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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. V, No. 15, 2nd Waning of Kason 1380 ME

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Tuesday, 1 May 2018



Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holds talks with the delegation composed of Permanent Representatives to UN and representatives from immediate neighbours of Myanmar. **PHOTO: MNA**

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-go-

ing 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,

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Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe meets with delegation led by Dr. Roberto Morales Ojeda, Vice President and Member of the Politbureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba. **PHOTO: MNA**

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 Eq-

uity”. 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 ■



Myanmar Press Council to conduct second paper reading session

THE Myanmar Press Council is conducting the “Second paper reading session of Myanmar Press Council” on 5 May (Saturday) and 6 May (Sunday) at Central Press hall, Theinbyu Street, Yangon.

The Myanmar Press Council held the “History of news media in Myanmar” paper reading session in March 2017 for the first time for the development of news media in Myanmar and to inform the public and the news media personnel about its history in Myanmar.

Some 12 papers will be read at the “Second paper reading session of Myanmar Press Council” and the

confirmed list of papers to be read will be announced soon.

Stalls and booths will be set up at the Central Press hall to display books, as well as the works of media organisations.

Admission is free. Visitors can join the discussion or raise questions, while the Myanmar Press Council will also invite outside media personnel to read papers.

The “Second paper reading session of Myanmar Press Council” is organised by the Myanmar Press Council, and the Ministry of Information is supporting it by providing the venue at the Central Press hall.—Myanmar News Agency

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 ■

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, Patheingyi 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



Former Luyechuns meets with outstanding students in Ngwehsaung, Patheingyi District yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

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 for-

mer 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) ■

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 ■



I will carry out the implementation of the priority goals of the Union Government which are as follows:

1. Rule of law and improvement of the socio-economic life of the people,
2. National Reconciliation and internal peace,
3. Amending the Constitution which is the foundation for building a Democratic Federal Republic.

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



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 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,

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, is it 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 2014. As a result, during the ninth session held in January 2018, we were able to adopt the Decent Work Country Programme a tripartite manner.



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 will thus be implementing the Decent Work Country

Programme in these three priority areas.

Dear esteemed workers,

In order to develop better job opportunities, the Government, Employers, and Workers need to cooperate in a tripartite manner and this is an important mode of work. I am very pleased and satisfied to note that there have been more tripartite discussions, negotiations and efforts to seek solutions.

In addition, in order to provide better rights and benefits for workers, we are in the process of amending and enacting new labor laws. For the amendment of laws, we are reviewing these laws again to ensure that they based on international standards and are in accordance with the real country situation, only after they have been negotiated and discussed in a tripartite manner. Next this draft law is circulated and informed to the public to ascertain their views and opinions and submitted to the Hluttaw. We are working according to this process. In collaboration with the ILO and with the assistance of development partners, we have initiated the Stakeholder Forum beginning from 2015 for Labor Law Reform. At the Third Stakeholder Forum held in January 2018, future work programmes were adopted the work process for labor law reform was intensified.

To upgrade the skills of workers and to build up capacity, more technical and vocational schools have been opened. We are also striving to produce ASEAN level skilled workers. We are allowing the private sector to cooperate with the Union Government to produce more skilled workers. The NSSA – National Skills Standard Authority has been formed on the PPP (Public, Private, Partnership) model with the Labor, Immigration and Population Ministry taking the lead.

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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

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We are now working to supervise, manage and establish skills standards according to priority areas; to register and provide accreditation to training departments, assessment and inspection departments including the private sector according to sectors; and to produce systems for inspection and accreditation in accordance with national level skills standard frameworks.

Furthermore, to create job opportunities at home and abroad, we have established policies for labor and migration matters. We have established all over the country a total of 83 labor offices to assist in job searches. For those in remote areas we are operating mobile teams for labor registration for providing service at the ground level; in addition we have organized job fairs for job seekers within the country.

