Upper House Speaker attends ceremony to mark upgrading of school in Pyawbwe

NAY PYI TAW, 17 Aug—As the government helped establish businesses to reduce poverty as a short-term measure and increased health and education budgets as a long-term measure, schools can be upgraded. Upper House Speaker U Khin Aung Myint said at the ceremony to mark the upgrading of the affiliated middle school of Myinte Village and Thanekon Village in Pyawbwe Township into a middle school on Saturday.

Upgrading schools is a measure to raise the socioeconomic life of locals, he added. In conclusion, he urged teachers to train and nurture students to become ones who will contribute to the democratic government system.

Then the upper house speaker unveiled the signboard of the upgraded school. Afterwards, the upper house speaker met with locals in Yan Aung Village Tract in the township.

At the meeting, he said that over K80 million was spent on rural development projects in the Yameothin District in the previous financial years while the government is striving for development through three phases of education budgets as a long-term measure.

Upper House Speaker U Khin Aung Myint says increase in education budgets results in upgrading of schools as he opens upgraded school in Pyawbwe Township.—MNA

First ever meeting between peace and ceasefire bodies and political parties on 18 Aug

YANGON, 17 Aug—The Union Peacemaking Working Committee (UPWC) and the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT) will meet for the first time with political parties, including the National League for Democracy (NLD), the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), the National Unity Party (NUP) and ethnic alliance parties, all of which are based in seven states, according to U Hla Maung Shwe, special advisor to the Myanmar Peace Centre.

Their meeting will take place at MPC on 18 August, the day on which the nationwide ceasefire plan initiated by President U Thein Sein will turn three years.

U Hla Maung Shwe described the meeting as an initial step to all-inclusiveness in the future politics of the country as well as the political dialogues, adding that the meeting will be an opportunity for ethnic parties to express their views. He said that over K80 million was spent on rural development projects in the Yameothin District in the previous financial years while the government is striving for development through three phases of education budgets as a long-term measure.

UPWC, NCCT making efforts to conclude nationwide ceasefire agreement, to hold political dialogues as soon as possible

The Union Peacemaking Working Committee and the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team of ethnic armed organizations issued a joint statement dated 17 August, 2014.

The unofficial translation of the joint statement is as follows;

17th August 2014, Yangon

(1) The delegation led by Vice Chairman Union Minister U Aung Min of the Union Peacemaking Working Committee and the delegation of the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team led by U Naing Han Thar conducted negotiations over the draft of the nationwide ceasefire agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and ethnic armed organizations from 15 to 17 August at the Myanmar Peace Centre on Shweli Road in Yangon.

(2) Both parties conducted frank negotiations over the remaining details left from the negotiations from 21 to 23 May 2014 and the negotiations resulted in many successes.

(3) Both parties agreed to meet again in September 2014 and conduct negotiations over a few remaining details left from the negotiations from 15 to 17 August, 2014.

(4) Members of both parties are making efforts to conclude the nationwide ceasefire agreement and to hold political dialogues as soon as possible.

UPWC and NCCT make 26 paragraphs in draft ceasefire agreement during a three-day negotiation in Yangon.

PHO HTAUNG

UPWC and NCCT make 26 paragraphs in draft ceasefire agreement during a three-day negotiation in Yangon.

As the government helped establish businesses to reduce poverty as a short-term measure and increased health and education budgets as a long-term measure, the government is striving for development through three phases of education budgets as a long-term measure.

An advisor to the NCCT said: “The draft ceasefire agreement is very fundamental for future political dialogues. So, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services are required to sign this agreement. The signatories from our side will be chairman or general secretaries of respective armed groups.”

The three-day meeting discussed the remaining facts from the negotiation in May, and could make agreements on many conflicting issues.

Another ceasefire meeting will be held in September 2014. Naing Han Thar, leader of NCCT, said: “I want to convey a good message to the people under 60-year civil war that we could sign the nationwide ceasefire agreements soon to continue political dialogues.”

Ye Myaw Nandar

Fifth ceasefire negotiation makes 26 agreements

YANGON, 17 Aug—The Union Peacemaking Working Committee (UPWC) of the government and the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT) made 26 agreements out 31 paragraphs in the draft agreement discussed during the fifth meeting from 15 to 17 August.

U Hla Maung Shwe, special advisor of Myanmar Peace Centre, said during the press release that the remaining five paragraphs are objectives and aims under the chapter 2, and truce affairs under the chapter 3, the guarantees of political dialogues under the chapter 5, the working process during the negotiation period under the chapter 6 and the general issues under the chapter 7.

Dr. Salai Lian Sakhong, an advisor to the NCCT said: “The draft ceasefire agreement is very fundamental for future political dialogues. So, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services are required to sign this agreement. The signatories from our side will be chairman or general secretaries of respective armed groups.”

The three-day meeting discussed the remaining facts from the negotiation in May, and could make agreements on many conflicting issues.

Another ceasefire meeting will be held in September 2014. Naing Han Thar, leader of NCCT, said: “I want to convey a good message to the people under 60-year civil war that we could sign the nationwide ceasefire agreements soon to continue political dialogues.”

Ye Myaw Nandar
Union Government forms Anti-Money Laundering Central Board

NAY PYI TAW, 17 Aug—The Government of Myanmar has formed a 15-member central body to combat money laundering, according to sources.

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar formed the Anti-Money Laundering Central Board chaired by Union Minister for Home Affairs in accordance with Section 6, Chapter (4) of the 2014 Anti-Money Laundering Law on 4 August, the statement said.

Representatives from the Supreme Court of the Union, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Union Attorney General’s Office, the Central Bank of Myanmar, the General Administration Department, the Bureau of Special Investigation, Land Records Department, the Customs Department, the Department of Transborder Crime of Myanmar Police Force act as members of the board with the chief of Myanmar Police Force as the secretary and the head of the financial investigation branch of the MPF as the joint secretary.

The central body is responsible for formulating policies on anti-money laundering and combating financial support for terrorism, taking action in coordination with government departments and organizations concerned in accordance with the policies, developing national strategies and implementing them, carrying out national level risk assessments, issuing directives for reporting organizations, cooperation with international and regional organizations and neighbouring countries, guidance and formulating policies on educative measures and capacity building process for anti-money laundering and combating financial support for terrorism and submitting reports on work of progress to the union government.

The central body will also form the financial investigation team, scrutinizing team and the reporting team to combat money laundering and financial support for terrorism, according to sources. MNA

Sports activities held in Ayeyawady Region

PATHEIN, 17 Aug—The Ayeyawady Region Chief Minister’s Cup Inter-State/Region Swimming Championship kicked off in Pathein on Saturday morning, attended by Chairman of Myanmar Olympic Committee Union Minister for Sports U Tint Hsan and Ayeyawady Region Chief Minister U Thein Aung.

