2017 Mid-Year Myanmar Jade and Gems Emporium sells 32 gem lots

THE fourth day of the 2017 Mid-Year Myanmar Jade and Gems Emporium was held yesterday at Mani Yandana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw, attracting local and international gem merchants.

Thirty-two gem lots out of 190 with a base-price of 500 euros and above were sold to local and foreign gem merchants. The 32 gem lots were sold under an open tender system and fetched a total of about 760,000 euros.

A total of 4,371 local and foreign gem merchants attended the fourth day of the emporium. They were seen viewing the displayed gem and jade lots and submitting their tenders into the tender boxes.

The 2017 Mid-Year Myanmar Jade and Gems Emporium is being held from 12 to 21 December. On 16 December jade lot Nos. 1 to 1150 will be sold. On 17 December jade lot Nos. 1151 to 2300 will be sold. On 18 December jade lot Nos. 2301 to 3450, on 19 December jade lot Nos. 3451 to 4600, on 20 December jade lot Nos. 4601 to 5750 and on 20 December jade lot Nos. 5751 to 6685 will be sold.

The 2017 Mid-Year Myanmar Jade and Gems Emporium will sell 6,685 jade lots and 190 gem lots under an open tender system, while high-quality finished jade and gems were also on display and for sale, it is learnt.—Myanmar News Agency

40,000 vaccinated in Buthidaung, Rakhine State

By Myint Maung Soe

ABOUT 40,000 of the 55,752 children in Buthidaung Township, Rakhine State have been vaccinated against Japanese encephalitis, said an official from the Department of Health.

“We have two Japanese encephalitis vaccination programmes; one is community based and the other is school based. According to the security situation, we launched the vaccination programmes on 15 November. So far about 40,000 children have been injected with Japanese encephalitis vaccine. We are committed to concluding the vaccination project by the deadline,” said U Than Aung, head of the township’s health department.

There are 55,752 children who are between nine months and 15 years of age in the township. Of this group, 39,691 children have been vaccinated, he added. The government launched the school-based vaccination campaign for children between 5 and 15 years of age from 15 to 23 November. The community-based vaccination programme for children between nine months and five years is being held from 11 to 20 December.
Opening ceremony of Myanmar e-Sport Federation and Yangon HOG e-Sports Center

THE opening ceremony of the Myanmar e-Sport Federation and Yangon HOG e-Sports Center, the first of its kind in Myanmar, was held yesterday morning in Kamayut Township, Yangon. The ceremony was attended by the Myanmar Computer Federation (MCF) President U Khun Oo, Myanmar Young Entrepreneurs Association (MYEA) Chairman U Tun Tun Naing, Myanmar Taekwondo Federation President U Myan and heads of departments from states and regions, invited foreign guests, e-Sport experts and students.

In his opening speech, MYEA Chairman U Tun Tun Naing said developed countries have “e-based” efforts such as e-cabinet, e-trade, e-commerce, e-library, e-business, e-data centre, e-payment, for which only a mobile phone is needed to conduct business. Through this, good governance, clean government, transparent government systems appear and corruption disappears.

“Now e-Sport, or electronic sport, is being organised by Myanmar youths attending University of Medicine, University of Foreign Language and American University. They formed the first entrepreneurial organisations of the Myanmar e-Sport Federation and Yangon HOG e-Sport Center, where youth e-sport training competitions will be held. Today’s event was the opening ceremony of the Myanmar e-Sport Federation and Yangon HOG e-Sport Center. It is the first of its kind in Myanmar, and youth themselves went to Southeast Asia, Korea and Singapore to practice and then design and construct it. It is at the same level as Southeast Asia, Korea and Singapore”, said the MYEA Chairman.

Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Viet Nam, and the Philippines are member countries of the International e-Sport Federation, along with 18 European, 18 Asian, four African, three American and two Oceanic island countries, for a total of 45 member countries. Myanmar e-Sport Federation has applied to become a member of the international federation, and only then can Myanmar participate in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. The aim of the Myanmar e-Sport Federation is to upgrade e-Sport technology in Myanmar according to the law and to participate in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, said the MYEA Chairman.

In many countries of the world, many e-Sport professional clubs were formed to play world level e-sports. Based on sports, health and knowledge, development of a country came about. e-Sport universities were opened in Malaysia and China, and Myanmar is now opening a Yangon HOG e-Sport Center, added the MYEA Chairman.

MCF President U Khun Oo and other attendees gave speeches yesterday, noting that the Myanmar e-Sport Federation is being formed for the first time in Myanmar and Yangon HOG e-Sport Center is the only e-sport center in Myanmar that is classified as meeting world standards.

The e-Sport Center is a tobacco, quid, alcohol and drug free zone, and is a place where physical and mental training is conducted, it is learnt.—Myanmar News Agency

JCC Chairman U T Khun Myat receives Director of NDI, Asia

U T Khun Myat, Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw and Chairman of Joint Coordination Committee received Mr. Peter M. Manikas, regional director for Asia programs at National Democratic Institute and party at 1 pm yesterday at the Office of the Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker, Hluttaw Premises in Nay Pyi Taw.

In the meeting, matters of NDI’s increased cooperation in the tasks of development of the parliaments, convention of workshops, trainings which will be of benefit for Hluttaw Representatives and Hluttaw Offices’ staff and NDI’s increased cooperation in the strategic project for Hluttaw Development [2018-2022] were discussed at length, it was learnt.—Myanmar News Agency

Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U T Khun Myat holds talks with Mr. Peter M. Manikas, regional director for Asia programs at National Democratic Institute in Nay Pyi Taw on 15 December 2017. PHOTO: MNA
President U Htin Kyaw meets professors, students of Osaka University in Japan

A Myanmar delegation headed by President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin, who have been in Japan on a friendship visit, arrived in Osaka by bullet train yesterday.

The President and his delegation were welcomed by responsible officials at the Osaka Railway Station and they proceeded to Osaka University, where they met with responsible officials of Osaka University led by Executive Vice-President Professor Tetsuo Ogawa and Director Professor of Centre for International Education and Exchange at Osaka University, Mr. Tomono Arikawa.

