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## Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's ninth regular session holds 18<sup>th</sup>-day meeting

Union Minister for Information explains ways to remedy NPE's expected loss, response of state-owned media in countering the world media's biased reports on Rakhine issue

THE 18<sup>th</sup>-day meeting of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's ninth regular session was held at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw meeting hall yesterday morning.

At the meeting, a report was read, an explanation made on Myanmar signing an international treaty, Union level officials responded to discussions by Hluttaw representatives on the basic principles, project works and budgets of the National Planning Bill and the Union Budget Bill, and the decision of the Hluttaw made on obtaining two loans were conducted.

### Report on 2018-2019 Union Tax Bill

First, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee member Daw Nwe Nwe Aung read the committee report on its find-



Hluttaw representatives at the 18<sup>th</sup>-day meeting of the ninth regular session of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw yesterday discuss matters related to national planning and the union budget and Union level officials respond accordingly. **PHOTO: MNA**

ings and comments on 2018-2019 Union Tax Bill.

Announcement was made for Hluttaw representatives who wanted to discuss the bill

to enroll their names.

### Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Next, the benefit of Myan-

mar signing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons sent by the President was explained by Union Minister for International Coopera-

tion U Kyaw Tin.

Announcement was then made for Hluttaw representatives who wanted to discuss the matter to register their names.

### Union level officials respond to discussion on National Planning Bill and Union Budget Bill

Afterwards Union level officials responded to the discussions by Hluttaw representatives on the basic principles, project works and budgets of the 2018-2019 National Planning Bill and the Union Budget Bill.

In his explanation, Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint said he'll explain in brief about the discussion of Daw Aye Mya Mya Moe of Kyauktan constituency related to Ministry of Information.

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## Grounded vessel to be handled in accordance with the law: Officials

THE grounded Indonesian ship in the Myanmar waters would be removed and it is first priority of the Marine Administration Department, said U Thaung Kyaing, the Director-General of the department.

At the press conference in Yangon yesterday, he said the crew of the tugboat Independ-

ence, who were towing the vessel, are being questioned in Kawthoung to determine whether the incident was intentional or an accident.

The outcome of the questioning will be submitted to the Office of the Union Attorney-General to decide on what course of action should be fur-

ther taken.

Officials of the department met the media to explain the department's handling of the grounded container vessel MV SAM RATUIANGI grounded near the mouth of the Sittoung River, 7 miles from Thamaseikta Village in Thongwa Township.

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## Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's ninth regular session holds 18<sup>th</sup>-day meeting

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The first point is about News and Periodicals Enterprise (NPE), Ministry of Information, having an income of Ks20.374 billion, expense of Ks21.537 billion and a loss of Ks1.158 billion, despite using the State's resources and staffs and having the biggest market share and obtaining the majority of the advertisement revenue.

Of the four departments under Ministry of Information, NPE is the only one that is a State-Owned Enterprise (SOE). Estimate for NPE for fiscal year 2018-2019 is an income of about Ks20.374 billion and an expenditure of about Ks21.531 billion, not Ks 21.537 billion.

In FY 2013-2014 and FY 2015-2016, NPE's capital expenditure, management expenditure, salary, pension and distribution expenses only were incurred from the State budget, while ordinary expenditures such as paper, ink, printing materials, machineries, spares and POL (petroleum, oil and lubricants) for machineries, income tax and State contributions were incurred from ministry's own Other Account (OA).

In FY 2016-2017, all ordinary expenditures are incurred from NPE's OA account, while capital expenditures were from the State budget. Starting from FY 2017-2018, State budget was not requested and all expenditures including salaries of all personnel and pension for 847 persons as well as all capital expenditures were incurred from the department's OA.

When Ministry of Information sells state-owned newspapers to the people, it was done with an aim to provide complete news to the people cheaply rather than to gain profit. Thus, a 32-page newspaper was sold at a reduced price of Ks50 when production cost is about Ks115.

Despite doing this, NPE was not in the red (loss) from 2011-2012 to the first six months of 2018. However, when estimates were made for FY 2018-2019, the accounts show a higher expenditure over income. The reason for this is the rise in exchange rate affecting importing of raw materials for printing newspapers, such as paper, inks and other products and reduction in print media advertisement revenue due to more advertisements going to online media. As such, the estimate shows a possibility of having a loss of about Ks1,157.577 million.

Although the account estimate shows a possibility of loss,

attempts will be made as an SOE to reduce the loss as much as possible through (state-owned) newspapers reaching the rural population, increasing circulation, reducing expenses and increasing advertisement revenue to a certain extent.

While striving towards increasing advertisement revenue on one hand, considerations need to be made toward advertisement market for private newspapers, journals and magazines. The most distinct example in this is the suspension of 8 advertisement pages in Kyemon and Myanma Alinn, starting from 1 January 2016.

On the other hand, reduction in tax, commercial tax and Customs duties as per 2018 Union Tax Law is expected to reduce the loss as initially estimated.

