State Counsellor receives UN officials

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi underscores Myanmar’s readiness to receive the verified returnees at meeting with UN delegation

A delegation composed of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations/representatives from immediate neighbours of Myanmar including current ASEAN Chair, and Member States of the United Nations Security Council arrived Nay Pyi Taw in the afternoon of 30 April 2018. During their stay in Nay Pyi Taw, the delegation paid a courtesy call on State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at 1530 hrs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

During the call, the State Counsellor underscored Myanmar’s readiness to receive the verified returnees and necessary cooperation of Bangladesh to expedite the repatriation process quickly. It is important for Bangladesh side to use prescribed forms agreed by both countries as early as possible for verification.

Furthermore, the State Counsellor also explained to the delegation on the matters pertaining to providing humanitarian assistance to affected communities, rebuilding trust and confidence among communities, citizenship issue, on-going closure of IDP camps, issuance of national verification cards (NVCs), restoring rule of law, issue of resettlement on the international boundary line between the two countries, possible recurrence of terrorist attacks at any time, necessity to find the root cause of the conflict, prevention of hate speech, and encouragement for school education.

Afterwards, the delegation met with Senior-General Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services at the office of the Commander-in-Chief in the afternoon.

Then, the delegation held a comprehensive discussion with U Kyaw Tint Swe, Union Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor; U Thaung Tun,
Union Minister for Health calls on Vice President of Communist Party of Cuba

MYANMAR delegation led by Dr. Myint Htwe, Union Minister for Health and Sports, arrived back Yangon yesterday after attending the International Convention on Public Health “Cuba Salud 2018” which was held in Havana, Cuba from 23 to 27 April 2018.

The Convention was attended by over 3,000 Representatives from 94 countries including Ministers of Health from 26 countries. Dr. Myint Htwe, Union Minister for Health and Sports, participated in the Convention and also presented on the theme of “Social Determinants and Health Equity”. While in Havana, Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe called on His Excellency Dr. Roberto Morales Ojeda, Vice President and Member of the Politbureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and Minister of Public Health on 27 April 2018 at Havana Convention Centre. Union Minister presented a letter of congratulations from U Win Myint, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, addressed to His Excellency Mr. Miguel Mario Diaz-Canel Bermudez, President of the Republic of Cuba, for being elected as President on 19 April 2018.

During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on strengthening friendly relations and multi-sectoral cooperation, particularly on technological collaboration in the areas of health care system and pharmaceutical industries. They also discussed on enhancing cooperation in the international fora, including in the United Nations. U Hau Do Suan, Ambassador of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Republic of Cuba accompanied Union Minister during his trip to Cuba. — MNA

Union Supreme Court sits to pass judgment, hear civil cases

CHIEF Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo, Supreme Court judges U Mya Thein and U Soe Naing of the Special Appellate Bench, sat at Union Supreme Court room number 1 yesterday morning and passed judgment on five (certiorari) civil cases and heard five other (certiorari) civil cases. — Myanmar News Agency

Notifications on new questionnaires for 2019 March matriculation examination

THE Ministry of Education is changing the format of the questionnaires in the matriculation examination starting from the academic year 2018-2019. The new format of the questionnaires will be published in daily newspapers on the following days for the awareness of students, teachers and the public.

2 May 2018 – Myanmar
3 May 2018 – English
4 May 2018 – Mathematics
5 May 2018 – Chemistry
6 May 2018 – Physics
7 May 2018 – Biology
8 May 2018 – Geography
9 May 2018 – History
10 May 2018 – Economics

The news articles will discuss and explain the format and structure of the questionnaires for each subject on the designated days. — Education

2018 Luyechuns meet former Luyechuns

OUTSTANDING students or Luyechuns of 2018, who were in Ngwehsaung Luyechun Vacation Camp, met former Luyechuns from the Luyechun (1964-88) Association at Pearl Ngwehsaung Hotel, Ngwehsaung town, Pathein District, yesterday morning.

At the meeting, former Luyechuns of the Luyechun (1964-88) Association were introduced individually and explained about the establishment of the Luyechun (1964-88) Association, the status of conducting social service works and their life experiences.

Next, the former Luyechuns presented commemorative gifts that were accepted by Ngwehsaung Luyechun Vacation Camp leader Daw Myint Myint Than Director of the Office of Ayeyawady Region Education Department, who then presented commemorative gifts to the former Luyechuns on behalf of the education department. Later, the former Luyechuns held a quiz competition and the Luyechuns of 2018 were formed into 18 groups to participate in the competition. The winners of the competition were presented with prizes and commemorative gifts.

Commenting on the meeting, U Win Aung of Luyechun (1964-88) Association, said, “I came to Ngwehsaung camp as the group leader. The main aim is to establish understanding between the youth and the elders, share experiences and set up communication channels between former and current Luyechuns, so young Luyechuns can seek support and assistance from former Luyechuns when they enter their respective works.”

“We learnt a lot by meeting with the Luyechun (1964-88) Association members. We also enjoyed the quiz competition. They also taught us Luyechun songs. I’m glad to learn about their experiences,” said Maung Tam Shalane, a new generation Luyechun from Mindat Town, Chin State. — Myo Thu Hein, (MNA)
Dear esteemed workers,

Today is Workers’ Day, highly regarded by workers all over the world, as well as by workers in Myanmar as a truly auspicious day. On this historic and significant day I send this Message of Greetings to all Myanmar workers in Myanmar good health and happiness, success in their work, peace in their work places and development of their socio-economic lives.

In this century, it is an undeniable fact that workers are enjoying rights and benefits more than ever before. However, we also have to accept the fact that there are differences in the rights and benefits enjoyed by workers based on the country’s geographical situation, economy, politics, government and the people.

However this may be, our Union Government has the duty to continuously monitor, assess and take action by taking into consideration international labor standards and ensure that workers are getting the rights and benefits they are entitled to get in accordance with the country’s internal labor laws, rules, regulations and instructions; and furthermore to make sure that they will get better benefits and rights, that their socio-economic lives will improve and that their standard of living will be elevated.

While Myanmar is working together with ASEAN countries on regional labor issues, we are also working on international labor matters in cooperation with the International Labor Organization (ILO). We are working to implement the Decent Work Country Programme in Myanmar 2018-2019 and have conducted the National Tripartite Dialogue Forums – NTDFs beginning from January 2018, we were able to adopt the Decent Work Country Programme in these three priority areas.

Programme in these three priority areas.

We will be implementing the Decent Work Country Programme to ensure that more decent, sustainable, innovative, economic job opportunities will come within the reach of all those who are able to work; by having better management at the work places, to ensure that the practice of basic rules and benefits becomes stronger; and to ensure that social security coverage is expanded for vulnerable workers and people.

We face various kinds of internal and external challenges while we endeavor for political, economic and social development of our country. As we are aware of the importance of our international responsibility, we have adopted a path consistent with the needs and situation of our country respecting at the same time the views and opinions of the international community.