The Union minister and Commander of Southwest Command Maj-Gen Lu Aye launched the men’s and women’s mini marathon events.

At Pathein Kanthaya swimming pool, the union minister and the chief minister attended the opening ceremony of the swimming championship.

The union minister presented sports equipment and mascots of the 27th SEA Games to the region chief minister. Presidents of sports federations presented cash donations to the fund of Ayeyawady Region Sports and Physical Education Committee to the region minister for Development Affairs.

The union minister and party enjoyed participation of the Inter-District Sepak Takraw Contest at Koethein Stadium in Pathein. MNA

People welcome construction of Ayeyawady Bridge (Htigyaing)

HTIGYAING, 17 Aug—The Government is striving for ensuring equitable development of both west and east parts of Ayeyawady River.

The Ayeyawady Bridge (Htigyaing) will link the eastern and western parts of Ayeyawady River.

Sagaing Region government funds the construction of the bridge in 2014-15 fiscal year. Superintending Engineers and parties of Public Works are carrying out construction of the bridge in Htigyaing and in Myataung of Htigyaing Township.

The construction of the bridge started on 15 March 2014. The lower structure of the bridge is of reinforced concrete type and the upper structure, of steel frame and prestressed RC type. The main structure of the bridge will be 1,807 metres long. The approach bridge on Myataung bank will be 274.3 metres long and Htigyaing bank, 274.3 metres long. The bridge will be 2,356.1 metres in length and 10.2 metres in width, with 28 feet wide motorway flanked by three feet wide pedestrian. The bridge can withstand 60 tons of loads. The region government allotted K56.640 billion for construction of the bridge.

As the bridge will be a drive for smooth transport process in the region, local people including bus workers heartily welcome the construction of the Ayeyawady River crossing bridge that will be completed in December 2015. NLM-018

Tenders scrutinized for construction tasks in rural areas of Taninthayi Region

DAWEI, 17 Aug—The tender scrutiny for rural development tasks to be undertaken by Taninthayi Region Department of Rural Development in 2014-15 fiscal year was held at the city hall in Dawei of Taninthayi Region on 15 August.

Chairman of the tender scrutiny committee Region Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Breeding Dr Win Aung and officials explained development undertakings in rural regions.

Director of the department U Thet Paing explained the disciplines for the tender.

The company responsible persons and entrepreneurs participated in the tender competitiveness.

The director announced the winners in the tender.

A total of 85 entrepreneurs joined the competitiveness in construction of rural roads and bridges, water supply, electrification, latrine and housing estates of the department in the region.

Taninthayi Region

IPRD
Union Information Minister promises closer ties with media professions

YANGON, 17 Aug—Newly appointed Union Minister for Information U Ye Htut on Sunday said that the associations of writers and journalists are the closer partners of his ministry to work together for the development of state and democratic transition processes.

The union minister also promised to help media groups in covering news of the state departments and in the development of journalistic skills, as well as media ethics by cooperating with Myanmar Journalists Association.

After the meeting with the members of MJA at its office in Yangon, union information minister said: “President U Thein Sein has said that civil societies including NGOs are the partners in the efforts of state development and democratic transition processes. I also accept that the associations of writers and journalists are the close partners of our ministry. To prove this, I, myself, met with these professions at this office.”

The minister also said that arrangements will be made to hold monthly-meetings between the Ministry of Information and MJA, and to invite heads of state departments to answer the questions from MJA and the Foreign Correspondent’s Club (FCC).

He added that the Ministry of Information will take part in some activities such as the Breakfast Forum of MJA.

Pho Thandar Kyaw, patron of MJA, said: “I feel that today’s discussion between new union information ministry and MJA is the dawn of media freedom which has been disappeared for decades, and I understand that the meeting shows appreciation of media freedom for Myanmar journalists.”

The veteran journalist added that the newspapers and government mechanisms are seemingly standing as rivals or as partners at the same time, but there will be no result of ‘win’ or ‘defeat’.

He also requested to the information minister to help establish more understanding with state departments.

The union minister then said: “While we recognize journalists and media organisations as our partners, we hope similar regard from these media professions. Based on previous experiences, some persons are assuming our ministry as an obstacle in media industry. There might be some controversial issues and different views among us. This is the mainstream in a democratic society. We will have to discuss the differences without viewing each other as enemies or disturbances. This is my clear message.”

U Ye Htut, former deputy information minister, was promoted to Union Minister for Information on 1 August, and the appointment was announced days after former minister of information U Aung Kyi announced his resignation July 29. He became the spokesperson of President in January 2013.—MNA

Yangon Youth and Mental Health Forum focuses on youth development

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 17 Aug—The government should consider modalities suggested by international education specialists when creating a perfect action plan for Myanmar’s education sector, according to the founder of Smile Education Training Institute.

May Palè Thwe suggested at the Youth and Mental Health Forum on Sunday in Yangon that the action plan should be designed to help the youth improve their capacity on their own initiatives through after-schooling programmes, which she said would be part of the plan.

Organized by the Myanmar Youth Initiative, the forum focused on all-round development of youths.

The forum covered positive and negative effects of mental health, parental influence, and emotional support gained through philanthropic work and extracurricular activities.

At the forum, Sein Wit Yee shared her knowledge on how to improve individual mental health, calling for the youth to have discussion with their parents to build a mutual understanding, to promote parent-children relations and to win trust.

Zwe Pyae Phyoe, 23, who provides free education services to matriculation students, expressed his view that most young people feel depressed as their parents force them to re-place their own natural bent. According to a survey, Myanmar has 16 million young people, but statistical data of youth with mental health problems are not available.

A recent UN survey shows that one-fifth of young people across the world experience a mental health condition every year.—NLM

Mutual understanding between parents and children is one of the topics discussed at Youth and Mental Health Forum.

Photo: Khaing Thanda Lwin

Meiktila asks permission for PhaungdawU Pagoda festival

Meiktila, 17 Aug—Located in Mandalay Region, the town of Meiktila boasts 23 historic pagodas which were built by kings of ancient times. One prominent pagoda is PhaungdawU Pagoda, which is a floating temple in the shape of a mythical bird.

King Alaungsithu built the pagoda, whose festival dates back 130 years. Every year, the pagoda sees its festival come alive from 3 to 8 September. It is widely believed that the festival has great symbolic significance of fine weather patterns and bumper harvests.

A communal violence that broke out on 20 March last year in the town forced the pagoda festival to lead to a one-year suspension.

In a bid to resume the festival, local administrative officials organized a meeting but failed to reach an agreement on grounds of security, the upshot that disappointing visitors.

Townspersons are eager to observe the pagoda festival on a grand scale this year in the hope of enjoying better climatic conditions and harvests.

The board of trustees commented that the festival, if observed, would receive funds needed for the renovation of the pagoda.