The President met with teaching staff of the Myanmar language faculty, university students and Myanmar scholarship students. Two Japanese students spoke words of thanks, followed by Myanmar traditional Thingyan dancing and traditional national dancing. On behalf of the Myanmar language students, two second-year female students presented the President and First Lady with bouquets.

“Diplomatic relations between Myanmar and Japan were established since over 60 years ago, so bilateral friendship has lasted long. I am very pleased to see Japanese youths studying Myanmar literature, Myanmar culture, Myanmar music and Myanmar art enthusiastically. With the increasing amount of students learning the Myanmar language and literature with great interest, it was learnt that there took place insufficiency of Myanmar language teaching staff. In Myanmar as well, those who are interested in Japanese language stood second or third, it was said. In both countries, there are many Japanese learning Myanmar language and literature in Myanmar or vice versa. We firmly believe that mutual understanding achieved through meeting with each other may promote better relations and lead to strengthened friendship”, said the President.

After the university visit, the President and his delegation arrived in Kyoto and visited the Kinkakuji Temple, an ancient heritage edifice.

Kinkakuji Temple was built in 1397 by the Chinese government to be used as a place of lodging when their diplomats came to Japan. After it was destroyed by fire in 1350, the structure was renovated in 1355. In 1987, all the gold leaves on the temple were replaced with new ones. Kinkakuji Temple contains 20 kilograms of gold, mostly from gold leaves placed there by worshippers. It is listed as a National Special Historic Site and a National Special Landscape, and is one of 17 locations making up the Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto, which are World Heritage Sites.

In the evening, the President and First Lady arrived at the Kyoto State Guest House, where they will stay. At night, the President and First Lady visited the Wisteria Flower Room, where they were welcomed by Governor Mr. Keiji Yomada, Mayor of Kyoto Prefecture, and member of Kyoto Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mr. Daisaku Kadokawa, with Governor Mr. Keiji Yomada giving a welcoming speech. The President and his delegation attended a dinner party hosted by the Kyoto Merchants and Industrial Entrepreneurs Federation, Kyoto Prefecture.—Myanmar News Agency

State Counsellor meets Finnish Ambassador

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received HE. Mrs. Riikka Laatu, Finnish Ambassador to Myanmar, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw at 11:00 hrs on 15 December 2017, and exchanged views on the promotion of friendly relations and cooperation between the two countries.—Myanmar News Agency
More than 680,000 foreign day-trippers visit Myanmar across Thai border since April

OVER 687,000 foreign day-trippers visited Myanmar from Tachileik, a cross-border gate between Thailand and Myanmar, since April, according to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

Between 1 April and 14 December of this year, the number of international day-trippers reached 687,235, who visited Talaw Market, Mahamayatmini Pagoda, Shwedagon Pagoda, ethnic villages and Chinese temples.

In the second week of this month, a total of 160 foreign travellers toured the country through Tachileik and visited the town’s popular destinations for a one-day trip.

Concerted efforts are being made to extend more nature-based tourism development projects nationwide and development of cross-border trips is high on the government’s list of priorities, said a spokesperson of the ministry.

Myanmar’s archaeological sites, mountain ranges, natural forests, beaches, ancient monuments, and a diverse range of traditions and lifestyles of ethnic tribes are popular among foreigners.—Maung Maung Oo

German tourists cruised Chindwin River

There are unique natural scenes, eco-tourism locations and archaeological sites in Myanmar, and there is now a culture-based tourism industry by which tourists can observe the traditions and cultures of ethnic people. Due to these attractive sites and scenes, larger numbers of tourists are visiting Myanmar.

A tour group of 12 Germans cruised along the Chindwin River, with arrangement made by Pandaw Cruises Co., Ltd and under the supervision of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism. They arrived in Mandalay on 24 November by air and toured along the Chindwin River by Khabyoo Pandaw cruise ship from 25th November – 2nd December.

The tourists visited Mandalay, Monywa, Bo Win Taung, Monywa, Shwe Sar Yay Way, Ah Tat, Kani, Mauk Katalaw, Mingin, Kan Ywa, Kyi Htaung Oo, Kalaywa, Ma Sein, Mawlaik, Yuwa, Stitung, Phaungbyin, Thaungyang, Thaung Htt, Homalin, Mandalay, and Yangon. Moreover, ten British tourists visited Myanmar on 1st December, arriving by air. The tourists followed a route from Yangon to Mandalay.—MNA

Terrorists destroy backhoe in Maungtaw

A backhoe of the Road Transport Administration Department was burnt down yesterday morning on the Kyainchaung-Taunggyo road near Wat Kyen (Mro) Village, Maungtaw Township, Rakhine State. The backhoe is currently used for road work and worth of about Ks 65 million. Police is conducting investigation into the case.—Myanmar News Agency

Wild elephant found dead in Ngaputaw Township

A wild elephant was found dead near Hsuepaik creek, Wah Chaung village tract, Ngaputaw Township, Ayeyawady Region on Wednesday.

The elephant was found lying on the ground in the early morning of Wednesday, the 13th of December. A local man founded the dead elephant in the morning and alerted authorities.

When officials from the township forestry department and local police forces arrived on the scene, elephant doctors and Friends of Wildlife (FOW) examined the elephant and concluded that the elephant was killed by unknown persons. They also said the elephant hide and trunk were missing from its body.

German tourists visit eco-tourism locations archaeological sites in Myanmar. PHOTO: MNA

Elephant was found dead near Hsuepaik creek. PHOTO: PATHEIN HLA KYI

Currently, the forestry department is offering an education campaign to local residents concerning wildlife conservation. Also, local police are searching for the person who killed the wild elephant.—Pathein Hla Kyi

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Cement imports decline by nearly 6,000 tonnes in late November

MYANMAR imported almost 6,000 tonnes of cement in the last week of November from neighbouring countries through border points, a decrease of nearly 700 tonnes against the previous week’s total, according to border merchants.

The country imported more than 6,000 tonnes of cement in the previous week before 25 November. Between 26 November and 2 December, domestic importers bought US$34,330 worth of cement weighing 175 tonnes from neighbouring Thailand via sea routes, which is 25 tonnes less than that of the previous week’s total of over 200 tonnes.

