HLUTTAW SESSIONS OF 21 MARCH 2011

First regular session of Pyithu Hluttaw continues for 12th day
Queries raised and replied, proposals submitted and discussed, approval sought at Pyithu Hluttaw session

NAY PYI TAW, 21 March-The First regular session of Pyithu Hluttaw was held for 12th-day at Pyithu Hluttaw Hall of Hluttaw Building here at 10 am today.

It was attended by Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann and Pyithu Hluttaw representatives.

First, the Speaker took position and announced the validity and start of the 12th-day session as 431 or 99.54 percent of 433 Pyithu Hluttaw representatives were present.

Of the questions raised by Pyithu Hluttaw representatives, members of union level organization Minister for Education Dr Chan Nyein and Minister for Information U Kyaw Hsan responded to the questions regarding “rights of scholarship students and scholarship programme” by U Khin Maung Yi (a) Khaing Maung Yi of Ahlon Constituency; “outstanding students at matriculation examination” and “to promote education standard of Maungtaw District” by U Shwe Maung (a) U Adu Raw Zat of Buthidaung Constituency; and “aspiration of people in Kayin State” and “war refugees affairs in Kayin State” by U Saw Thein Aung of Hlaingbwe Constituency.

Pyithu Hluttaw representatives discussed the approved proposal “to level power charges of Regions and States covered by the national power grid and Regions and States not covered by it yet at equal rate” submitted by U Maung Nyo of Sittway Constituency and “to make necessary arrangements for drawing a new international level Social Security Insurance Law (draft) and to submit it to the second regular session of Pyithu Hluttaw” by U Pwint Hsan of Mayangon Constituency. Members of union level organization Minister for Electric Power No.2 U Khin Maung Myint and Minister for Labour U Aung Kyi discussed the proposals. Pyithu Hluttaw sought the approvals.

U Tin Maung Win of Mingaladon Constituency submitted a proposal “to make arrangement for submitting a draft of development of job opportunity, safety at worksites and development of workers’ skills” at second regular session of Pyithu Hluttaw. The Pyithu Hluttaw sought approval to discuss the submitted proposal.

The Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw announced the end of the 12th-day first regular session of Pyithu Hluttaw and the 13th-day session will be held at 10 am on 22 March (Tuesday).

The session came to an end at 3:25 am
Pyithu Hluttaw Bill Committee, Public Accounts Committee, Pyithu Hluttaw Rights Committee and the Government’s Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee meetings continue

NAY PYI TAW, 21 March-The First Pyithu Hluttaw Bill Committee, the Public Accounts Committee, Pyithu Hluttaw Rights Committee and the Government’s Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee held first meetings at their offices of Pyithu Hluttaw Hall of Hluttaw Building here this evening.

Chairmen, secretaries and members of respective committees attended the meetings.
They participated in discussions on works of the committees.

Education Minister responds to question on scholarship programme

NAY PYI TAW, 21 March-At today’s Pyithu Hluttaw sessions, Minister for Education Dr Chan Nyein responded to the query raised by U Khin Maung Yi (a) Khine Maung Yi of Ahlon Constituency.

U Khin Maung Yi (a) Khine Maung Yi of Ahlon Constituency said that it is known that international organizations annually grant scholarship for Myanmar citizens through the Government-To-Government system; that Myanmar citizens have to miss the chance of scholarship programme; that whether or not there is any plan to get international scholarship programme, to send cent per cent rate of students and to get more scholarship from industrialized countries.

Regarding the question, Minister for Education Dr Chan Nyein said that with respect to the international scholarships, scrutinizing committee for choosing scholarship including Minister for Education as chairman, four deputy minister level officials, ten director-general level officials from ministries and four deputy director-general level officials scrutinized the scholarship.

In 2008, a total of 1706 trainees were sent to 29 countries for scholarship programme; 1881 trainees to 32 countries in 2009; and 1766 trainees to 36 countries in 2010.

With respect to scholarship programme from 2008 to 2010, 98.95% or 5353 out of 5410 trainees were sent.

To be able to get more international scholarships and send more trainees, Ministry of Education is making coordination with respective departments.

Education Minister responds to question as to improvement of education standard of Maungtaw District

NAY PYI TAW, 21 March - Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Shwe Maung (a) U Adu Rawzak of Buthidaung Constituency at today’s Pyithu Hluttaw regular session asked how the State will help Maungtaw District improve its education standard, stating that teachers from other townships are assigned to Buthidaung and Maungtaw Townships in Rakhine State and are meeting difficulties in language, and accommodation; and the education standard of Maungtaw District will improve if well-qualified local teachers are appointed.

Regarding the query, Education Minister Dr Chan Nyein answered that, to appoint teachers at basic education schools, locals in equal ratio from each Region and State meeting set qualifications are trained at teacher training courses and are assigned to their own Region or State as priority.

Fifty teachers out of 51 at three basic education high schools in Buthidaung Township are locals and the other high school teacher is wife of a service personnel assigned in the region.
All 124 middle school teachers at six BEMSs and 790 teachers at 145 BEPSs are also locals, So, 964 teachers out of 965 in Buthidaung Township are locals.

All 92 teachers of five BEHSs, all 165 teachers of 11 BEMSs and 821 teachers out of 822 of 143 BEPSs in Maungtaw Township are locals and the other one is a family member of staff assigned in the region. So, well qualified teachers, well rid of language and accommodation difficulties, have been assigned to Maungtaw District for improvement of education standard of Maungtaw District.

**EP-2 Minister replies to question on supply of electricity from National Power Grid to all towns in Chin State in order to establish factories and workshops in Chin State**

NAY PYI TAW, 21 March - At Amyotha Hluttaw session held today, Amyotha Hluttaw Representative U Zung Hlei Thang of Chin State Constituency No- 2 put a question about supply of electricity from National Power Grid to all towns in Chin State in order to establish factories and workshops in Chin State.