(Excerpt from the speech by President U Win Myint at the ceremony to take oath of office at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on 30th March 2018)

(Excerpt from the speech by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on the 2nd Anniversary of NLD Government on 1st April 2018)
Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Message of Greetings sent by President U Win Myint
On the occasion of Workers’ Day which falls on 1st May 2018

Dear esteemed workers,

Labor inspection officers are working to make sure that workers who are working in factories, shops and offices are getting benefits and rights in accordance with the law with respect to pay, work days and holidays, work hours, workplace safety, and health. In addition we are conducting educative seminars to promote the awareness of labor laws. We are also working to enact a new law for safety and health of workers at the work site.

Furthermore, we are working to review the minimum wage every two years the minimum wage that was fixed in 2015 according to the 2013 Minimum Wage Law. Soon, we will be able to announce a new minimum wage that has been fixed according to the findings of the tripartite committees for fixing minimum wage that have been established in all regions and states including Nay Pyi Taw.

The Arbitration committee composed of representatives of employers and employees has been formed to solve the labour disputes. A tripartite group comprising representatives of the government, employers and employees, township arbitration groups, region and state juries and jury council sit down at the negotiation table to solve the labour disputes which cannot be settled by the arbitration committee.

Workers are being provided with social security rights in accordance with the Social Security Law-2012 and efforts are being made to expand coverage of the social security system. As Myanmar became a member of the ASEAN Social Security Association-ASSA and International Social Security Association-ISSA, the Union Government will carry out the good practices of the international social security systems. The Union Government is committed to improvement of the livelihood of workers by managing the social security funds effectively.

Dear esteemed workers,

Due to the increase in awareness about elimination of forced labour, the people and authorities has been getting more understanding about it and the country has seen spirally downward of the rate of forced labour issues which happened due to the condition of our country’s economy. I wish to let all of you know that the elimination of forced labour is in sight. The project for elimination of forced labour 2018 will be implemented in cooperation with the International Labour Organization-ILO. Besides, the Union Government formed the national-level committee on elimination of child labour cases and the committee has been cooperating with the government, employers and civil society organizations.

Today, workers have rights to form of labour organizations, which have not existed in Myanmar for decades. The workers have been allowed to form labour organizations so that the employers can become responsible businessmen, can acknowledge and respect the basic rights of workers, the workers and labour organizations can become a responsible partner for the government and employers and can build mutual trust and respect to be able to cooperate with each other with the supervision of the government in boosting the production and in development of the country. According to the 2011- Labour Organization Law, there are 2,772 employer and labour organizations representing employers and employees.

In conclusion, I would like to sincerely urge employers and employees nationwide to actively and constructively cooperate with the government and participate in the works undertaken by the State joining hands with the government to overcome the challenges and obstacles as the government has adopted policies and implemented them to promote full labour rights, to create job opportunities, socio-economic development, to promote safety and health care and to expand social security of workers who are the major driving force for the development of the State.

(Uofficial Translation)
Demand from China drives soybean price up in post-Thingyan period

THE increasing demand from China has revived the lackluster soybean market in the country, with the soybean price touching a record high, according to a report in Myanmar's media on Monday.

The yield this year has been moderate. Soybean fetched Ks65,000 per three-basket bag in the pre-Thingyan period. However, the price soared to Ks80,000 per bag. The price remained on the higher side after the Thingyan festival and registered a record high of Ks150,000 per bag.

China has been importing soybean mainly from Myanmar following the high tariff rate imposed by the United States on soybean. China's carrot-and-stick approach to the US has revived Myanmar's soybean market, U Soe Win Myint told Myanma Alinn.

Some 80 per cent of Myanmar's soybean exports depend heavily on the China market, he remarked.

It costs Ks115,000 to cultivate an acre of soybean. The crop has potential, as it reaps a healthy profit of Ks300,000 per acre. Its value added products such as soybean oil, and dried soybean mixed with sticky rice are distributed widely in the domestic market across the country. Soybean is primarily cultivated in Madaya Township and Myingyan District in the Mandalay Region.

— Zin Oo (Myanma Alinn)

Myanmar sees FDI worth $4.34bn last FY

THE inflow of foreign direct investments (FDIs) into the country in the 2017-2018 fiscal year (1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018) was recorded at US$4.34 billion, while the amount approved by the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) was $6.11 billion, according to an announcement made recently by the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.

The MIC discloses the actual amount of foreign direct investments every three months to ensure transparency in the record. This report is based on MIC's report, statistics of the Central Bank of Myanmar and the Myanmar customs' import data.

From July to September, the actual amount of FDI for the 2017-2018 FY was $2.8 billion, and the amount approved by the MIC was more than $4 billion. As of 31 December 2017, the actual amount of FDI for the 2017-2018 FY was $3.7 billion, while the amount approved was $5 billion, according to interim reports released on the official website of the MIC and the media and social network.

— Ko Htet

EIA/SIA practices to be examined at jetties in Yangon

May Thet Hnin

YANGON’S jetties that handle fishery products will undergo an environmental impact assessment (EIA) and social impact assessment (SIA) inspection, said U Tun Win Myint, director of Yangon Region Fisheries Department.

“We will conduct an EIA/SIA inspection tour soon to prevent pollution. This is to upgrade the jetties. Entrepreneurs need to adapt to the changing procedures,” he maintained.

Import of intermediate goods up by $209 million in current FY

THE import of intermediate goods in the 2017-2018 fiscal year (FY) reached US$462 million, registering an increase in value by $209 million compared to the same period last year.

Foreign trade partners imported similar products amounting to $522 million from Myanmar at the same time last year.

According to the statistical report of the Ministry of Commerce, during the first 20 days of this FY, the import of intermediate goods from the public sector was more than $10 million, while the private sector sold $452 million worth of intermediate goods to foreign buyers.

Compared with the same period last FY, private sector imports of intermediate goods increased by $202 billion. However, imports from the public sector saw a slight increase in value by more than $6 million.

The ministry’s figures showed that the country’s total import value exceeded $913 billion in the current FY, including $1.24 million from the government sector and more than $888 billion from the private importers. The total import figures increased by $235 million last year.


Myanmar’s trade partners include ASEAN member states, Asian countries, some African nations, members of the European Union, some island nations and a few western countries, with the goods mainly being transported via sea.

— Swe Nyein
MOFA: Defending the interests of the State and the People on the frontlines of the international arena

By Khin Yadana

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs practices an independent, non-aligned and active Foreign Policy based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, being a Ministry which considers the promotion and protection of the interests of the State and the People in the international arena as its utmost responsibility. From the time the present government took over State responsibility, we continued practicing this policy, using different approaches. Using a People-centered diplomacy, we have worked to improve and consolidate relations with neighboring countries with whom we have traditionally had friendly relations; re-establish friendly relations with countries far and near; we have worked hard for promoting national and regional interests by actively participating in ASEAN and regional affairs in accordance with the priorities of Myanmar; we are preparing to cooperate with the UN and international organizations in accordance with our country’s situation and priority needs. There are many actions that the MOFA has undertaken. During the second year term of our Government, it may be seen that there have been many challenges, and many issues that have been resolved in the international arena. Therefore, in order to understand the activities of MOFA and the recently formed Ministry for International Cooperation, we have met and interviewed U Kyaw Tin who is the Union Minister for International Cooperation as well as the former Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.

