNA

Vice President U Nyan Tun views round Nam Ngum Hydropower Plant No.1, 90 kilometres north of Vientiane in Laos.—MNA

Vice President U Nyan Tun observes hydropower plant in Laos

VIENTIANE, 31 March— Vice President U Nyan Tun visited Nam Ngum Hydropower Plant No.1 here on Tuesday and heard briefings on the energy sector of Laos, a 15-year plan for nationwide power

supply and the use of solar energy for rural power supply.

After signing in the visitors' book of the hydropower plant, the vice president observed the generation of electricity at the

hydropower plant.

He also went on a boat trip in the Nam Ngum Dam and observed tourist sites and environmental observation activities there.

In 1996, Laos could supply electricity to 19 per-

cent of all its households, with the percentage rising to 88 in 2014. The country has seen an average of 10 percent increase in individual electricity consumption over the last 15 years. The sale of electricity accounts

for 15 percent of the country's total export earnings.

The country has plans to generate 9,514 megawatts of electricity in 2020, up from 3,329 in 2015. There are five hydropower plants in the Nam Ngum River.

In the evening, the vice president and his wife went to the Myanmar Embassy, where he met staff and their families.—MNA