Regarding the question, Minister for Electric Power No-2 U Khin Maung Myint replied that although Chin State did not enjoy electricity from National Power Grid yet, arrangements have been made in two ways - building of small-scale hydropower stations and supplying electricity from diesel engines - for supply of electricity to 12 towns including Haka, Chin State’s capital, and Falam and Mindat, district towns.

Under the first way of supplying electricity to nearby towns and villages from hydropower stations, eight power stations were built with total installation capacity of 3013 kilowatts.

Libar power station with generating capacity of 600 kilowatts benefits Haka and its surrounding four villages and Thantalang and its surrounding four villages, Daungbar with 400 kilowatts, Haka and its surrounding two villages, Ngasitbar with 1000 kilowatts, Falam and its surrounding nine villages, Zarlwee with 400 kilowatts, Tiddim and its surrounding three villages, Htwehsuang with 164 kilowatts, Tongzan and its surrounding two villages, Chichaung with 260 kilowatts, Mindat, Namtlaung with 139 kilowatts, Matupi and Paletwa with 50 kilowatts, Paletwa.

Therefore, eight small-scale hydropower stations can supply 24-hour electricity to eight towns and 24 villages in Chin State during the seven months period from July to January. During the remaining five months, 19 diesel engines with installation capacity of 1119 kilowatts can supply electricity six hours a day.

Under the second way of supplying electricity through diesel engines, nine diesel engines with installation capacity of 423 kilowatts benefit Kanpetlet, Yayzwa, Reidkhawdah and Kyikha. As engines run on diesel allotted by the government, those towns can enjoy electricity two hours a day.

In calculating the cost of supplying electricity through diesel engines, the government is supplying electricity to Chin State at a loss of K 10.7 million a month or K 128.4 million a year.

Supply of electricity is being carried out by 15 Electrical Engineers’ Offices with the strength of 197 officers and other ranks in Chin State. As 177 out of 197 service personnel are Chin national, 177 Chin national staff made up 89.85 per cent of all staff. The monthly salary for all staff is K 7.29 million. Construction of eight hydropower stations in Chin State cost K 89 million and 28 diesel engines K 28.95 million. The government uses 3640 gallons of diesel per month woth K 14.25 million to generate electricity from the diesel engines. The government spent K 1535.667 million for extended construction of power lines and subpower stations and maintenance of hydropower stations and diesel engines in 2010-11 fiscal year.
Then the minister continued arrangements being made for supply of electricity from National Power Grid to all Chin State. He said that plans are underway to supply electricity from 40-megawatt Myitha hydropower station in Gangaw Township and 380-megawatt Manipur hydropower station in Kalay Township through Gangaw, Kyaw, Chaungku, Pakokku and Nyaungbingyi subpower stations and to install and build 66 KV power line and subpower stations in Haka, Falam and Tidim in Chin State.

Besides, arrangements are being made to supply electricity to Matupi through Gangaw and then Mindat through 66 KV power line. Plans are underway to build 33 KV power line linking Kyauktaw subpower station and Paletwa Township in Chin State and a subpower station in order to supply electricity from hydropower plant projects- 76.5-megawatt Saidin, 500-megawatt Laymyot and 111-megawatt Thahtaychaung-in Rakhine State. Hence, the government has spent a lot of money on supplying electricity to Chin State on a nonprofit basis.

Information Minister replies to question of Pyithu Hluttaw representative of Hlaingbwe Constituency

NAY PYI TAW, 21 March - At today’s session of Pyithu Hluttaw, U Saw Thein Aung of Hlaingbwe Constituency questioned what kind of humanitarian aid is being rendered to the refugees in Kayin State due to armed clashes and to what extent aid measures have been taken.

In response to the question, leader of the government Spoke Authoritative Team Minister for Information U Kyaw Hsan said the government wants only peace and development, not war. It wants no bloodshed, either. But, measures have to be unavoidably taken to take the offensive for national security and for the security of the people and their property.

It is natural that armed clashes spark loss and damage for both sides. Besides, it is true that the people in the regions where armed clashes broke out will suffer economic, education and health losses, more or less. It has been known to all that the Tatmadaw government has been trying to seek peace since its assumption of State duties in 1988.

As a result, many of national raced armed groups from Kayin State have returned to the legal fold and they are DKBA group led by U Tha Htoo Kyaw, Haunghayaw special region peace group led by U Saw Thamuhe, Phayagon special region peace group led by Phado Aung San, Thantaung special region peace group led by U Saw Phery Moe, Thantaung (North) special region peace group led by U Ko Gyi, and KNU/KNLA peace council led by U Htay Maung Oo totalling six. Those groups had a strength of 5973 troops together with over 20000 people affected by the armed clashes. For those national races armed groups and public refugees, the government took systematic measures to provide necessary assistance.

Provisions, including rice, table salt and iodized salt, money, clothing, household items and consumer goods were provided for them. Moreover, to improve their livelihoods in the long run, seasonal and perennial crop strains, cultivation methods, winnowing machines, pumps, tractors and vehicles for business and transport purposes were provided.

In addition, pedigree piglets, chicks and breeding methods were provide for livestock breeding, and other necessary assistance for transport, education, health and communication sectors. So far, the State has spent K 6773.253 million or over K 6.773 billion for such assistance.

To ensure smooth transportation and construction work for Kayin national race armed groups, the Ministry of Defence helped license 383 cars officially.

Now, those national race armed groups have transformed themselves to be border guard forces.
For those who were too old to be members of border guard forces, physically handicapped and unhealthy, the State provided them with lump sums of money, which totalled K 340.3 million.

As internal armed insurrections have not yet stopped completely, it has been 129 times from 1988 to date that the people were affected by the insurgents. Due to internal armed clashes, 12679 houses or 14953 households or 64929 people had to be moved to other places. Most of them are from Kayin State.

This is why for the whole Kayin State including the people of Kayin State affected by armed clashes, the government is working for the improvement of all sectors like economy, education, livestock breeding, communication and transport under the programme of progress of border areas and national races. For those measures, K 18812.86 million or over K 18.81 billion has been spent so far.

Despite the government’s efforts for peace and development, some of the people are in the other country to live in refugee camps. However, most of them are remnant insurgents and their families, expatriates and those who fled after committing crimes.

