

Amyotha Hluttaw session continues for 12th day - Five questions answered, one bill discussed

NAY PYI TAW, 23 July-The 12th day session of Amyotha Hluttaw was held at the Amyotha Hluttaw Hall of Hluttaw Complex here at 10.30 am today, attended by 201 Hluttaw representatives including Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint.

As regards to question of U San Tun of Kachin State Constituency-11 that statements on daily life of the people through the media contribute to bringing about good governance and if there are any organizations formed in a systematic manner to monitor and take action against over the news, Deputy Minister for Information U Soe Win replied that editorials, news and articles in TV, radio, newspapers, publications and journals are the perspectives of reporters, editors, journalists, and people voice, letters to editors are also their outlooks over the daily life of people.

The Sub-section (a) of Section 354 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar states that every citizen shall enjoy freedom of expression over their belief and assumption if it is not contrary to security of the State, prevalence of law, community peace or law enacted for the sake of morality of the people.

In other words, all citizens including journalists and media persons shall have the right to enjoy freedom of expression.

In building a democratic nation, media, the Fourth Estate need to monitor the three estates such as legislative, administrative and judicial affairs so that democratic practices can be exercised rightly. The statements of media, the Fourth Estate are to monitor the remaining three estates to ensure that the estates are not swayed.

The Ministry of Information formed a six-member monitoring group led by a director to explain matters concerning the State and the ministry in case such matters occurred and take action over the matters. This was done even in the past in all seriousness.

Apart from the monitoring, the minister himself at the EC meeting laid down a policy to response daily incidents in real time. The deputy minister, managing directors and directors-general also informed the monitoring group in case matters to be dealt were found so that they can be addressed. All officials of the ministry are extensively engaged in the supervision of matters concerning their ministry or departments whenever necessary and seek advice from the higher levels.

At present also, newspapers are in the process of dealing with the statements, advices and criticism of press media after reviewing and scrutinizing them. As regards to letters to editors of the State-owned newspapers, the officials concerned from the relevant departments have taken prompt actions and the sector of letters to editor used to make explanations over the case after prompt actions have been taken. Similarly, a sector like public information was opened at the newspapers and matters related to public affairs are being addressed.

According to democratic practices, the three pillars such as legislative, executive and judicial affairs are to response the monitoring of the Fourth Estate in all seriousness without urge from anyone. To be able to do so, the monitoring groups of the respective sectors were formed and systematic measures are being taken.

The press media, the Fourth Estate itself is to try its utmost to become a wellqualified, genuine Fourth Estate so that it can monitor the remaining three estates.

To become a genuine Fourth Estate, journalists need to be fully equipped with the five norms: to avoid bias, to write a subject from different views rather than one view, to write it on the basis of freedom and

accountability or freedom and rationality, to focus on unity in democracy although they may have differences in the writing and to put in the fore the national interest in doing so.

Any statements and expressions complete with the five norms are to be scrutinized and dealt in line with the democratic practices, he said.

As to question of U Sai San Min of Shan State Constituency-3 that do retired service personnel of Nanmatu Mines who settled in Lashio have the right to draw monthly pensions at Myanmar Economic Bank in Lashio and can they enjoy pensions like the Tatmadawmen as they had to discharge State duties at the risk of their lives like the Tatmadawmen, Deputy Minister for Finance and Revenue U Win Shein replied that pensions of service personnel of departments are born out of public funds while pensions of those from enterprises are born out of expenses of the respective enterprises.

In that regard, pensions of those from departments and defence are born out of pension and bonus expense funds of the State budget.

Therefore, the money order of pensioners can be drawn from Myanmar Economic Bank after opening a bank account.

But pensions of those from enterprises are born out of expenses of the relevant enterprises. Therefore, pensions of enterprises can be drawn through the head offices of the respective enterprises and enterprise branches after going through the required check and scrutiny.

Being an enterprise of the State, pensioners of No.1 Mining Enterprise who settled in Lashio could not draw their pensions from Myanmar Economic Bank in Lashio as pensions cannot be drawn at MEB. As the question is concerned with the Ministry of Mines, decision was made for the ministry to deal with the question as only the ministry can effectively address the case.

