

Pyithu Hluttaw 18 March, 2015

Information Ministry withdraws proposed Public Service Media bill

Nay Pyi Taw, 18 March — The Pyithu Hluttaw in its session Wednesday discussed illegal imports of satellite dishes and receivers for foreign TV channels, motorway toll charges and the withdrawal of the proposed Public Service Media bill by the Ministry of Information. Deputy Home Affairs Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Zan Myint told the Lower House that the ministry and its organs are taking action against illegal imports of satellite TV receivers in accordance with the 2012 Import- Export Law. The penalty for breaching the law on the prohibition of illegal items is up to three years' imprisonment, a fine, or both, he said. He added that authorities will take action in response to complaints from TV service providers.

Responding to the query of Lower House MP U Thein Nyunt, Union Minister for Information U Ye Htut also said relevant ministries need to cooperate to control illegal import of foreign satellite receivers, as some of the channels show explicit programmes and gambling. The information minister said spill-over is technically unavoidable as TV programmes are broadcast through satellites, although imports of satellite dishes that can receive programmes from Skynet and MRTV have been banned. He also suggested the bill committee of the Pyithu Hluttaw should consider putting this issue into the discussion of a bill on television and broadcast law. On the issue of motorway tolls, Deputy Minister at the President's Office U Kyaw Kyaw Win said the toll rates will not be changed for cars coming into Yangon Region.

Concerning tender invitations for government projects, Deputy Minister for Construction U Soe Tint said projects worth under K 5 million do not require a tender invitation, but instead should be referred to the departmental tender scrutiny board. From K 5 million to K 50 million, tenders are sought through notice boards of relevant government departments, while for projects worth K 50 million and over, tender invitations are advertised in state-owned newspapers one month in advance.

The Pyithu Hluttaw also agreed on the withdrawal of the Public Service Media bill that was submitted by the Ministry of Information on the 26th day of the 9th regular Pyithu Hluttaw session. Regarding the withdrawal, the information minister said the ministry tried to transform state-run media to public service media, with a study tour of representatives from the Ministry of Information, the Amyotha Hluttaw, and the Pyithu Hluttaw to four European countries in June 2012 and the holding of a conference on international public service media in Yangon in September 2012. It also provided an explanation about PSM to committee members of the Amyotha Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw.

U Ye Htut also said the ministry drafted the PSM bill with the assistance of UNESCO before it was submitted to Hluttaw. The information minister said the ministry invited public opinion, publicizing the bill on state-run media, adding that the withdrawal is now aimed at reviewing and improving the bill.
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