**Pyidaungsu Hluttaw votes to postpone constitutional referendum**

**Nay Pyi Taw, 22 July** — The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on Wednesday voted in favour of postponing a constitutional referendum until after the 8 November general election. The referendum on Section 59 (d) of the Constitution had been scheduled to be held in conjunction with the election, but the Union Election Commission proposed holding it separately at a later date. The referendum will ask voters whether the term “military” in the section — which states the president of the union “shall be well acquainted with the affairs of the Union such as political, administrative, economic and military” — should be changed to “defence.”

A majority of MPs backed the UEC proposal, saying the concurrent staging of the referendum with the election would pose several difficulties but would not reduce costs significantly. The Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw earlier this month said he would send a proposal to the Union Election Commission to hold a referendum on amendment of Section 59 (D) alongside the parliamentary elections on 8 November.

**Amyotha Hluttaw MPs raise queries on illegal liquor license, national sports plans**

**Nay Pyi Taw, 22 July** — Strict enforcement of regulations on reduction of illegal liquor sales will continue while the number of beverage license is being decreased year by year, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brig-Gen Kyaw Kyaw Tun told the Amyotha Hluttaw on Wednesday.

The ministry has issued 41,040 liquor licenses for the fiscal year, 170 fewer than last year, under 30 categories. Deputy Minister for Sports U Thaung Htike replied to queries about national sports plans. He said a total of 40 townships across the country do not have sports grounds or stadiums. He also urged other government agencies to inform the Union government and the sports ministry if sports facilities are renovated for other purposes.

The Myanmar Red Cross Society Bill with an amendment from Pyithu Hluttaw was submitted for approval, and the report on the Arbitration Bill was read out. The Bill on theBrothel Suppression Act was submitted for approval, and was read out to the parliament. The report on the Bill amending the Blood and Blood Products Law was submitted and with a call for suggestions from parliamentarians.—MNA

**Pyithu Hluttaw discuss reservoir projects, Chindwin River conservation**

**U Khin Zaw told the Pyithu Hluttaw on Wednesday.**

The ministry had requested funds to complete the Swanye and Minhla reservoir projects this fiscal year but did not receive budget approval. Deputy Minister for Transport U Han Sein said K 26.8 million will be spent on dredging as part of waterway maintenance of the Chindwin River.

The Joint Bill Committee submitted the second amending bill on the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law. Approval was sought for the bills on the Union Government Law and Homogenous Marriage.—MNA

**Myanmar, Laos to promote cooperation**

**Nay Pyi Taw, 22 July** — Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann held a talk with Vice President of Lao People’s Democratic Republic Mr. Bounnhang Vorachith and party at the hall of Hluttaw complex, here, Wednesday.

They discussed bilateral relations and further cooperation between the two countries. Mr. Bounnhang Vorachith and wife and party arrived at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport Tuesday evening.—MNA

**Networking, investment seminar draws more than 20 Japanese firms**

**YANGON, 22 July** — More than 20 Japanese firms seeking to invest in Myanmar attended a business networking event Wednesday in Yangon held by the Bank of Tokyo Mitsubisi UFJ.

Thirteen Myanmar companies and three from Thailand also attended the event, which saw some 100 meetings arranged between participating firms, according to the organizer.

The Japanese companies represented diverse business sectors including food, consumer products, media, chemical products and construction.

BTMU senior executive Mr Makoto Kobayashi said the bank had invited Japanese firms that had expressed interest in doing business in Myanmar.

BTMU plans to play a bigger role in enhancing Myanmar’s financial infrastructure as well as re-shaping the economy of the country, he added.

Mr Mitsuhiro Kimura, General Manager of BTMU’s Yangon branch, spoke about some of the challenges facing foreign banks in Myanmar, including the lack of a remittance system to enable payments, as well as the need for a more vibrant interbank market.

The first business matching fair in Yangon followed a Myanmar investment seminar which attracted about 1,000 businesses last month in Japan. BTMU opened its Yangon Branch three months ago, partnering with Myanmar-owned CB Bank, which has 120 branches across the country.—GNLM

**By Aye Min Soe**

**Tokyo-based BTMU senior executive Mr Makoto Kobayashi**