According to official statistics of border trade authorities, the country imported more than 20,000 tonnes of the same product last month. The country also imports cement, an important construction material, from Malaysia and it exports domestically-produced cement to India, the second-largest neighbouring country.—Shwe Khine

More than $2.9 billion trade deficit in current FY

THE external trade value for the current fiscal year topped US$22 billion since April, with a trade deficit of over $2.9 billion, according to the Commerce Ministry’s weekly statistical report.

From 1 April to 8 December of this year, total foreign trade value rose by $3.9 billion when compared to the similar period of last year. Imports were $12.497 billion and exports were $9.58 billion, resulting in a trade deficit of $2.916 billion.

The current trade value included over $16.836 billion from normal trade and over $5.241 billion from border trade. Myanmar conducts overseas trade with international trade partners mainly through by sea ports. At present, the country chiefly imports capital goods, intermediate goods and consumer products and exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals and forest products. Efforts have been made by the trade authorities to reduce trade deficit by promoting the country’s export sector.

According to the ministry’s yearly report, the country’s trade deficit was $2.5 billion in FY2016-2017.—Swe Nyein

China increases border imports of sesame seeds

CHINA increased its import of locally produced sesame seeds from Myanmar through cross-border points of entry in late November, according to border authorities.

From 25 November to 1 December, Myanmar exported a wide variety of different coloured sesame seeds to the world’s most populous country from Muse (130-mile) trade zone and Chinswehaw border station, earning US$6.766 million in total.

According to official statistics, China imported over 190 tonnes of black and white sesame from the Muse border gate, a significant increase of 97.5 tonnes against the previous week’s total of 94 tonnes. It also imported over 5,500 black, brown and white sesame seeds from Chinswehaw border station, increasing over 3,300 tonnes matched against last week. In Muse market, the prices of black sesame seeds were Ks2.225 million per tonne while white sesame seeds were sold for over Ks14 million within the aforesaid week.

The country exported more than 16,000 tonnes of sesame seeds to China from both Muse and Chinswehaw borders in November. It also sold 85 tonnes of the black sesame seeds to neighbouring Thailand last month.—Khine Khant

Japanese company to build bulk grain terminal at Thilawa

JAPANESE logistics company Kamigumi Co. will establish a joint venture to operate a bulk terminal at Thilawa port on the outskirts of Yangon with a local partner by the end of the year.

Under the $65 million investment project, Kamigumi has teamed up with Lluvia Ltd., a leading flour milling firm, to form International Bulk Terminal (Thilawa) Co. to cater to the growing demand for handling grain, feed and other bulk cargo in Myanmar. Lluvia will hold a 75 per cent stake in the venture with registered capital of $33 million and Kamigumi will own the remaining 25 per cent, according to the Japanese logistics firm.

The planned bulk terminal will be built on an 80,000-square-meter plot at the port, with a 230-meter-long jetty, and is slated for completion in April 2019. Thilawa is home to Myanmar’s first special economic zone jointly developed by the private and public sectors of Japan and Myanmar. The emerging economy with one of the fastest growth rates in the region has seen westemization in diets and a greater diversity in food choices along with a rapid increase in per capita consumption, but mostly depends on imports for raw materials of food products.

Expecting the continued growth in trading of food products and raw materials in the future, the joint venture will mainly handle grains and also operate silos and warehouses by taking advantage of the Kobe-based intermodal transporter’s expertise in port facility operations, Kamigumi said. With the project, “Kamigumi will be able to secure an advantageous position in handling of bulk cargo such as wheat grain in Myanmar and establish a solid foothold in the food logistics business, which is expected to see further growth going forward,” the company said in a statement. Kamigumi is also seeking to expand its logistics business in the country through synergies with another of its joint ventures, Kamigumi-EFR Logistics (Myanmar) Co., set up in March 2014 in Yangon.

Lluvia, a joint venture between Japanese trading house Mitsubishi Corp. and local conglomerate Capital Diamond Star Group, is a major food maker in the country with a focus on flour milling and Premier brand instant coffee.—NNA/Kyodo
43rd Anniversary Rakhine State Day ceremony held in Sittway

Rakhine State Government observed the 43rd Anniversary Rakhine State Day yesterday at the Ottama Hall in Sittway-Rakhine State.

The event was opened with royal-drum beating and singing—ine State.

At the ceremony, Chief Minister U Nyi Pu read the Message from the President to the 43rd Anniversary Rakhine State Day.

Sittway Town elder U Maung Thein Phyu (Gawyaw Myay Saw Win) explained the holding of 43rd Anniversary Rakhine State Day.

Attended at the event were State Chief minister and wife, State Hluttaw Speaker, State ministers and elders of the town, teachers, awarded people and students.

In the early morning, State Chief minister, State government ministers and elders of the town offered morning meal and offerings to nine Sayadaws of Rakhine State Sangha Nayaka at Atulamarazein Pyilone Chan Thar Pagoda Hall in commemoration of the 43rd Rakhine State Day. The officials also received the five precepts from the monks and shared the merits.

Buthidaung observes 43rd Anniversary Rakhine State Day

The 43rd Anniversary Rakhine State Day ceremony was celebrated yesterday at the Ottama Hall, Buthidaung Township, Rakhine State.

In the ceremony, after the people saluted the national flag, U Hla Shwe deputy head of Butidaung Township General Administration Department read the message from the President to the 43rd Anniversary Rakhine State Day.

“The objective of holding this event is to conserve our traditions. Rakhine traditional games are also organized on the state day as part of efforts for raising awareness that conserving Rakhine traditional culture is the duty of all Rakhine people,” said Daw Khaiing Su Hlaing, leader of Rakhine tradition group.

At the ceremony the certicates of honor were granted to the organizations involved in the development and philanthropic activities in Buthidaung Township and outstanding students were also awarded.

43rd Anniversary Rakhine State Day celebrated in Maungtaw

Maungtaw celebrated the 43rd Anniversary Rakhine State Day yesterday at the Maungtaw General Administration Department Hall in Maungtaw.

U Phyu Hla, Head of Maungtaw Township General Administration Department read the message sent from the President to the 43rd Anniversary Rakhine State Day.

“The anniversary day event was held on a grand scale. After the violence, we held the ceremony at the Town Hall.

In coming years when the state returns to peace and stability, we will hold fun activities on the state day in cooperation with township departments, Hluttaw-representatives and social organizations”, said U Phyu Hla.

