Pyidaungsu Hluttaw creates commission, inter-parliamentary joint committees

THE second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw held its meeting for fifth day in Nay Pyi Taw, proposing to form a commission and two inter-parliamentary committees yesterday.

First, Deputy Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker U Aye Tha Aung announced that Myanmar Parliament-Union-MPU is set to be formed with 18 members including Chairman Mahn Win Khaing Than, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker, Vice-Chairman U Win Myint, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker, and U Aye Tha Aung, Deputy Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker.

Next, Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Ko Ko Naing of Yamethin Constituency informed the Parliament of proposed formation of Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission.

Then Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than named Thura U Shwe Mann, U Ko Ko Naing of Yamethin Constituency, Dr Win Myat Aye of Bago Region Constituency 4 and U Khin Maung Tun chairman, vice-chairman (1), vice-chairman (2) and secretary of the 35-member commission.

During the 5th day session, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw proposed to form Joint Committee on ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly and Joint Committee on Inter-Parliamentary Union with 16 members each.

The sixth day session continues today. — Myanmar News Agency

Four-nation meeting in Cambodia set to discuss trafficked Myanmar fishermen in Indonesia

A MEETING focusing on trafficked Myanmar fishermen in Indonesia is set to take place in Cambodia, according to Myanmar’s Anti-Human Trafficking Police Force.

The meeting, involving Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia and Cambodia, will last for three days from 9 to 11 March, said the Anti-Human Trafficking Police Force, adding that a matter of bringing back trafficked Myanmar fishermen home from Indonesia will be the main topic of discussion.

The meeting is aimed at boosting cooperation among the four countries in an effort to arrest traffickers and to prevent future human trafficking cases, said Police Captain Min Naing.

Hundreds of Myanmar fishermen were trafficked to Indonesia via Thailand in 2015, and efforts are underway to repatriate them.

There have been delays in the process of determining whether the victims are Myanmar citizens or not, said a police captain from the Anti-Human Trafficking Police Force. The Myanmar government has resisted repatriating fishermen who are members of the Rohingya ethnic community, many of whom fled persecution in Rakhine State, only to be exploited by fishing companies.

The meeting in Cambodia will be the fourth one focusing on anti-human trafficking operations. According to the Anti-Human Trafficking Police Force, 1,080 Myanmar fishermen were brought back to Myanmar from Indonesia through the four-nation meetings.

In 2015 there were in total 24 batches of repatriated fishermen numbering 1,010 persons from Indonesia.

There have been 3 batches numbering 42 persons repatriated so far in 2016. — Thein Ko Lwin

Speaker U Win Myint receives Czech delegation

Speaker U Win Myint receives Mr Lubomir Zaoralek, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. —MNA

AN order to print warning messages and illustrations of the effects of smoking on cigarette packages will come into adverse effects on 1 September 2016, the Ministry of Health announced yesterday.

According to the order, a warning message shall be printed on 25 per cent of one side of each cigarette pack, and an image depicting the adverse effects of smoking will appear on 50 per cent of a side.

The order came after a ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw, where Union Minister Dr Than Aung signed an initiative to implement part of the 2006 Control of Smoking and Consumption of Tobacco Product Law that contains the ministry’s functions and responsibilities.

In his address, the Union minister called for public participation in the implementation of the law. Myanmar is the 11th signatory to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. —MNA

Carter Center Releases Myanmar Post-Election Statement

MYANMAR’s Union Election Commission has addressed post-election complaints in a transparent manner, the Carter Center said in a statement released yesterday, but the country’s new government should address legal and structural issues to make it easier for candidates and citizens to pursue complaints in future elections and to further increase the transparency of the tabulation of results.

Forty-five complaints were lodged with the election commission. The cost of filing a complaint—including the cost of traveling to Nay Pyi Taw for a hearing—discouraged some candidates and parties from registering complaints. To date, the election commission has issued a judgment in only two cases. (The lack of deadlines for deciding cases limits the potential for an effective remedy.)

The Center’s observers remained in Myanmar after the historic 8 November election to monitor post-election day developments, including the tabulation of results, the dispute-resolution process and the seating of the new government. In most areas the observers visited, tabulation was conducted in a transparent and professional manner. However, results forms were not always made available for public scrutiny in a timely manner, and in several instances, observers were denied access or were restricted in their ability to observe effectively.

The Carter Center offers the following recommendations to the Union Election Commission:

• As possible, minimize additional costs for complainants, including the relocation of hearings to states and regions where appropriate.

The Center commends the UEC on its post-election review and recommends that the Union legislature place reform of election laws, including the improvement of the post-election dispute system and campaign finance regulation, on the 2016 legislative agenda. —GNLM