Another group that joins the trustees and townsfolk in support of holding the festival is street vendors, who earn their living by selling things at festivals of famous pagodas in big cities. The board of trustees at the PhaungdawU Pagoda has decided to bring the issue to authoritative bodies concerned to obtain the permission to hold the festival.—NLM-018

Cultivation of GAP paddy demonstrated

MYAWADY, 17 Aug—With the aim of encouraging peasants to adopt systematic cultivation techniques, systematic cultivation of GAP paddy strain was demonstrated in Meikaw Village in Myawady Township on Saturday.

Chairman of the District Agriculture and Livestock Breeding Supervisory Committee and District Commissioner U Lwin Ko Oo, departmental officials and farmers from six villages nearby studied the cultivation of GAP paddy strain.

District Officer of the Agriculture Department Daw Than Yi demonstrated the cultivation techniques, Hein Lin Aung (PRD)
**Militants abduct 11 de-miners in Afghanistan**

**Ghazni, (Afghanistan), 17 Aug — Militants abducted 11 de-miners in Ghazni Province with Ghazni city as its capital 125 km south of Kabul late Saturday night, spokesman for provincial government Shafiq Nang said on Sunday. “A group of de-miners were on their way from Kandahar to Kabul city when armed militants stopped their bus on the highway in Ghazni Province and took away 11 of them to unknown location on Saturday night,” Nang told Xinhua.

Without giving more details, he added that search operations had been launched to locate and secure their safe release. He also didn’t rule out the involvement of Taleban militants in kid-napping the de-miners and taking them to Taleban hideouts in Andar district. Taleban militants have yet to make comment. However, Taleban had abducted 18 de-miners couple of months ago but set them free after mediation made by tribal elders.—Xinhua

**Gov’t eyes fund to develop military technology with universities**

**Tokyo, 17 Aug — The Defence Ministry plans to create a fund to develop military technology by aiding research projects at universities and other civilian institutions, government sources said on Saturday.**

In a move aimed at keeping down development costs amid a move by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to expand Japan’s defence capabilities, the ministry plans to seek roughly 2 billion yen for the fund in its budget request for fiscal 2015 beginning next April, rising to 6 billion yen in three years, the sources said.

The fund, which will be modeled after the US Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency, or DARPA, will finance promising projects in fields such as the development of surveillance radar technology and of new materials to be used in aircraft.

The ministry is currently developing a replacement to the Air Self-Defence Force’s F-2 fighter jet. However, many research institutions in Japan remain reluctant to cooperate in the development of technology that can be diverted to military use due to feelings of regret over their history of aiding military research during World War II. The ministry has, therefore until now, developed defence technology on its own.

In May, the University of Tokyo turned down a request from the ministry to help find the cause of defects in the next-generation C-2 transport aircraft that were detected during stress tests.

Abe’s Cabinet in July approved a reinterpretation of the pacifist Constitution to allow the Self-Defence Forces to exercise the right to collective self-defence, or coming to the aid of allies under armed attack even if Japan is not directly attacked.

The government has also eased Japan’s decades-old self-imposed ban on arms exports.—Kyodo News

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**Public opinion solicited on draft defence transportation law**

**Beijing, 17 Aug — The Legislative Office of China’s State Council has begun to solicit public opinion on a draft national defence transportation law.**

China first issued a regulation on national defence transportation in 1995. The draft law improves coordination among infrastructure, material storage, transportation facilities and different departments.

The draft law encourages civilians and organizations to provide suitable transportation for defence through tax breaks and other policy supports.

Organizations and individuals are not allowed to transfer civilian vehicles suitable for national defence to foreign individuals or organizations without permission from provincial-level departments, according to the draft law.

The draft law also clarifies punishments for dereliction of duty, corruption, embezzlement and leaking secrets about national defence transportation.

Individuals and public organizations can visit www.chinalaw.gov.cn or send letters and emails to share opinions on the draft law. The deadline is 15 September.—Xinhua

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**Chinese national charged with hacking US defence contractors**

**New York, 17 Aug — A Chinese business- man has been indicted in California on charges he hacked the computer systems of Boeing Co and other US defence contractors and stole confidential plans for military aircraft, federal prosecutors said on Friday. According to the indictment in federal court in Los Angeles, Su Bin traveled to the United States at least 10 times between 2008 and 2014 and worked with two unidentified co-conspirators based in China to steal the data.**

Prosecutors said the trio stole plans relating to the C-17 military transport plane and F-22 and F-35 fighter jets, and attempted to sell them to Chinese companies.

Su is charged with unauthorized computer access, stealing trade secrets and violating federal laws that require a license from the US State Department to export defence-related technical data. He faces up to 30 years in prison.

Su was arrested in June in Canada, where he was attempting to establish residency, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Court documents did not list an attorney for Su.—Reuters

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**Indonesian Air Force jet fighters fly over the sky as part of the events marking Indonesia’s 69th Independence Day in Jakarta, Indonesia on 17 Aug, 2014. Indonesia gained independence from the Netherlands in 1945.** —Xinhua

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Photo taken on 17 Aug, 2014 shows the site of explosion in Bangkok, Thailand. A large boiler of a cloth dyeing factory exploded and injured 21. —Xinhua

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Photo taken on 17 Aug, 2014 shows the site of explosion in Bangkok, Thailand. A large boiler of a cloth dyeing factory exploded and injured 21. —Xinhua

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New Light of Myanmar Monday, 18 August, 2014
Gov’t begins seabed survey for US Futenma base transfer

NAKAMA, 17 Aug — The Defence Ministry on Sunday started a seabed survey for landfill work off the coast of Nago, Okinawa Prefecture, at the planned relocation site for the US Futenma airbase, amid protests from local residents opposed to the base transfer.

Small boats carrying protesters tried to approach a survey vessel but were blocked by Japan Coast Guard ships. The landfill work for the base transfer has been approved by Okinawa Gov Hirokazu Nakaima, but Okinawa residents want the base moved outside the prefecture.

Bore holes are to be drilled at 16 locations off the Henoko district of Nago to investigate the strength of the seafloor to prepare for landfill work necessary to build an airstrip.

Japan and the United States have agreed to relocate the US Marine Corps Futenma Air Station from a crowded residential area of Ginowan to the less populated Henoko. The survey is to be completed by 30 November.

At the time of Nakaima’s landfill approval in December, the Japanese and US governments expected the replacement facility to be completed in nine years.

Kyodo News

European man’s remains found in ancient Chinese tomb

YINCHUAN, 17 Aug — The remains of a human skull found in a 1,400-year-old tomb in China possibly belonged to a man of European origin, an initial investigation by scientists revealed on Sunday.

The skull was found in the M1401 tomb in Guyuan City in northwest China’s Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. “The man had a protruding nasal bone and a sunk nasion, which are typical features of Europeans,” said Zhang Quanchao, professor with the Research Centre for Chinese Frontier Archaeology of Jilin University.

Zhang believes the skull belonged to a 40-year-old man of European origin.