As said in the first clarification, the government side by side with the people will try in accord with the constitution so as to ensure eternal peace after putting an end to all armed clashes and an eternal peaceful life in Kayin State, said the minister.

After raising and replying to the question, the Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw said continued measures will be taken as there are points to be considered regarding the questions and answers. The clarification has made it clear to all that they have understood the issues of Kayin State more although they seem to be simple in a superficial manner. It is hoped that today's discussions will contribute to achieving peace completely. The State always opens the peace door and created opportunities to achieve peace. So the representatives are urged to convince the people that the public strength, genuine goodwill and cooperation are necessary for seeking eternal peace in the nation.

Five Pyithu Hluttaw Representatives discuss proposal of U Maung Nyo of Sittway Constituency
Minister for Electric Power No.2 replies

NAY PYI TAW, 21 March -At the session of Pyithu Hluttaw today, five Pyithu Hluttaw representatives held discussions on the proposal which is approved to discuss “to level power charges of Regions and States covered by the national power grid and Regions and States not covered by it yet at equal rate” raised by U Maung Nyo of Sittway Constituency.

Daw Khin Saw Wai of Yathaedaung Constituency said that there was no argument on the clarification of the Electric Power No-2 Minister to the question raised by Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Ye Tun of Thandwe Constituency. But there were other points to think. She said there was a great difference between K 25 and K 50 a unit charged for electricity from power grid and K 450 or K 500 a unit charged in Rakhine State. Instead of taking financial point of view on this public services, other political, economic and social points of view should be taken.

Although the Ministry of Electric Power No-2 is an enterprise, it is a service industry by nature. All national race voters residing in the Union should have equal rights and harmonious development should be guaranteed in all parts of the Union.

K 200 per unit will be a reasonable rate for the regions where electricity is being generated from diesel engines. By doing so, the rate of electricity bill will be equal in the regions that has not got electricity from national power grid before the completion of hydropower projects. There were many government-funded programmes.
Hydropower projects-Thahtaychaung in Thandwe, Saidin in Buthidaung and Laymyot in Minbya-being implemented in Rakhine State will not be completed within few years. She called on the government to render assistance to more electricity supply in Rakhine State that gets electricity from 6 to 10 pm.

In his discussion, U Gyi Phon Sah of Naugmon Constituency said that regarding the proposal to charge for electricity bill at equal rate, it is required to study the nature of generating and supplying electricity logically.

Like Rakhine State, rates of electricity bill are different in Kachin State. Systems of supplying electricity from hydropower station, from diesel engines, from neighbouring countries and from committees for availability of electricity made differences in charging for electricity bills. According to cost of production and the length of time electricity supplied, rates of electricity bill will vary. For instance, electricity users are charged K 800 per unit in Phakant region in Kachin State and K 160 in Myitkyina. It is learnt that the government lost K 100 million a month on supplying electricity through diesel engines.

The government could not afford to bear the cost in all sectors. It is difficult to fulfill the requirements of a particular region. The government is trying hard for ensuring equitable development in all corners of the nation. The proposal should be reviewed as it is impossible to charge electricity bill at equal rate from the political, management and economic points of view.

Next, U Tun Aung Kyaw of Ponnagyun Constituency said that the amount of electricity received in Rakhine State and electricity bills is making it difficult for businesses to run in full swing and the region is witnessing losses rather than profits.

Being an independent state formed with Union system, development of the whole Union calls for development of Regions and States and economic infrastructures.

Electricity insufficiency, increase in cost of living and closure of factories due to high electricity bill will lead to high unemployment and hard living.

He seconded the proposal submitted by U Maung Nyo because he believed in honesty that regional development can contribute towards peace and stability and perpetual existence of the Union.

Next, U Sai Tun Sein of Mongping Constituency said that supplying electricity at a loss through diesel engines to the regions with lack of hydropower. It is difficult to see the proposal logically.

Like Rakhine State, it is difficult to charge for electricity bill at equal rate in Shan State. There are different systems in supplying electricity in Shan State.

He expressed his firm belief that the State is striving to supply adequate power to all regions.

Due to differences in production cost, geographical situation and supply duration, unit prices cannot be the same in the whole country. Equal unit charges will be possible when the country has national energy security to the full. Hence the proposal should be reviewed.

Dr San Hlaing of Taungup constituency said the State in implementing plans for the whole nation to equally enjoy the benefits of national grid. He thanked the government for building hydropower stations in Thahtay creek, Saidin, An and Laymyo of Rakhine State. He expressed belief that after completion of the stations, most of the towns in state will get power from the grid and that unit price will be the same in the whole nation. At present, diesel and husk-fired generators are distributing power to regions outside the grid. Unit prices will vary to a certain degree depending on production cost, transport charges and fuel prices. The unit price in Taungup is K 450.

Equal development is not possible yet. Logically, the government cannot take all the responsibilities in market economic system.
Then, he discussed that the proposal should be reconsidered with positive view as it is unlikely that the electricity bills are paid at equal rate.

Regarding the proposal, Minister for Electric Power No.2 U Khin Maung Myint said the State is supplying electric power to the public through five ways – power supply by building national power grids, power supply by building small-scale hydropower plants, power supply from diesel engines, power supply from diesel engines after formation of electric power supply committees with local authorities and townspeople, power supply by building small-scale hydropower plants and power supply to some regions adjacent to neighbouring nations through purchase of electricity from those nations.

The electricity bill rates in the regions being supplied through the investment of the ministry are 25 kyats per unit for household meter and 50 kyats per unit for commercial meter. But, the regions which are supplied electricity with private investments have different rates.

Way One in distributing electricity includes:

(1) The national power grid supplies power to 10 out 14 cities where region and state offices are seated and four other states and regions are supplied electricity though the other ways.

(2) The national power grid supplies power to 42 out of 67 towns where district offices are seated and 25 other towns are supplied electricity through the other ways.

(3) The national power grid supplies power to 224 out of 330 towns where township offices are seated and 106 other towns are supplied electricity through the other ways.

