NAY PYI TAW, 26 Jan- First day third regular session of first Amyotha Hluttaw was held in Amyotha Hluttaw Hall in Hluttaw Building here at 10 am today.

Today’s session was attended by Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint and 211 Amyotha Hluttaw representatives.

The Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker said in his greetings to the Hluttaw: Bills to be submitted by the Union government such as national projects and State Budget will have to be mainly discussed in the third regular session.

Representatives are suggested to attend the session regularly and review the bills extensively as it is an important matter. The subject has been introduced to the representatives by holding paper-reading session in the second regular session.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker has received 2011-2012 Supplementary State Budget Bill and 2012-2013 Union Budget Bill.

These will be shared to all Hluttaw representatives for their consideration. For the third regular session, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is chief.

The bills could only be submitted to the Pidaungsu Hluttaw. Respective Union ministers and Region and State chief ministers, if required, will be invited to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw for detailed explanation in respects of national projects bill, supplementary budget bill and Union budget bill.

As the project and budget have to be considered in parallel, they will be requested to explain both the project and the budget.

According to Hluttaw Law and Rules, daily session has to be finished as in agenda. Although it is designed to finish the agenda at 4 pm in principle, the time could even be 10 pm by approval of the Hluttaw. The national projects and budgets will have to be reviewed in the light of people’s desire and happiness and reality of the State.

The thorough reading of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law and Rules is recommended. In discussing such important laws and rules, representatives have to strictly adhere to Hluttaw law and rules.

While abiding by these law and rules, representatives should put forward the proposal on amendment if any provisions in law and rules that should be amended are found.

The Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker read out the message sent by the President to the Amyotha Hluttaw.

Amyotha Hluttaw Financial and Legal Affairs Commission and Nongovernmental Organizations Committee were established and other Hluttaw committees reconstituted.

Newly formed Financial and Legal Affairs Commission is chaired by U Aung Tun of Magway Region Constituency (11), alongside Secretary U Ye Myint of Bago Region Constituency (4). It is formed with 11 members in total.
Non-governmental Organizations Committee is chaired by U Win Naung of Yangon Region Constituency (5), alongside Secretary U Khin Maung Yi of Ayeyawady Region Constituency (6). It is formed with 15 members in total.

In reorganizing Hluttaw committees, the Hluttaw approved U Mya Nyein of Yangon Region Constituency (7) as chairman of Bill Committee, U Thein Win of Sagaing Region Constituency (9) as chairman of Public Accounts Committee, U Mya Nyein of Yangon Region Constituency (7) as chairman of Hluttaw Rights Committee, U Aung Tun of Magway Region Constituency (11) as chairman of Government’s Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee, U Than Swe of Magway Region Constituency (7) as chairman of Hluttaw Representatives Vetting Committee, the change in name of National Races Affairs and Internal Peace Committee as National Races Affairs Committee, U Sai Paung Nat of Shan State Constituency (12) as chairman of National Races Affairs Committee, Dr Aye Maung of Rakhine State Constituency (1) as chairman of Citizens’ Fundamental Rights, Democratic Rights and Human Rights Committee, Dr Khin Shwe of Yangon Region Constituency (9) as chairman of Education, Health and Culture Committee, Professor Dr Mya Oo of Bago Region Constituency (9) as chairman of Women and Children Affairs Committee, U Aung Nyein of Magway Region Constituency (2) as chairman of Public Complaints and Petitions Committee, Defence Services Personnel Hluttaw Representative Col Maung Maung Htoo as chairman of UN, ASEAN, AIPA and International Relations Committee, Dr Myint Kyi of Yangon Region Constituency (8) as chairman of Farmers and Local and Foreign Workers Committee, and name lists of secretaries and members.

National Planning, Economic, Monetary and Customs Committee was divided into three committees, namely National Planning Committee, Monetary and Customs Committee and Commerce Committee. The Hluttaw approved U Zaw Myint Pe of Mandalay Region Constituency (5) as chairman of National Planning Committee, U San Tun of Kachin State Constituency (11) as chairman of Monetary and Customs Committee, Daw Nan Ni Ni Aye of Kachin State Constituency (6) as chairperson of Commerce Committee and name lists of secretaries and members.

Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Thein Htay answered questions raised by three Hluttaw representatives regarding development affairs.

U Myo Myint of Mandalay Region Constituency (6) asked about “upgrading Taungtha- Natogyi road section and Nyaunghtha-Taungtha- Myingyan road sections for regional development”. The Union minister answered: Ten border area development tasks, 48 rural development tasks and 19 rural/urban water supply tasks, totally 77, were carried out, spending K 4400.20 million, according to requests of Hluttaw representatives in the second regular session. Taungtha- Natogyi Road is 18 miles and three furlongs long.

Currently, it has three furlongs long and 12 feet wide tarred road, 4 miles and 3 furlongs long 12 feet wide gravel road and 13 miles and five furlongs long earth road.

