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Herald Sun

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EX-PM WHOSE DREAM DIED

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RANGOON - A genial, pious eccentric, former **prime minister** U Nu died today at 87 without realising his dreams of democracy in **Burma**.He led **Burma's** first muddled attempt at democracy and re-emerged 26 years after his overthrow to see his efforts fail again. U Nu enjoyed a wide international reputation as an exponent of peaceful co-existence between capitalism and communism in his heyday in the 1950s.He served as **Burma's** first post-independence **prime minister** from 1948 until 1956, then from 1957-58, and again from **1960** until 1962, when he was ousted by a coup.In 1988, at the height of **Burma's** uprising for democracy, U Nu reemerged from years of imprisonment, exile and scholarly retreat to declare a parallel government.Few took him seriously, and the movement followed younger leaders until it was violently crushed by the army in September 1988.One of the original members of the third world's non-aligned movement, he laid the foundations of Burmese neutralism and enjoyed the latitude it afforded.U Nu was born in the Irrawaddy Delta town of Wakema on May 25, 1907. He joined the nationalist drive against British colonialism at Rangoon University and became a close friend of presumed post independence leader Aung San. He took up his mantle when he was assassinated in 1947.U Nu was widely regarded as honest, sincere and devout, but critics suggested he should have spent more time listening to his advisers than practising Buddhist meditation and consulting his astrologer about affairs of state.He was also a writer of plays, poems, novels and political works, translating into Burmese the works of Karl Marx and Dale Carnegie's How to Win Friends and Influence People. - APEND OF STORY

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