(4) The said ten Region/state capitals, 42 district capitals, 224 townships, 26 sub-town and towns and 1393 villages get power from national grid through self-help means. The remaining 4986 villages get power through other means. Hence 6379 villages get electricity on self-help basis.

The price is K 25 per unit for households and K 50 for business purposes. In the second way, the EP-2 Ministry has 32 mini hydropower stations. They with 33.237 megawatt-capacity are supplying power to 31 towns and 42 villages round the clock for seven months from January to July and diesel generators distribute power six hours daily to them during the remaining months charging the same unit price as in the places covered by the grid. A total of 568 stateowned generators are supplying power to 309 townships not inclusive in the previous two methods. The annual consumption of diesel is 1400,448 gallons.

But the generators can run only two hours with the fuel provided by the ministry. Per unit price is K 25 for households and K 50 for businesses. The cost for the State is K 300 for diesel plus K 19 for transport charges for every unit. If other costs are added, the State is distributing electricity at a loss of K 294 per unit.

The State is supplying power to Kachin State, Chin State, Rakhine State, Shan State (North), Kayah State and Kayin State at an annual loss of K 1807.35 million. Annual revenue is K 84690.397 million meaning average income per unit is K 33.25 of which every K 20 goes to the EP-1 Ministry and only K 13.25 to EP-2 Ministry. If other costs including maintenance, tax, fuel are subtracted the ministry gets a per unit profit of only 63 pyas.

Concerning the fourth way, towns and villages which want to have electricity more than two hours daily are forming region-wise committees and bearing the extra fuel cost. Depending on duration and cost, unit price goes between K 400 and K 600. There are 47 power distributor groups.

Kachin State has one group supplying six hours daily at K 800 per unit. Sagaing Region has one group supplying 13 hours daily at K 550 per unit.
Rakhine State has 12 groups supplying 13 hours daily in Kyauktaw at K 500 per unit; 12 hours daily in MyaukU at K 450 per unit; 10 hours daily in Taungup at K 400 per unit; five hours daily in Myinbya at K 500 per unit; four hours daily in Thandwe at K 600 per unit; three hours daily in Kyaukphyu and Manauang at K 300 per unit; four hours daily in Gwa at K 550 per unit; four hours daily in Sittway (four groups) at K 400 per unit.

Shan State (South) has one group supplying 12 hours daily at K 700 per unit. Moreover, two hydro generators with 375 kva are distributing four hours daily at K 275 per unit.

Mon State has two groups supplying round the clock to Ye at K 500 per unit and 10 hours daily to Kawza at K 500 per unit. Taninthayi Region has 30 groups. Two are supplying from 18 to 24 hours daily to Dawei at K 430 per unit; one is supplying four hours daily to Myitta at K 285 per unit; two are supplying four hours daily to Yebyu at K 450 per unit; two are supplying 14 hours daily to Maungmakan at K 500 per unit; one is supplying four hours daily to Launglon at K 450 per unit; one is supplying four hours daily to Kaleinaung at K 300 per unit; eleven are supplying 24 hours daily to Myeik at K 300 per unit; one is supplying 24 hours daily to Palaw at K 450 per unit; one is supplying five hours daily to Palauk at K 450 per unit; one is supplying five hours daily to Taninthayi at K 450 per unit; one is supplying 24 hours daily to Pyigyimandaing at K 450 per unit; two are supplying three hours daily to Karathuri at K 450 per unit. There are 47 groups in the whole nation charging from K 300 to 800 per unit.

Per unity cost is K 319 (K 300 for diesel+K 19 for transport). If K5 for Royal Fee is subtracted, they have K 76 for maintenance and other expenses. So, K 400 per unit is a reasonable price. But it depends on the price of fuel.

There are 14 groups distributing power with minihydropower stations. Buga Co is supplying to Myitkyina and Waingmaw 24 hours daily at unity price of K 160 for households and K 300 for small industries with three 3.5-megawatt stations; one group is supplying 24 hours daily to Chipwe at K 200 per unit with 200-kv station.

Shan State (North) has three groups. One group in Kutkai is supplying 24 hours daily at unit price of K 200 for households and K 300 for small industries with 640- Kv station; one group in Tangyan is supplying eight hours daily at unit price of K 250 for both the households and small industries with 75-Kv station; One group in Manton is supplying 24 hours daily at unit price of K 250 for fist 50 units, K 200 for second 50 units, K 100 for 100 units and above.

Shan State (East) has two groups. One group in Kengtung is supplying 24 hours daily at unit price of K 60 with 3480-Kv station; One group in Tachilek is supplying 24 hours daily during high water level and two hours daily during low water level at unit price of 6 Baht or K 195 with 50-Kv station.

In Shan State (South) one group in Kunhing is supplying 24 hours daily at unit price of K 60 with 175-Kv station.

Taninthayi Region has five groups. One group in Kyunsu is supplying 24 hours daily in rainy season and five hours daily in summer at unit price of K 250 with 150-Kv station; three groups in Taninthayi are supplying four to nine hours daily at unit price from K 480 to 500 with 124-Kv stations; one group in Malikyun is supplying six hours daily at unit price of K 500 with 192-Kv station.

Small hydropower plants are charging 60 to 500 Kyats per unit of electricity.
There are 12 units for accessing electricity which are buying electricity from neighbouring countries in some regions adjacent to neighbouring countries as the fifth method. Lwalkyal of Kachin State is buying electricity from China and supplying electricity 24 hours a day. One unit charge is 145 Kyats.

There are seven units in Shan State (North) buying electricity from China and supplying electricity 24 hours a day. One unit charge is 1.2 Ywans in Chinshwehaw; 1.5 Ywans in Monekoe; 1.2 Ywans in Manhero; 1.2 Ywans in Hopang; 300 Kyats in Nantphatkha, Khomone, Mongyulay; 1.4 Ywans or about 210 Kyats for both ordinary household metre and small industrial use metre in Kunlong and 1 Ywans for 150 Kyats for ordinary household metre and 1.2 Ywans or about 180 Kyats for small industrial use metre in Laukkai.

