

Construction Minister replies to question about maintaining and upgrading of Mandalay-Shwebo-Myitkyina Union Highway

NAY PYI TAW, 16 March-At today's session of Pyithu Hluttaw, U Kyaw Soe Lay of Mohnyin Constituency put a question about the Government's plans for maintenance and upgrading of Mandalay-Shwebo- Myitkyina Union Highway.

He said that residents in Mohnyin and Myitkyina townships have to rely on railways and motorways. Mandalay- Shwebo-Myitkyina motor road, in spite of having provided smooth transport between Mandalay and Myitkyina for a certain period, is now damaged beyond repairs, causing delay in commodity flow and traveling.

In his response, Minister for Construction U Khin Maung Myint said that Mandalay-Shwebo-Myitkyina Road is 359 miles in length and is the extension of Mandalay- Shwebo Road to Myitkyina from Shwebo.

The road came into existence in 1962 as earthen facility, and then was upgraded to gravel and then finally to 12-ft wide tarred road in December 1996. As soon as the tarred road was in commission, it has become the major road in the region and was recorded standard facility.

Although maintenance works were carried out yearly by superintending engineers of Shwebo, Katha, Mohnyin, and Myitkyina districts and townships under close supervision of the superintending engineers of Sagaing Region and Kachin State, the withstanding power of the road was decreased due to weak earth foundation, heavy rain, transport of heavy machinery to Phakant, and over-loaded trucks carrying timber logs.

To upgrade Shwebo- Myitkyina Road, Ministry of Construction is working in partnership with national private companies under B.O.T (Build, Operate, Transfer) System. Four partner companies- Shwetaung Co, Suhtupan Co, Khaingmathaw Pandaing Co, and Lido Highway Co are undertaking maintenance and upgrading works under B.O.T System. The first one is undertaking the road section between mile posts No. 27/0 and 77/4, the second one 140/0 and 168/ 0, the third one 168/0 and 257/0 and the last one 257/ 0 and 289/0.

Those companies are responsible for maintaining the original 12-ft wide tarred road, widening the road to 24-ft wide one with withstanding power of 60-ton load and constructing retaining walls, small and large bridges, conduits and box culverts.

Nine private national construction companies and two district-level construction groups of Public Works are undertaking the repair of 62 miles and 4 furlongs long Minwuntaung section from mile post Nos 77/4 to 140/0, the worst damaged road section on Mandalay- Shwebo-Myitkyina Road.

In parallel with road works, 428 bridges, large and small, are being upgraded. Zawchaung Bridge was commissioned in January 2011 as 180-ft long two-way broad crest type facility.

Nankwing Bridge is also being upgraded to 350-ft long two-way RC type facility with withstanding power of 60-ton load and will be inaugurated soon. In addition, Manyut bailey bridge is being upgraded.

Whether a road can be used up to its full lifespan depends on how much the road users abide by law and have a sense of duty.

With over-loaded vehicles passing everyday, the road whose estimated lifespan is 10 years will be damaged just in two or three years. It is loss not only to the State but also to the locals. The minister asked locals via the representative to maintain the Union Highways in the region for durability. The minister concluded that the ministry is upgrading Mandalay- Shwebo-Myitkyina Union Highway with added momentum as it is important to the State and the region.

He asked the representative to urge locals to maintain already-built infrastructures for their durability.

Source: NLM 2011-03-17