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## Thai-Burmese talks a success

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THE recent Thai-Burmese talks, marking the "dawn" of relations between the two countries, may be the last major achievement of Army Chief Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh before he retires, *Soo Anakot* reports.

Gen Chavalit, as director of the Thai-Burmese border policy, led a 128-member team comprising military and police officers to Rangoon on April 21 for talks on seven topics of mutual interest.

Because of thorough preparations beforehand, the talks were completed within a mere five hours, reaching unexpectedly successful results in the fields of politics, minorities, economics, energy development, narcotics suppression, communications and public health.

It was agreed that:

- Thai and Burmese authorities would negotiate border problems on a case by case basis;
- the two sides would co-operate in energy development along the border;
- co-operation in narcotics suppression would continue;
- a beginning would be made in communications co-operation;
- Thailand would provide medical help.

At the same time, Burma made clear that it would not hold peace talks with minority groups and urged Thailand to prevent journalists posing as tourists from reporting on matters that benefit the "thugs" in Rangoon's side.

The talks reportedly were conducted in a cordial atmosphere, sincerity, unlike those that were held with Laos on other affairs.

The success of the talks makes confidence in the situation on the western border. Burma and Thailand has problems but does not think that it has any bearing on Thai-Bur-

Though a neighbour, Burma does not want to step up relations with Laos because it does not want to meet Vietnamese and Soviet influence, the weekly says. But Burma wants "many things from Thailand," it adds.

The talks therefore were a case of Burma opening the door to Thailand cautiously after much careful study. It was an exceptional case because earlier attempts to approach Burma by China and India had failed, it notes.

### Footnote:

Come what may of the present political situation, prospects are not bright, *Soo Anakot* says. Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda is going through a bad patch and the future is short of promising for Army Chief Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh even though he may have more potential than others to rise to the top.

The fault, says the weekly, lies in the fact that Gen Chavalit has not yet succeeded in winning acceptance from all sides. Among other things, there is too much about him that remains a mystery, it adds.