In Muse, Namhkam and Kyugok, one unit charge is 1.2 Ywans or about 162 Kyats. Now, the State is charging 120 Kyats per unit electricity supplied by Shweli Hydropower Plant. The State charges 120 Kyats per unit because it has bought the electricity from Shweli Hydropower Plant with Ywan.

Tachilek in Shan State (East) is buying electricity from Thailand and supplying electricity 24 hours a day.

One unit charge is 6.25 Bahts or about 200 Kyats for ordinary household metre and 7.5 Bahts or 240 Kyats for small industrial use metre.

One unit charge in No (1) Ward of Myawady in Kayin State with 24-hr electricity supply is 4.5 Bahts or about 144 Kyats for ordinary household metre and 6 Bahts or about 192 Kyats for small industrial use metre; that in No (2) Ward of Myawady is seven Bahts or about 244 Kyats for ordinary household metre and 9 Bahts or 280 Kyats for small industrial use metre; that in Phaya Tonezu of Kayin State six Bahts or about 192 Kyats for both ordinary household metre and small industrial use metre.

It can be seen that Committee for availability of electric power supply are supplying electricity by using every possible way; that the committee could serve interest of the people depend on its ability; that the government is doing it without taking any profit, that there could be different electricity charges across the nation at the time when electricity can not be distributed from national power grid and that now it is not impossible to equalize electricity charges nationwide.

The government does not neglect regions that have no links with national power grid. The 26 hydropower projects (3035 MW) and a coal-fired power station (six MW) are being implemented with the private sector investments and 36 hydropower projects (36360 MW) and two coal-fired power station (870 MW) are under implementation with the foreign investment.

Upon completion of the 65 projects (40271 MW), electricity would be supplied to regions and surrounding areas through national power grid. Then, electricity power charges can be equalized.

Of 65 projects, Thahtay Chaung Hydropower project would generate 111 MW, Laymyo hydropower project, 500 MW, Saidin Hydropower project, 76.5 MW and An Hydropower project, 10 MW respectively. Electricity will be supplied to 17 townships of Rakhine State and Paletwa Township of Chin State through national power grid. Electricity charge per unit will be the rate fixed by the government.

Due to natural barriers, privileges and rights would never be same.

So, the proposal submitted by U Maung Nyo is good with benevolent attitude. But it is less possible and impossible to take action under current situation.

Now, it is impossible and very difficult to have equal rights across the nation. So, he discussed that U Maung Nyo should review his proposal and it is a proposal not to continue to discuss.
The Hluttaw Speaker said that five representatives and the Minister for Electric Power No.2 fully discussed the proposal submitted by U Maung Nyo of Sittway Constituency; that discussions on the proposal are beneficial not only to region but also to the State. So, it will be put on record at Hluttaw and taken into account in the future. He asked U Maung Nyo’s option of whether or not his proposal should be submitted to the Hluttaw.

U Maung Nyo said that I thank for submitting aspiration of the people at the hluttaw on behalf of the people; that the detailed explanations of representatives and the Minister are resonable. But the State should put into consideration at opportune time and he postponed his proposal.

Pyithu Hluttaw announced the postponement of U Maung Nyo’s proposal was agreed.

12th-day First regular session of Amyotha Hluttaw continues
Queries raised and replied, proposals submitted and discussed, approval sought at Amyotha Hluttaw session

NAY PYI TAW, 21 March-The 12th day First regular session of Amyotha Hluttaw continued at Amyotha Hluttaw Hall of Hluttaw Building here at 10 am today.

It was attended by Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint and Amyotha Hluttaw representatives.

First, the Speaker took position and announced the validity and start of the 12th Day session as 220 or 98.65 percent of 223 Amyotha Hluttaw representatives were present.

Of the questions raised by Amyotha Hluttaw representatives, members of union level organization Minister for Electric Power No.1 U Zaw Min, Minister for Electric Power No.2 U Khin Maung Myint and Minister for Finance and Revenue U Hla Tun responded to the questions regarding “hydropower projects in Ayeyawady’s confluence and along Maykha-Malikha basin” made by U Za Khun Ting Ring of Kachin State Constituency No.4; “national power grid that links townships of Chin State so as to build factories and workshops,” by U Zung Hlei Thang of Chin State Constituency No.2; and “taxes imposed on import and export industry,” made by Dr Myat Nyana Soe of Yangon Region Constituency No.4.

After that, U Paw Lyan Lwin of Chin State Constituency No.9 submitted a proposal “to build heavy hydropower station in Bontala waterfall”.

Amyotha Hluttaw sought approval to discuss the submitted proposal.

The Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw announced the end of the regular session of Amyotha Hluttaw and the 13th-day session will be held at 10 am on 22 March (Tuesday).

The session came to an end at 11:45 am.
Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee, Public Accounts Committee, Amyotha Hluttaw Rights Committee and the Government’s Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee hold meetings

NAY PYI TAW, 21 March-The First Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee, the Public Accounts Committee, Amyotha Hluttaw Rights Committee and the Government’s Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee held first meetings at their offices of Amyotha Hluttaw Hall of Hluttaw Building here this afternoon.

Chairmen, secretaries and members of respective committees attended the meetings.

They participated in discussions on works of the committees.

Education Minister responds to query regarding “students who passed matriculation examination with high marks”

NAY PYI TAW, 21 March - At today’s Pyithu Hluttaw session, Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Shwe Maung (a) U Adu Rawzak of Buthidaung Township stated that students in Buthidaung and Maungtaw Townships who passed matriculation examination with high marks are losing opportunities to attend vocational universities; it is lost not only for students but for the State; and it also happens in other townships in Rakhine State. He asked how the officials concerned will help the students not to lose pursuit of vocational education.

Regarding the query, Minister for Education Dr Chan Nyein answered that anyone, who applied for vocational universities, colleges and institutes and is Myanmar citizen under existing citizenship law, is allowed to join the universities, colleges and institutes if they have lowest mark considered for the admission and meet the set qualifications.