“In coming years, we hope that Rakhine State Day can be held on a grand scale as we celebrated in the past”, said Ma Sandar who attended the ceremony.

Attended at the event were township departmental officials, local ethnic residents, teachers and students. —Zaya, Myint Maung, Tin Tun, Han Lin Naing (Sittway IPRD)

Rakhine-born magician wows audience

AT the invitation of the Rakhine State Government, Rakhine-born magician Mr. Top and his son Harry staged a magic performance Thursday before a packed crowd in commemoration of the 43rd anniversary of Rakhine State Day at the Dhanaya Sports Ground in Sittway.

“Being a Rakhine national, my magic skills have been known by the Rakhine State Government. They regard (my magic) as world-class performances. I showed some of my magic skills to them, which were highly acclaimed by them. In reply to my request to show my skills to Rakhine brethren, they told me to do so on Rakhine State Day. I am very pleased to have an opportunity to make my fellow natives enjoy a wonderful magic performance, which is given in gratitude. Every individual cannot be delightful all the time. I firmly believe that people will be happy provided that I can manage to present magic shows mixed with humour”, he said.

Mr. Top’s performance impressed the crowd.

“To my great delight and honour, this Rakhine State-born magician showed his world-class magic at the invitation of Rakhine State Government on Rakhine State Day. We can have marvelous feelings on seeing such world-class magic shows. This will be a thing of pride for us. I would like him to entertain people in other townships in Rakhine State with these performances in future”, said U KyawZanMaung of the HsatVoe quarter of Sittway.

Officials said after the terrorist attacks in Maungtaw in August, the local populace lost their happiness. With a view to encouraging them to lift up their depression and to get rid of unhappy feelings, such performances were entertained on the ceremony of Rakhine State Day.

Present at the ceremony were Chief Minister U Nyi Pu and wife, Rakhine State Cabinet members and their wives, Rakhine State, district and township departmental heads and local residents. —Zaya, Myint Maung

Harry shows his magic skill at the ceremony to celebrate the 43rd Anniversary Rakhine State Day in Sittway. PHOTO: MYINT MAUNG

Rakhine ethnic women perform traditional dance at the ceremony to celebrate the 43rd Anniversary Rakhine State Day in Maungtaw, Rakhine State. PHOTO: MYINT MAUNG
THE third day of Literary Conference 2017 was conducted with the theme of “Free Literature, Free Voice” yesterday at the Myanmar Convention Centre, Ward 4, Mayangone Township, Yangon, where representatives from literary organisations discussed poetry, culture, education, literature and youth.

The day’s event was held in six different groups. The discussion leaders, titles of the talks, and the participants in yesterday’s morning session included:


Maung Nyein (Danuphyu), San San Nwe (Thayawaddy), Myin Mu Maung Naing Moe, Myay Lat Maung Myint Thu of Myanmar Writers Association.

Ko Yaw Aung, Lupa Aung and San San Nwe (Thayawaddy), Maung Nyo, “Status of National Literature”, Pascal Khoo Thwe and Myay Hmn Lwin.


Gone Du U Thein Naing, Myanmar Literature Lovers Association, San Nyein Oo, “To-day’s Poem”, Maw Min Tha, Nyi (Paokku) and Lin Thei Nyein.


Ma Thida (Sanchaung), Pen Myanmar, “Toward International Literature Circles”, Saya Win Nyein, Pascal Khoo Thwe and Myay Hmn Lwin.

Saya Zaw Lwin Oo, “Towards Right to Safeguard and Duties”, Saya Okka Kyaw, Maung Tha Thi (Ye U), Maung Than Soe (Chauk).

Dan Feng, Myanmar Translation Network, “How to Build a Bridge Between Languages”, Kate Griffin, Nasir Tamarai and Moe That Han.

Writer Hnin Wai Nyein, Myanmar Writers Club, “Writer and Literature Influences”, San San Nwe (Thayawaddy), Maung (Taung Lone Pyai) and Ko Yo Kunt.

Writer Ma Thida (Sanchaung) of Pen Myanmar later commented on the pros and cons of the discussions.

“I participated in leading a discussion on a topic or a subject. There are weaknesses in coming up with concrete suggestions and proposals”, Ma Thida said. “Some speakers are noticed to come as a member of a group and their discussions were based on a particular group. The discussions are not specifically on literature and become drawn out, taking a lot of time. As the conference was being held after a long time had passed, so maturity is lacking. For the conference to become a mature one, it needs to be held in the following years.”

The four-day literary conference ends today. In the first three days, more than 200 literature experts and writers participated in the discussions. Writers, literati, and invited guests were in attendance.

“The three days discussion includes some similar topics. Our committee is reviewing the discussions. Discussion of the same topic will be combined and on the final day (today) announcement on decisions and agreements will be announced”, said conference organising committee vice chairman and poet Maung Swe Thit.

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**Achievement in the Education Sector**

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<th>Year</th>
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<th>Number of Middle Schools in Myanmar</th>
<th>Number of High Schools in Myanmar</th>
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<td>38,107</td>
<td>2,635</td>
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Source: Ministry of Education Information Unit, Central Statistical Organization
Myanmar's ongoing economic reforms with SMEs development

By Sayar Mya (MOFA)

Ver the years, the public’s interest in Myanmar has increased, as the country has become a middle-income country through fundamental improvement of business climate such as a fair and clear investment regime.

In ensuring the SMEs development in Myanmar, a strategic approach should be applied and encouragement should be given for the emergence of new businesses focusing on export and innovation, said Vice-President U Myint Swe, Head of the Myanmar Small and Medium Enterprises Development Work Committee at the committee’s meeting 1/2017 held at the Ministry of Industry in Nay Pyi Taw the other day.

To provide comprehensive support to local SMEs for competitiveness improvement and facilitate technology transfer and productivity improvement, the country needs to become a middle-income one through fundamental improvement of business climate such as a fair and clear investment regime, good infrastructure and supportive business-related systems.

Taking advantages of ongoing economic reforms and open foreign investment policy, progress of democratization, abundant natural resources, inexpensive and good-quality young labour force, growing linkage with the regional economy and potential domestic market, it is needed to ensure investment to export-oriented industries to domestic market-oriented industry, investment to resources-based industry and technology industry.