For workers to work in foreign countries and to ensure that they get rights and benefits in accordance with the law, we have signed MOUs relating to migrant workers with the host countries. We are working with them in close consultation. We are working in close cooperation with the IOM – International Organization for Migration, concerned Ministries, NGOs, to ensure that our migrant workers can travel and work free from danger. We are doing this in countries which have a high population of our migrant workers such as Thailand, Malaysia and Republic of Korea. We have appointed Labor Attaches and they are making sure that our workers are getting the full rights and benefits. We have also opened free training courses for providing assistance and guidance to prospective migrant workers in Yangon and Mandalay.

We have opened Migrant Resource Centres in all big cities all over the country. These centres are working in collaboration with relevant organizations to ensure that migrant workers get the information they need.

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.

(Unofficial Translation)

State Counsellor receives UN officials

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Union Minister for the Office of the Union Government, Dr. Win Myat Aye, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and Chairman of the Implementation Committee on Recommendations on Rakhine State, U Kyaw Tin, Union Minister for International Cooperation, Dr. Aung Tun Thet, Chief Coordinator of Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement, and Development in Rakhine (UEHRD), U Win Mra, U Tun Myat, U Khin Maung Lay, U Hla Myint and Dr. Daw Khin Nyo, who are national members of Advisory Board on Rakhine State, Dr. Thet Thet Zin, Chairperson of Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation and Dr. Tha Nyan, U Myo Nyunt, U Maung Maung, U Aung Soe Lwin, Dr. Tin Hla, U Aung Naing, Dr. Hla Tun, U Than Lwin, and U Tin Myint from Interfaith Dialogue at Shwe San Eain Hotel in the evening.

In the evening, U Kyaw Tint Swe, Union Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor, hosted a working dinner for the delegation at Shwe San Eain Hotel. —Ministry of Foreign Affairs ■

Senior General receives Permanent Representatives of UNSC permanent member countries

TATMADAW Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received a group of Permanent Representatives of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) member countries led by Mr. Gustavo Meza Cuadra Velasquez of Peru in Bayintnaung Guest House, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting members of the group of Permanent Representatives of United Nations Security Council member countries led by Mr. Gustavo Meza Cuadra Velasquez of Peru asked about security matters at Buthidaung and Maungdaw region in northern Rakhine State, status of receiving returnees from the other country, cooperation with United Nations organisations, returning and living in harmony and matters conducted by Tatmadaw in accordance with the law.

In reply to the questions, Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing told of the Tatmadaw following rules and laws as it is the sole defence organisation representing the country, conducting its work according to international laws and procedures, taking effective actions according to the law for those who

breaks those laws and procedures, present situations in northern Rakhine States being caused by the actions of the extremist terrorists, readiness of Myanmar to receive returnees from the other country according to the bilateral agreement, Tatmadaw ready to cooperate according to the instruction of the State Government, sexual violence considered as despicable acts according to the tradition, culture and religion of the country and actions being taken against any offenders, Tatmadaw taking harsh and stronger actions against such offenders, requirement of humanitarian aids from international organisations to be provided equally to local ethnic nationals, studying and reviewing the documentary and photographic evidences provided to understand the true events, raise questions openly during the trip to Rakhine State on 1 May and to draw conclusion fairly.

Afterwards, books containing documents and photographs of Rakhine State event were presented to the group of Permanent Representatives of UNSC member countries led by Mr. Gustavo Meza Cuadra Velasquez it is learnt. — Myanmar News Agency ■



Workers select fishes at the Nyaungtan Jetty in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

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.

There are some 11 jetties in the Yangon region, but only two are in line with the EU regulation. "Whoever causes pollution, must follow good waste management practices. They must install equipment that can monitor and prevent environmental hazards and try to carry out reduction measures. If they fail to do so, they must dispose of the waste in line with section 7 of the Conservation Law to prevent harm to the environment," said U Tun Win Myint.

