THE name Rohingya was never mentioned in any of the census lists, and it is not included among the list of 135 ethnic nationals, said Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe during the Pyithu Hluttaw meeting yesterday.

During the 12th-day meeting of the seventh regular session of the second Pyithu Hluttaw yesterday, U Tin Aye of Metmung constituency raised a question on the plan to inform the people of Myanmar, as well as those across the world, of there being no ethnic nationals under the name Rohingya. The Union Minister was responding to his question.

Union Minister U Thein Swe added that according to records, a race census was made by the British government in 1911, 1921 and 1931, prior to independence, and censuses were collected after independence in 1953-1954, 1973 and 1983. According to Part I – Provincial Totals of Races by Religion census report for 1921 and 1931, the name Rohingya was never mentioned.

The government is conducting work for the long-term benefit of the people and towards national interest. In conducting these works, it is not responding to sentimental words but to legal and formal processes in calm, dignified and effective ways.

The race list was prepared for census collection after independence in 1973, it was based on the ethnic race list included in the 1931 census, 1953-1954 nationality lists, 1961 suggestions by the historical literature and culture office, operating under the ministry of culture, and suggestions by the Myanmar History Commission and coordination of ethnic national affairs committee of Burma (Myanmar) Socialist Programme Party. The 135 ethnic nationals in that census do not include the name Rohingya, explained the Union Minister.

The name Rohingya was not used in state-owned and private media, and Rohingya not being included in the ethnic national list has been mentioned repeatedly. Myanmar diplomats in the world and United Nations organisations do not recognise the usage of that word, and if others were using it, official objections, protests and indications were made consistently, said the Union Minister.

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The race list obtained from the 2014 census will be published only after consultation with ethnic affairs committee members; ethnic national leaders; ethnic national representatives; history, culture and social science experts; relevant departments and organisations, as there are contentious matters in the inclusion of ethnic nationals, sub-tribes of ethnic nationals, spellings, new names and classification of ethnic nationals, said the Union Minister.

Questions raised by U Sai Aung Kyaw of Kehsi constituency, U Naing Naing Win of Tamu constituency and Dr. U San Shwe Win of Yadkyi constituency were also answered by U Thein Swe.

A motion urging the government to set up appropriate policies to assist Myanmar nationals who return to Myanmar after facing difficulties abroad for various reasons due to migrant labour laws of the host countries, tabled by U Sai Tha Tha Kyaw of Mairel constituency, was then discussed by Daw Khin Hnin Thit of Padaung constituency, U Sai Tun Aye of Mongshu constituency, U Sai Tha Tha Zin of Saliaw constituency, U Win Thein Zaw of Salengyi constituency, Daw Cho Cho of Oattwin constituency, Daw Nan Than Than Lwin of Hpa-an constituency and Dr. Daw Khin Sithu of Loikaw constituency.

In his discussion on the motion, U Thein Swe said the socio-economic development of workers and the employment of nationals are priorities for the ministry. The ministry has drawn up and is implementing policies on migrant workers and employment matters, added the Union Minister.

When our migrant workers return from abroad, whether they go there officially or not, they have official documents or not, the ministry does its best to assist them. The union minister suggested the motion be put on record, as it is an important matter that the government is conducting consistently with all the ministries.

The Hluttaw decided to put the motion on record. In addition to this, the bill to repeal the Dock Workers (Regulation of Employment) Act 1948, returned without amendment by Amyotha Hluttaw, was also approved by the Hluttaw after the Hluttaw’s decision was obtained.