

Pyithu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw discusses sports infrastructure, healthcare

Hmwe Kyu Zin

THE 10th-day meeting of the seventh regular session of the second Pyithu Hluttaw was held in the Pyithu Hluttaw meeting hall, Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday morning.

At the meeting, Dr. Salai Rianville of Falam constituency raised a question on the plan to upgrade the Falam Centenary football field into a standard football field. Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe said Falam Town had the Centenary and Hran Thio football fields. The Centenary football field was upgraded in the 2015-2016 fiscal year (FY) with Ks60 million, and a stadium is being built in the 2017-2018 FY with Ks27 million. To upgrade the Centenary football field into a standard football field, the ministry will require an estimated Ks250 million to build a 500-foot-long rock-lined retaining wall and Ks120 million

to build a 400-metre five-track racing strip around the football field, the total requirement being Ks370 million. Therefore, there is no plan to upgrade the football field further, replied the Union Minister.

Responding to a question by U Min Thein of Taungdwingyi constituency on the plan to increase the number of doctors of psychology in district-level hospitals in Myanmar, Dr. Myint Htwe said that of the 74 districts in the country, some 34 townships have more than 200-bed hospitals that had in its setup a specialist doctor of psychology, while 24 townships had appointed a doctor of psychology. Under the department of health, there are 51 hospitals, of which, 39 had appointed a doctor of psychology, which is 76.5 per cent of the hospitals.

The remaining 40 districts only have 100, 50 or 25 beds and did not have a doctor of psychol-

ogy in their organisation's setup. Doctors of psychology were not appointed full-time even in hospitals where the organisation's setup included such a position, and thus, it would not be possible to appoint doctors of psychology in all district-level hospitals, replied the Union Minister.

Questions raised by U Sai Maung Pwint of Tangyan constituency, U Myo Nyunt of Homalin constituency, U Than Aung of Ngaputaw constituency and Daw Khin Saw Wai of Yathedaung constituency were also answered by Dr. Myint Htwe.

Next, a motion urging the government to improve the rural community health standards and healthcare coverage to include all nationals by forming regional doctors and township health personnel into a mobile medical team and conducting field visits to villages was tabled by Dr U Aung Khin of Pyin Oo



Pyithu Hluttaw speaker U Win Myint. PHOTO: MNA

Lwin constituency. The motion was supported by U Hla Tun Aung of Mahlaing constituency.

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint then requested the Hluttaw representatives who wanted to discuss the motion to enrol their names.

With regards to the bill to repeal the municipal law, returned without amendment by the Amyotha Hluttaw, the Py-

ithu Hluttaw speaker said both the Hluttaws had agreed on the bill, and Pyidaungsu Hluttaw was notified to confirm it. The Pyithu Hluttaw speaker announced that the matter would be followed up according to the Pyithu Hluttaw's rules.

The 11th-day meeting of the seventh regular session of the second Pyithu Hluttaw is scheduled for 2 February. ■

Amyotha Hluttaw

Amyotha Hluttaw discusses construction of bridges

Aye Aye Thant (Myanmar News Agency)

THE Minthan-Maunglaw Bridge connecting Taninthayi, Myeik and Kyunsu townships is on a road classified as Class (A) priority level (1) and will be given priority to be implemented before the 2020-2021 fiscal year (FY), explained Ministry of Construction Deputy Minister U Kyaw Lin.

He was responding to a question raised by U Zaw Hein of Taninthayi constituency (7) on the plan to build the Minthan-Maunglaw Bridge connecting Taninthayi, Myeik and Kyunsu townships during the 10th-day meeting of the seventh regular session of the second Amyotha Hluttaw yesterday.

The deputy minister added that the road on which Minthan-Maunglaw Bridge will be built is managed by the Rural Road Development Department, and the 1,800-foot-long bridge will be built to connect Minthan Village in Myeik Township with Maunglaw Village in Kyunsu Township. The Taungpale-Shantaung-Minthan road in Myeik Township is on the Myeik-Taninthayi-Kawthoung union road said the Union Minister.