Some 141 enterprises need

to follow good EIA/SIA practices under the Environmental Conservation Law.

Myanmar's Environmental Conservation Policy issued in 1994 is being updated and finalised. Therefore, a national-level conservation policy adaptable to the changing situation, a national-level climate change policy and strategy, and a national-level green economy policy and strategy framework, as well as national-level waste management strategies will soon be instituted, he added.

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

THE import of intermediate goods in the 2018 transitional financial 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 \$252 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 \$24 million from the government sector and more than \$888 billion from the private importers. The total import figures increased by \$255 million last year.

The ministry's yearly sta-

tistics stated that the imports of intermediate goods was \$9.035 billion in the 2011-2012 FY, \$9.068 billion in the 2012-2013 FY, \$13.759 billion in the 2013-2014 FY, \$16.633 billion in the 2014-2015 FY, \$16.577 billion in the 2015-2016 FY, \$17.211 billion in the 2016-2017 FY and \$17.010 billion in the 2017-2018 FY.

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 ■

Demand from China drives soybean price up in post-Thingyan period

THE increasing demand from China has revived the lacklustre soybean market in the country, with the soybean price touching a record high, according to a report in Myanmar Alinn yesterday.

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 Myanmar 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 (Myanmar 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 ■

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attends the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit 2018 along with leaders from ASEAN nations. **PHOTO: MNA**



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, accompanied by Vietnamese Prime Minister Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc, inspects the Guard of Honour in Viet Nam. **PHOTO: MNA**

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

By Khin Yadanar

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 area. 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 practise "people-centered diplomacy", as 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



Union Minister for International Cooperation as well as the former Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin. **PHOTO: MNA**

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 Rakhine 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.

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 area.

If I were to give a frank assessment, although our government attained significant achievements in foreign relations during its first one and a half year period, it faced tremendous challenges in the second half of the second year.

Therefore, the MOFA is responding to these challenges and pressures in the international arena. In addition, we are making efforts to show progress on the ground. In this way we are placing special focus on improving our international relations.

Q: Has there been any changes or challenges in the role of the MOFA during the term of the present government?

A: During the term of our government, the State Counsellor herself has concurrently taken the portfolio of the Union Minister for Foreign Affairs. Thus the coordinating role of MOFA has been further elevated. Countries of the world welcomed, supported and encouraged the new civilian government. During the first one and half years, assistance and offers of assistance surged to ensure the increased success of the democratic transition process. This is a significant change and progress in the international relations area. 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. However, as Myanmar needs to survive in the international community as a country which respects her duties and obligations, she needs to handle and resolve her problems in accordance with international norms. For this we will give due regard to the views and opinions of the international community. On the other side, as we need to act in accordance with internal requirements, the need to solve this problem in a balanced manner is a big challenge for our Ministry.

Q: Please tell us about the changes and developments that have taken place in Myanmar's relations with countries of the world.

A: In assessing Myanmar's international relations, it may be necessary to recognize two distinct periods: from the time the new government assumed state responsibilities to the time the terrorist attacks occurred on 25 August 2017 and the period beyond that. During the first period, we not only maintained and promoted traditional friendly ties with neighboring countries such as China, India and ASEAN countries, we were able to revive and consolidate our relations with our development partners such as the United States of America and the western European countries. During the first year, the visit of the State Counsellor to the US, we were able to work for the removal of all sanctions imposed against Myanmar.

Similarly, Myanmar was able to further consolidate the Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership with China and establish not only friendship but also mutual understanding between the leaders.

As a result of improved relations with European countries, 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 Waddualah in Brunei Darussalam, the 30th and 31st ASEAN Summit Meeting and other related meetings in the Philippines, the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation 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.