Q: How is the MOFA working for Peace and Development of the country?

As we implement our country’s programs for national reconciliation, peace, uplifting the socio-economic life of the people, and for the transition towards democracy, our job is to get the cooperation and support of other countries. We make strenuous efforts to get the constructive cooperation of the international community by engaging and communicating with other countries as we meet the challenges we are facing.

As diplomats, we provide assistance and support not only for our country’s peace and development, but also for peace and development of the countries of the world. To do this as we try to resolve the challenges we have adopted a different approach which takes into account not only the views and opinions within our country but also the views and opinions of the outside world. In accordance with our approach to practising “people-centered diplomacy”, we work to promote friendship in our bilateral relations, we work not only in the area of government-to-government relations but also for promoting people-to-people relations, protecting and promoting the interests of the people. In working for the success of our goals, we are utilizing the united strength of the people.

Q: During the second year, what are the priority tasks for the MOFA?

A: During the second year the following priority tasks were performed by the MOFA:

- Promoted friendly relations and cooperation with all countries around the world.
- Secured technical and financial assistances from international and regional organizations for national development.
- Worked to boost foreign trade and investments from abroad.
- Participated actively in international and regional organizations.
- Worked to uplift the image and dignity of the people and the country in the international arena.
- Worked to increase our participation in international conventions relating to human rights, climate change, and disarmament.
- Worked to protect the interests of Myanmar nationals and former Myanmar Nationals living abroad.

To achieve these objectives, we need capable diplomats. Therefore we have increased the recruitment of Foreign Service personnel and worked to build up the capacity of our diplomats.

We have also provided substantive and necessary administrative support to our diplomats so that they are able to perform their tasks at the diplomatic missions abroad in accordance with their diplomatic ranks.

While noticeable achievements were being attained in our international relations, beginning from the time terrorist attacked our border security forces in Rakhae State large numbers of refugees left our country. The media lashed out with exaggerated and distorted reports. As a result, misunderstandings, criticisms and efforts to put pressure on Myanmar developed in the international arena.
As a result of improved relations with European counties, we were able to end the EU resolution on the situation of Human Rights in Myanmar in 2016 which has been tabled annually at the United Nations General Assembly since 1991. This may be seen as a significant success during the first year.

However, during the second year, although we were able to further consolidate and improve our friendly relations with China, India, ASEAN countries, and countries in the region, due to the terrorist attacks in Rakhine State, large numbers of refugees left the country. Thus, we had to face misunderstandings. Therefore, our warm relations with Western countries deteriorated. However among countries that had consistently supported and encouraged Myanmar, we have been able to maintain friendly relations and cooperation in areas of mutual interest, with countries which could appreciate the depth and complexity of our challenges. For the promotion of friendly relations with the countries of the world, the basic necessity is to provide support for the exchange of visits of Heads of State and High level delegations. In this regard, our Ministry has been able to perform diplomatic relations as well as prepare necessary background papers of discussion topics in coordination with other relevant Ministries. We were able to make systematic arrangements for these visits to have a proper balance.

Q: Please tell me about the visits of the President and the State Counsellor during the two year term of this government.

A: Former President U Htin Kyaw paid friendly visits to Laos which assumed the ASEAN chairmanship in 2016, India, China, Vietnam, Singapore, Cambodia and Japan. He also visited Russia to attend the ASEAN-Russia Summit, Mongolia to attend the Asia-Europe (ASEM) Summit Meeting, and Thailand to attend the Royal Cremation Ceremony of Thailand’s late King.

The State Counsellor also visited Thailand, China, the United States, Japan, Singapore, Italy, Vatican City, United Kingdom, Belgium (home of the European Union), India and Australia. In addition, she attended the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the 28th and 29th ASEAN Summit Meetings and other related meetings in Laos, Outreach Summit between BRICS and BIMSTEC Partners in India, the Royal Golden Jubilee Celebrations of His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu’izzaddin Waddaulah in Brunei Darussalam, the 30th and 31st ASEAN Summit Meeting and other related meetings in the Philippines, the Belt and Road Forum for International Co-operation in China, the ASEAN-APEC Leaders’ Informal Dialogue in Vietnam, the 25th ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit and the celebration of the 69th Republic Day of India in India, and the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in Australia.

Q: Please also tell us about the visits of foreign dignitaries to Myanmar.

As with China. The State Counsellor visited China in November 2017 to attend the Communist Party of China - CPC in Dialogue with World Political Parties High-Level Meeting as a special guest which consolidated the friendship between the leaders of both countries.

In spite of facing enormous challenges in the second half of the second year period, many countries of the world still remained committed and strongly supported Myanmar for a successful transition to democracy.

Q: Please tell us about the benefits we gained from these friendly visits.

Senior officials from China, Indonesia, Vietnam, Singapore, Thailand, Cambodia, European Union, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka. Apart from these visits, there were over 50 visits from abroad. We were able to arrange all these visits to foster bilateral relations and cooperation.

(TO BE CONTINUED)
The labour force, which is a major driver of the development of the country, is urged to actively participate in the implementation of the policies of the government to ensure better labour rights, job opportunities, safety at work and health for all.

Maha Saddhannahna Ketkajbahda, Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyant

LAVAKA is the name of a giant ogre living at a great distance from the country, through democratization process to a peaceful, prosperous, and democratic country, through the political process. To that end, the resolve demonstrated by Her Royal Highness Princess Chulabhorn, who is a member of the South-East Asia Region's 11 countries account for around 45% of the world's rabies burden, with over 1.5 million human rabies deaths in the region. This is a significant global health challenge, with the potential to be stopped with the right policies and investments.

Overcome challenges with cooperation of labour force

The 21st Century Pinlong Conference is on the way to its final destination. We all should bury our hatchets and sit at the dialogue table to get what we want to do and what we want to achieve. It is our opportune time and our opportune moment.

Hailing May Day:

Everyone of us, all ethnic nationalities should know that nothing is permanent. Everything is always changing. Time, place and circumstances are beyond our control. Good and bad come together. Opportunities and challenges come together. Try to catch opportunities without fail and try to face challenges with effort and determination.

T o honour the efforts of workers, Myanmar observes Internationa May Day, which falls on 1 May. For Myanmar workers, May Day is a meaningful and solemn occasion.

While considering the international standards for labour rights, the union government is obliged to provide them with rights and rights under the Labour Law, 2004 in accordance with the ILO standards and instructions. The union government is carrying out reforms to create a peaceful working environment with human integrity. Obsolete laws are being revoked and repealed or amended.

Myanmar is facing challenges such as protecting women from being forced to work as sex slaves, conducting educational programs for communities receiving favourable occupations, eradicating forced labour, ensuring the job safety, health and social security, and preventing labour disputes.