Amyotha Hluttaw being convened in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

On the Kyunsu Township side, it will connect to Yataung-Minkote-Pyinwin-Gyotaung-Wayitkayin-Wayitmyanmar-Lethit west road and Maunglaw-Zaykami-Nyaungbi-Anyin-Peya road via Maunglaw Village and will benefit some 30,000 people, noted the Deputy Minister. Next, Ministry of Construction Deputy Minister U Kyaw Lin replied to a question raised by U Soe Thain of Kayah State constituency (9) on the plan to build a Ponnagyun-Pauktaw river-crossing bridge for the development of northern Rakhine State, stating that the Kissapa Nadi (Kaladan) Bridge is not like the river-crossing bridges on Ayeyawady, Chindwin, Thanlwin and Sittaung rivers, as it is

near a river mouth where there is high tide, and double-decker vessels from inland water transport pass through the Sittway-Ponnagyun-MraukU-Kyauktaw route daily. The height of the bridge needs to be above 100 metres, but the machinery being used in the construction of bridges in Myanmar are incapable of constructing such a bridge, so, the country will require higher-capability machinery. Therefore, it will be costlier, and there will be limited funds to construct it, he said.

The main entry roads to Rakhine State, Minbu-An-Sittway road and Ngathaingchaung-Gwa road are being upgraded as a priority in the current five-year project period, and foreign aid will be pursued to construct the Kissapa

Nadi (Kaladan) Bridge, while the bridge will be constructed as soon as foreign funds are available for it, replied the Deputy Minister.

Responding to a question posed by U Tin Aung Tun of Magway Region constituency (5) on the action taken against persons responsible for the collapse of the approach road to the newly built Yaypuyochaung Bridge in Minbu Township after the work done and quality control group had reviewed and accepted the work, U Kyaw Lin said the repair work was being conducted by his ministry, and instructions had been sent to take necessary action against the company and persons responsible for constructing the Yaypuyochaung Bridge.

Questions raised by Dr. U

Kywe Kywe of Mandalay Region constituency (6), Dr. Khun Win Thaug of Kachin State constituency (11) and Daw Than Than Aye of Magway Region constituency (7) were also fielded by Deputy Minister U Kyaw Lin.

Next, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than informed the Hluttaw about the bill on the registration of deeds being approved and returned with amendments by the Pyithu Hluttaw. He requested the Hluttaw representatives who wanted to discuss the bill to enrol their names. U Min Oo of Bago constituency (6) then tabled a motion of condolences for the demise of Daw Shila Nan Taung @ M Nan Taung of Kachin State constituency (2), which was agreed on by the Hluttaw, and Hluttaw Speaker Mah Win Khaing Than announced the approval of the motion.

The Hluttaw also agreed on providing social assistance with a daily allowance by the Hluttaw whenever a Hluttaw representative passes away, and the Hluttaw speaker announced the approval of the Hluttaw on this matter.

The 11th-day meeting of the seventh regular session of the second Amyotha Hluttaw will be held on 2 February. ■

State Counsellor attends Mon National Day event

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attended a dinner to mark the 71st Mon National Day at the Myanmar International Convention Centre II (MICC-II) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, at which she expressed her happiness over last week's pledge by the New Mon State Party to sign the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.

Speaking at the ceremony, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said the move would strengthen the Union spirit of the country.

"We all take great pride in the recent agreement with the Mon ethnic armed group to sign the ceasefire agreement for their participation in the peace process, and I believe that Mon ethnic people are also taking pride in it. This is the first step,

and we must strive to reach our goal of eternal peace," she said.

The State Counsellor stressed the importance of "respect, loving kindness, and values" among the national ethnic races in the country for allowing the Union spirit to flourish, highlighting how Bamar people respect and admire Queen Shinsawpu, King Raja Diraj and King Dhammazedi and the historical heroes of the Mon people.

"Mon ethnic people should take pride in that Burmese people loves the Mon heroes in history, and Burmese people should take pride in those who love and respect heroes of ethnic Mon", said the State Counsellor.

She also said the recent agreement is an important show of unity and positive thinking



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attends the dinner to mark the 71st Mon National Day at MICC-II in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**



Mon ethnic dance troupe perform traditional dances at the dinner to mark the 71st Mon National Day in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

among ethnic people to reach the goal of a Federal Union.