The fund of K 447.92 million is needed to built eight miles long and 20 feet wide earth road, 15 miles and six furlongs long and 12 feet wide gravel roads, one concrete culvert and one stone-embedded retaining wall. Six furlongs long gravel road will be implemented in 2011-2012 fiscal year with the fund of development affairs committee. Remaining road sections will be implemented in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 fiscal years.

NyaungU-Taungtha- Myingyan road (Ngathayauk-Zajan-Myingan road) is 21 miles and seven furlongs long and currently has four furlongs long 12 feet Ngawide gravel road, two miles long and eight feet wide cobblestone road and 19 miles and three furlongs long earth road.
For enabling to use the road in all weathers, 21 miles and three furlongs long gravel road and five concrete culverts will be built. The fund of K 899.37 is needed.

The tasks will be carried out with the supplementary fund of Mandalay Region in 2011-2012 fiscal year.

Dr Win Myint Aung of Sagaing Region Constituency (4) asked “whether there is plan to upgrade three miles and 4.4 furlongs long gravel roads on Monywa-Thazi village road into tarred road and to recognize Monywa-Thazi village road and Naunggyiai-Mukangyi-Yekyiwa-Seikkhon-Shwebo road as roads under the Ministry of Border Affairs”. The Union minister answered: Monywa-Thazi village road was formerly a rural development tarred road and has nine miles and four furlongs long tarred road, three miles and four furlongs long gravel road and the length of 13 miles. Paving, tarmacking, and repairing the road and construction of three concrete bridges and one wooden bridges were carried out spending K 105.57 million from the fund of Monywa Township Development Affairs Committee.

The estimated cost for tarmacking remaining three miles and four furlongs long section, is K 161.5 million. It will be carried out by Monywa Township DAC with yearly plans. It is planned to tarmac seven furlongs long road section in 2012-2013 fiscal. The remaining road section will be finished by 2013-2014 fiscal year.

27 miles and seven furlongs long Naunggyiai-Mukangyi-Yekyiwa-Seikkhon-Shwebo road links three townships. Ayadaw Township has 10 miles and six furlongs long earth road, Dabayin Township has three miles and seven furlongs long earth road and Shwebo Township has six miles and two long gravel road and seven miles long tarred road.

Out of seven miles long tarred road in Shwebo Township, three miles long section from Chipa junction to Shwebo is under Public Works and the others under Township DACs.

Repairs of six miles and two furlongs long gravel road section of Yekyiwa-Tebin-Seikkhon road and one furlong long tarred road section of Seikkhon-Chipa junction tarred road in Shwebo Township are being carried out in 2011-2012 fiscal year.

Though, fund of Township DACs is not sufficient for upgrading Naunggyiai- Mukangyi-Yekyiwa-Seikkhon-Shwebo road linking three townships. Yearly plans will be drawn and upgrading will be carried out within three fiscal years.

U Zaw Naing Oo of Mon State Constituency (12) asked “whether there is plan to repair key inter-village production roads in Bilin Township of Mon State this year”. The Union minister answered: Among three inter-village roads in Bilin Township, the road from Bilin to Hninpale, Shwehlay, Nyaungpalin, Nyaunglan and Leikkhon villages is seven miles and one furlong long.

Bilin-Hninpale road section under the Ministry of Construction is one mile and seven furlongs long and Hninpale-Leikkhon earth road, constructed by Correction Department in Aungmyay Sugarcane Project, is five miles and two furlongs long.

The second is the road from Taungzun village-tract to regional villages and Yangon- Mawlamyine Highway, six miles and five furlongs long and implemented by Correction Department. The originally tarred road is now badly deteriorated.

The third is the road from Yekkanthema village-tract to Mayangon village-tract constituted with 16 villages is two miles and three furlongs long gravel road, now in condition of earth road.

Of three roads, Yekkanthema inter-village road is the route for transporting agricultural produce and others are gravel production routes of the Correction Department.
To upgrade all three roads, Township DAC has no enough fund. The No (3) Yekkanthema inter-village road will be upgraded to gravel road with the financial aid of the State in 2011-2012 fiscal year.

Repairing others will be carried out in coordination with the Correction Department as these are its gravel production routes.

Union Minister for Energy U Than Htay answered questions raised by two Hluttaw representatives.

Daw Khin Waing Kyi of Yangon Region Constituency No.1 raised question on “whether there is any oil reserve system for regional energy sufficiency and security based on future population growth”.

Oil consumption of the country is equivalent to 60,000 barrel per day. But the domestic production is one third of the consumption and the rest is to be imported yearly. Import had reached 781 million USD in 2006-2007 financial year, which was the most import value. Price of imported oil is much more than that of domestic production.