To prevent child labour, the country is drafting the child labour eradication law cooperation work programme. All are urged to cooperate and implement it as a national duty.

Through good relations among the tripartite force of the government, the employers and the employees, the authorities convinced the workers' rights protecting workers to enjoy legal rights, work safely and build a safe workplace to mitigate workplace in injuries, create job opportunities at home and abroad, introduce safe labour migration, conduct on-job training, implement social welfare social security and prevent labour disputes.

Plans are under way to promulgate a new Occupation and Health and Safety Law soon. A new minimum wage, which can be adjusted every two years, is being studied.

The labour force is an important factor that drives the development of the country. Therefore, it is urged to actively participate in the implementation of the policies of the government to ensure better labour rights, job opportunities, safety at work and health for all.

In the 2030 outlines, and as the South-East Asia Region's own Strategic Framework has long stressed, that means implementing a range of simple though highly effective policies. As crucial as increased access to PEP is, however, achieving our target requires action across a number of other areas. First, it is important to demonstrat that more than 70% of the canine population in any given area will achieve herd immunity, thereby ensuring the transmission of rabies can be stopped. Second, and then, to humans - no longer a threat. That requires Member countries to develop efficient rabies vaccine procurement systems, as well as sustainable logistics and infrastructure to ensure vaccines are delivered to remote and isolated areas. Finally, in places where rabies vaccination and animal birth control is the most cost-effective way to prevent dog-mediated rabies.

Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director for WHO South-East Asia Region

Mission possible: Reaching zero human rabies deaths in the South-East Asia Region

In the WHO South-East Asia Region, rabies has been tamed. Intensified action can con- quer it altogether.

Robots can be especially fatal in rural areas. One bite or scratch from a re-infected animal - 95% of the time a dog - and the victim will, after an incubation period of anywhere between a week and a year, develop the disease's fatal symptoms: fever, headache, nausea and death.

The disease was once post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) treatment was not always available, but extensive washing and treatment of the wound, as well as several rounds of rabies vaccine - if available - could develop. Despite being rabies being 100% preventable, and despite the South-East Asia Region's substantial progress in drawing down the disease's burden in recent years, it remains an under-reported and under-served disease.

More than 200 000 people die from rabies every year. Over 8 million people receive treatment at one dose of rabies vaccine every year.

Targeted and diverse initiatives have achieved strong results. Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Thailand, for example, have observed sharp declines in rabies infection and mortality following mass canine vaccination campaigns and providing improved access to life-saving post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) treatments. States on the Indian subcontinent, most notably states of Goa, Sikkim, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Tamil Nadu have likewise saved countless lives. All Member countries have meanwhile phased out the production and use of outdated vaccines, while new advanced effective intramuscular vaccination schedules are available to improve accessibility, affordability and availability of the modern rabies vaccine.

But to achieve zero human deaths by 2030, as per the Sustainable Development Goal 3.3, the WHO South-East Asia Region is calling on Member countries to be the best they can be.
To achieve its targets, the ministry will work together with private companies under the Public Private Partnership-PPP Program and also with development partners such as JICA, ADB, WB, KOICA and TICA.

By Naing Lin Kyi

As for the Ministry of Construction, plans are under way to design and estimate the construction and maintenance of roads, bridges, buildings and airfields in accordance with the rules and regulations of the country.

The Government is conducting reforms in all sectors for progress in all states and regions. This is a union where ethnic brethren live together in harmony through thick and thin. Basic infrastructures like roads and bridges need to be sound for reliable road transportation between states and regions so that trade, contact and relations are established enabling all ethnic brethren to have developments in social, education, health and economic sectors. Through this, friendship and good relations among the ethnic brethren will increase. In addition to improving the road transportation and construction of buildings for safe dwelling, the Ministry of Construction is improving rural roads continuously.

Ministry of Construction has adopted a policy which encourages development of roads and bridges and housings to improve the socio economy of the entire people.

The ministry set its target of upgrading more than 42,000 km distance of roads meeting the ASEAN Class III standard by 2030 and upgrading all bridges to RC/PC type.

The ministry’s targets to be achieved by 2030 also include urban planning for more than 330 towns, construction of 1 million apartments and upgrading all roads in rural areas to all-weather roads so that more than 90 percent of rural population can access to road facility.

To achieve its targets, the ministry will work together with private companies under the Public Private Partnership-PPP Program and also with development partners such as JICA, ADB, WB, KOICA and TICA.

After finishing its current housing projects, roads and bridges projects, the ministry will only supervise and maintain the facilities.

“We will not directly involve in the construction later, and we will form a regulatory body to supervise and examine quality of construction projects.”
We are committed to carrying out our works without corruption and respective region and state construction ministries are to take the duty,” said Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw.

The ministry is planning to write the regulations and Standard and Specifications for the Regulatory Body which will carry out construction works on behalf of the ministry.

Ministry of Construction has seen significant achievement in road and bridge sector over two years in office of the new government. Those areas which did not get access to road facility in the past have got access to road in last two years.

**Achievement in Kachin State**

Bridges and roads in Kachin State are being built with Union funds, State funds and pledged from the Hlutaw through the BOT ‘build, operate, transfer’ system and had so far built and maintained 60 roads with a total length of 2,383 miles, 6 furongs and 49 bridges.

The 500-feet long Yat Bawt Bridge (Nawngmun) that opened in July 2018 and it is on the Machanbaw-Farukha-Nawngmun road section. It is a reinforced concrete support Bailey bridge with a steel floor and is the first bridge to be opened in the year 2018 at the northernmost part of Myanmar.

Malikha Bridge (Machanbaw) was opened in Kachin State in March 2017. In fiscal year 2017-2018, five bridges with lengths of over 180 feet including the Yat Bawt Bridge (Nawngmun) were built and all will soon be completed.

As a result of the opening of the Yat Bawt Bridge (Nawngmun), road transport will be eased and the health, education, socio-economic status of local populace and flow of goods will be increased. The Khakaborazi region, which is full of natural beauty, will become accessible, while travel and related businesses will develop.

**Achievement in Kayah State**

About 96 per cent of roads in Kayah State was upgraded to the asphalt road in last two years. The Maese route linking Kayah State and Thailand was also upgraded to 18-foot wide road.

**Achievement in Kayin State**

With the assistance of the Asian Development Bank, the road section between Eindu and Kawkreik has been upgraded under the Greater Mekong Sub-region’s East-West Corridor project. The completion of the Myanmar section of the corridor will link Da Nang in Viet Nam with Mawlamyine and Yangon.

Transportation is the most important for local development. If the transportation is getting better in the undeveloped area, it will cause rapid commodity flow and also assist in local development.

Ministry of Construction has improved the infrastructure giving priorities to Rakhine and Chin State. The Natzn Bridge in Tonzang Township which links Tonzang and Kyikha township was also opened.