Meanwhile, remedial measures are to be taken to cope with the weaknesses in investment promotion such as underdeveloped infrastructure, insufficient skilled human resources and residual investment restrictions.

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Lisu Literature Centenary Jubilee held in Myitkyina

Lisu literature centenary jubilee was held under the sponsorship of Myanmar Lisu literature and culture central committee at the central grounds of Lisu literature and culture in Pammati ward, Myitkyina yesterday morning. Lisu literature was invented in 1917. At the festival ceremony, Kachin State Cabinet Member and Minister for Kachin State Development U Nay Win and Director-General of Information and Public Relations Department, the Ministry of Information, U Ye Naing made opening speeches respectively.

Afterward, U RT Yaw Han, Minister for Lisu Ethnic Affairs addressed a speech, contributing donation money of K5 million and providing books on Lisu literature to the committee for convening Lisu literature centenary jubilee on behalf of the Kachin State Government.

In addition, Major General Nyi Nyi Swe, Commander of Northern Command, Minister for Lisu ethnic affairs, Kachin State, U Gu Hsar, Minister for Lisu ethnic affairs, Shan State, U Aung Thein, Patron of Central Committee for Lisu literature and culture, Amyotha Hluttaw Representative U Yaw Na and Chairman of Convening Lisu Literature Centenary Jubilee opened the ceremony by cutting ribbon, with Commander and Minister for Kachin State Development unveiling the monument by pressing the button of the machine, followed by traditional dancing of Kwache of Lisu nationals in the grounds.

Lisu literature centenary jubilee will be held till December 17, with literary talks, singing religious praises, sports including sepak takraw, volleyball and futsal ball games.

Lisu literature was invented in 1913, based on English alphabet and English grammar. For pronunciation, 15 English alphabets was invented in reverse writing, whereas it was published in hand script writing and started to be taught. It has been prescribed on 15th July 1922 under Reg; no GBC. PO 421, Secr 9 [g]. Starting from 1917 it has been being conserved, reaching for 100 years. The present jubilee was being held, organized by Lisu nationals living in China, Thailand, US and other EU countries, it was learnt.

—Kachin State IPRD

SG Min Aung Hlaing attends 70th Anniversary of Myanmar Air Force

70th Anniversary of Myanmar Air Force and inauguration of new aircrafts into the force was held yesterday morning at flight training base in Meiktila where Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attended wearing an Air Force uniform in honor of the Air Force.

First, Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Khin Aung Myint explained about the inauguration of new aircrafts into the force.

Next, Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief delivered a speech saying wars occurring in the world nowadays can be seen as un-balanced wars where air power is gaining in importance. Using the advantage of better air power, opponents were overwhelmed and controlled while air operations were seen to be used primarily. That is why our Air Force needs to be modernized in order to increase its air power said the Senior General.

Afterwards Chief of Staff (Air) Maj-Gen Maung Maung Kyaw announced the inauguration of new aircrafts into the force after which Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing was presented with new aircraft inauguration commemorative gift by Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Khin Aung Myint.

The aircrafts and helicopters then conducted a demonstration fly-by and aerobatic display by squadron.

Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief and party released 70 birds as merit making and then inspected the inaugurated aircrafts while sprinkling the aircrafts with scented water.

Myanmar Air Force 70th Anniversary exhibition opening ceremony was held later in the day in Meiktila cantonment flight training headquarter with the cutting ribbon by the Senior General and wife.—Myanmar News Agency
Group discussion continues on successful completion of nationwide census

Discussion by groups continued yesterday morning at the Myanmar International Convention Centre-2 (MICC-2) on the occasion of the successful completion of the nationwide population and household census.

Central Statistics Organisation Assistant Director Daw Thida Htwe and U Aung Ko Win of United Nations Population Fund discussed the topic under the title “Matters on the Quality of the Census” and Athong Makuty of the Naga National Council spoke on the topic in a discussion titled “Matters on Cooperation.”

Difficulties and challenges faced, opportunities, experiences and lessons learnt, suggestion on future works, processes to be drawn and finding ways to overcome difficulties were discussed by attendees.

Situations encountered during the population and household census 2014, the importance of youth, obtaining of news and information, practical usefulness, importance of the health sector and other sectors were discussed by of Medical Research Department’s Director-General Dr. Kyaw Zin Thant and U Salai Pi Pi @ Salai Wunzapyuang of Chin Nationals Supporting Committee, U Min Zarni Lin of the Socio-Economic Development Group, Executive Director Daw Khin Thet Maw of Social Vision Services and Director Daw Sandar Thant of Socio-Economic Gender Resource Institute joined the discussion.

Afterwards, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population Permanent Secretary U Myint Kyaing explained future work processes to be conducted based on data and information collected from the census. —Myanmar News Agency

Container cranes for Myanmar International Thilawa Terminal arrive

A second batch of Machinery for handling containers at Myanmar International Thilawa Terminal (MITT) arrived at the port in southern Yangon yesterday.

The five container cranes are manufactured by ZPMC company in China.

MITT has been boosting its capacity to handle increasing number of containers and to provide better service to the nearby Thilawa Special Economic Zone since April after seeking permission from the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Myanmar Port Authority and Myanmar Investment Commission.

On completion of the project in early next year, the MITT would possess the highest capacity for handling containers among the ports in Yangon. —Myanmar News Agency

Four of six members of Ava Tailoring family receive long prison sentences

YANGON West District court sentenced four of the six members of the family that was accused of years of physical and emotional abuse of their teenage maids.

The family owned the downtown Yangon shop Ava Tailoring, where three female maids in their teens were employed. The young girls testified they endured years of beatings and enslavement.

Lawyer Hnin Su Aung, who represented the Ava Tailoring family, said Daw Tin Thuazar and Daw Su Mon Latt were each sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for causing grievous hurt, confinement and abating under the Anti-trafficking in Persons Law, plus six years and one month for other violations, for a total prison sentence of 16 years and one month.

U Yazar Tun was sentenced to a total of 13 years and a month in prison, while U Tin Min Latt was sentenced to a total of 9 years and one month in prison.

Two other members of the family, Daw Thiri Latt and U Ko Latt, were acquitted after the court found no evidence to try them. —Myo Min Thein (Myan-gon)

Police detains terrorist suspect in Maungtaw

Police arrested a man on suspicion of planning for terrorist attack in Maungtaw on 13th December.