Further excavation is needed for a firm conclusion, he said.

“If we can find his teeth and more bones, we will have more precise judgement about his age,” he said. The tomb was first discovered in the 1980s. Illegal excavation was reported this year, and archaeologists began to unearth the tomb in June for protection.

More than 40 clay figures, copper coins and a number of murals were found in the tomb, according to Zhu Cunshi, head of the archaeological team.

Zhu said the tomb was built in the early Tang Dynasty (618-907). Ningxia is along the ancient Silk Road that connected China with Europe through commerce. — Xinhua

Curfew takes hold in troubled streets of Ferguson

FERGUSON, 17 Aug — A group of protesters angry at the shooting death of a black teenager by a white police officer remained on the streets of Ferguson, Missouri, early on Sunday morning past a declared curfew, as police gathered nearby in a tense standoff.

Missouri Governor Jay Nixon declared a state of emergency after a week of racially charged protests and looting over the 9 August fatal shooting of 18-year-old Michael Brown in the suburban St Louis community. The curfew will run from midnight until 5 a.m. CDT (0500 to 1000 GMT), officials said.

The protesters remained in the street past the curfew under a downpour of rain, with some chanting, “No justice, no curfew, no peace”, while others implored the crowd not to move forward towards police. Police estimated the number of protesters remaining in the street at about 150 people.

On Saturday night, the mood among hundreds of protesters on a main road in Ferguson was tense and defiant, following a number of other demonstrations in the town in recent days. Dozens of helmet-clad officers holding full-length shields took position near demonstrators in the rain.

“The curfew is going to make things worse,” said protestor Phonso Scott, 24. “I think the cops are going to get violent tonight, but they can’t lock us all up.”

A running series of protests erupted in Ferguson after police officer Darren Wilson, 28, shot and killed Brown as he and a friend walked down a street that runs through an apartment complex where Brown’s grandmother lives.

On Saturday afternoon, Nixon and other officials came face to face with angry members of the community during a tense news conference at a church near Ferguson. “The eyes of the world are watching. This is the test of whether a community, this community, any community, can break the cycle of fear, distrust and violence, and replace them with peace, strength and, ultimately, justice,” Nixon, a Democrat, told the gathering. — Reuters

Protesters gesture and voice their opinions about police officers near Missouri Highway Patrol officers during ongoing demonstrations in reaction to the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri on 16 Aug, 2014. — Reuters
German security recorded at least one Kerry conversation

US Secretary of State John Kerry waves as he steps aboard his aircraft in Sydney on 13 Aug, 2014.  

REUTERS

BERLIN, 17 Aug — Germany’s foreign intelligence agency recorded at least one phone conversation held by US Secretary of State John Kerry, a German magazine said on Saturday, potentially embarrassing Berlin which has reprimanded Washington for its surveillance.

Der Spiegel cited unnamed sources as saying security agents at Germany’s BND had intercepted Kerry’s words when he was in the Middle East negotiating between Israelis, Palestinians and Arab negotiators in peace talks to end a war that has claimed the lives of 200,000 people.

Kerry was Secretary of State and Kerry’s predecessor, Condoleezza Rice, were willing to forgive her former husband, a 50-year-old war pleaded for the National Security Agency (NSA) contractor Edward Snowden that Washington spied on German officials and bugged the phone of Chancellor Angela Merkel.

The dispute was re-quired in July when Germany’s Federal Prosecutor arrested Markus R, a 31-year old employee of Germany’s foreign intelligence agency (BND), on suspicion of spying for the Americans.

A BND spokeswoman said in an e-mail concerning the Spiegel report: “We decline to comment.”

The recording of at least one of Kerry’s phone calls seemed to have been immediately deleted, the magazine said in a pre-publication copy of an article. It did not give any evidence for this.

On Friday, German media reported that German security agents tapped a conversation involving Kerry’s predecessor, Hillary Clinton, while she was Secretary of State and had not immediately deleted the recording.

Spiegel said that phone call had taken place in 2012 between Clinton and former UN chief Kofi Annan, who had just returned from negotiations in Syria and wanted to brief Clinton.

Both Germany’s government and a spokeswoman for the National Security Council at the White House declined on Friday to comment on the reports.

The magazine cited unnamed security sources as saying several US officials had been intercepted by the BND when making phone calls via satellite in a plane but that these interceptions had been unintentional “bycatch”.

A BND spokeswoman told Reuters Germany was not tapping the phones of allied countries and said the United States was not a target.

“Any accidental recordings are deleted immediately,” she added.

A spokesman for the German government said it was up to the parliamentary control committee to deal with the accusations.

Bild newspaper cited a US secret service employee as saying the phone calls of the secretary of state were encrypted just like those of the president so it would be “impressive if the BND was able to crack this encryption” and it was more likely Clinton’s statements were intercepted on an unsecured line.

Relations between the United States and Germany were hit last year by revelations by former US National Security Agency (NSA) contractor Edward Snowden that Washington spied on German officials and bugged the phone of Chancellor Angela Merkel.

The dispute was revived in July when Germany’s Federal Prosecutor arrested Markus R, a 31-year old employee of Germany’s foreign intelligence agency (BND), on suspicion of spying for the Americans.

A BND spokeswoman said on Friday they had discovered documents showing the German government had ordered the BND to spy on a NATO partner state, without naming the country. On Saturday Der Spiegel said Turkey was and still is the target.

Merkel said in an interview last month that the United States and Germany had fundamentally different conceptions of the role of the intelligence service, and she stressed the Cold War was over.

Former Senator Marina Silva attends a plenary voting session of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, to try to obtain registration for the creation of a party named Rede Sustentabilidade (Sustainability Network), to contest the 2014 presidential elections in Brazil, in Brasilia on 3 Oct, 2013.—REUTERS

Brazil plans to launch Marina Silva presidential bid

BRASILIA, 17 Aug — The Brazilian Socialist Party plans to launch environmentalist Marina Silva as its presidential candidate next week, replacing party leader Eduardo Campos who was killed in a plane crash, a senior party official said on Saturday.

The PSB, as the party is known, has agreed to rally around a Silva candidacy after she pledged to honour the party’s programme and its regional alliances, said Beto Albuquerque, a party congressman from the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul.

“She will be the PSB candidate and she will honour those agreements,” Albuquerque told Reuters. “Marina already signalled she will take over the candidature.”

Silva’s candidacy, along with the name of her running mate, is expected to be announced after a party meeting scheduled for 20 August, he said.

Concern among some prominent PSB members about Silva’s conservationist views and other issues such as economic policy were the main obstacles to her nomination.—Reuters

Colombia’s war victims ask country to support peace talks

HAVANA, 17 Aug — Victims of Colombia’s 50-year-old war pleaded with peace negotiators to reach a deal and said they were willing to forgive heinous acts of cruelty, urging Colombians to unite behind the effort to end the bloodshed.