"How far is our goal? If we walk together joining hands with each other, we will reach it without tiredness," said Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi also said the government is obliged to support and encourage the languages and culture of ethnic people. "Our cooperation at the national days of ethnic people is an important step for the march to democracy," she said.

Following her address, Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs Nai Thet Lwin expressed his

pleasure over the freedom to hold the national days of ethnic people in the time of the elected government. At a dinner held later in the evening, Mon ethnic dance troupes performed traditional dances.

Yesterday's event was attended by Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint and wife, Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than and wife, Chairman of the Constitutional Tribunal U Myo Nyunt and wife, Chairman of the Union Election Commission U Hla Thein and wife, Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U T Khun

Myat and wife, Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Aye Tha Aung and wife, Chairman of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Thura U Shwe Mann and wife, Union Ministers, Union Attorney-General, Union Auditor-General, Chairman of Union Civil Service Board, Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council and their wives, deputy ministers, members of Anti-Corruption Commission, Hluttaw representatives, departmental heads, Mon ethnic people and invited guests.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Bail denied for Reuters reporters

YANGON Northern District Court rejected yesterday the bail request of two Reuters Journalists accused of violating Official Secrets Act, even though their defence lawyer said information in documents at the centre of the case was publicly available.

Lawyer Than Zaw Aung said a police witness had accepted during court proceedings that details in documents found in the possession of the reporters when they were arrested had already been published in newspaper reports.

Wa Lone, 31, and Kyaw Soe Oo, 27, were detained on 12 December after they had been invited to meet police officers over dinner in Yangon. They have told relatives they were arrested almost immediately after being handed some documents at a restaurant by two officers they had not met before.

Police Major Min Thant, who

said he led the team of arresting officers, yesterday submitted what he said were secret documents seized from the two reporters to the district court in Yangon.

Police have previously said the documents contained information on the disposition and operations of security forces in Rakhine's Maungtau District.

In response, defence attorney Than Zaw Aung submitted copies of several newspaper articles that he said showed the information in the documents was already in the public domain.

"After August 25, the government explained to the media and diplomats about what happened in Maungtau," Than Zaw Aung said.

He said afterwards that Major Min Thant had acknowledged that when cross-examined.

"The witness admitted that the content of the documents they obtained from them is the

information that the public already knew. He said the contents are same," Than Zaw Aung told Reuters.

At the end of the day's proceedings, the court rejected the defence's application for bail. Reading from the Official Secrets Act, Judge Ye Lwin said the alleged offence was "non-bailable", without elaborating further.

Deputy District Judge Daw Su Sandar Win, in her capacity as information officer, confirmed to reporters that the court rejected the bail request.

The next hearing for the case will be to be on next Tuesday. Out of 25 witnesses, two have so far been presented. The remaining witnesses will testify in court in subsequent hearings, she added.

Relatives of the two reporters were distraught after the decision was announced.

"I cleaned my house with the hope that he might get bail, just

in case," Pan Ei Mon, Wa Lone's wife, said, sobbing. "I knew that he wouldn't get bail but still I cannot handle this."

Kyaw Soe Oo's wife, Chit Su Win, held on to her husband in tears, kissing him as he was being taken back to prison.

In the morning, the two journalists had been smiling and appeared in good spirits as they were brought handcuffed to the court from Insein Prison in Yangon. Wa Lone gave the "thumbs up" sign and Kyaw Soe Oo hugged his young daughter.

The courtroom was packed with reporters and diplomats from the US, British, Canadian, Norwegian, Swedish, French and Danish embassies as well as United Nations and European Union officials.

Under cross-examination, police witness Min Thant also said he had updated the paperwork recording Kyaw Soe Oo's

arrest and search to show he was detained outside the restaurant where the reporters say they had a meal with police officers.

Kyaw Soe Oo had refused to sign a form stating he was arrested at an intersection in northern Yangon where police say they had a checkpoint, the officer said.

The two journalists said afterwards that Min Thant was not among the officers who arrested them.

"We have never seen that police officer before," Wa Lone told reporters outside the courtroom. "We were arrested by plainclothes police."

In his testimony, Min Thant said he led the team that arrested the reporters and that he was in uniform at the time.

The court hearing is to determine whether Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo will face charges under the Official Secrets Act.—GNLM/Reuters contributed to this report