The country’s domestic daily gas consumption is about 570 million cubic feet. The 240 million cubic feet of gas is being distributed, which is 40 percent of consumption. The future oil and gas demand of the country has been calculated based on standards such as growth rates of GDP, population, industrial sector and agricultural sector. It is expected that till 2015-2016 fiscal year, increased rate of crude oil demand would be 7.3 percent yearly and gas, 4.5 percent yearly. The 1.5 percent of GDP goes to the energy sector in the world. That is to say, Kyat 1.5 is used to increase K 1 of GDP. To fulfill the demand of increased industrial sectors and the country’s energy, the country is doing oil and gas explorations at 38 onshore and offshore blocks in cooperation with over 30 foreign gas and oil exploration companies.

Plans are under way to give permissions to eight companies to do at 10 of 18 onshore blocks. Due to the recent changes in political and economic policies, International oil companies are having discussions.

Oil and gas exploration needs tasks such as collection, exploration, survey, drilling of test oil well and development works for commercial use. It takes times from three to five years to use oil well even after finding it as commercial use.

According to the survey, the stockpiling of Asian countries such as Japan, the Republic of Korea, China, Thailand and European countries’ diesel for contingency use is only for 90 days. These countries have no oil deposits without exploring oil in the earth. For energy security, only US keeps oil and gas reserves in oil and gas deposits For energy security of the country, Myanmar has signed ASEAN Petrol Security Agreement-APSA in March 2009 as a regional cooperation. According to that, in case of a member country faces ten percent shortage of regular domestic crude oil demand for 30 days consecutively, the rest countries are to help that country.

To meet the domestic demand, the country is extending oil and gas explorations in cooperation with foreign companies while for the country’s energy security, oil reserves are kept to be able to use in the time of emergency.

U Sai Tin Aung of Kachin State Constituency No.5 raised the question on “whether there is any plan to sell oil for agricultural equipment to farmers at reasonable prices.”

He answered that oil filling stations across the country have been sold to the privates. As of June 2010, the government has given permissions the privates to import and distribute oil freely. Entrepreneurs are allowed to sell oil at variable prices by giving taxes on imported oil and taking reasonable profits. Since its inception, the private filling stations have been selling diesel and 92 Rom gasoline based on the world’s market prices.
The government sold home-produced gasoline at the same price of K 2500 per gallon across the country. In practice, it brought benefits only to entrepreneurs, not general public. According to Hluttaw’s desires and the Union Government’s permission, without bearing the loss any longer, the government has started selling at K 3000 per gasoline gallon as of 1-1- 2012. It should no longer cause a loss to government as well as putting price restrictions on entrepreneurs.

So, the government has allowed sale of oil at reasonable prices. For public awareness, approximate oil price that should be sold by entrepreneurs are announced via media. So, there is no significant change in oil price. Thanks to that condition, sale and purchase system of oil at variable prices will work well.

According to the statistics of Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, there are 10341 tractors, 202405 power-trillers, 62 paddy transplanting machines, 184218 water pumps, 1494 harvesters and 38121 winnowing across the country.

A few number of paddy transplanting machines run on gas-o-line and almost all agricultural equipments, diesel. Diesel needed for agricultural equipments is easily available at market prices at private filling stations across the country. Private filling stations’ retail oil price is much cheaper than foreign countries’.

A total of 261 filling stations have been handed over to private entrepreneurs.

Among them, 260 stations run well till now.

The number of filling stations granted by Ministry of Energy has reached 137 until today. So, the stations across the country are 397 in total. Blessings will be given to 545 new stations.

Regarding selling price of petroleum products produced from Ministry of Energy, imported petroleum products, the government is not only selling them at a loss according to market-oriented economic system but also trying not to be high prices for customers. The Ministry has changed the system of adding few profits on production costs.

After that, Hluttaw announced the nomination of Hluttaw representatives who want to discuss environmental conservation bill confirmed by Amyotha Hluttaw, which was sent by Pyithu Hluttaw. Member of Union Election Commission U Myint Naing submitted the proposal on bill amending the Union Election Commission Law to be discussed in Amyotha Hluttaw and it was approved by Hluttaw. After that, Hluttaw announced the nomination of Hluttaw representative wishing to discuss it.

U Myo Myint of Mandalay Region Constituency No.6 submitted the proposal on asking Union Government to change from Imperial Unit system to Metric Unit System and the Hluttaw agreed to discuss it.

Daw Khin Waing Kyi of Yangon Region Constituency No.1 also submitted proposal on asking Union Government to extend maternity leave for pregnant women and the Hluttaw agreed to discuss it. The first day third regular session of First Amyotha Hluttaw came to an end at 1.30 pm. The meeting will go on at 10 am tomorrow.

Today’s session included formation of one commission and one committee, reformation of Hluttaw committee, reply to five questions by respective Union Ministers, submitting one bill sent by Pyithu Hluttaw with amendment, and submitting one bill and two proposals.-MNA

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