Matupi-Palatwa Road, Kalay-Falam-Haka Road and the roads linking India’s Mizoram State were also upgraded in the two years period.

In addition to improving the road transportation and construction of buildings for safe dwelling, the Ministry of Construction is trying to improve rural roads continuously and to construct basic infrastructure required by the people such as roads, bridges, houses and city development works enabling the people to have a peaceful and fruitful life.

Union Minister for Construction, U Han Zaw said, “Myanmar which receive a huge amount of rainfall, needs of durable, water resilient roads, so quality is the primary focus of the Ministry of Construction in this sector. We are dedicated to maximizing our resources, energy and human capacity in order to improve the road infrastructure and secure better roads and better connectivity in the country.

One of our most recent projects is the upgrading of two 10-mile sections of the Yangon-Mandalay highway, which we pledged to finish within 100 days. The upgrading will reduce traffic accidents along the highway and will be used as a criterion for estimating the cost of upgrading the entire 366 mile highway.

**Urban Development Programme**

As for the Ministry of Construction, plans are under way to finish the construction of over 1 million apartments in 330 towns across the country by 2030 under its urban development programme.

The Department of Urban and Housing Development is providing proper housing for the people in accord with its policy on long-term development of towns and cities.

In the previous fiscal year, blueprints for urban development in 24 cities in various states and regions were drawn while urban development plans for Mandalay, Mawlamyine and Pathein were drawn in collaboration with Japan International Cooperation Agency.

**Low-cost and affordable housing project**

The ministry announced that low-cost and affordable housing projects with 3,000 apartments were implemented last financial year (2016-2017)—2,208 apartments in Yangon and 800 in Mandalay.

Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw said a five-year housing development project (from 2016-2017 to 2020-2021) had been drawn to build 180,000 apartments. For Yangon alone, low-cost and affordable housing projects had been finished and will provide 8,700 apartments.

The Ministry has tried to implement more low-cost housing options for the public and housing projects year by year so that the people can have the opportunity to own apartments.

The Ministry has been conducting reforms in all sectors for progress in all states and regions. Basic infrastructures like roads and bridges are needed to be sound for reliable road transportation between states and regions so that trade, transport and relations are established enabling all ethnic brethren to have developments in social, education, health and economic sectors.

(Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)
Go-live ceremony for Port EDI system

A SYSTEM GO-LIVE ceremony for the Port Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) system was held at Park Royal Hotel on 30 April 2018 at 9 a.m.

The Port EDI system was established with the assistance of the Government of Japan and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Implemented under the project for port modernisation, the computer network system will be used in the port work processes of the Myanma Port Authority (MPA).

In his opening speech at the ceremony, Union Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung said the Port EDI system project was one of the important works among the assistance provided to Myanmar by Japan. As an ASEAN member country, Myanmar must establish a Myanmar National Single Window to enter the ASEAN Single Window. At the moment, maritime trade makes up 85 per cent of the country’s trade and is an important trade process. There is a need to use modern technology to communicate data and information in this important maritime trade process. The Myanmar Port Authority was able to implement the Port EDI system because of the goodwill assistance of the government and the people of Japan.

To use the Port EDI system, it is important for the related departments to cooperate and participate in the process, said the union minister.

Next, speeches were delivered by State Minister Mr. Toakasa Akimoto of Japan Ministry of Land Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT); Ambassador of Japan to Myanmar Mr. Ichiro Maruyama; MPA Managing Director U Ni Aung; and JICA Myanmar Office Chief Representative Mr. Masayuki Karasawa. Later, Project Director Dr. Myo Nyein Aye of Port EDI Project explained the Port EDI system through a documentary movie.

Following this, the Union Minister for Transportation and Communications and the State Minister of Japan Ministry of Land Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism led the cutting of a ceremonial ribbon to mark the Port EDI system going live. Port EDI system is a modern and international standard computerised electronic service and management system to conduct port-related procedures, which were carried out manually using manpower in the past. The paperwork and the time required for port work processes will be reduced and simplified with the Port EDI system.

Also, at the meeting, the 1964-88 Luyechuns posed 50 quiz questions to grade nine Luyechuns, and Union Minister Dr. Aung Thu presented awards to prize-winning Luyechuns. Later, the Luyechun students gave their vote of thanks.

The opening ceremony of Bagan Luyechun Vacation Camp will be held on the morning of 1 May, while the rehearsals for the opening ceremony were held yesterday morning. After the opening ceremony on the morning of 1 May, the Luyechuns in Bagan Luyechun Vacation Camp will visit and pay homage to ancient pagodas in the Bagan region.

OUTSTANDING STUDENTS ANSWERING QUIZ QUESTIONS. PHOTO: THIHA SITHU

Luyechun for 2018 in Bagan Luyechun Vacation Camp meet former Luyechun

Zin Oo (Myanmar Alinn)

UNION Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr. Aung Thu met and encouraged grade nine Luyechuns (outstanding students) of 2018 at the Bagan Luyechun Vacation Camp yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting between Luyechun (1964-88) Association, including Union Minister Dr. Aung Thu and Luyechuns in Bagan Luyechun Vacation Camp, the former Luyechuns of Luyechun (1964-88) Association were introduced individually and they shared their experience.

Former Luyechun Union Minister Dr. Aung Thu shared his experience, while Dr. Than Min Htut and another former Luyechun Professor (required) Dr. Nay Soe Maung conducted talks on topics such as “Education for whom” and “Cigarette and betel free schools.” Also, at the meeting, the 1964-88 Luyechuns posed 50 quiz questions to grade nine Luyechuns, and Union Minister Dr. Aung Thu presented awards to prize-winning Luyechuns. Later, the Luyechun students gave their vote of thanks.

The opening ceremony of Bagan Luyechun Vacation Camp will be held on the morning of 1 May, while the rehearsals for the opening ceremony were held yesterday morning. After the opening ceremony on the morning of 1 May, the Luyechuns in Bagan Luyechun Vacation Camp will visit and pay homage to ancient pagodas in the Bagan region.

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V. LEILA H VOY. NO. (+)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V. LEILA H VOY. NO. (+) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2-5-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of ABFT-2 where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm on Claim’s Day.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S BEN LINE AGENCIES (S’PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V MONTOK V.03

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MONTOK V.03 are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2-5-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm on Claim’s Day.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MERIDINA SHIPPING AGENCIES PTE, LTD

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V RISING SKY

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V RISING SKY are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30-4-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm on Claim’s Day.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CA SHIPPING PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V. MCC HALONG VOY. NO. (+)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V. MCC HALONG VOY. NO. (+) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30-4-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T/T.M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm on Claim’s Day.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT (S’PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185
Firefighters see success consecutive two days in fighting smoke from garbage fire

Firefighters completely controlled the smoke came out from Zone-A and B of the garbage dump two days after fighting the fire with a new strategy of dividing the garbage dump into four zones.

The fighting against the smoke with the use of bio foam practicing a new strategy launched on Sunday starting to dosing water and bio foam on the zone A.

