

## Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

## Pyidaungsu Hluttaw discusses national budget

THE 21<sup>st</sup>-day meeting of the seventh regular session of the second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw was held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The MPs discussed the review (5/2018) by the Public Accounts Joint Committee on the report by the office of the Auditor General of the Union on the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's development fund for the 2016-2017 financial year (FY).

Auditor General of the Union U Maw Than replied to the MPs' questions on the policies, managerial process and the auditor general's office work on the report.

Concerning the unused funds, the Auditor General said the Kachin State government had returned Ks4.9 million on 23 March 2018, which was to be used for constructing a pre-primary school in Sunpwarbun Township in Kachin State, but the project did not go through. In the Yangon Region, a retaining wall was constructed in



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is being convened in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Twantay Township on 13 March according to the plan, he added.

U Oo Htun Maung of Ponnagyun Constituency suggested that township auditors should conduct field checks to determine the status of ongoing projects. The

Auditor General replied that field checks cannot be conducted in distant or remote areas and in areas without security, and thus checks are conducted with photographic evidence. Otherwise, township auditors are instructed to conduct

field checks.

The Auditor General said the Central Development Committee will continue its work according to the Development Fund Law but will simultaneously review which townships need higher budgets

and allot funds accordingly, instead of allotting Ks100 million to each township equally.

The Auditor General said it is important for everyone to follow the permitted businesses in the 2017-2018 FY and budget rules and regulations as well. He said some 18 townships had submitted project completion reports but one of them had submitted alterations to their original project plans. He said these townships need to re-submit the reports detailing the alterations, in accordance with the Development Fund Law.

U Bo Gyi of Chauk Constituency then motioned for the Hluttaw to approve the (5/2018) review by the Public Accounts Joint Committee. The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker then announced the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw had approved the review.

The 22<sup>nd</sup>-day meeting of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will continue on 30 March.—Thura Zaw ■

## Pyithu Hluttaw

## Journalism, cinema, state-owned media discussed at Pyithu Hluttaw



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat. PHOTO: MNA

PLANS are being made to open schools that will produce international-level journalists, one of several issues discussed at the Pyithu Hluttaw meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

The plans were revealed in reply to questions raised by Daw Thandar of Einme constituency. In answering her first question on plans to open a journalism school, Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun replied that long-term

and short-term plans are being drawn up to open a journalism school that will produce international-level journalists. The Myanmar Journalism Institute and Myanmar Media Development Center that are already established in Myanmar are co-operating with the effort, added the Deputy Minister.

Responding to the second question on whether there is a plan for the Myanmar Press Council to issue identity cards to journalists, the Deputy Minister replied that it is not a practical work for Myanmar Press Council to do this. The Myanmar Press Council only endorses the member cards and reporter cards issued by state recognised news media organisations – Myanmar Journalists Association (MJA), Myanmar Journalist Network (MJN), Myanmar Journalist Union (MJU), Myanmar Women's Journalist Society (MWJS), Burma News International (BNI) and Myanmar Foreign Correspondents Club.

SEE PAGE 6

## Amyotha Hluttaw

## Seventh regular session of second Amyotha Hluttaw concludes

THE seventh regular session of the second Amyotha Hluttaw held its 33<sup>rd</sup>-day meeting at the Amyotha Hluttaw meeting hall yesterday morning.

At the meeting, the Amyotha Hluttaw Public Accounts Committee, Hluttaw Rights Committee, International Relations, Inter-Parliamentary Friendship and Cooperation Committee, Mineral, Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Committee, local and international non-governmental organisations and the local and overseas Labour Affairs Committee submitted their committee-wise work reports and obtained the approval of the Hluttaw.

Similarly, the Amyotha Hluttaw Education Promotion Committee, Public Complaints Committee, Health, Sports and Culture Committee, Agriculture, Livestock and Fishery Development Committee, Ethnic Affairs Committee, and Women and Children's Rights Committee also submitted committee-wise work reports and obtained the approval of the Hluttaw.



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than. PHOTO: MNA

Next, the government's Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee's report on questions and motions raised during the second Amyotha Hluttaw's sixth regular session was discussed by U Hla San of Magway Region constituency (1), Daw Shwe Shwe Sein Latt of Bago Region constituency (3), Dr. Khun Win Thauang of Kachin State constituency (11), U Khin Myo Win of Taninthayi Region constituency (12), U Aung Thein of Bago Region constituency (12), U Zaw Hein of Taninthayi

Region constituency (7) and U Than Soe, also known as Than Soe (Economic), of Yangon Region constituency (4).

Later, the Amyotha Hluttaw government's Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee Chairman U Thein Swe tabled a motion to the Hluttaw to accept the report and obtained the acceptance of the Hluttaw.

Following this, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than delivered a speech to the Hluttaw outlining the works done during the seventh regular session of the Hluttaw.

The Amyotha Hluttaw speaker said the MPs will now return to their respective constituencies, meet with constituents and implement their wishes and will.

The Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker concluded by wishing the MPs a safe trip home, urging them to serve their country and constituents sincerely.