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi shakes hands with Chinese President Mr. Xi Jinping as they meet at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China. **PHOTO: MNA**



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with Mr. Nguyen Phu Trong, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Viet Nam. **PHOTO: MNA**

A: Heads of State from Singapore, India, Lao PDR, the Philippines, Mongolia, Cambodia and Vietnam, and His Holiness Pope Francis visited Myanmar. Foreign Ministers from China, Italy, Canada, Japan, India, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Cambodia, Britain, Hungary, US, Norway, Ukraine, Luxembourg, Netherlands, France, Czech and Turkey also visited Myanmar. Other visits included

A: From these friendly visits we received assistance for development of the socio-economic life of the people. We also received loans, technical assistance and financial assistance. During the two years period of the government, the President made one visit and the State Counsellor made three visits to the People's Republic of China. This reflects how much importance we place on our friendly relations

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.

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.

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

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.

(Translated by Kyaw Myaing)

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Overcome challenges with cooperation of labour force

To honour the efforts of workers, Myanmar observes International Workers' Day or May Day, which falls on 1 May. For Myanmar workers, May Day is a meaningful and auspicious occasion.

While considering the international standards for labour rights, the union government is obliged to provide them with rights and better opportunities they deserve, in accordance with the law, rules and instructions.

Currently, 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 educative programmes for migrant workers, providing favourable occupations, eradicating forced labour, ensuring on-the-job safety, health and social security, and preventing labour disputes.

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 and healthcare for all.

To prevent child labour, the country is drafting the child labour eradication 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 employees and the employers, the authorities concerned are making efforts to enable workers to enjoy legal rights, worksite safety and build a safe culture to mitigate workplace injuries, create job opportunities at home and abroad, introduce safe labour migration, conduct on-job training, implement social welfare plans and settle labour disputes.

Plans are under way to promulgate a new Occupation and Health and Safety Law soon.

A new minimum wage, which can be amended every two years, will be announced soon.

As the elimination of forced labour is important for creating appropriate job opportunities, ward or village tract administrative law was amended in conformity with the Forced Labour Convention 29 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). A work plan has been laid down and implemented, along with the ILO, to eliminate forced labour.

Myanmar has seen decreasing cases of forced labour, and the goal of elimination of forced labour in the country is within sight.

International investments are being invited for the development of industrial enterprises. Every industrial zone is an economic zone, which is earning money and contributing to the national development.

Hence, employers and employees are required to work hard for their development.

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 and healthcare for all.

Only with the active participation of the labour force, can the country overcome the challenges ahead. ■

Hailing May Day:

Alavaka Thakhin Hpo Hla Gyi, 1938 Oil fields strike

Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja, Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

ALAVAKA is the name of a giant ogre living at a great Banyan Tree near the Alawi Kingdom. He refused to submit even to Lord Buddha who eventually won him by his dhamma of metta (loving kindness). Thakhin Hpo Hla Gyi was one of die-hard young Myanmar nationalists in the British Colonial Days, who had served in the British army in the Mesopotamian Campaigns in the First World War and who had received some awards from the British Government, and he was working as a worker at the oil fields in Yenangyaung Township. Seeing the desperate conditions of the lives of Myanmar native oil field labourers he led the labour movement that joined the historic anti-British colonial revolution of 1938 (well known in Myanmar Struggles for national freedom as ၁၃၀၀ ပြည့်အရေးတော်ပုံ (ME 1300 Revolution). He assumed the name Alavaka as a prefix to his name. So he came to be called Alavaka Thakhin Hpo Hla Gyi.

Labour problems and labour strikes appeared isolatedly and occasionally at the docks at the sea port towns of Myanmar especially Yangon. The British brought in on a short term basis cheap labour of Indian coolie (Korengyis) from India to Myanmar to work as cheap coolie at docks, or as farm labourers in monsoon season. When the seasons were over they went sent back to India. This cheap Indian Labour deprived Myanmar Labourers of their job. Conflicts and riots frequently broke out. Besides Indian money lenders popularly known as Cheteers (ချစ်တီးငွေချေးကုလား) came in, lending money at great interest to Myanmar people. In course of times Myanmar dock and farm labourers were head over heel in debt.