“We will put the garbage dump releasing poisonous smoke under total control in two days,” Deputy Director-General of the Fire Services Department U Myat Thu said.

After reviewing the ground situation, the Fire Services Brigade adopted a new strategy and divided the garbage into four zones. A combined force of firefighters, Tatmadaw men, staff of the Yangon City Development Committee and some 900 volunteers will participate in the fight against the poisonous smoke from the garbage fire with the use of biofoam and water.

More 1 million gallons of water is used daily to control the under-garbage fire releasing poisonous smoke.

Authorities have adopted a new strategy to control the smoke from the garbage, though 90 per cent of the garbage fire in the western outskirts of Yangon is under control.

There was no patient who receive treatment at Hlinethaya Township Hospital for inhalation of poisonous smoke.

The fires started at a garbage dump in Hlinethaya on the afternoon of 21 April and burned for several days, causing health hazards in nearby areas due to the smoke and carbon monoxide emitted by the fire.

Five clinics has been set up nearby villagers to provide healthcare to the people and about 60 ambulances are also being used to send patients to the hospital when necessary.

Zaw Gyi

Grade 10 Luyechuns meet former Luyechuns in Inle

THE aim of outstanding students or Luyechuns is to be exceptional in education, healthy, fit, ethical, have interest in all-round development works, have ability to live and be-friend others and obtain regional knowledge.

The Luyechun project was started in 1964. After 1968, it was stalled for sometime, but was re-started in 2011 with the aim of training and producing outstanding students in the country. Accordingly, this year, Luyechuns from grades 9, 10 and 11 were identified, and vacation camps were conducted in Inle Kaung Taing, Bagan and Ngwehaung for them.

The Luyechuns from grade 10 arrived at Inle Kaung Taing vacation camp on 29 April. A meeting between these Luyechuns and former Luyechuns was held at Khaung Taing high school, where the Inle Khaung Taing vacation camp was located, and the former Luyechuns shared their experiences.

At the meeting with former Luyechuns, Upper Myanmar Luyechun Group Chairman Dr. Maung Maung Lay said, “Luyechun works were implemented to continue serving the country, along with the new generation. It is being implemented according to the requirement of the Ministry of Education, guidelines and requirement of the country. Despite the changing time and systems, the essence of Luyechun remains unchanged.”

The meeting with former Luyechuns was arranged at all camps to provide knowledge, pass on words of wisdom from the old to the new generation and to relay exceptional thoughts and ideas he added. Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi will be present at the opening ceremony of Inle Kaung Taing Vacation Camp for grade 10 Luyechun students, which will be held on 1 May — Naing Lin Kyi

Invitation for Bids

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received ODA Loan from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The Bid is invited by Department of Power Transmission and System Control (DPTSC) for the design, supply, installation including Civil and Building works of the following 500kV GIS Substations.

Grade 10 Luyechun students meet former Luyechuns at Khaung Taing high school in Inle. PHOTO: MNA

Grade 10 Luyechuns meet former Luyechuns at Khaung Taing. PHOTO: PE ZAW

PHOTO: PE ZAW

Rescue workers focus on medical treatment of injuries to firefighter.

2. The Eligible Nationality of the Bidder shall be Japan in the case of the single contractor. In case of a joint venture, such joint venture will be eligible provided that the nationality of lead partner is Japan, that the nationality of the other partners is Japan and/or the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and that total share of work of Japanese partners in the joint venture is more than fifty percent (50%) of the contract amount. This scheme is based on applicable guidelines of Japanese ODA Loan.

5. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the website (http://www.moe.gov.mm) or the documents from the Material Planning Department, Department of Power Transmission and System Control, Ministry of Electricity and Energy, Office No.27, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

6. Technical Bid will be opened on 31 July 2018 at 14:00 hr at the Department of Power Transmission and System Control, Ministry of Electricity and Energy, Office No.27, Nay Pyi Taw in the presence of representatives from Bidders.

7. Any request for the extension of bid submission deadline shall not be allowed.
LOS ANGELES — “Avengers: Endgame” opens with $630 mn, smashing global record

LOS ANGELES — “Avengers: Infinity War” took in $630 million in its first weekend, the highest global opening of all time, industry estimates showed on Sunday.

“The latest Marvel juggernaut...opened with $630M worldwide, making it the largest global weekend tally in the history of film, and this was done without China,” which has a later opening, industry tracker Exhibitor Relations said.

That topped “The Fate of the Furious,” the eighth installment of the high-octane action series starring Vin Diesel, Dwayne Johnson and Michelle Rodriguez that opened with more than $530 million globally in 2017.

“Infinity War,” which features more than two dozen superHeroes fighting to save the universe, also broke the record for highest North American opening weekend, raking in $250 million at US and Canadian box offices.


Katy Perry visits Pope Francis with Orlando Bloom

LOS ANGELES — Katy Perry seems to be back with former flame Orlando Bloom as the duo was spotted in Vatican City where they got an opportunity to meet Pope Francis.

The 33-year-old singer also shared an Instagram story in which she told her fans that she was in Italy to speak at the Vatican’s United to Cure event, an international conference on the cure for cancer.

“Happy Saturday everyone. I’m here in Rome at the Vatican about to speak on meditation,” Perry said.

She also turned the camera towards her mother Mary Hudson before panning the camera over to Bloom, whom she addressed as “darling”. The actor smiled at the lens before getting out of the car they were riding in.

The “American Idol” judge also shared a photograph with the Pope, along with Bloom on Instagram.

Saving the universe

“Infinity War” is the 19th film in the so-called Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), combining a whopping nine franchises and a cast list that reads like a who’s who of Hollywood’s A-list.

Robert Downey Jr does the red and gold metal suit once again as Iron Man; Benedict Cumberbatch is Doctor Strange; Scarlett Johansson is back as Black Widow; and Australia’s Chris Hemsworth is Thor.

Also back for more?

Black Panther — the Marvel breakout of the year after the standalone pic’s massive opening in February, Captain America, the Hulk, Spider-Man, Hawkeye, the Guardians of the Galaxy and their assorted allies.

Their mission is to prevent the powerful purple alien Thanos (Josh Brolin) from destroying the universe.

“We took a picture of every single person whose character has been in the MCU. We hung it up on a wall all around us,” co-director Anthony Russo, who helms the film with his brother Joe, told reporters ahead of its release.

“We basically spent months and months talking about where we could go with each character, how we could draw them through the story,” he added.

“Every one of these characters...has been on a very specific journey through the MCU to arrive at this moment.”

This is the third “Avengers” film, before the final, untitled saga set for next year.

‘North Star’

An important source of inspiration is the Marvel canon — the storylines developed over decades in the original comic books.

“Infinity War” is drawn from the “Infinity Gauntlet” series of the early 1990s.

“It starts with those comics and us beginning to rip pages out or rip copies of pages out and put them on the walls and start to be inspired,” explains Kevin Feige, the president of Marvel Studios, which is owned by Disney.

“It’s a North Star for us as we lead these giant productions into reality.”