In short, NPE, an SOE that was operating without any loss in the past, is estimated to incur a loss in FY 2018-2019, but attempts will be made as men-

ine State to the world. In order to release information on events in Maungtaung region, Rakhine State, Ministry of the State Counsellor's Office established a State Counsellor Office's Information Committee on 26 November 2016. In addition to this, the Rakhine State government formed a Rakhine State True News Issuing Committee on 27 August 2017 under notification 88/2017 and a state-owned media group led by a high ranking official from the Ministry of Information was attached to the Rakhine State government to support in its work.

In addition to announcements made by the committees, works conducted by Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development (UEHRD) in Rakhine and the Committee for Implementation of Recommendations on Rakhine State were published in state-owned media.

In addition to publishing these in the state-owned media,

on privatizing state-owned media because there shouldn't be any state-owned media in a democracy country.

Newspapers and media are public communication machineries. Departments, organisations and businesses dealing with the public need to communicate with the public through newspapers, journals, magazines, pamphlets, television, radio and online media, whichever is appropriate and within reach to conduct their works effectively. The government elected and appointed by the people also has the responsibility to inform and report to its electors about its works and (state-owned) newspapers are a necessary and useful media tool, explained the Union Minister.

Ministry of Information is responsible to provide news and information to the people and to increase the knowledge of the people, and (state-owned) newspapers are useful and valuable media tools for this, said the Un-

ion Minister. mid-term financial frameworks were drawn to improve the resources distribution strategy. It will be done through the modernizing and developing public finance management project, conducted by Ministry of Planning and Finance, said the Deputy Minister.

Ministry of Planning and Finance appreciate the comments and remarks of the joint bill committee, the joint public account committee and the discussion and suggestion made by the Hluttaw representatives. Necessary instructions will be made to relevant departments and required submission will be made to the Office of the President and Union Government Office, explained the Deputy Minister.

Similarly, union level officials from Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Border Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Sports, Ministry of Construction, Nay Pyi Taw Council (for Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee and Central Bank of Myanmar responded to discussions by Hluttaw representatives on the basic principles, project works and budgets of the National Planning Bill and the Union Budget Bill.

### Hluttaw decides on IFAD and EDCF loans

Later, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw and Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win explained about US\$8.984 million loan from International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to conduct Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation projects and Ministry of Planning and Finance project works.

This was followed by explanations by Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin and Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win on US\$61.816 million Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) loan from EXIM Bank of Korea to conduct project works of Ministry of Construction.

Finally, the Hluttaw decided to approve the two loans.

The 19<sup>th</sup>-day meeting of the ninth regular session of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is scheduled to be held on 10 September; it is learnt. – Myo Myint, Aung Ye Thwin (MNA) ■

Ministry of Information is responsible to provide news and information to the people and to increase the knowledge of the people, and (state-owned) newspapers are useful and valuable media tools for this, said the Union Minister.

tioned above to reduce the loss, said the Union Minister. The Union Minister then continued his explanation on the second point of the response of state-owned media lacking in countering the world media's one-sided attack on Rakhine issue.

The first thing the Union Minister said about this matter is the fact of a political battle's reflection on the media front. He said the problem will be side-tracked if this is considered as a media battle. Another thing is the huge power of the world's media and the small power of the state-owned media (or) Myanmar media. It is small because the state-owned media was formed with an aim to be a bridge between the government and the people. It was not aimed at penetrating into the world, as to do this requires investments in media infrastructures and human resources that is costly and time consuming.

Yet, at the moment, state-owned media is doing all it can to inform the true situation of Rakh-

ine State to the world. In order to release information on events in Maungtaung region, Rakhine State, Ministry of the State Counsellor's Office established a State Counsellor Office's Information Committee on 26 November 2016. In addition to this, the Rakhine State government formed a Rakhine State True News Issuing Committee on 27 August 2017 under notification 88/2017 and a state-owned media group led by a high ranking official from the Ministry of Information was attached to the Rakhine State government to support in its work.

After the terrorist acts in Rakhine State's Maungtaung region in October 2016, government's stabilization and development works were widely distributed by sending to the region local media and international media organisations 25 times to date.

Furthermore, since the event in Maungtaung occurred, about 17 press conferences were held to date. In short, despite requirements in the capacity of state-owned media, news including about Rakhine State's Maungtaung region were being announced in a timely manner in order to penetrate into international media, explained the Union Minister.

The Union Minister then continued and responded to a discussion by U Ye Htut of Sagaing Region constituency 5

ion Minister.

In his explanation on heavy losses incurred due to Phyu Chaung factory fire in 2017, Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy Dr. Tun Naing said that construction works were not completed in time and had to done in parts over several financial years while machineries and equipment purchased for the works were stored for long period of times. When a flashover in the High Voltage Room causes a fire, much was lost and arrangements are being made to prevent similar occurrences from happening again.

Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win, on the other hand, explained about works being conducted to study and report jointly with the Office of the President, Union Government Office and the Ministry of Industry for SOEs to reduce losses and conduct works in full capacity. To reduce budget deficit, works were being done to increase income on one part, while on the expenditure part,