Twelve victims from all sides in the Colombian conflict addressed peace negotiators in Havana on Saturday, marking the first time victims have been given an official voice in peace talks to end a war that has killed 200,000 people.

In all 60 victims will speak to representatives of the Colombian government and leftist guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), who have been working toward a comprehensive peace plan with Cuba as host for nearly two years.

“If we who have been directly affected by violence can take this step and have this encounter, why can’t the rest of the country? Why can’t the rest of the country forgive,” said Constanza Turbay, whose entire family of politicians was killed by the FARC.

One of her brothers died while kidnapped in 1997. Another brother, president of a peace commission, was assassinated along with their mother and five other people in 2000.

She and 11 other victims of the FARC, the army and right-wing paramilitary groups spoke to reporters on Saturday after addressing peace negotiators behind closed doors.

President Juan Manuel Santos won re-election in June after staking his political future on peace talks, while challenger Oscar Zuluaga criticized the talks and threatening to end them. Many Colombians flatly oppose negotiations, preferring to keep military pressure on the FARC.

“Those who aren’t betting on peace have never lived through what we have lived through,” said Angel Maria Giraldo, whose brother was kidnapped and killed by the FARC.

Others present had relatives killed in army or paramilitary massacres, or were displaced by the fighting.

Their appearance added a personal human drama to a process that has been largely marked by political pronouncements from the rebels and government representatives.

“I have worked with victims for 30 years on every continent and in many armed conflicts and this has been one of the most moving experiences for me,” said Fabrizio Hochschild, a U.N. representative deeply involved in the Colombian talks.

A commission led by the United Nations, the Roman Catholic Church and Colombia’s National University chose the victims, some of whom were sharply critical of the FARC or the army.

Their role as official participants in the talks is internationally unprecedented, Hochschild said.

Each expressed distinct views on the war but all of them want a country in which their children and grandchildren will not suffer as they did,” Hochschild said.

Among them was Jaime Peña, the father of one of 32 young people who disappeared and were assassinated by a paramilitary group in 1998. 

Reuters

Victims of the Colombian armed conflict attend a conference for peace talks between Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the Colombian government in Havana on 17 Aug, 2014. The banner reads, “Dialogue of peace”.  

REUTERS
US says conducts air strikes in Iraq near Arbil and Mosul dam

WASHINGTON, 17 Aug — The United States on Saturday conducted air strikes in Iraq against Islamic State fighters near the Kurdish capital of Arbil and the Mosul dam, the US Central Command said.

The Mosul dam, Iraq’s big-
PERSPECTIVES

Monday, August 18, 2014
Punishment not enough to reduce traffic congestion
By Aung Khin

A total of 6,600 buses from 352 lines are running in Yangon with a population of around 7.8 million while the nine traffic rule enforcement groups are patrolling in the business city to check vehicles.

However, road accidents or traffic congestions are still irritating road users from day to night especially during the rush hours. The drivers blame on their undisciplined counterparts who breach the traffic rules and regulations.

Although the traffic rule squads are tightening measures to reduce congestions, more actions are being needed to wipe out unreasonable traffic jams by using members of traffic police forces. Some drivers disregard the rules at the junctions without using proper lane.

On the other hand, Myanmar people are not accustomed to traffic rules and crossing the road randomly without using pedestrian crossings, causing problems for the drivers.

Therefore, both road users and drivers should change their mindset on traffic rules to reduce congestion or road accidents. In 122 road accidents occurred from January to May this year, 41 people died and 358 others were injured.

The office figure of road transport administrations in 2013 has shown that around 4.02 million vehicles, including 3,418 million motorcycles, 409,411 passenger cars, 110,705 trucks, and 21,043 buses, are operating in Myanmar.

Traffic rule enforcement committees are conducting many campaigns to prevent road accidents and traffic jams through radio, TV and roadside posters. These education programmes and punishments are not enough to solve this problem. More traffic police forces should monitor vehicles and road users by taking actions against those who ignore the rules, avoiding any bribe.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

The unfolding civil war in the eastern part of Ukraine has been a topic of extensive coverage on the pages of the New Light of Myanmar in the recent months. However, I have noticed that your reputable newspaper relies almost exclusively on the western news agencies as the source of information. As a result, your readers receive distorted and biased picture about the events in Ukraine and the position of the Russian Federation.

In fact, in February 2014 democratically elected President and the Government of the Ukraine were overthrown by force with open Western support. Installed puppet regime unleashed a war against people in Donetsk and Lugansk regions is the root cause of the tragic incident with Malayian Airlines flight MH17. The coverage of this tragedy is perhaps most stricken example of how easily the Western media put aside the norms of unbiased and balanced reporting. Old tricks such as intentional omission of facts or direct lies have been used. Immediately after the accident the Western sources put the blame on the forces which oppose Kiev saying that the Ukrainian army didn’t have anti-aircraft missile systems in the proximity of the crash site. This is a lie.

On July 21 Russian Ministry of Defence presented satellite data proving that on the day of the crash on July 17 Ukrainian military deployed 4 to 5 anti-aircraft systems in the conflict zone. Russian monitoring systems detected high activity of the Ukrainian anti-aircraft radars of this day. Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777 was approached by a Ukrainian air force aircraft, believed the OSCE to SU-25 fighter chart hover at the distance of 3-5 km. Russian Aviation agency posed 32 specific technical questions about the incident including request to Ukrainians authorities to release the tape recordings of the flight controllers who followed the MH-17. None of the questions were answered and the recordings have not been made public.

It is a lie that the local militia obstructs the investigation. In reality continued artillery fire and tanks movements from the Ukrainian side together with political games connected to the unwillingness to deal with “rebel” authorities are the main reasons for the delay of the investigation. It should be mentioned that Malayaian experts and representatives of the OCSE received full cooperation from the government of Donetsk People’s Republic in getting access of the site of the incident.

Russian President Vladimir Putin as well as Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on numerous occasions called for comprehensive independent international investigations on the cause of the crash of Malaysian Airlines plane. Before it is completed Moscow, unlike our western partners, refuses from conclusions. However, vicious propaganda campaign and hiding of information (in contrast to the Russian satellite data, photos from American spy satellite have never been released) create strong impression that Washington and Kiev are in fact not interested in finding the truth. They already put the blame on the local people and Moscow. These false accusations paved the way for adoption of new illegal sanctions against Russia. Russia will not bend under pressure from sanctions and will continue to carry out independent foreign policy aimed at building together with like-minded states a more just and democratic international system free from dictate and domination of a group of Western states which cannot reconcile themselves with the dramatic changes in the world power balance in favour of emerging powers in Eurasia, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and Africa.

However it is highly regrettable that a grave human tragedy is used to achieve selfish political gains. As President Putin said in his statement, such events should unite countries and their efforts to meet common challenges of the contemporary world rather than saw discord and confrontation.