In the movie’s trailer, Gamora (Zoe Saldana) — Thanos’s daughter, of sorts — explains that the villain believes that if he annihilates half of the universe, he can save the other half.

He needs the so-called Infinity Stones to do it. So, the heroes need to keep him from getting them.

The film cost an eye-watering $300 million to make, according to Hollywood media.

“It was about the most fun creative exercise I think I’ve ever been through in my life,” said Anthony Russo. “We thought about everybody in the MCU.”

Overseas artists invited to design sculptures for SW China green passage

CHENGDU — More than 30 overseas artists have visited Chengdu, capital of southwest China’s Sichuan Province, where they have been invited to design sculptures that will be placed along a newly built “green passage.”

The passage features paths for jogging and cycling, public sports and fitness facilities, and other recreational venues, according to the website of the foreign affairs department of the Chengdu city government.

The local government invited the artists from 30 countries and regions including the United States, France, Colombia, Uruguay, Hong Kong and Macao.

During the last five days, the artists have visited local museums, art galleries, and an exhibition center about the passage to understand the local history and culture.

Joaquin Restrepo, a sculptor from Colombia, said he is ready to share his experience with local artists.

Yanet Chango Bruzzone, an artist from Uruguay, hopes to design a sculpture that embodies both Chengdu’s culture and Uruguayan cultural elements. Jake Elliott from Nashville, the United States, said he was particularly impressed by the many bicycles on city roads.

In his design, he will combine music, a symbol of his hometown, with bicycles, he said.

The sculptures will be submitted to the Chengdu sculptors’ association for selection.

—Xinhua
Second Grand Piano Competition directed by Denis Matsuev kicks off in Moscow

MOSCOW — The second International Grand Piano Competition for Young Pianists directed by world renowned Russian pianist Denis Matsuev kicks off on Sunday at the Conservatory Grand Hall, the Moscow Philharmonic press service reported.

The Svetlanov Symphony Orchestra will perform at the Grand Opening, conducted by Alexander Sladkovsky. The Grand Prix holders of the first Grand Piano Competition — Russia’s Alexander Malofeyev and Georgia’s Sandro Nebieridze — as well as the competition’s founder Denis Matsuev will perform at the opening ceremony.

Round 1 auditions will be held from 30 April to 1 May at the Conservatory Rachmaninoff Hall. Fifteen contestants aged under 16 from Belarus, Kazakhstan, China, Russia, the US and South Korea will take part in the auditions. On 3 and 4 May, the contestants will demonstrate their skills at the final auditions with the Svetlanov Symphony Orchestra at the Tchaikovsky Concert Hall. The Grand Piano Competition prize fund is $40,000. Five contestants will win the title of Laureate and a $5,000 prize each, whereas there will be no first, second and third places. Ten Diploma Holders will be given a $1,000 prize. In addition, the laureates’ teachers will each receive $1,000. The competition’s laureates will be announced at the Tchaikovsky Concert Hall on 5 May where the Svetlanov Symphony Orchestra will perform with them, conducted by Sladkovsky. Matsuev and conductor Valery Gergiev will take part in the gala concert. The Grand Prix Giveaway will be also held there, and the winner will be awarded with a Yamaha C5X concert grand.—AFP

A monument to Soviet Red Army soldiers that had dominated a square in the southwestern Polish town of Legnica for nearly 70 years has been removed and mothballed with dozens of other monuments under a 2016 de-communisation law.

Under the 2016 law, the PiS government put the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) — responsible for prosecuting Nazi and communist-era crimes — in charge of removing around 300 monuments nationwide.

“They glorify the communist regime in public spaces, so they must be dismantled and transferred to museums showcasing communist propaganda,” IPN chief and historian Maciej Korkuc told AFP.

In Legnica, the 2.5-tonne (5,500-pound) bronze statue is of a strapping Red Army soldier and has paid out of our own pocket,” he told AFP. Although the Soviet Union drove Nazi German forces out of occupied Poland towards the end of World War II, Moscow went on to impose its own brand of totalitarianism until the regime collapsed in 1989.

Now, nearly three decades on, Poland’s governing right-wing Law and Justice (PiS) party is bent on removing all vestiges of the communist system, even judges who served during that era, as part of a series of controversial reforms.

From statues to street names, the government’s strong nationalistic views underpin an enduring aversion to communism, which it views as primarily a form of foreign domination.

‘Glorifying communism’ — Legion (Pologne) — For nearly 70 years, an imposing monument to Soviet Red Army soldiers dominated a central square in the southwestern Polish town of Legnica. Known as Little Moscow, Legnica hosted the largest Soviet military base in Poland during the Cold War.

But one day recently, in the early hours, the classic example of Stalinist-era propaganda was hauled away to a warehouse to be mothballed with dozens of other monuments under a new de-communisation law.

According to town spokesman Arkadiusz Rodek, Legnica acted in order to qualify for a state refund of the removal costs, which had included hiring a crane. “After the (end-March) deadline, we would have paid out of our own pocket,” he told AFP.

The government put the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) — responsible for prosecuting Nazi and communist-era crimes — in charge of removing around 300 monuments nationwide.

“They glorify the communist regime in public spaces, so they must be dismantled and transferred to museums showcasing communist propaganda,” IPN chief and historian Maciej Korkuc told AFP.

In Legnica, the 2.5-tonne (5,500-pound) bronze statue is of a strapping Red Army soldier and has paid out of our own pocket,” he told AFP.

Although the Soviet Union drove Nazi German forces out of occupied Poland towards the end of World War II, Moscow went on to impose its own brand of totalitarianism until the regime collapsed in 1989.

Now, nearly three decades on, Poland’s governing right-wing Law and Justice (PiS) party is bent on removing all vestiges of the communist system, even judges who served during that era, as part of a series of controversial reforms.

From statues to street names, the government’s strong nationalistic views underpin an enduring aversion to communism, which it views as primarily a form of foreign domination.

‘Glorifying communism’ — Legion (Pologne) — For nearly 70 years, an imposing monument to Soviet Red Army soldiers dominated a central square in the southwestern Polish town of Legnica. Known as Little Moscow, Legnica hosted the largest Soviet military base in Poland during the Cold War.

But one day recently, in the early hours, the classic example of Stalinist-era propaganda was hauled away to a warehouse to be mothballed with dozens of other monuments under a new de-communisation law.

According to town spokesman Arkadiusz Rodek, Legnica acted in order to qualify for a state refund of the removal costs, which had included hiring a crane. “After the (end-March) deadline, we would have paid out of our own pocket,” he told AFP.

The government put the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) — responsible for prosecuting Nazi and communist-era crimes — in charge of removing around 300 monuments nationwide.

“They glorify the communist regime in public spaces, so they must be dismantled and transferred to museums showcasing communist propaganda,” IPN chief and historian Maciej Korkuc told AFP. Although the Soviet Union drove Nazi German forces out of occupied Poland towards the end of World War II, Moscow went on to impose its own brand of totalitarianism until the regime collapsed in 1989.