Mahar Bayzu Raman, a villager from Hmoe Win village in Maungtaw township, was found with a mobile phone using Bangladesh SIM card, 9,230 Bangladeshi Taka, and a registration card issued in Bangladesh.

He has been detained for further interrogation. —Myanmar News Agency
Google crunches data to help NASA find two new planets

SAN FRANCISCO — Alphabet Inc’s Google and NASA said on Thursday that advanced computer analysis identified two new planets around distant stars, including one that is part of the first star system with as many planets as Earth’s solar system.

The research by Google and the University of Texas at Austin that used data from NASA raised the prospects of new insights into the universe by feeding data into computer programmes that can churn through information faster and more in-depth than humanly possibly, a technique known as machine learning.

In this case, software learned differences between planets and other objects by analyzing thousands of data points, achieving 96 per cent accuracy, NASA said at a news conference. The data came from the Kepler telescope which NASA launched into space in 2009 as part of a planet-finding mission that is expected to end next year.

Advancements in hardware and new techniques for machine learning have made it possible in recent years for automated software to tackle data analysis in science, finance and other industries.

Machine learning had not been applied to data acquired by the Kepler telescope until Shallue came up with the idea, he said. “In my spare time, I started Googling for ‘finding exoplanets with large data sets’ and found out about the Kepler mission and the huge data set available,” he said. “Machine learning really shines in situations where there is so much data that humans can’t search it for themselves.”

Vanderburg has received funding through a NASA fellowship aimed at distant-planet researchers. — Reuters

Second phase of Brexit talks will be harder than first - EU’s Juncker

BRUSSELS — The second phase Brexit negotiations will be significantly harder than an already difficult first phase of talks, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said on Friday.

The leaders of the 27 countries remaining in the European Union will give the go-ahead on Friday for the EU’s chief negotiator Michel Barnier to begin talks with London on a transition period and future trade ties with Britain.

“I have extraordinary faith in the British Prime Minister. She has agreed with me and Mr Barnier that the withdrawal agreement will first be formalised and will be voted on and then we will see. The second phase will be significantly harder than the first and the first was very difficult,” Juncker told reporters on arriving for the second day of the EU summit. — Reuters

US negotiator says direct diplomacy needed on North Korea

BANGKOK — The chief US negotiator for North Korea said on Friday the United States should engage in direct diplomacy with Pyongyang alongside sanctions imposed over its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson offered on Thursday to begin talks with North Korea without pre-conditions, but the White House later said no negotiations could be held until North Korea improved its behaviour. “We should exercise direct diplomacy as well as sanctions. That is our policy, which is based on pressure and engagement, and we do want to engage in pressure and diplomacy,” Joseph Yun, US Special Representative for North Korea Policy, told reporters in Bangkok.

Yun travelled to Japan and Thailand this week to meet officials to discuss ways to build pressure on North Korea after its latest ballistic missile test.

On Thursday, Yun met the head of Thailand’s National Security Council, General Wailop Roksanao, and deputy foreign minister Weerasak Phuttranai. “We had very constructive, open-ended discussion,” said Yun. The United States had “no specific requests” for Thailand, he said.

Four French schoolchildren killed as train ploughs into bus

PARIS — Four adolescents were killed when a train smashed into a school bus on a level crossing outside the town of Perpignan in southwestern France on Thursday.

Images from the scene showed the bus split in two, with a long line of emergency vehicles on an approach to the crossing.

Another 29 people were injured in the crash, 11 of them seriously, according to French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe, who travelled immediately to the scene. Most of the injured were schoolchildren aboard the bus, aged 13-17.

Philippe told reporters the authorities were focused on getting accurate information to families, a process “made difficult by the question of identification of those who have died and some of the injured.”

A crisis coordination centre has been set up at Millas town hall on Perpignan’s western outskirts, about 850 kilometres (530 miles) from Paris. According to local media reports, the bus was transporting pupils from the town’s Christian Bourquin college. “All my thoughts are with the victims and their families,” French President Emmanuel Macron said on Twitter.

The causes of the crash are unknown, pending a full investigation, officials said. The bus and train drivers both survived and will be interviewed by police. The train was carrying 25 passengers and travelling at 80 km/h, the regulatory speed for the section of track where the collision occurred, a spokesman for the national SNCF railway told Reuters. Three train passengers sustained relatively minor injuries, according to the interior ministry. — Reuters
Beijing/London — Britain wants closer cooperation with China over its landmark Belt and Road infrastructure scheme, finance minister Philip Hammond said on Friday at the start of a Beijing trip on which he hopes to seal a billion pounds ($1.34 billion) in deals.

Hammond’s visit, the latest installment in long-running economic talks between the two nations, has taken on new importance for Britain as it looks to re-invent itself as a global trading nation after leaving the European Union in 2019.

Meeting Chinese Premier Li Keqiang in Beijing’s Great Hall of the People, Hammond said there were many opportunities to build on their strong relationship.

“I was privileged earlier this year to represent the UK at the first Belt and Road forum and one of the things we will discuss tonight and tomorrow is the opportunity for closer collaboration in delivering the ambitions of the Belt and Road programme,” he said, without elaborating.

President Xi Jinping’s Belt and Road initiative aims to recreate the old Silk Road with massive infrastructure projects to connect China to Europe and beyond.

Li told Hammond that people in China follow developments in Britain and China’s Premier Li Keqian (R) talks with Britain’s Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China, on 15 December 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

South Korea vice finance minister sees Chinese tourists return as ties improve

Seoul — South Korean vice finance minister Ko Hyoung-kwon said on Friday he expects improving diplomatic ties with Beijing to support the country’s economic growth next year as Chinese tourists return to its shores.

Ko’s comments come a day after Chinese President Xi Jinping and his South Korean counterpart Moon Jae-in pledged at a summit in Beijing to move past a spat over Seoul’s deployment of a US missile shield.

“One of many factors that makes next year more optimistic than this year is better Korea-China relations,” Ko told Reuters in an interview in Seoul. He added there would be a resurgence in the visits by Chinese tourists, particularly if President Xi attends the 2018 Winter Olympics in February.