The following is the excerpt from Alavaka Thakhin Hpo Hla Gyl's declaration issued on the occasion of the great oil fields strike(ရေနံမြေသပိတ်ကြီး). In exposing the real economic life of Myanmar in the British Colonial Regime. Hpo Hla Gyi out-lined as follows.

1. Though Myanmar is rich in natural resources -forest minerals, biodiversity, fertile lands, Myanmar peoples of all ethnic origins were very poor due to economic exploitation of foreign capitalists especially the British and their under dogs — Indians.
2. Myanmar forestry was monopolized by British Bombay Burma and Steel Fucar Companies.
3. Myanmar minerals were monopolized by the British Burma Corporation, Namtu Bawdwin Company and Mogok Ruby Mines Company.
4. Myanmar rice and agricultural products were

“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.”

monopolized by first Steel Brothers and later by Bulinger Pool.

5. Oil fields (Petroleum) were monopolized by the British Campanies B.O.C, I.O.C, PPC etc.

In the name of freetrade these British Capitalists exploited Myanmar to the entire negligence of the walfare of Myanmar peoples.

Complaints and demands for increment of daily wages and improvement of working condition and labourers' accommodations were either rejected or ignored.

No wage increase, no improvement in working conditions and Iabourers' accomodations. Alavaka Thakhin Hpo Hla Gyi discarded all rewards he received from the British Government for his military service in the First World War and began leading the First National level labour Strike known as oil fields strike (ရေနံမြေသပိတ်ကြီး). Alavaka Thakhin Hpo Hla Gyi led a long protest march from Yenangyaung, the centre of oil fields to Yangon the headquarters of the British Colonial Government. They surrounded the British Government Secretariat Buildings downtown Yangon (အတွင်းဝန်များရုံးချုပ်ကြီး). (later Headquarters of Ministeries of Myanmar Government (ဝန်ကြီးများရုံး).

Yangon University Students' Union led by Thakhin Nu and Thakhin Aung San joined the Oil Fields strike. In British history they had learnt the political slogan of the Irish Freedom Fighters Sinn Fein. "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity". So these young Thakhins' slogan was British colonialism's difficulty is Myanmar nationalism's opportunity'. By now the Second World War had already started in the west. Hitler's nazi-ism and Mussolini's fascism were challenging the Western Powers. Even communist Russia had to join the western block to resist Naziism and Fascism. In the East,

Japan's military Government was rising. It joined with Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy to form 3 Fascist Powers to dominate the entire world.

Young Myanmar nationalists tried to contact China to get co-operation. But China itself was invaded by Japan leading to Manchurian crisis.

Japanese Military Government stepped in to catch the opportunity of bringing young Myanmar nationalists to its side. On promise of granting independance to Myanmar, young Myanmar nationalists were trained in modern military warfare on Hainan islands by the Japan Kampeti. Thakhin Aung San and his colleagues thirty of them in their early 20s and 30s later known as Yebaw Thonegeik or 30 comrades-in-arms, slipped out of the country incognito under the vigilant eyes of British Intelligence. It is so exciting and inspirig to read their memoirs. Present young Myanmar generations should not miss reading these memoris.

Needless to describe in detail the remaining part of this history. The Burma Independence Army (BIA) the Burma Defence Army (BDA). The AFPFL (the Anti Fascist People's Freedom League). The Simla White Paper, Sir Doman Smith the British Labour Government of Mr. Clement Atlee. British Governor Sir Hubert Rance. Aung San-Atlee Agreement at British Parliament, the Pinlong Agreement of 12-2-1947. The assassination of Bogyoke Aung San and his cabinet colleagues on 19 July 1947. Nu-Atlee Agreement and Grant of Independence 4-1-1948.

These historic events we all must learn to gain lessons so as to apply at present and plan for our future.

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.