In conclusion, I would like to express my support to your efforts in cultivating well-informed views among the Myanmar readers who represent a nation with a long-standing record of independent foreign policy and a strong mental culture that enables to discriminate between false and truth.

Sincerely yours,

VASILY B. POSPELOV
AMBASSADOR OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

MOST

Kyi Mun

Most Beautiful Word
Most is a very beautiful word which stirs your heart and delights your mind. For example,

- Most lovely
- Most generous
- Most exciting
- Most desirable
- Most friendly

“...to do the Most Good for the Most People” has been my dream and I make it my MISSION in my life. But in order to be able “...to do the most good for the most people”, one must have what it takes to serve the people. One must have the conviction, courage and caring to serve the people. So, one has to make the MOST of one’s life in the service of the people in the tradition of the MOST altruistic minds in human history, such as Bogoyke Aung San, Mahatma Gandhi, and Nelson Mandela.

Define Your MOST Passionate Purpose in Life
If you want to make the MOST of your life, you should not hesitate to clearly define what your MOST passionate desire in your life is and wholeheartedly dedicate your life to it. If you are not ready to define your MOST passionate purpose in your life-work or life-duty, you are still wobbling or groping in your life-journey.

The Meaning of the Word MOST
If you can see the futuristic meaning of the word MOST, I think you will be able to form your MOST PASSIONATE PURPOSE in your life. So, let us see what the word MOST means in the following context:

| M for Mission |
| O for Objective |
| S for Strategy |
| T for Tactic |

So, Most stands for Mission, Objective, Strategy and Tactic.

The Meaning of Mission
Mission means:
- Reason for Being (in existence)
- Definite Purpose

MOST stands for Mission, Objective, Strategy and Tactic.

Examples of Mission are:
- To be a Masterpiece of a person in Art, Literature, Sports, etc.
- To serve the people
- To create the stockholders’ wealth
- To create the stakeholders’ value
- To build the Triple Bottom-Lines of People, Planet and Profit

(U Kyi Mun residing in Yangon is a consultant of NAING Group Capital Co., Ltd.)
EU encourages the political reform process and will continue its support to Myanmar, says EU Ambassador

Interviewer - Khin Yadana

YANGON, 17 Aug — The EU currently stands as the largest grant donor to Myanmar, with an envelope of US $1.4 billion (1 billion euros) to be allocated in different fields in order to support socio-economic development and provide assistance to the country’s population. In particular, the EU is in regular dialogue with the government on political, economic and social reform as well as on regional development issues. On 14 August, Myanmar Alinn (New Light of Myanmar) met with the Ambassador of the European Union (EU), Dr. Roland KOBIA, who opened the EU Delegation in Myanmar in 2013.

Q. We know that the EU has been supporting Myanmar since the beginning of the transition. Could you explain the EU’s major areas of support in this new phase of the EU-Myanmar relationship?

A. The EU has been providing support to Myanmar in many ways. There are three major aspects to the normalization of the Myanmar-EU relations: political support, development aid and trade relations. We have allocated US $1.4 billion from 2014 to 2020 in order to support the development of Myanmar.

On the political front, the EU has been supporting the Government, Parliament and civil society to strengthen good governance, obtain genuine elections, and to promote democracy and fundamental freedoms. With our development aid, the four sectors we mainly support are education, rural development and agriculture, good governance, and the peace process. We particularly believe that peace, security and stability are the foundations to sustainable socio-economic growth, which is why we are the largest donor to the peace process. We are also active in many other sectors, including our support to the reform of the Myanmar Police Force. Regarding trade, the EU will share and support international best practices in Myanmar, so that the country can keep abreast of international standards and good trade and business practices.

Q. What kind of advice does the EU want to offer Myanmar as the Chair of ASEAN, so that Myanmar can make the right decisions when it works on regional development, stability and business management?

A. I first wish to congratulate Myanmar for its good work as the Chair of ASEAN for the first time in the country’s 17 year membership. When Myanmar carries out regional peace and stability initiatives, they should be done with the support of regional and international organizations. Europe has experienced a lot of regional wars and conflicts in our past, but we were able to overcome this legacy through cooperation, unity and the peaceful settlement of conflict, and promote strong regional reconciliation. In Europe, disputes are now discussed around the table instead of attempting to solve our problems with guns. As ASEAN is also a developing regional organization, we believe that Myanmar will be able to address some of its most important challenges through regional cooperation. Peace and stability must be the core elements of socio-economic development in Myanmar in both a domestic and a regional context. The EU welcomes the work and commitment of all political actors involved in the peace process, from both the government and ethnic groups.

Q. Please let us know why the EU has decided to support Myanmar. Some EU members have criticized the EU-Myanmar relationship, how would you like to respond to this?

A. There are 28 member countries in the EU, and they work together in close coordination, with a constructive and balanced approach. The EU has collectively chosen to support Myanmar due to the country’s political reforms and commitment to democratization. Myanmar has been reforming continuously since 2011, and the EU has come into Myanmar to support this positive trend, which we hope will continue; as long as Myanmar continues its democratic reforms, the EU will also continue to support the country. The EU has adopted a common position on Myanmar, respected by all foreign ministers of the European Union. EU member states all want to see positive reforms in Myanmar and have chosen to continue supporting this process. However, although the EU can provide support to the country, in the end it falls upon Myanmar’s own leadership to adopt the reforms. The EU can provide US $500 million for providing soft loans to Myanmar. So to sum up, in cooperation with the Myanmar Government on this, so you will soon see the EU investment banking operate in Myanmar alongside the Asia Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank. The EIB has allocated about US $500 million for providing soft loans to Myanmar. So to sum up, in cooperation with the Myanmar Government on this, so you will soon see the EU investment banking operate in Myanmar alongside the Asia Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank. The EIB has allocated about US $500 million for providing soft loans to Myanmar.

Q. The EU has previously pointed out some mistakes in the management of public transportation in Myanmar. What is the current EU opinion on Myanmar government activities?

A. We are a partner that really wants to continue the progress of democracy and stability in Myanmar. So the EU wishes, with its EU Member States and partners, to fit into the development strategy and to continue the progress adopted by Myanmar. In addition, we want to align with the UN Millennium Development Goals. The EU and its Member States provide a lot of assistance which we hope will help all the people of Myanmar to develop and make their own decisions.

Q. May I know how the EU is supporting Myanmar’s economic development, and what advice you have on this process?

A. Only when a country has stability and protection of human rights can it promote its other sectors. As long as there is no peace and security in the country or the region, there can be no sustainable development. Currently, many companies from EU member states have been waiting to enter into Myanmar’s markets. They want to ensure they can clearly see where the country’s reform process is going. In addition to EU grant support, we are also ready to open the European Investment Bank (EIB), a public bank development bank in Myanmar so that it can provide concessional loans with the lowest interest rates. The EIB will support small and medium investors, infrastructure such as roads, transportation, electricity and environmental protection. We are currently encouraging the Myanmar Government on this, so you will soon see the EU investment bank operating in Myanmar alongside the Asia Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank.

