

## Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

## Pyidaungsu Hluttaw discusses housing scheme

THE 12<sup>th</sup>-day meeting of the seventh session of the second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw was held yesterday. At the meeting, deputy ministers from the Ministry of Planning and Finance and Ministry of Construction answered questions on the request for a loan of 15 billion Japanese yen (approx. US\$141 million) from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for the Ministry of Construction's residential housing development plan, sent by the President's office.

Deputy Minister U Kyaw Lin said that any property with a value lower than Ks 10 million is considered low-cost housing, and the ministry grants a 15-year instalment plan for people unable to pay upfront. He said the minis-



U Kyaw Lin, Deputy Minister for Construction. **PHOTO: MNA**

try identifies people who cannot afford to buy housing for a period of five years, after which it helps low-income households to buy property.

He said the government was trying to make it possible for middle-income households



U Maung Maung Win, Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance. **PHOTO: MNA**

to own property by adopting the public-private partnership (PPP) model and investing in low-cost housing. He explained that the low-interest loan from JICA would help the government's housing scheme, if the

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approved it. The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw reviewed the proposal and then approved it.

Later, U Aung Tike from Seikpyu constituency and Daw Htu May from Rakhine constituency (11) led a discussion on a submission from the President's Office to amend the ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement. Daw Htu May said the agreement would enable Myanmar to enter the ASEAN economy and make investments. She said the government needed to create job opportunities, in tandem with carrying out the agreement, so that the public can see the results of the agreement. U Maung Maung Win, Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance,

then explained the plans for the ASEAN agreement.

The Hluttaw then discussed a submission from the President's office to review the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention on Illegal Trading and Theft of Cultural Artefacts for Myanmar to sign. U Saw Htun Mya Aung from Papun constituency voted for the signing, as he believed it would help Myanmar recover its losses. Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko said he was in favour of the 1995 UNIDROIT, as it would help recover ethnic cultural artefacts that have been smuggled into neighbouring countries through the borders. The Hluttaw approved the submission. —Myo Myint, Aye Aye That ■

## Myanmar-China border liaison office opens in Myitkyina

A Myanmar-China border liaison office was opened in Ayeyar Ward, Myitkyina in Kachin State this morning.

The purpose of opening the office is not only to fight against illegal drug trade but also to crack down on transnational crimes such as human trafficking, arms smuggling and making counterfeit money and at the same time, ensure peace, stability and rule of law along the border between the two countries.

"Myanmar shares a border with China and both countries have maintained very good and sustainable bilateral relations for a long time. We have overcome many difficulties for decades. The two governments also cooperated in the areas of peace and stability in border areas, rule of law, anti-drug campaigns and human trafficking based on our existing friendship. Everybody knows we achieved many successes in various sectors.

I would like to urge those present to strengthen existing friendships by protecting each other in order to speed up anti-drug drives

between the two countries in the future," said Maj-Gen Aung Soe, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs at the ceremony.

Mr. Liang Yun, Executive Secretary General and the Director General of the Office of National Narcotics Control Commission (ONNCC) under the Ministry of Public Security of China also gave a speech.

The deputy minister then presented a commemorative gift to the Chinese director general. Officials from both sides pressed the button to open signboard of the office and had a documentary photo taken.

The ceremony was attended by around 50 people including Kachin State Minister for Security and Border Affairs Col Thura Myo Tin, the chief of Kachin State police force Police Col Zaw Khin Aung, Chinese guests, local authorities from the General Administration Department, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, Correctional Department and Fire Services Department and local people.—Myanmar Digital News ■

## Regional government will mediate for Shwenandaw monastery renovation process

THE Mandalay Regional Government is going to mediate between the Department of Archaeology and National Museum (DANM) and foreign experts in conducting a second renovation process of the Shwenandaw monastery in Mandalay.

Myanmar is working together with the USA under the support of the US Ambassador Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP). Foreign experts would like to substitute the old teak pillars with new pillars by focusing on the strength of the building while the DANM would like to renovate it without removing the original materials. So, both sides could not reach a decision regarding the old pillars.

"After listening to what both

sides said, I found that each side holds their own ideas and opinions. The main problem is that cooperation is weak between them. We accept international aid to renovate the ancient monastery in order to show off a positive and productive international image and to have friendly relationships with other countries around the world. As a supervisory committee, we will help them reach a settlement over their disagreement," said U Myat Thu, Minister for Planning and Finance in the Mandalay Region government.

Tampawady U Win Maung, a Myanmar architect, said: "Both sides cannot agree how to move the renovation process forward. If they cannot reach a settlement,

the whole project will be all for naught. Previously, all teak pillars at the back of the monastery were substituted with new pillars. The DANM does not like it. It is good for the strength and structural support of the building, but it is not good if we look from the point of view of the traditional aesthetics of the building."

The renovation of the ancient monastery started in the fiscal year 2014-2015 using funds from the AFCP amounting to US\$ 505,000. In November 2017, the renovation process was conducted with funding of more than US\$ 300,000. The monastery, which is more than 120 years old, is a typical style of wooden architecture from ancient Myanmar. —Myanmar Digital News ■

## MCDC accepts permits for Thingyan pandals

PERMITS to build Thingyan pandals around the moat can be applied for as of 5 March, according to the Mandalay City Development Committee.

MCDC allocated 24 pandals with the dimensions of 100 ft by 25 ft to be built around the moat. There are five pandals on 66<sup>th</sup> street and along the moat from 12<sup>th</sup> street to 19<sup>th</sup> street, nine pandals from 19<sup>th</sup> street to 26<sup>th</sup> street, and 10 pandals from 66<sup>th</sup> street to 80<sup>th</sup> street.

"We will grant permits by open tender system. Applications can be submitted from 5 March to 14 March," said U Kyaw Zaw Aung, a member of MCDC.

The Walking Thingyan festival will be held in the southern part of the moat. The size of the pandal for the area is 30 ft. by 12 ft. MCDC will allocate 51 pandals in total.

There are 16 pandals along the road from 69<sup>th</sup> street to 71<sup>st</sup> street and 35 pandals from 73<sup>rd</sup>

street to 78<sup>th</sup> street.

The pandal with dimensions of 20 ft by 12 ft will be allocated for 15 places; three pandals along the road from 69<sup>th</sup> street to 71<sup>st</sup> street and 12 places from 73<sup>rd</sup> street to 78<sup>th</sup> street.

A pandal with dimensions 10 ft by 12 ft will also be allocated for 19 places. They are four pandals along the road from 69<sup>th</sup> street to 71<sup>st</sup> street and 15 places from 73<sup>rd</sup> street to 78<sup>th</sup> street. —Ei Moh Moh Khaing ■