We are now having good opportunities of building our country, through democratization process to a peaceful, prosperous, progressive and united Federal Democratic Republic. The 21st Century Pinlong Conference is on the way to its final destination. We all should bury our hatches and sit at the dialouge table to get what we want to do and what we want to achieve. It is our opportune time and our opportune moment. ■

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

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

In the WHO South-East Asia Region, rabies has been tamed. Intensified action can conquer it altogether Rabies can be an especially fatal virus. One bite or scratch from an infected animal - 99% 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 tell-tale symptoms: fever, headache, nausea and death. That needn't be the case. If immediate post-exposure action is taken - including extensive washing and treatment of the wound, as well as several rounds of rabies vaccine that meets WHO standards - all will be well; not a single symptom will develop. Despite rabies being 100% preventable, and despite the South-East Asia Region's substantial progress in driving down the disease's burden in recent years, it remains an issue: More than 26 000 people in the Region succumb to it annually. Eight of the Region's 11 countries account for around 45% of the world's rabies burden, with over 1.5 billion people at risk of rabies exposure. More than 6 million patients receive at least one dose of rabies vaccine every year.

Targeted and diverse initiatives have achieved strong results. Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Thailand, for example, have obtained sharp declines in rabies infection and mortality following mass canine vaccination campaigns and providing improved access to life-saving post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) treatments. Similar initiatives in the Indian 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 nerve-tissue vaccines, while six have introduced cost-effective intradermal vaccination schedules able to improve accessibility, affordability and availability of the modern rabies vaccine.

But to achieve zero human rabies deaths by 2030, as per the Sustainable Development Goal target, intensified action - including better access to PEP tools - is needed. To help make that happen, WHO has convened a meeting in early May in Kathmandu, Nepal, with representatives of rabies-endemic countries from the WHO South-East Asia, WHO Western Pacific and WHO Africa regions gathering alongside global health partners such as Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). Together they will look at how progress against rabies can be accelerated and access to PEP improved.

As crucial as increased access to PEP is, however, achieving our target requires action across all sectors and at all levels of society. To that end, adopting a 'One Health' approach that identifies and controls multiple risks at the human-animal interface is crucial. As the Global Strategic Plan to End Human Deaths from Dog-Mediated Rabies by 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. Vaccinating Rabies' prime reservoir - dogs - is a good place to start. Sustainable vaccination of at least 70% of the canine population in any given area will achieve herd immunity, thereby ensuring the transmission of rabies between and among dogs - and then on to humans - is no longer a threat. That requires Member countries to develop efficient rabies vaccine procurement systems, as well as sustainable logistics and infrastructure for canine vaccination. It also requires high-level leaders to fully grasp that mass canine vaccination and animal birth control is the most cost-effective way to prevent dog-mediated rabies.

Addressing socio-cultural perceptions and practices associated with the disease is likewise essential. Public information campaigns are critical to building awareness of what responsible dog ownership looks like (including the need for vaccination), as well as preventing and treating bites or scratches when they occur. Key to this process is increasing awareness of PEP's life-saving potential and the need to take immediate action once a bite or scratch is incurred. Importantly, awareness campaigns should be tailored to the needs of children, who are particularly vulnerable to the disease.

Sustaining high-level commitment to achieving zero human rabies deaths is fundamental. To that end, the resolve demonstrated by Her Royal Highness Princess Chulabhorn of Thailand, who has committed her country to achieving zero rabies deaths by 2020, is to be commended. So too is the high-level commitment of Bhutan and Sri Lanka, as well as a number of India's state governments. In support of their efforts, WHO South-East Asia has worked with Member countries, as well as regional organizations such as the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), to enhance high-level buy-in and ensure rabies' unnecessary burden is tamed and ready to be conquered altogether.