Q. The Government and organizations are working hard on reforms. What is the significance of this for ordinary people to understand and to be able to participate in this process?

A. It will be necessary to see a government for all peoples emerging after the 2015 general elections. If people believe in the authorities that they have elected, they will see this is their choice, and they will be happy to accept and cooperate with the Government and other public authorities. For this, it is important to ensure political pluralism, and bring all the vibrant voices of the nation into the political process. For example, when Mr. Nelson Mandela set up his government in South Africa, he included both black and white South Africans. In addition, he moved on from his terrible experiences after being imprisoned for many years, he did not seek revenge, choosing instead to look positively into the future. One day, he said to the media that he did not want to focus on the previous regime, but on the development and higher interest of South Africa. To illustrate this, he gave an example about a zebra. He said it does not matter whether you shoot a zebra in the white stripe or in the black stripe: either way, the zebra will still die. In the same way, people of all races are part of the country, and need each other to rebuild it. This story also refers to Myanmar. Leave bitter experiences in the past and work together for the future. One should remember the past, but it is more important to build a new house of Myanmar with a positive mindset for the next generation. It is easier to accuse than to excuse. If you work on national reconciliation with all stakeholders, whatever their past and their origin, Myanmar will be able to tap its huge potential and become one of the leading countries of the region, economically and politically.

Q. As the EU Ambassador, what do you think of the current reforms in Myanmar?

A. The EU works for success, not for failure. Political pluralism tends to be always complex and difficult; it is a bumpy road with twists and curves. No political transition has ever been a straight line without its challenges and at times setbacks. One should always encourage those who are working for change and avoid being cynical. I have served in several transition processes in the Middle East, and it is always a huge challenge, but Myanmar is not doing badly compared to other countries. The EU has supported reforms so far, as they mark an enormous change compared to the past. If reforms continue in the right direction, if the democratic path continues, if freedoms and human rights continue to improve, if civil society is given a greater role, and if political pluralism emerges, we will continue to support the Government. At last, we should have largely heard the right things, and seen some important achievements. We will continue to be present to accompany and support further reform as a positive and vigilant partner.
Tokyo, 17 Aug — A survey of 106 major companies in Japan has found 100 expect the country’s economy to expand toward the year-end, while 76 do not oppose the government’s plan to implement another sales tax hike in 2015, the Kyodo News poll showed on Saturday. Although Japan’s economy plunged in the April-June quarter following a 3.9 percentage-point consumption tax hike to 8 percent on 1 April, 92 of the companies polled said they believe the slump in consumer spending will dissipate by the end of 2014. The questionnaire survey conducted between mid-July and early August showed many major companies are upbeat about the economic outlook, but that they also expect the government to steadily carry out policies to put the economy back on a path of stable growth.

Of the companies that responded to the questionnaire, none said they foresee a slowdown in the economy at the end of the year. Eighty-six companies said they perceived the decline in personal spending following the April sales tax hike as “as expected,” or “smaller than expected.” Seven firms felt the drop was “larger than predicted.”

Asked when consumer spending is expected to recover, 92 companies said it has already picked up or will do so by the end of the year, while one company said it will recover next year and seven said they cannot tell yet.

On the second sales tax hike to 10 percent planned in October next year, 34 companies said they will approve of the move if economic conditions remain roughly the same as now, while 16 companies expressed support for the move regardless of the economic climate.

Twenty-six companies said the tax hike is tolerable as long as the economy improves and companies can pick up and two companies said they are against such an increase.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s government is expected to decide later this year whether to implement the second tax hike based on July-September gross domestic product data and other economic indicators.

As for requests to the Abe government, a corporate tax cut was the most popular among options presented in the questionnaire, followed by calls for drastic easing of regulations and restoration of fiscal health.

Meanwhile, some companies, including those in the electronics or auto industries, expressed hope that the government will consider the possible impact on corporate activities and trade in its diplomacy with China and South Korea.—Kyodo News

Fitch upgrades Ireland’s sovereign debt rating to A-

Dublin, 17 Aug — The credit ratings agency Fitch on Saturday upgraded Ireland’s long-term foreign and local currency Issuer Default Ratings (IDR) to A- from BBB+.

In a statement, Fitch said the Irish government has continued its multi-year fiscal consolidation programme following the exit from the Troika programme at the end of 2013 and remains compliant with domestic and eurozone fiscal rules.

Fitch forecasts the 2014 general government deficit to be below the 4.8 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) target and expects a small primary surplus compared with a primary deficit peak of more than 9 percent of GDP in 2009.

We believe Ireland’s gross general government debt (GGGD) to GDP ratio peaked in 2013 at 123 percent, albeit after an increase of 100 pp since 2007 to a level among the highest of Fitch-rated sovereigns,” it said.

Fitch is the second agency to move Ireland back to an A rating, following Standard & Poor’s in June.

Reuter

Chinese institutions issue nearly 200 bln in interbank CDs

Beijing, 17 Aug — Chinese financial institutions have issued nearly 200 billion yuan ($32.5 billion US dollars) in certificates of deposit (CDs) on the interbank market since December, an official with the central bank said on Friday.

To let banks borrow at more stable costs, China’s financial institutions have issued CDs between banks in December last year, another step toward reforming the country’s interest rates.

In the first seven months, 31 financial institutions issued CDs totaling 184.6 billion yuan, Zhang Cuwei, deputy director of the monetary policy department of the People’s Bank of China, was quoted as saying in Saturday’s Shanghai Securities News.

Zhang said the aggregated volume of interbank CDs at the end of July expanded 30 percent from the end of June. The trend has continued into August, with total interbank CDs issued standing at nearly 200 billion yuan as of mid-August, according to Zhang.

Analysts believe the introduction of interbank CDs will help set pricing standards for the future launch of Large Negotiable Certificates of Deposit (NCD). NCDs have proved effective in overcoming hurdles in interest rate liberalization in other countries.

China has taken incremental steps toward interest rate liberalization, including scrapping the floor limit for lending rates in July 2013.

The central bank said in early August it will accelerate work to establish a deposit insurance scheme in the coming months, which is deemed a precondition for liberalizing deposit rates.

Reuters

Wall Street week ahead: US stocks a safe haven, even after panic selloffs

New York, 17 Aug — As headlines about an apparent escalation of the conflict in eastern Ukraine hit traders’ screens, selling was the word on Wall Street. Once again, though, for many it looked like nothing but another buying opportunity in US stocks.

Benchmark US Treasury yields hit their lowest in 14 months on Friday after Ukraine said its forces had attacked and partly destroyed a Russian armored column that entered Ukrainian territory overnight. The S&P 500 ended Friday down a mere fraction of a point. The three major US stock indexes posted a second straight week of gains after a correction that evaporated following a brief drop of 4 percent.