As regards the question of U Myint Tun of Bago Region Constituency-10 that if any plan to prevent farmlands of west Letpadan Township from flood, the question of U Naing Tun Ohn of Mon State Constituency-5 that if any scrutiny over the use of quality rubber or not by rubber growers as the number of rubber growers is on the increase in Mon State and the question of U Thein Win of Sagaing Region Constituency-9 that if any plan to handle land disputes with the formation of the Union level scrutiny committee and if any plan to enact the law on compensating for the confiscated land for various reasons.

Regarding the first question, the deputy minister replied that the Irrigation Department is responsible for the works of 16 drains, and one sluice gate out of the 18 works for prevention of flood in west part of Letpadan Township. The Development Affairs Committee is responsible for one 30-ft long bridge, which would be assisted by the Irrigation Department.

The length of the drains to be constructed by the Irrigation Department would be 44 miles in length needing over 0.2 million hundred cubic feet of earth. Permission and fund allocation would be asked from the Union government to start those works in 2013- 2014 fiscal year. If the Union government grants permission, proposal would be submitted for further actions.

Regarding the second question, the deputy minister replied that Perennial Plants Education and Technical Development Division of Industrial Crops Development Department under the Agriculture and Irrigation Ministry is helping rubber growers to be able to grow high yield purely-bred rubber strains suitable to the climate of their own regions, establishing quality rubber plantations, distributing pure rubber saplings, annually conducting courses on rubber cultivation and production process to rubber growers.

Rubber research farm and six nurseries covering 186 acres of rubber plantation distribute 150,000 quality saplings yearly.

In addition to educative works on rubber production, Perennial Plants Utilization Department (Hpa- auk) in Mawlamyine Township of Mon State organizes theoretical and practical courses for those interested in rubber cultivation once or twice a year to ensure that the strains are suitable for the region where rubber is grown most.

So, Perennial Plants Education and Technical Assistance Division would make amendment to rules and regulations relating to permit for plantation with a view to increase in quality rubber strains and would enforce it starting 2012-2013 fiscal year.

Regarding the third question, Farmland Act and Vacant, Fellow and Virgin Land Management Law passed by the third regular session of the First Pyidaungsu Hluttaw was approved by the President dated 30-3-2012. The Section 22 of Chapter (8) Settlement of Disputes over Farmland Right and Appeal of the Farmland Act prescribes that the ward or village-tract farmland management team is to investigate, hear and judge the disputes over farmland right, and the section 23, 24 and 25 state that the final decision is subject to appeal courts at different levels.

The Section 26 of Chapter (9) Recompense and Compensation states that “the central farmland management committee shall coordinate as necessary enabling the State give compensation or recompense the original farmland owner in other ways to make sure that the original owner suffers no losses from his farmland confiscated for national or public interests and all the matters including improving the farmland with buildings carried out by the owner” Section 3 of Chapter (2) states that Vacant, Fellow and Virgin Land Management Committee is to be formed for effective management of vacant, fellow and virgin land for commercial cultivation, breeding, mineral mining for national economic development and other legal business permitted by the State.

According to Sections 19 and 20, the central committee is obliged to departments and organizations concerned to make sure that the original farmland owner is compensated appropriately within set period under the agreement of the Union government.

A 16-member work committee led by the deputy agriculture and irrigation minister for drafting by-laws was formed with letter 112(1)/8/President Office dated 2-5-2012 of the President Office to formulate bylaws for enforcing Farmland Act and Vacant, Fellow and Virgin Land management Law.

In addition, a 21- member Land Utilization Scrutiny Committee led by the Union Minister for Environmental Conservation and Forestry was formed with order No. 41/ 2012 dated 18-6-2012 of the President Office to effectively implement land distribution policies in urban development and investment projects.

Land Utilization Committee is responsible for review the existing land and tax laws, by-laws, land confiscation act and bylaws, taxation law and related procedures and to formulate appropriate ones in coordination with government agencies and the committee has launched its first step.

So, organizations concerned and region and state governments would be able to deal with the conditions on the ground under the Farmland Act, Vacant, Fellow and Virgin land management Law and by-laws promulgated in accordance with the Constitution of the State.

Deputy Minister for Transport U Han Sein submitted a bill revoking Myanmar Five Star Shipping Line Corporation Law for discussion at the Hluttaw, which was seconded by U Khin Maung Yi of Ayeyawady Region Constituency (6).

The Hluttaw approved to discuss the bill and announced that MPs wishing to discuss the bill are to register by 26, July.

The session came to an end at 11.30 am and the 13th day session continues at 10 am tomorrow.
Five questions were answered and one bill was discussed at today' session.

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