That outcome is readily achievable. With better access to PEP tools and the intensified and sustained application of diverse preventive policies, rabies' burden in the South-East Asia Region can be lifted, and tens of thousands of lives saved every year. Reaching zero human rabies deaths is a mission that is both possible and necessary. It is a mission to which WHO South-East Asia and its partners are fully committed. ■

Skilled workers and engineers upgrading Yangon-Mandalay Expressway. **PHOTO: MNA**



Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Performance over two years by Ministry of Construction

By Naing Lin Kyi

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.



Vehicles crossing the bridge after upgrading Myitkyina-Sumprabum-Putao road. **PHOTO: MNA**

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 Hluttaw through the BOT (built, operate, transfer) system and had so far built and maintained 60 roads with a total length of 2,383 miles, 6 furlongs and 49 bridges.

The 500-foot 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 Natzan 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



The opening ceremony of Chindwin Bridge (Khamti) on Khamti-Sinthaty-Lahe road in Sagaing Region. PHOTO: MNA

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 Patheingyi 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 3,008 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, contact and relations are established enabling all ethnic brethren to have developments in social, education, health and economic sectors. ■

(Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)



Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw inspects model design of rural and urban development in Yangon Region. PHOTO: MNA

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 Patheingyi were drawn in collaboration with Japan International Cooperation Agency.

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 Co-operation 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



Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung and officials launch the system go-live ceremony for Port EDI system in Yangon. **PHOTO: MNA**

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 Myanma 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 co-operate and participate in the process, said the union minister.

Next, speeches were delivered by State Minister Mr. Tsukasa 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 Transport 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. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Luyechun for 2018 in Bagan Luyechun Vacation Camp meet former Luyechun

Zin Oo
(Myanma 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 (re-

tired) 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. ■



Outstanding students answering quiz questions. **PHOTO: THIHA SITHU**

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

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

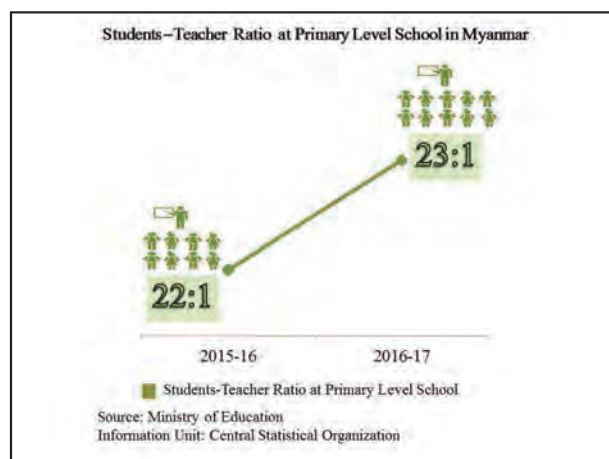
Consignees of cargo carried on M.V LEILA H VOY. NO. (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2-5-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AIPT-2 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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
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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 to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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 to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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 to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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 dousing 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 volun-



Rescue workers focus on medical treatment of injuries to firefighter. PHOTO: PE ZAW



Firefighters douse the garbage dump with bio foam and water to extinguish the underground fire. PHOTO: PE ZAW

teers 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 sev-

eral 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 the ability to live and be-friend others and obtain regional knowledge.

The Luyechun project was started in 1964. After 1988, 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 Khaung Taing, Bagan and Ngwehsaung for them.

The Luyechuns from grade 10 arrived at Inle Khaung 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 va-



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

cation 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

Loan Agreement No.MY-P8 dated 26/March/2015
IFB No. 1(T)DPTSC(PTP)/2018-2019

1. 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.

Sr. No	Invitation for Bid	Descriptions	Issuing Date	Submission Deadline Date and Time	Non-refundable Document Fee
1	MYP8, JICA, ODA Loan	500/230/33kV, 3x500MVA Meik Hti La (Kan Kaung) Substation 500/230/33kV, 1x500MVA Taung Oo (Sa Ba Gywe) Substation	3/May/2018	31/July/2018 (14:00hr)	Purchase order with Myanmar Kyats which is equivalent to USD 1,000.