EP-1 Minister responds to query about “hydropower projects in Maykha Malikha river valley at the confluence of Ayeyawady River”

NAY PYI TAW, 21 March - Amyotha Hluttaw representative U Zakhun Ting Ring of Kachin State Constituency-4 revealed that seven hydropower projects are being implemented in Maykha Malikha River valley at the confluence of Ayeyawady River; residents from five villages which are included in the area of projects have been moved to better places equipped with roads, electricity, potable water, hospital, school and religious buildings; and local people are enjoying higher living standard and emerging job opportunities. He asked which arrangements will be made for people who inhabit in basin areas in the upper part of Myitsone hydropower project.

He also questioned on the situation of electricity supply of the hydropower projects and present opportunities and future prospects for local people depending on the projects.

In response to the query, Minister for Electric Power No. 1 U Zaw Min answered that, regarding the first question, five villages in the area of Myitsone Hydropower Project which have been relocated are Tamphe, Kyieinkaram, Myitsone, Khappa/ Aungjayan and Daungpan villages, with the total 410 households and a population of 2146. The former three villages were moved to Aunmyintha new model village and the latter to Maliyan new model village. Roads of the villages were of concrete type and each household was provided a plot of land.
The villages have 410 two-storey wooden houses, one high school with two extended school building, three primary schools, one police station, one post office, one general administration office with fire station, 16-beded hospital and four religious buildings.

Two-storey houses are Kachin traditional houses and of RC type, with water system and electricity. The newly-established model village is situated on Myitkyina-Myitsone concrete road.

Compensation for farmlands and perennial crops were given to locals with the negotiation of local authority and the reclamation of lands was carried out.

Local people who live in basin areas in the upper part of Myitsone hydropower project will also be relocated to better places and a community with higher social and economic status will be established systematically.

Regarding the second question, eight hydropower projects will be implemented in Maykha Malikha River valley at the confluence of Ayeyawady River, namely Myitsone, Chepwe, Chepwenge, Wusauk, Khaunglanphu, Yinan, Phizaw and Laiza. Total installed engine power is 18499 MWs. The projects will be completed within 15 years. The installed engine power of Myitsone project is 6000 MWs. First engine will start running in 2018 and all others in 2019.

Current opportunities for locals depending on the projects were job opportunities in stone and sand production, building and road construction, civil engineering works in the projects and food supply business for tens of thousands of workers of the projects. Only a food supply business is a huge business.

For future prospects, all-weather 261-mile motorway from Myitsone to Yinan and 170-mile motorway from Myitsone to Laiza, seven bridges which can withstand 80 tons of load will emerge on completion of the projects. Construction of Ayeyawady river-spanning bridge south of Myitsone is underway and will be finished in 2011.

The emerging roads and bridges will contribute towards development in socio-economic status of local people and enhance regional friendship.

Local youths and educated persons will enjoy job opportunities at power plants upon completion of the projects. Kachin State will experience huge improvement in electricity supply and industrial enterprises using electricity, social, education, economic and transportation sectors will become developed with added momentum.

Information Minister replies to question of
U Saw Thein Aung of Hlaingbwe Constituency about aspiration of Kayin nationals

NAY PYI TAW, 21 March—At today’s Pyithu Hluttaw session, U Saw Thein Aung of Hlaingbwe Constituency put a question about government’s plans for restoration of peace and stability in Kayin State and role of Kayin nationals in the process. He said that peoples of Kayin State aspire to ceasefire and peace for they are sympathetic towards war refugees in Kayin State.

In his response the question, leader of government Spoke Authoritative Team Minister for Information U Kyaw Hsan said that the government, like Kayin nationals, also has longed for ceasefire and peace. So, the government has made every effort to bring about peace and stability and development in the nation.

He then gave an account of endeavours of the government for peace and progress of the nation. In 1988, the Tatmadaw assumed State’s duties as the nation was on the verge of collapse due to political turmoil. Since then, the Tatmadaw has strived for stability and development of the nation.
Stability or peace is instrumental in the progress of a nation. During the period between 1948 in which the nation regained independence and 1962, there was almost no stability and tranquility in the nation because of multicolored insurgency. Stability could be restored to a certain extent between 1962 and 1988, but it was rather weak and fragile. The successive governments made several abortive attempts to restore stability in the nation and could not make remarkable progress of the nation.

Taking lessons from the history, the Tatmadaw and Tatmadaw Leader Head of State sought different but effective means to restore stability and could bring about stability in the nation practicing the policy which avoids seeking political advantages, is based on goodwill, pragmatic, beneficial to locals, and acceptable to anti-government organizations. So, 17 major armed groups and 23 small armed groups returned to legal fold. That means all armed groups against the government have returned to legal fold except three armed groups. So, the nation is enjoying the fruits of peace and stability.

The government while trying to restore stability has made endeavours for development of the nation. It has laid down plans and implemented for development of border areas and national brethrens. The Head of State as the chairman of the development project supervised for the success of the project. So far, over K 341.52 billion has gone to the project. In addition, 24 regions were designated as special development regions and seven rural development tasks were laid down for development of rural areas. Furthermore, five-year plans were implemented for economic growth of the nation. As a result, the nation today is witnessing unprecedented progress in every aspect. Almost every infrastructure for further development of the nation has been built and so the nation is on the right track to greater development.

The government has also made efforts for practicing democracy as aspired by the entire nation. National Referendum was successfully held in the face of various difficulties and obstacles. The constitution was ratified by the referendum and now the respective hluttaws are in session in accord with the constitution after the general election. Those hluttaws are forming Union-level, State and region-level legislative, administrative and judicial bodies which will establish peaceful, modern, developed democratic nation, which is the national goal of the nation.

In democratization process, the government has tried to make peace with armed groups for ever rather than for a period in accord with the constitution.

Most of the armed groups that have returned to legal fold have been dissolved in line with the constitution.

Some have even formed legal political parties and entered into national politics. Armed groups are also assuming the State’s duties as border guard forces and regional militia forces in compliance with the constitution under the command of the Tatmadaw.

