

Minister for Hotels and Tourism replies to discussion of U Khin Maung Yi (a) Khaing Maung Yi of Ahlon Constituency

NAY PYI TAW, 14 March - U Khin Maung Yi (a) Khaing Maung Yi of Ahlon Constituency discussed the proposal of U Ngun Moun of Haka Constituency “to allow foreign guests and tourists to visit Chin State” at today’s regular session of Pyithu Hluttaw that Chin State is scenic and could attract the attention of tourists; tourism industry is one of important foreign currency earners of the nation; it is heartening to learn the State is undertaking development tasks in Chin State; to help Chin State develop in parallel with the Union the blockage of tourist entry should be cleared; the similar cases of that, for example, an American citizen who was born in Haka and his family legally arrived in Myanmar to attend 100th Anniversary of Haka, was refused to travel to Haka and only reached Kalay should be averted.

With the aim to apply new ideologies, new ways and new laws which envision peace and development in transition to democracy in conformity with the new State Constitution, he supported the proposal submitted by U Ngun Moun, he discussed.

Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Soe Naing explained that foreign guests and visitors who want to enter Myanmar for various purposes may obtain visa at Myanmar Embassy and Consul- General Office; they are permitted to live for 28 days in Myanmar; the number of foreign guests and visitors entered Myanmar through Yangon and Mandalay International Airports in 2010 was 310688 including 201971 tourists.

The State had issued Myanmar Hotels and Tourism Law to enable private entrepreneurs to run hotels, rest houses, tour, transportation and tour guide services with licenses to make tourism industry systematically developed.

The number of hotels and rest houses was 691; that of tourism companies, 658; that of tour vehicles, 215; and that of tour guides, 4077.

The Ministry of Home Affairs had issued rules, orders and directives for tourists and foreign guests who visit Myanmar to travel with their tour plan and to travel with the permission of respective ministries through the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism. Tourists and foreign guests are traveling in Myanmar in accord with this directive.

Although the directive for tourists and foreign guests to travel in Myanmar issued in 1996 by the Ministry of Home Affairs had some limitations to travel in Chin State, Natmataung National Park was opened in 1997 and tourists were allowed to travel to this region and Chin State since 2002 with prior request.

With improved number of tourists and increased interest in ecotourism industry, the Home Affairs Ministry issued necessary directives for foreign citizens for business purpose, tourists and other foreigners for various purposes. Package tour groups and foreign independent travelers were allowed to travel Kanpetlet, Natmataung, Mindat, Ayeywa station, Ramhsi station, 8th mile station, Kennedy hill, Falam and Haka in Chin State with the arrangement of tour companies.

Therefore, the number of tourists who visited Chin State reached 80 in 2008, 150 in 2009 and 280 in 2010. The number of tourists who visited the state in January, 2011 alone, reached 112.

To allow tourists to visit Chin State, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and other ministries concerned have to make arrangements for them as the trip to the hilly state is tough and not easily accessible by vehicles and there is a limited number of guest houses. Besides, arrangements have to be made to ensure safety and prevent accidents.

The number of foreign visitors to Chin State would increase in proportion to the number of visitors to the country.

Like other regions and states, Chin State should attract not only foreign tourists but also local visitors. Therefore, the tourists have been allowed to visit Chin State since 2002, and the number of visitors to the state has increased year after year. Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Soe Naing promised to provide necessary assistance to the state and the ministry has already taken measures related to the proposal submitted by U Ngun MOUNG of Haka constituency in Chin State.

Afterwards, the Speaker sought approval of the representatives over the discussion of the minister. U Ngun MOUNG thanked the minister for his clear clarification, saying it was not necessary to continue to discuss the proposal.

After the approval of Hluttaw, the Speaker announced that it is not necessary to discuss the proposal separately.

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