Seoul has requested Xi visit South Korea for the event. The government hopes the games will serve as a turning point for peace on the Korean Peninsula.

For nearly a year, China-South Korea relations have been tense with Beijing angry about the deployment of the US-made Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) anti-missile system in Korea. China claims THAAD’s powerful radar can penetrate deep into its territory.

Ko expects an economic boom from improved relations with China in 2018 would help sustain momentum, which is currently supported by a memory chip boom and facility investments.

He said the economy is likely to expand 3.2 per cent this year, but declined to give an estimate for next year. —Reuters

Britain eyes closer Belt and Road cooperation with China

“We believe that no matter how the situation in Britain and in Europe may evolve, China will continue to hope that there will be steady and sound ground growth of Sino-British and Sino-Europe ties,” Li said.

China is one of the countries with which Britain hopes to sign a free trade pact once it leaves the EU. London and Beijing have been keen to show that Britain’s withdrawal from the bloc will not affect ties.

The focus on a “Golden Era” of relations, trumpeted by both sides in 2015 when then-prime minister David Cameron hosted a state visit by Xi, has cooled under Cameron’s successor Theresa May.

In 2016, May caused a diplomatic spat by unexpectedly deciding to delay approval of a partly-Chinese funded nuclear power project. She later granted it, but not before drawing criticism from Beijing.

Business Minister Greg Clark will travel to Beijing too, along with a delegation including London Stock Exchange CEO Nikhil Rathi and representatives of major financial firms such as BlackRock, HSBC and Standard Chartered Bank.

Talks are expected to focus on a more integrated approach to financial services, new industrial partnerships and economic reform.

Previous rounds of discussions have examined how to develop London as an offshore hub for trading China’s currency and closer integration of the two countries’ stock markets.

Clark will hold energy-specific talks focused on clean and renewable power generation. —Reuters
Oasis star Liam Gallagher lends voice to Christmas climate change campaign

LONDON — Former Oasis front man Liam Gallagher has lent his distinctive voice to a Christmas-themed video produced by an activist group highlighting climate change.

The film, “The Very Hot Snowman,” shows a cartoon snowman, melting under the heat of the sun, while Gallagher’s narration warns “Our earth is too ‘ot, and it’s getting even ‘otter,” and urges people to get involved in a campaign to raise awareness of climate change.

It was produced by director and photographer Rankin, on behalf of The Climate Coalition, an umbrella group of 130 British organisations including the National Trust and Oxfam, advocating for political action on the environment.

Gallagher had a string of hits with Oasis in the late 1990s and early 2000s, including “Live Forever” and “Wonderwall”, before the band split in 2009.

His first album as a solo artist, “As You Were,” was released in October 2017, and topped the UK album charts.—Reuters

Fifty years on the Beatles’ Magical Mystery Tour celebrated

LONDON — A new exhibition has opened at the Beatles Story, the Liverpool museum dedicated to the city’s most famous band.

It celebrates the release of Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band in February. It was also a year of sadness for the band, with the death of John Lennon on the set of his 1980 film “Death of a Salesman”.

The exhibition reveals information, facts and figures about the Magical Mystery Tour film and soundtrack.

Visitors will also be able to view the film on loop in its entirety through the window of a replica tour bus.—Xinhua

Three more women accuse Dustin Hoffman of sexual misconduct

LOS ANGELES — Three more women have accused Oscar-winning actor Dustin Hoffman of sexual misconduct, Hollywood trade publication Variety reported on Thursday, bringing to six the number of people accusing him of impropriety decades ago.

Variety reported that two of the women said Hoffman sexually assaulted them in 1987. A third woman said he exposed himself to her in 1989, when she was 16, and asked for a foot massage, the Variety report said. In the story, two women went on the record and a third was not identified.

Variety quoted Hoffman’s attorney, Mark Neubauer, as saying the accusations were “defamatory falsehoods.”

Neither Neubauer nor Hoffman’s representative immediately replied on Thursday to requests for comment.

Reutters was unable to independently confirm the accusations.

Three other women have come forward in the last six weeks accusing Hoffman of sexual harassment that they said took place more than 30 years ago.

Hoffman issued an apology to the first woman, who was a teenage intern on the set of his 1980 film “Death of a Salesman.” He said in a 1 November statement the behavior the woman described was “not reflective of who I am.”

He has declined comment on the other accusations.

Hoffman has won Oscars for his roles in “Rain Man” and “Kramer vs. Kramer.”—Reuters
World’s steepest funicular railway to open in Switzerland

ZURICH — Swiss technology is due to hit new heights on Friday when the world’s steepest funicular line opens at one of its Alpine resorts.

Swiss President Doris Leuthard will officially open the 52 million-Swiss franc ($52.6 million) project running from Schwyz to the mountain village of Stoos, which lies 1,300 meters (4,300 ft) above sea level in central Switzerland. The barrel-shaped carriages adjust their floors so passengers can still stand upright even as they climb towards the Alpine plateau at inclines of up to 110 per cent.

The train, which will go into public service on Sunday, will climb 743 meters over a span of 1,738 meters, at speeds of up 10 meters per second.

“After 14 years of planning and building, everyone is very proud of this train,” said Ivan Steiner, spokesman for the railway.—Reuters

Japan’s southernmost ski resort opens for the season

MIYAZAKI, Japan — Japan’s southernmost ski resort opened Friday in the Kyushu region for the winter season through early March, as it struggles to attract more visitors by overcoming difficult traffic access and warm winters.

With its highest slope starting at an altitude of 1,610 meters above sea level, the two-course Gokase Highland Ski & Snowboard resort in Miyazaki Prefecture kicked off by opening half of its 1-kilometer-long course for beginners and intermediate skiers.

With the introduction of a gentle slope where beginners and children can practice safely, the resort expects 35,000 visitors this season, 3,000 more than the previous year’s record low.

Although snow was machine-made, Hiroshi Yano, 54, manager of the resort said, “The condition of the snow is fairly good as it’s colder than usual.” More than 300 visitors in colorful attire had enjoyed the first day of the season as of noon Friday.

According to the local town government, which has invested in the public-private operator of the resort, a shutdown has been considered due to declining numbers of visitors. “The business environment is still harsh. We need to strive to draw more visitors by raising the profile,” a Gokase town government official said.

