

Pyithu Hluttaw

7th-day meeting of 8th regular session of 2nd Pyithu Hluttaw held

By Aye Aye Thant (MNA)

Perpetrators exploiting mountain range in Rakhine apprehended

THE eighth regular session of the second Pyithu Hluttaw convened its seventh-day meeting yesterday.

During the session, U Oo Tun Win of Kyauktaw constituency posed a three-part question: (i) whether the demolition of the historically significant mountain range near Daungtawyo Village in the east of Kyauktaw Township, Rakhine State, would be prohibited, (ii) if the excavation businesses that had sprung up near the discontinued railway project were legal, (iii) how has the income generated from excavation businesses been used for the country and the people since 2010?

Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Maj-Gen Aung Soe replied, on behalf of the Rakhine State government.

He said the Rakhine State Peace and Development Council had leased 20 acres, along with 10 acres of grazing land from the Taungpaukgyi mountain range to state departments and the state



Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Maj-Gen Aung Soe. PHOTO: MNA

police force, respectively, in 2003 for use as agricultural land. The police officers were reportedly using only 3 acres of the leased land, while the remaining 7 acres were left unattended. He explained that in the 2008-2009 period, while working on a project to build a railway line through the mountain range, the Myanmar Railways had discovered laterite rocks during the demolition process. It then contracted with a private company to excavate the rocks, and on 17 December 2013, it contracted with a local resident to continue with the excavations.

The railway project was discontinued on 4 April 2014 after residents protested against the



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat. PHOTO: MNA

demolition of the ancient capital Dhanyawadi and Mrauk-U, which are cultural heritage zones. However, the excavation of laterite rocks continued, and the concerned village administrators and excavators were given final warnings on 4 March 2017, following which the excavation businesses were not allowed to continue operating in the area.

However, a state police investigation revealed that the 7 acres of leased land that had been left unattended by the police force were being used for excavation businesses, with permission from the Kyauktaw Township police chief. Further, legal action was taken against all involved parties,

with the trial held on 26 January 2018. As no legal businesses were permitted after the railway project was discontinued, the government has not accrued any income, explained the deputy minister. The grazing land in Taungpaukgyi mountain range is under the management of the Kyauktaw Township General Administration Department.

Motion to expand nationwide tourism approved for discussion

U Myint Oo of Thanatpin constituency tabled a motion to urge the union government to establish tourism-based festivals

and special events, increase the number of tourism agencies, and expand tourism districts to develop both community-based and eco-tourism throughout the country.

He said countries around the world were using numerous innovative methods to enhance international tourism and boost their local economies. Tourism can cause a country to become popular, while encouraging rural areas to uphold their traditions, while generating sustainable income, he noted. The tourism sector around the world is changing, said U Myint Oo, as the focus is on more authentic interactions with local communities, wildlife and nature, and accessing new and lesser known areas in a country.

He urged the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, other relevant ministries, state and regional governments, the Myanmar Tourism Organisation, and civil organisations to work together with the local people to boost tourism and follow the sustainable development of tourism standards set by the World Tourism Organisation.

Another MP seconded the motion, and the speaker announced the motion would be put forward for discussion. ■

Amyotha Hluttaw

Amyotha Hluttaw MPs suggests forest bill to ensure transparency, public notification

By Aung Ye Thwin (MNA)

Lawmakers of the Amyotha Hluttaw discussed the forest bill sent by the Pyithu Hluttaw, making suggestions for transparency and public notification when forest reserves are established. At the seventh day meeting of Amyotha Hluttaw yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw, U Soe Win of constituency-12 of Rakhine State made a suggestion to add a clause to the bill which guarantees negotiation

and ensures transparency with the local people when reserved forest and protected public forest are designated in paragraph 6 of Chapter-3 titled "Establishing reserved forest and designating protected public forest".

The MP also suggested a clause that wooded areas two miles from villages, pagodas, monasteries, schools, ponds, lakes and farmland which are used by local people should be designated as forest reserves.

The MP also suggested the



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than. PHOTO: MNA

wording "announcements shall be made in many ways to let the local people know ..." be added in paragraph 7 of the same chapter when the entire forest reserve or a part of the forest reserve is reestablished or is abolished or is reestablished as protected public forest.

In sub-paragraph (b), paragraph 7, he suggested to amend the clause "entire forest reserve or a part of the forest reserve which no longer needs to be re-

served shall be abolished," as "if ... are abolished, a part of the forest reserve with farmland shall be abolished and announcements shall be made to let the local people know these issues."

U Zaw Hein of constituency-7 of the Taninthayi Region suggested deletion of the requirement that people shall seek recommendations from a forest official in Section 23 (A), saying that the bill will cause hardships.

He continued to say that



U Zaw Hein of constituency-7 of the Taninthayi Region. PHOTO: MNA

anyone who smuggles teak or banned hardwood to foreign countries, or those who involve in the smuggle shall get a minimum ten-year prison sentence and a fine of at least Ks5 million.

The new forest law should include a penalty of at least a three-year prison sentence and a fine of Ks2 million to those who are involved in charcoal smuggling to foreign countries, he added. Six MPs also discussed the bill. ■

Anyone who smuggles teak or banned hardwood to foreign countries, or those who involve in the smuggle shall get a minimum ten-year prison sentence and a fine of at least Ks5 million.