Myanmar Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin (center) attends the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone session during an ASEAN foreign ministers' meeting, at the Myanmar International Convention Center in Naypyitaw on Friday. | REUTERS

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**Japan to extend ¥10.5 billion telecom loans to Myanmar**

Kyodo

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NAYPYITAW – Japan said Saturday it will extend a total of ¥10.5 billion in loans to Myanmar to improve the country’s communications network linking major cities and meet growing demand for mobile phones and the Internet.

Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida offered the low interest loans during talks with Myanmar counterpart Wunna Maung Lwin on the sidelines of Association of Southeast Asian Nations meetings in Naypyitaw. Wunna Maung Lwin expressed appreciation for the offer, a Japanese official said.

With the loans, Myanmar aims to strengthen its communications network involving Yangon, Mandalay and the capital, Naypyitaw, as well as to improve access to the Internet in Yangon, the country’s largest city, according to the Japanese Foreign Ministry.

Wunna Maung Lwin told Kishida that Myanmar has decided to issue one-year, multiple-entry visas for Japanese businesspeople as part of relaxation measures sought by Tokyo, the official said.

On regional issues, Wunna Maung Lwin was quoted as saying Myanmar will steadily work to promote regional security as this year’s chair of ASEAN through such measures as ensuring the rule of law, strengthening the East Asia Summit process and curbing North Korea’s missile and nuclear threats.

ASEAN groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

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