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.
3. 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.
4. Bid documents must be delivered to the address above mentioned on or before the deadline date and time.
5. The Bid must be accompanied by a bid security of not less than four hundred million yen (JPY 400,000,000).
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 dead line shall not be allowed.

Tender Committee
Department of Power Transmission and System Control
Ministry of Electricity and Energy, office No.27,
Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar
Telephone : 067- 3410282, 3410209

'Avengers' 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.

That beat "The Force Awakens," the seventh film in the long-running "Star Wars" space saga that made \$248 million in its opening weekend in 2015.

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 dons 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 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



Actor Robert Downey Jr arrives for the world premiere of "Avengers: Infinity War," which has smashed North American and global box office records. **PHOTO: AFP**

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."

—AFP ■

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 a 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.



Katy Perry. **PHOTO: PTI**

"Honored to be in the presence of His Holiness @franciscus' compassionate heart and inclusivity. Thank you to @meditationbob and #TheCuraFoundation for making it all possible," she captioned the picture.

Perry's video comes days after she told ET that she was "spoken for". The duo split in February 2017 after a year of dating but sparked rumours that they had rekindled their romance months later.—PTI ■

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 ■

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Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

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Poland consigns communist-era monuments to dustbin of history

LEGNICA (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.

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 nationalist views underpin an enduring aversion to communism, which it views as primarily a form of foreign domination.

'Glorifying communism'



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 decommunisation law. **PHOTO: AFP**

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 shaking a Polish soldier's hand in a fraternal but dominant gesture of congratulations to Poland for its post-war "freedom".

The soldiers also hold a little girl dressed as a communist youth pioneer, symbolising a bright future.

Dozens of communist mon-

uments still stand across Poland, which has long been a European Union and NATO member, and their removal has rankled Russia. Several statements by lower-level Russian officials have accused Poland of ingratitude as well as disrespecting Red Army soldiers.

Soviet tanks

Meanwhile, critics at home, including the liberal opposition, view the PiS's decommunisation drive as a bid to impose its own version of history.

In the southern town of Lapaz, a memorial to the communist militia killed by the anti-communist resistance in 1946 has been re-dedicated to the so-called "cursed soldiers" of the Polish resistance, a group now promoted by the IPN.

But many municipalities oppose sweeping away relics of recent history. In the northern city of Elblag, authorities circumvented the law and kept a Soviet T-34

tank in a park by donating it to a museum as a historical artifact. The nearby town of Malbork tried to sell its tank but failed to find a buyer.

"It's always been here; as children, we played cat and mouse or hide-and-seek around it. It never bothered anyone. It was always an attraction," Malbork resident Mateusz Jablonski told AFP. The PiS government is also working on a new draft law to demote communist-era generals, some posthumously.

"It's unprecedented in Polish history; there have never been demotions, whether after World War I or World War II," Monika Jaruzelska, daughter of the late General Wojciech Jaruzelski, Poland's last communist leader, told AFP. "If there were, it was over acts of treason and it was left up to the courts to decide," she added.—AFP ■

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 Geor-

gia'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 finalist auditions with the Svetlanov Symphony Orchestra at the Tchai-



Russian pianist Denis Matsuev. **PHOTO: TASS**

kovsky 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 Giveway will be also held there, and the winner will be awarded with a Yamaha C3X concert grand.—AFP ■

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 handicapping him as he surged into a 8-0 lead — including two century breaks — in the first session but Scotsman McGill saved face by squaring the second of their eight frame sessions.

Unless he suffers an astonishing collapse, Ding will play Englishman Barry Hawkins in

the last eight.

Hawkins 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 cuesman, 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 given Lisowski — who only just avoided becoming the second player in the tournament's history to fail to win a frame — had ousted 2015 world champi-



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

on Stuart Bingham in the first round.

Higgins's highest break was 146, one short of a clearance, 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."

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 ■

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 ■

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 knock-out 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 ■