After his speech, the Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker announced the successful completion of the seventh regular session of the second Amyotha Hluttaw.—Aung Ye Thwin ■



## Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar

SENIOR General Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, received Hong Liang, Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar, at the Bayintnaung guest house in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to the process of repatriation of

displaced persons from the Buthedaung-Maungdaw region, the role of China in supporting Myanmar at the United Nations, the status of acceptance of international aid for the development of Rakhine State, and security cooperation between Myanmar and Bangladesh police forces.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets with Chinese Ambassador Hong Liang at Bayintnaung guest house in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

## Journalism, cinema, state-owned media discussed at Pyithu Hluttaw

### FROM PAGE 2

It also endorses the reporter identity cards issued by press media, broadcasting media and online media registered in copyright and registration division of Ministry of Information. The responsibility to issue identity and reporter cards lie in these entities and Myanmar Press Council is responsible to manage these entities so that they conduct matters ethically, said the Deputy Minister.

### Cinema

In regards to a question by Daw Mar Mar Khine of Thaton constituency on action to be taken against 70 cinemas that were sold to private concerns with an agreement to operate the theatres but to date haven't done so, Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun said a total of 136 cinemas were sold to the private sector, of which 94 were agreed to be operated as a cinema. Previously, movies where shown in cinemas under a film system, but when films become scarce, movie production declined down to less than 10 movies being produced per year. For the Myanmar motion picture sector to develop, it needs to change over to a digital system, and the Ministry of Information began to drive cinemas to convert to Digital Cinema Package (DCP) starting in 2013.

Of the 94 cinemas that had to be operated as cinemas, only 14 had converted to digital system as of 13 December 2017 and five more will be converted by mid-2018, resulting in 75 cinemas that still need to be converted. While legal actions are being taken against cinemas who fail to operate as per the agreement, support is being provided to in-

terested private businesses that want to convert to a digital system in cooperation with companies and entities that are working for motion picture sector development.

### Access to news

On the question of public's right of access to news raised by Daw Aye Mya Mya Myo of Kyauktan constituency, Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun said a list of spokespersons for each ministry were being published and was posted on the Ministry of Information web portal [www.moi.gov.mm](http://www.moi.gov.mm). And for the ease of people who need to contact departments and organisations, information (office works and procedures) are to be displayed prominently in the offices and also posted on internet and social media websites.

The Ministry of Information has also opened a Call Center Hotline (1883) to distribute information obtained, office procedures, work processes of other ministries, weather reports and special occurrences.

Furthermore, in order to inform the public in a democratic society about the works of the three pillars of the government by the news media, talks on increasing cooperation between the four pillars were being arranged to be conducted in Nay Pyi Taw and states and regions in coordination with the Myanmar Press Council. Arrangements are also being made to enact the Right to Information Law, explained the Deputy Minister.

### Privately owned newspapers

Answering a question by U Myint Lwin of Twantay constitu-

ency on plans to support private newspapers, Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun said with the rapid progress in communication technology, online media is rapidly developing, while the print media sector declines. Since about 2018, well known global newspapers as well as many print newspapers were being totally transformed into online newspapers or the online and print newspapers were being published together.

The main reason for print media's continued existence is selling newspapers and declining revenue from advertisement. The work scope limitation of adver-

### State-owned newspapers

State-owned newspapers are state-owned enterprises operated with state funds and could not be run at a loss. If faced with possibilities of economic losses, methods like joint ventures will have to be adopted. State-owned newspapers could not be operated with the sole aim of making a profit, but also need to provide information and news at a cheap price. It is because of this that the newspapers were being sold at less than the printing cost by offsetting the expense with the income from advertisements. In developing countries, state-owned

from the three pillars were assigned so that news media can contact them. Publishing of advertisement pages in Kyemon and Myanmar Alinn newspaper in cooperation with private advertisement companies was stopped starting from 1 June 2016 so that private newspapers and journals could do it. News of union and state-level persons as well as departmental news and photos were also shared in a timely manner on websites so that private newspapers have the same information at the same time as the state-owned newspapers.

Arrangements for travel and accommodation for local private media was also provided in the same way as it was provided to international media. Arrangements are also made so that all have access to news. Even when there is a limitation due to location or time, arrangements are made so that all are given fair chances to attend such occasions alternatively.

The Ministry of Information recognises that the government needs to do much to meet the requirements of the private newspapers to publish freely and is doing all it can. State-owned newspapers inform the works of the government to the people and it also informs the people of news about ethnic nationals and low-interest news that people ought to know. This is the aim of the state-owned newspapers, and it is not competing with private newspapers. By standing apart in such a way, the state-owned newspapers left an opening for private newspaper to flourish, explained the Deputy Minister.—Aye Aye Thant (Myanmar News Agency) ■

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tisement revenues being diverted from print media to online media like broadcast and digital is also the reason. The government is learnt to be preparing to abolish the withholding tax so as to ease the burden on print newspapers from duties, commercial tax and income tax. As this can only be done with all relevant departments and ministries, the Ministry of Information could not do it alone. State-owned newspapers are not exempt and are paying taxes and duties in the same way as private newspapers, explained the Deputy Minister.

newspapers have the responsibility to be a bridge between the government and the people and to provide news to the people at a cheap price.

For reporters from private media to obtain departmental news conveniently and quickly, starting from 2016, discussions between the three pillars and the news media were conducted together with Myanmar Press Council all over the country. This was seen to have supported the ease in understanding one another as well as in contacting to obtain news. Spokespersons