

NATIONAL

State Counsellor,
Laotian PM witness
signing of MoUs
PAGE-3

**NATIONAL**

Vice President
U Myint Swe attends 2018 Naga
Traditional New Year Festival
PAGE-6

**NATIONAL**

Over 17,000 Asian
water birds found
in Indawgyi Lake
PAGE-10

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President U Htin Kyaw receives Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR) Prime Minister Mr. Thongloun Sisoulith. **PHOTO: MNA**

President U Htin Kyaw welcomes Lao PM Thongloun Sisoulith

Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR) Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith, who is in the country at the invitation of Myanmar President U Htin Kyaw, was welcomed at a ceremony

held at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday afternoon.

The Lao Prime Minister and his wife, Naly Sisoulith, arrived at the Presidential Palace

at 3 p.m. and was cordially greeted by the President and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin.

Next, President U Htin Kyaw and Lao PM Sisoulith received the salute from the

Guard of Honour and introduced to each other the members of their respective delegations, who were present at the ceremony.

SEE PAGE-3

Union Minister inspects of issuing NVCs in Sittway

Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye, chairman of the Implementation Committee on recommendations of Advisory Committee on Rakhine State, inspected the process of issuing national verification cards (NVCs) in Sittway, Rakhine State, yesterday morning.

The committee is adopting measures to expedite the citizenship scrutiny process in the Rakhine State. To inform the local people of the the benefits of holding an NVC, educational talks are being held in the region. NVC holders will have sound proof of identification in Rakhine.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population will issue the NVCs, and those who already possess the cards can use it as an official fishing licence as well. Moreover, they can overcome the difficulties of procuring food, clothing and shelter by holding this card.

Dr. Win Myat Aye met with local people in Sittway two days ago and explained the government's preparations for repatriation of refugees to Rakhine State. The work of verifying identification and issuing NV Cards is a priority for the government. — Myanmar News Agency ■



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Foreign Heads of State send felicitations to President U Htin Kyaw

The following are messages of felicitations from Foreign Heads of State / Government sent to President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Htin Kyaw, on the occasion of the 70th Anniversary Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

**From Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev,
President of the Republic of Uzbekistan,
Excellency,**

Please kindly accept my sincere congratulations on the occasion of the national holiday of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar – Independence Day.

I have the honour to express my confidence that by our joint efforts friendly relations between Uzbekistan and Myanmar will continue to develop.

Let me avail this opportunity to wish You good health and great success, and for the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar – well-being and prosperity.

**From Mr. Raimonds Vejonis
President of the Republic of Latvia
Your Excellency,**

On the occasion of the Independence Day of the

Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I am pleased to convey my sincerest congratulations and best wishes for further prosperity, peace, and well-being of your country and its people.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my confidence that the relations between Latvia, and Myanmar will continue to develop and strengthen for the mutual benefit of our people.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Foreign Head of State send felicitations to State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

The following is message of felicitations from Foreign Head of State / Government sent to State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, on the occasion of the 70th Anniversary Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

**From Mr. Edgars Rinkevics
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia
Excellency,**

On the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, allow me to offer you my most sincere and cordial con-

gratulations along with the wishes for peace and prosperity to the people of Myanmar.

It is my firm conviction that the established cooperation between our countries will grow increasingly stronger, thus enhancing mutual understanding and friendship.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw begins regular session

FROM PAGE-2

Hluttaw representatives are advised to coordinate and work together in order to avoid unnecessary disagreement by basing on the experience of the works conducted during the two-year period of the second Hluttaw term.

Moreover, all are urged to work together and manage by stages for the success of the works benefiting the people, complete the work in time, avoid audit objection and return the excess fund for works that could not be done

Hluttaw representatives will face more works during this Hluttaw session and all need to value and systematically use the time with good effort, work and will.

As people's representative using the power granted by the people for the country, it is important to follow related laws, rules, regulations and procedures.

Next, the matter of loan from Austria's Unicredit Bank sent by the President was explained by Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin. The Deputy Minister said the Euro 5.0 million soft loan from Austria's Unicredit Bank when obtained will be used for Kinchaung Bridge construction project on the Zinchaung-Kinmyauk-Laytaung

road in Rakhine State, Kyaukphyu District, Yanbye Township.

The 1,256 ft. long Kinchaung Bridge is close to the sea and by constructing it under the European technology, the quality will be better while it can better withstand the weather and natural surrounding (seawater effect). Myanmar engineer will also be able to study the modern bridge building technology. Once the bridge is completed, it will shorten the travel time between Kyaukpyu and Yanbye towns. Due to better road communication, there'll be additional benefits of increasing the local and foreign investments that will develop the social-economic situation of the people in the region. As the construction of Kinchaung Bridge will benefit the country's social, economy, education, health, transport and all other sectors, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is requested to permit the no-interest Euro 5.0 million soft loan from Austria government.

Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Kyaw Win explained further about the loan and said the grace period is 8 years and repayment period is 17 years, making a total loan period of 25 years. It is an interest-free loan with a management fee of 0.65 per cent of the loan amounting to Euro 32,500,



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

advance insurance premium Euro 37,125, bank charges of Euro 1,440 adding up to a total one-time payment of Euro 71,065. Remaining insurance fee of 0.9 per cent of the loan are to be paid yearly and if the loan is forfeited, a yearly forfeiture fee of 0.65 per cent of the loan need to be paid for the year it is forfeited. Under the assistance program of the Austria government, 15 per cent of the loan (Euro 0.75 million) is not required to be repaid and only the remaining 85 per cent (Euro 4.25 million) need to be paid back.

Whether an international loan is a concessional loan or non-concessional loan is determined by the grant element. According to World Bank, if the grant element is above 35 per cent, it is a concessional loan and if it is below 35 per cent, it

is a non-concessional loan. The loan from Austria to buy the steel frames for Kinchaung Bridge has a grant element of 43.93 per cent and thus it is a concessional loan explained the Union Minister U Kyaw Win.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker then announced for Hluttaw representatives who want to discuss the matter to enroll their names.

The Union Minister stated that the National Planning Bill for the six month period of 2018 April to September was drawn up in accordance with the economic policy of the union, policies of the union ministries, state/region governments and United Nations sustainable development goals.

Proposals for projects were based on implementation of past year projects, priority sector, re-

gion and subjects, immediate requirements and availability of fund. Feasibility, benefit to the people and the economy, support toward regional development and environmental impact were also assessed.

The bill was drawn up in coordination for effectiveness and to benefit sector wise and region wise during the transition six month period.

The aims of planning for the six-month period will focus on the projects which are urgently needed to be implemented for the people and for the projects which are considered essential for the National Planning of the 2018-2019 Fiscal Year.

In the annex of 2018 April to September six month national planning bill, the expectation of the union, aim and processes to implement each of the 12 policies, union ministries' policy, aim, implementation process and priority works according to each union ministry were included.

In the 2018 April to September six month national planning bill, a total investment of more than Ks 2,988 billion investment is earmarked in the state-owned sector including states/regions, said U Kyaw Win.

2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw 7th regular session 2nd day meeting will be held today. ■