



State-level officials from Myanmar and honoured Japanese guests pose for documentary photo at the second Sakura Festival Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw on 14 January. **PHOTO: MNA**

Myanmar, Japan hold 2nd Sakura Festival

STATE-LEVEL Myanmar officials and honoured Japanese guests attended the second Sakura Festival Myanmar at Myanmar International Convention Centre-1 (MICC-1) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Speaking at the event, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint said, "Cherry is a flower conveying the fine characteristics of Japan, which it represents," and added, "It is an honour for Japan that the cherry blossom season annually hosts thousands of global tourists."

He thanked the Japanese for their assistance in helping the cherry season thrive in Myanmar, as the Sakura festival is part of the endeavours to promote tourism in the country. The festival is where the soul of Japan and Myanmar converges, he said, praying for long-lasting friendship between Myanmar and Japan.

Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than also addressed the festival, which was held with the aim of cherishing peace among future generations through people-to-people friendship between Myanmar and Japan, promoting the tourism industry and turning Myanmar into a new global tourist hotspot.

Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than said cherry was among the many seasonal and regional flowers of Myanmar, whose people

loved flowers. Sakura helps beautify the area and conserve the natural environment. The beautiful Sakura blooms may attract more Japanese visitors, investment and economic cooperation with Myanmar, he added.

At a time when Myanmar is promoting itself as an emerging destination, the festival and the beauty of Sakura will provide the country with greater attractiveness and a better reputation. Beautiful cherries will always stand as proof of the ever-improving Japan-Myanmar friendship, understanding and cooperation.

Also, Chairman of Japan-Myanmar Parliamentary Friendship Association (JMPFA) Ichiro Aisawa read out a message by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Speakers U Win Myint and Mahn Win Khaing Than, Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung, union ministers, the Union Attorney-General and the chairman of JMPFA planted cherries at the MICC-1 and Royal Myanmar Golf Club, followed by a luncheon in honour of the festival. Some 200 cherries were planted. The first Sakura festival saw the planting of some 100 saplings last year in Nay Pyi Taw, where 1,000 Sakura trees will be planted this year. Chin State will also grow 1,000 cherries, in places such as Haka and Thantalan townships.

The cherry trees may

attract more tourists, including the Japanese, as they represent strong bonds of mutual love and

friendship.

The speakers of the two houses, other high level officials and distin-

guished Japanese guests also attended a pre-festival dinner at Horizon Lake View Resort Hotel

in Nay Pyi Taw on the evening of January 13. — Myanmar News Agency ■



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint plants a cherry in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than watering cherry plant. **PHOTO: MNA**



Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar watering the cherry plant in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**



Union Minister U Ohn Maung and Mr. Ichiro Aisawa planting a cherry. **PHOTO: MNA**