The railway project was discontinued in 2014 after residents protested against the demolition of the ancient capital Dhanawadi and Mrauk-U, which are cultural heritage zones. However, the excavation of laterite rocks continued, and the concerned village administrators and excavators were given final warnings on 4 March 2017, following which the excavation businesses were not allowed to continue operating in the area. However, a state police investigation revealed that the 7 acres of leased land that had been left unattended by the police force were being used for excavation businesses, with permission from the Kyauktaw Township police chief. Further, legal action was taken against all involved parties, with the trial held on 26 January 2018. As no legal businesses were permitted after the railway project was discontinued, the government has not accrued any income, explained the deputy minister. The grazing land in Taungpaukgyi mountain range is under the management of the Kyauktaw Township General Administration Department.

### Motion to expand nationwide tourism approved for discussion

The Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat. PHO TO: MNA

U Myint Oo of Thanatpin constituency tabled a motion to urge the union government to establish tourism-based festivals and special events, increase the number of tourism agencies, and expand tourism districts to develop both community-based and eco-tourism throughout the country. He said countries around the world were using numerous innovative methods to enhance international tourism and boost their local economies. Tourism can cause a country to become popular; while encouraging rural areas to uphold their traditions, while generating sustainable income, he noted. The tourism sector around the world is changing, said U Myint Oo, as the focus is on more authentic interactions with local communities, wildlife and nature, and accessing new and lesser known areas in a country.

He urged the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, other relevant ministries, state and regional governments, the Myanmar Tourism Organisation, and civil organisations to work together with the local people to boost tourism and follow the sustainable development of tourism standards set by the World Tourism Organisation. Another MP seconded the motion, and the speaker announced the motion would be put forward for discussion.

### Amyotha Hluttaw MPs suggest forest bill to ensure transparency, public notification

**By Aung Ye Thwin (MNA)**

Lawmakers of the Amyotha Hluttaw discussed the forest bill sent by the Pyithu Hluttaw, making suggestions for transparency and public notification when forest reserves are established. At the seventh day meeting of Amyotha Hluttaw yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw, U Soe Win of constituency-12 of Rakhine State made a suggestion to add a clause to the bill which guarantees negotiation and ensures transparency with the local people when reserved forest and protected public forest are designated in paragraph 6 of Chapter-3 titled “Establishing reserved forest and designating protected public forest”.

The MP also suggested a clause that wooded areas two miles from villages, pagodas, monasteries, schools, ponds, lakes and farmland which are used by local people should be designated as forest reserves. The MP also suggested the wording “announcements shall be made in many ways to let the local people know …” be added in paragraph 7 of the same chapter when the entire forest reserve or a part of the forest reserve is reestablished or is abolished or is reestablished as protected public forest.

In sub-paragraph (b), paragraph 7, he suggested to amend the clause “entire forest reserve or a part of the forest reserve which no longer needs to be reserved shall be abolished,” as “if … are abolished, a part of the forest reserve with farmland shall be abolished and announcements shall be made to let the local people know these issues.”

U Zaw Hein of constituency-7 of the Taninthayi Region. PHOTO: MNA

He said the Taninthayi Region. PHOTO: MNA

U Zaw Hein of constituency-7 of the Taninthayi Region. PHOTO: MNA

He urged the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, other relevant ministries, state and regional governments, the Myanmar Tourism Organisation, and civil organisations to work together with the local people to boost tourism and follow the sustainable development of tourism standards set by the World Tourism Organisation. Another MP seconded the motion, and the speaker announced the motion would be put forward for discussion.

### Anyone who smuggles teak or banned hardwood to foreign countries, or those who involve in the smuggling shall get a minimum ten-year prison sentence and a fine of at least Ks5 million.

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