Now, nearly three decades on, Poland’s governing right-wing Law and Justice (PiS) party is bent on removing all vestiges of the communist system, even judges who served during that era, as part of a series of controversial reforms.

From statues to street names, the government’s strong nationalistic views underpin an enduring aversion to communism, which it views as primarily a form of foreign domination.

‘Glorifying communism’ — Legion (Pologne) — For nearly 70 years, an imposing monument to Soviet Red Army soldiers dominated a central square in the southwestern Polish town of Legnica. Known as Little Moscow, Legnica hosted the largest Soviet military base in Poland during the Cold War.

But one day recently, in the early hours, the classic example of Stalinist-era propaganda was hauled away to a warehouse to be mothballed with dozens of other monuments under a new de-communisation law. PHOTO: AFP

A monument to Soviet Red Army soldiers that had dominated a square in the southwestern Polish town of Legnica for nearly 70 years has been removed and mothballed with dozens of other monuments under a 2016 de-communisation law.
Masterful Ding on brink of world snooker quarter-finals

LONDON — Chinese snooker superstar Ding Junhui is one frame away from booking his place later on Monday in the quarter-finals of the world championships after dominating Anthony McGill 12-4 in their second round clash.

The 31-year-old, the losing finalist in 2016, is the new favourite after five-time champion ‘Rocket’ Ronnie O’Sullivan and defending champion Mark Selby went out.

Ding showed little sign of the favourite’s tag handicap ping him as he surged into a 8-0 lead — including two century breaks — in the first session but Scotsman McGill saved face by securing the second of their eight frame contests.

Unless he suffers an astonishing collapse, Ding will play Englishman Barry Hawkins in the last eight.

Hawks beat Ding on his way to a surprise appearance in the 2013 world final where he lost to O’Sullivan but since then the 39-year-old has shown that was no fluke by reaching the last four on three occasions.

Ding lost to Selby both in the 2016 final and last year’s semi-finals and he could face serious competition for the title from another Scottish cueist, John Higgins, who looks in sparkling form.

The 42-year-old quadruple world champion, who lost in last year’s final, demolished Englishman Jack Lisowski 13-1.

That was no mean feat giv en Lisowski — who only just avoided becoming the second player in the tournament’s history to fail to win a frame — had ousted 2015 world champion Stuart Bingham in the first round.

Higgins’s highest break was 146, one short of a clear ance, and it was only the fourth time it had been done in world championships history.

He will next face the winner of the match between 2011 finalist Judd Trump and Ricky Walden, who are all square at 8-8.

“I felt for Jack a little bit,” said Higgins.

“It is the worst feeling in the world and the worst venue in the world when you are really struggling. The harder you try, the worse it gets. I could see what he was going through.” —AFP

Real and Zidane look to overcome Bayern in Champions League semis

MADRID — Zinedine Zidane may have won two consecutive Champions League titles but he refuses to admit a third would brand this his very own era at Real Madrid.

Real stand on the brink of a trio of finals ahead of their second leg against Bayern Munich in the last four on Tuesday, when they will carry a 2-1 lead, and two away goals, to the Santiago Bernabeu.

It makes them favourites to go through and, for many, heavy favourites to win the tournament after already beating Paris Saint-Germain and Juventus in the knockout stages.

For Zidane, a third European crown as coach is now in sight, which would put him level with Carlo Ancelotti and Bob Paisley in the pantheon of successful managers.

Only the three triumphs of Paisley, however, came at one club, Liverpool, and over a single era, in 1977, 1978 and 1981. Ancelotti’s treble stretched across 11 years, with two clubs, Real and AC Milan.

“We cannot talk about this,” Zidane said on Friday. “Coaches like this were given a lot of time, they did a lot of things.

“I am comfortable, we have done well, it is two and a half years that have been good but the rest, ‘Zidane’s Real Madrid’, let’s wait a bit.”

Even Alex Ferguson, Jose Mourinho and Pep Guardiola have lifted Europe’s biggest prize only twice, all with more years in management under their belts.

But Zidane’s merits as a coach and tactician continue to be downplayed, at least in part because the Frenchman owns arguably the most talented squad in the world and, in Cristiano Ronaldo, the Champions League’s greatest ever player.

Zidane’s brave call

Ronaldo’s 15 goals in this year’s competition have certainly been key, but it was Zidane who made the brave call to leave out Gareth Bale and Karim Benzema at the Allianz Arena against Bayern.

The preferred but less established duo of Lucas Vazquez and Marco Asensio combined brilliantly for the winning goal, with the former also switched to right-back late on, where he held off the threat of Franck Ribery.

Bale, harshly treated in recent weeks, may not agree but the majority of Real’s first team are now regularly hailing Zidane’s man-management, his preparation and his tactics.

“When Zizou has to gamble, he does, because he is the boss,” captain Sergio Ramos said. “We are very happy that he is steering the boat.”

There is certainly work still to be done to overcome Bayern, who dominated large parts of the first match and perhaps deserved to emerge with a more flattering result. “We earned a lot of extra credit for winning the match,” Zidane said. “But we cannot make the same mistakes again and I think on Tuesday we’ll have to go into the match with more determination than we’ve ever had before.” —AFP

Pochettino says Spurs years ahead of schedule

LONDON — Tottenham boss Mauricio Pochettino is targeting a top-four place in the Premier League.

Mauricio Pochettino says Tottenham are victims of their own success as they scramble to finish in the top four of the Premier League ahead of deposed champions Chelsea.

Fourth-placed Spurs, who host Watford on Monday, have stumbled in the league in recent weeks and crashed to their eighth successive FA Cup semi-final defeat against Manchester United last week.

But Pochettino, targeting Champions League qualification for a third straight year, said his approach would not change as he strives to take the club to the next level and win silverware after a barren decade. Spurs are two points clear of Chelsea, with four games remaining.

Antonio Conte’s side, who have won three successive league matches, have three games left.

“Tottenham needed when we arrived here to have a clear idea about discipline, rules, principles, a project to develop, to use young players, and that was how we created this project all together,” he said.

“Whether it is me or another, that is the right project to keep pushing, don’t be disappointed if we still don’t win a trophy, the expectation always is massive.

“We are victims of our own success because we are ahead in our project. I remind you that in my first meeting with (chairman) Daniel Levy and (owner) Joe Lewis, the target was to arrive in the new stadium in four years and to create a team to have the possibility to fight for the top four and the second year to play Champions League.”

Pochettino, whose club will move into their new stadium next season, raised eyebrows following the defeat to Jose Mourinho’s United by saying the project at Spurs will go on “with me or another”.—AFP

Ding Junhui is closing in on a second appearance in the world snooker championships in three years. PHOTO: AFP

Lisowski admitted the whitewash was playing on his mind, inhibiting his play which had been so impressive against Bingham. “It wasn’t embarrassing, it was more frustrating and disappointing,” said Lisowski.

“I felt like it could change. Little things were going against me the whole game.” — AFP