However, some armed groups are still refusing to follow the provision of constitution and the government is trying to make eternal peace with those groups with its genuine goodwill, farsightedness and sympathetic attitude. The door to peace is also kept open for the remaining armed groups in some border regions.

And it is also of the policy of the new government, said the minister.

Nevertheless, the armed groups need to have a thirst for stability like the government and the peoples.

Only then, peace and stability can be created. Nowadays, some organizations which do not want peace themselves are trying to persuade or prevent other organizations longing for peace from the road to peace.
Those organizations even use threats and attacks to stop other organizations seeking for peace. Some certain remaining armed groups, exiles, super powers, INGOs are agitating national armed groups that have returned to legal fold but still fail to follow the provisions of the constitution to go underground.

In reality, modest cooperation of some certain powers, INGOs and the neighbour is the effective solution to remaining unrest and disability in Kayin State. There are base camps which they call refugee camps in the territory of the neighbor near Myanmar border. Those camps are founded with contribution of some certain super powers, INGOs and the neighbour.

There may be some refugees in those camps as representative U Saw Thein Aung had said. Likewise, there are also a considerable number of insurgents, their families and exiles. Insurgents use those camps as their base and launch guerilla attack on the army, which is the reason that exchange of fires are still occurring in Kayin State. In fact, those remaining insurgents manage to be alive with the assistance of some certain super powers and INGOs.

The minister pointed out a similar case as an example. The north-eastern part of the nation once had been the home to Burma Communist Party. As BCP forces were strong and powerful, the Tatmadaw had to take hard and massive military actions against them.

The neighbour, as a friendly nation of Myanmar, took principled stand against interfering in internal affairs of other nations. As a result, BCP were demolished and stability could be restored.

If the neighbour would stand as a friendly nation, problems of Kayin State would soon be solved. No matter what, the incumbent Government and the new Government will keep open the door to peace for armed groups and will make efforts for peace and stability of Kayin State in accord with the constitution.

The new government will promote all sectors including agriculture, livestock breeding and transportation with added momentum for physical growth.

In addition, for mental growth, it will take wider actions for promoting the standard of education, health and social and cultural sector of the nation, with a view to flourishing genuine Union Spirit.

The minister then made suggestion about the role of Kayin nationals in peace process, saying that peoples are to work for further development and stability of home regions in cooperation with the State and the region/state government to achieve widespread stability and then to full and eternal peace, stage by stage, in line with the constitution. The minister added that he believed that it is the best and most appropriate way for the nation to enjoy peace and stability.

In short, the minister said, the government is striving for development and stability of the nation.

The new Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar will also endeavour for progress of Kayin State and make effort for full and eternal peace in Kayin State with genuine goodwill, farsightedness and sympathetic attitude in line with the constitution.

People would see peaceful and tranquil Kayin State for sure if they are willing to partake in the peace process in line with the constitution.

**F&R Minister answers query of Dr Myat Nyana Soe of Yangon Region Constituency-4**

NAY PYI TAW, 21 March-Representative Dr Myat Nyana Soe of Yangon Region Constituency- 4 raised a question at today’s session of Amyotha Hluttaw. He said it is found that the government has formed a trade policy council for development of market-oriented economic system in accord with Article 35 of Chapter 1 of the constitution and for development of general investments in accord with Article 36 Sub-subsection (c). So, he said he would like to know whether the collection of 10 percent
tax – 2 % trade revenue and 8% income tax in export processes and collection of 3.5% tax in import processes could be abolished only by gathering income tax from companies concerned and proprietors according to financial year so that national entrepreneurs could enjoy more opportunities in international market and that GDP could increase and whether the State could render additional cash assistance for export items like the People’s Republic of China, the second biggest economy of the world.

Minister for Finance and Revenue U Hla Tun responded to the question saying that at present income tax is being collected in kyats from individuals and companies or organizations in accord with the income tax law and companies law respectively. Likewise, income tax is being collected in foreign currency from those individuals or companies earning foreign currencies in accordance with the income tax law. A directive has been issued to collect only 2 percent tax over the sales of goods sold in foreign currency in order that the staff from related tax and revenue departments cannot be overtaxed and that the work of paying tax can be simple and easy as 30% tax on net profit has to be paid according to the income tax law. This is the policy adopted by the trade policy council. That 2 percent tax of foreign currency is subtracted when the financial statement is submitted at the end of the financial year.

Similarly, regarding trade revenue, there are laws, and directives are issued occasionally. UMFCCI and other business associations are also informed of those directives. There are rates of tax and 5 to 200% revenue taxes according to types of goods. Server taxes are imposed against the goods unnecessary for the country and relaxed taxes against the goods necessary for the country. Some kinds of commodities are exempted from tax. According to the decision of the trade policy council, a directive has been issued to collect only 8 percent trade revenue over the goods sold in foreign currency. The State is now doing so as necessary and will review it later depending on the increase in tax and revenue.

As to the collection of 3.5 percent tax in import processes, withholding tax is not to be paid by paying organizations but to be paid by a seller/ importer or one take in charge of the business. And 3.5 percent tax is collected over the money paid for purchasing goods. So, the tax has to be paid by importers from foreign countries. Such taxes are being imposed according to the withholding method to ensure there is no avoidance of tax as foreigners do not usually settle in Myanmar. It is therefore done by in accord with the taxing right of Myanmar, a sovereign nation.

The Union of Myanmar and other six nations signed avoidance of double taxation agreement.

Those six countries are the UK, Vietnam, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, India and Singapore.

Withholding method is also employed by western countries, European countries, Asian countries and almost all of Southeast Asian countries.