Accessibility does not help the situation. It takes 90 minutes by car from the nearest highway exit and there is no public transport available, according to the official.

The past few years saw lack of snow due to warm winters, another major factor that kept visitors away from the resort in a prefecture which is often associated with tropical mango fruit and palm trees.

Yusaku Nonaka, a 31-year-old snowboarder who brought his 5-year old son and other family members from Fukuoka, said, “We came here because the snow quality is good. I want my son to enjoy it, too, and visit here next year and afterward as well.”—Kyodo News

Decorated kayaks light up Copenhagen canals on Saint Lucia’s Day

COPENHAGEN — A flotilla of kayaks decked in lights and Christmas decorations floated through the canals of central Copenhagen on Wednesday evening to celebrate Saint Lucia’s Day.

Thousands watched from streets and bridges as around 400 kayaks illuminated the Danish capital’s dark canals.

“We have people coming from other northern countries but also Italy and last year we had someone coming from the (United) States so it’s a big thing now,” Tobias Weber-Andersen of Danish Kayak Republic, organizer of the event, told Reuters.

Traditionally Saint Lucia’s Day is celebrated on the evening of 13 December with a procession of singing children dressed in white and led by a “Lucia Bride” wearing a candle crown.

The light-bearing procession in honor of the 3rd-century saint originated in Sweden and was later adapted by the Danes.—Reuters

The barrel-shaped carriages of a new funicular line are seen front of mount Grosser Mythen (1,898 m/6,227 ft above sea level) during sunny winter weather in the Alpine resort of Stoos, Switzerland on 13 December 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS
Spurs away form adds to task at Man City

LONDON — Manchester City host Tottenham Hotspur on Saturday on the back of a record 15 successive Premier League wins, and on the basis of their visitors' recent away form, a 16th victory appears to be the likely outcome.

Tottenham will travel to the Etihad Stadium fourth in the standings following consecutive home wins over Stoke City and Brighton and Hove Albion in the past week, but their position masks troubles on the road.

Having won their first four away league games this season, Mauricio Pochettino’s side have earned just one point and scored only twice in their past four away league matches, losing 1-0 to Manchester United, 2-0 to Arsenal and 2-1 to Leicester City before being held to a 1-1 draw by Watford.

And their prospects against City, who lead the league by 11 points, are dampened further by Tottenham’s tendency under Pochettino to struggle away from home against the best teams in the country. Since he took over as manager in 2014, they have won only one of 17 away matches against Manchester City, Manchester United, Arsenal, Chelsea and Liverpool.

Some comfort can be taken from the fact that the one exception was a 2-1 success at the Etihad Stadium in February 2016, but the two teams were in different situations back then, with Tottenham battling with Leicester City for the Premier League title and Manchester City stumbling towards a fourth-place finish under Manuel Pellegrini.

In the 22 months since, City have evolved from also-rans into one of the most prolific, entertaining and consistent sides in the world, as potent away as they are at home. Pep Guardiola’s team have won seven home league matches in succession and haven’t been beaten at the Etihad Stadium in the league since Chelsea claimed a 3-1 league win on 3 December, 2016.

In eight home games in the league this season, they have scored 28 goals at a rate of 3.5 per game, which suggests Tottenham might struggle to keep a clean sheet and that they will need to score, potentially more than once, to get a result.

They can, however, take hope from the recent performances at the Etihad Stadium of Southampton and West Ham United, who defended deep in numbers and looked to be on course for 1-1 draws until City conjured winners in the 90th and 89th minutes respectively. Should Tottenham get a positive result on Saturday, second-placed Manchester United will have the chance to cut the gap at the top when they visit West Bromwich Albion on Sunday. United bounced back from losing 2-1 to City last Sunday by beating Bournemouth 1-0 on Wednesday and should fancy their chances against a West Brom side who haven’t won in the league since 19 August and who failed to score in each of the three matches new manager Alan Pardew has been in charge.

Third-place Chelsea sit 14 points adrift of City and host Southampton on Saturday, while fifth-placed Liverpool travel to Bournemouth on Sunday. —Reuters

AFC boosts prize money for upcoming football competitions

KyawZin Lin

The prize money for two leading club competitions, the AFC Champions League and the AFC Cup, have been increased for the coming season, according to a 9 December announcement by the Asia Football Confederation.

The AFC Champions League winners will receive US$4 million – up from $3m in 2018 while the club that lifts the AFC Cup will pick up $1.5m next season rather than the previous $1m.

The AFC Champions League is second only to European club competitions in terms of prize money, and in addition to the US$1m increase for the winner, the runners-up will get an extra $500,000, taking the purse to $2m.

There is also the introduction of a travel subsidy in the early stages with an increase in prize money to $100,000 in the round of 16, $150,000 in the quarter-finals and a rise of $50,000 in the semi-finals, taking the total to $250,000 per team.

In the AFC Cup, the winner rises of $500,000 is in addition to the increase for the runners-up to $750,000 from $500,000.

All the increases will come into force in the 2018 AFC Champions League and the AFC Cup, according to the AFC.

Courtois says Chelsea expect tough challenge from Saints

LONDON — Premier League champions Chelsea will not underestimate Southampton on Saturday as they aim to keep up the pressure on the sides around them in the top four, goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois has said.

Chelsea are third in the league, 14 points adrift of leaders Manchester City and three behind second-placed Manchester United after 17 games, and Courtois says the London side must continue winning to either chase down City or at least finish second. “It’s a tough game, Southampton drew against Arsenal and it’s always difficult against them home or away,” Courtois told the club’s website. (www.chelseafc.com)

“We have to be careful because these are the games we have to win if we want to stay near the top and try to close the gap on Man City. Obviously we are far away but we want to keep on pushing and if we can’t catch them, we want to finish second.

“It was very good that we showed from the start we wanted to win against Huddersfield and that’s the mentality we need in every game.”

Chelsea beat promoted Huddersfield Town 3-1 on Tuesday to maintain a four-point gap above Tottenham Hotspur, Liverpool and Burnley with seventh-placed Arsenal a further point behind.

Southampton are 11th in the standings and winless in their last four league games. —Reuters

Chelsea’s Thibaut Courtois. PHOTO: REUTERS