The minister continued that in successive eras, Myanmar is still weak in enjoying the right of tax. At a time when the market economy system is in progress, the nation will be able to work for development only if necessary taxes and revenues are collected. The following are rates of collected tax and GDP of ASEAN+3 countries in 2009-2010 financial year: 30% in Brunei, 8% in Cambodia, 11% in Indonesia, 10.8% in Laos, 15.5% in Malaysia, 14.4% in the Philippines, 13% in Singapore, 17% in Thailand, 13.8% in Vietnam, 27.4% in Japan, 26.8% in ROK, 17% in China and 3.2% in Myanmar. So, in comparison with those nations, Myanmar cannot enjoy full right of collecting taxes, and according to the existing laws, the State cannot render additional cash assistance yet for export items.
Ministry of Labour, if granted by Pyithu Hluttaw, will take measures for submitting new social security insurance law (draft) as supported with possibility thinking

NAY PYI TAW, 21 March-Four representatives discussed the approved proposal “to make necessary arrangements for drawing a new international level Social Security Insurance Law (draft) and to submit it to the second regular session of Pyithu Hluttaw” submitted by U Pwint Hsan from Mayangon Constituency at the regular session of Pyithu Hluttaw today.

U Tin Win from Dedaye Constituency said that Section 24 of the constitution (2008) says, “The Union shall enact necessary laws to protect the rights of workers”, Section 26 (b) “The Union shall enact necessary laws for Civil Services personnel to have security and sufficiency of food, clothing and shelter, to get maternity benefits for married women in service, and to ease livelihood for welfare of retired service personnel”, Section 28 (a), “The Union shall earnestly strive to improve education and health of the people”, Section 31, “The Union shall, to the extent possible, assist to reduce unemployment among the people”, Section 32 (a),“The Union shall care for mothers and children, orphans and fallen Defence Service members’ children, the aged and the disabled”, and Section 351,”Mothers, children and expectant women shall enjoy equal rights as prescribed by law.”

In other countries, staff who become disabled and injured have access to benefits in accordance with the social security scheme, and other staff have the rights to withdraw their deposits with interests.

When a new social security insurance law is drafted, staff members who become disabled due to normal illness and family members of late workers can benefit from the security plan. The plan can attract more attention from employers if health care is provided to fee-payer employers as well as employees.

If an employed insured worker can enjoy unemployment benefit, that will contribute towards the State’s economy and will comply with Article 31.

If the social security scheme is implemented on a wider scale, instability of employment can be reduced and production of goods can be boosted with an increase in number of skilled workers. And that will benefit employers. The plan will be implemented with combined efforts of the State, employers, and workers.

So, he is in support of the proposal, he said.

Daw Win Maw Tun from Yenangyoung Constituency said that the present social security scheme guarantees workers health security only. Workers whose homes are distant from hospitals and dispensaries still find it hard to receive medical treatment. In addition, workers in a town or village where there are no security hospitals or dispensaries have no access to social security according to the present law. Even if they have access, they cannot enjoy the rights to receive medical treatment due to lack of medical facilities.

Providing employment grants for a redundant worker ensures his life security and contributes to State’s currency circulation and economic stability.

So, the majority of countries have prescribed a provision of social security insurance laws.

Unlike civil servants, workers of private-run enterprises have not had access to old age pension. If a social security insurance law is drafted with suitable points, workers can enjoy life security and that will provide impetus to the nation’s economic stability and development. So, she is in favour of the proposal.
U Kyi Myint from Latha Constituency said that a new bill should be written based on the 1954 Social Security Act. Present act benefits only private and civil servants only. Even in the US, the congress held discussions in 2010 to benefit more citizens.

Security systems include regional hospitals and dispensaries, cost-sharing system in government-owned hospitals, pension-saving system as part of the medical trust funds set up by donors, life and other insurance systems, savings bond, shares in private companies, and purchasing houses by installment.

However, there is no link between security systems. Even staff do not know what for they are paying. The government makes major contribution to the systems, which is against market economy.

In the international community, social security is called security or national insurance as well as social security net.

In market economy, the whole security and insurance system is based on the contribution of parts of the grants provided for unemployed people. A rust fund is established with parts of the grants and contributions made by employers and the government concerned. The fund is raised by investing it by economic enterprises in stock market. That may be similar to establishment of a medical trust fund.

In the insurance security system, either the government or private sector has to contribute more. So, he is in support of the proposal.

U Tin Maung Oo from Shwepyitha Constituency said that employers and employees do not take much interest in Myanmar Social Security Project.

When a female staff member is on a maternity leave of 12 weeks, the Social Security Board has the right to take 66.66% of her salary in the period.

However, unlike female counterparts in other countries, female staff members do not have the right to get maternity grants yet.

According to the existing law, female staff members who have paid insurance fees can enjoy maternity leave. If those systems are included in the new law, it will win more trust and reliance from workers.

According to the law, those with health care are exclusive of employers.

So, they are not much interested in the system. So, it is needed to draw a new security law. He said that therefore he seconded the proposal.

Minister for Labour U Aung Kyi said that Social Security Act was issued on 22 October 1954, and put into practice since 1 January 1956. When workers who pay insurance fees can receive free treatment when they are sick, pregnant, dead and injured and they suffer diseases related to their work. In addition, they are provided with grants during the period of leave. If a worker receives treatment in other hospital or clinic in an emergency case, he is provided with the expenses.

When a female worker is pregnant, she can take a 12-week leave and enjoy maternity grants. She can receive free treatment to give birth in the Workers Hospital. And the newborn is provided with free health care for six months. If a worker is disabled in a worksite accident, he is provided temporary or permanent disabled pensions.

However, the 1954 Social Security Act needs to grant more rights, and the granted money is low in proportion to consumers’ prices. The number of workers who pay insurance fees is only over 520,000. That implies that the law is not reliable enough.

Social Security programmes in the majority of ASEAN countries cover sickness, maternity, funeral expenses, grants for worksite accidents, cash assistance for permanent disability, monthly pensions and old age pensions. Old age pension guarantees security to over 3.6 million workers from private
industries in Myanmar. Similarly, many countries exercise unemployment grants as well as health care for family members of employee. So, the present law needs amendments.

The majority of ASEAN countries have amended their social security insurance laws at least once. So, the Ministry of Labour, if granted by Pyithu Hluttaw, will take measures for submitting a new social security insurance law (draft) as supported with possibility thinking.

The speaker said that the discussions are related to human rights.

The proposal should go on, and it needs approval of the hluttaw.

The hluttaw approved the proposal and confirmed it.