An escalation of the conflict in eastern Ukraine will likely bring stronger economic sanctions against Russia from Europe and the United States — and harsher retaliation from Moscow.—Reuters

Bill Ackman, chief executive officer and portfolio manager of Pershing Square Capital Management LP, speaks at the Ira Sohn Investment Conference in New York on 8 May 2013 file photo. — Reuters

New York, 17 Aug — Activist Bill Ackman’s Pershing Square Capital Management LP filed its second lawsuit in two days against the US government over bailout of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, court documents show.

In Friday’s complaint with the US District Court, Pershing Square alleged that the Department of the Treasury illegally seized tens of billions of dollars in Fannie and Freddie profits.

Pershing Square, the largest shareholder of both the mortgage companies, said in the complaint that it was told the Fannie and Freddie stockholders no longer have fundamental shareholders rights.

Fannie’s and Freddie’s conservator, Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA), denied “written demands by Pershing Square to the companies’ boards of directors for a books and records inspection”, according to the complaint.

In the second lawsuit, Pershing suggests the mortgage giants being paid to the Treasury should be shared among other common shareholders.

Three retirees who own Fannie Mae stock have joined as plaintiffs of the lawsuit.

In a complaint filed on Thursday with the US Court of Federal Claims in Washington, DC, Pershing accused the government of violating the Fifth Amendment of the US Constitution by taking private property for public use without just compensation.

Though the lawsuits raise different legal theories and are in different courts, they are both designed to enable Ackman to recoup sums for the depressed value of his Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac shares.

Pershing disclosed last November it had invested close to a half-billion dollars for common share stakes of 9.98 percent in Fannie Mae and 9.77 percent in Freddie Mac.
US extends deadline for ‘net neutrality’ comments to 15 September

WASHINGTON, 17 Aug — US Federal Communications Commission on Friday said it would accept public comments on its proposed new “net neutrality” rules through 15 September, giving Americans extra time to weigh in on how they think Internet traffic should be regulated. The FCC has received more than 1 million comments already on new rules for how Internet service providers should be allowed to manage web traffic on their networks.

The FCC had set a deadline of 15 July for the initial comments and then 10 September for replies to those initial comments. However, the surge in submissions overwhelmed the FCC’s website and the agency had delayed the first deadline by three business days.

“To ensure that members of the public have as much time as was initially anticipated to reply to initial comments in these proceedings, the Bureau today is extending the reply comment deadline by three business days,” the FCC said on Friday, delaying the final deadline for comments to 15 September.

Google buys city-guide app maker JetPac

BANGALORE, 17 Aug — Google Inc is buying JetPac Inc, the startup that designs social travel applications disclosed on its website on Friday, without providing details.

“We’ll be removing Jetpac’s apps from the App Store in the coming days, and ending support for them on 9/15,” stated a posting on JetPac’s homepage.

San Francisco-based JetPac has created a mobile application that uses pictures from various social networking sites to create city guides.

Earlier this year, Google bought Nest Labs Inc, which makes smart thermostat and smoke alarms, for $3.2 billion, making the deal one of the largest in Google’s history.

Google was not available to comment outside of normal business hours.

Samsung SDI, China’s Sungrow plan venture for energy storage systems

SEOUL, 17 Aug — South Korea’s Samsung SDI Co Ltd said on Sunday it has signed a preliminary deal with China’s Sungrow Power Supply Co Ltd to form a joint venture to make energy storage systems in China. The companies plan to build a production facility by next year, the statement said. Samsung SDI, a maker of electronics components, did not disclose how large the joint investment will be and said the location has not been decided.

Samsung SDI and other electric vehicle battery makers are increasingly betting on energy storage systems to hedge their bets as the market for electric vehicle batteries has lagged expectations.

US extends deadline for ‘net neutrality’ comments to 15 September

Fiber optic cables carrying Internet providers are seen running into a server room at Intergate, Manhattan, a data centre owned and developed by Sabey Data Centre Properties, during a tour of the facility in lower Manhattan, in New York on 20 March, 2013. — Reuters

Google buys city-guide app maker JetPac

Google logo is seen at the garage where the company was founded on Google’s 15th anniversary in Menlo Park, California on 26 Sept, 2013. —Reuters

Samsung SDI, China’s Sungrow plan venture for energy storage systems

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West faces tough choices if Russia, Ukraine fight

WASHINGTON, 17 Aug — If Russia and Ukraine slide into outright war, the United States and allies will face tough choices on how to support a friendly state they have no intention of making a full NATO member. In what appeared to be a dramatic escalation on Friday, Ukraine said it had destroyed much of a column of armoured vehicles that had entered its territory from Russia.

Moscow dismissed the account as “fantasy”, NATO confirmed what it described as an “incursion”. Ukraine did not specify if the vehicles were manned by Russian troops or separatist rebels, and it was not immediately clear if Russia would respond.

If Moscow ever took any such action against a NATO member, that would inevitably trigger the alliance’s Chapter 5 mutual defence clause, essentially committing it to war. Ukraine, however, is not a member and Western officials say is unlikely to become one any time soon. Washington and others have spent much of the last five months chastising the government of Russian President Vladimir Putin, describing its actions in Ukraine as unacceptable. They accuse Moscow of arming the rebels, a charge the Kremlin denies.

The reality, however, is that US and European leaders want to avoid a potentially nuclear superpower confrontation. Direct military action by NATO states remains entirely off the table, current and former officials say. “The West is already pushing at the limits of what it feels it can do without finding itself in a serious confrontation with Russia,” said Samuel Charap, a former US State Department official, now a senior fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

“There could be more sanctions, there could be more supportive of Ukrainians, but beyond that I really don’t see the US doing too much more.”

Speaking on condition of anonymity before Friday’s incident, US officials said several options were under discussion if Russia escalated further. They include tightening sanctions, freezing Moscow further out of international forums, beefing up NATO’s military presence in Eastern Europe and, perhaps, supplying more non-lethal aid.

Sanctions and economic pressure on Russia have prompted capital and expertise flight and a fully fledged trade war — but no policy shift from Moscow.

Critics in Washington and elsewhere say the paucity of the Western response may simply encourage President Vladimir Putin to act further.

Ukrainian forces may have taken heart from the reports of a successful attack on the armoured column on Friday. Still, most experts say Russia could outmatch Ukraine if it attacked in force, particularly if it limited its ambition to separatist areas of the East. A thrust into Ukraine’s central and western heartland would more challenging, they say, but Russia would still be expected to win, although with a likely insurgency to follow.

Man dies in Britain as 35 people found in shipping container

LONDON, 17 Aug — A man has died after 35 people, including several children, were found inside a shipping container being unloaded at a dock in eastern England on Saturday morning, police said.

Two of the group, believed to be from the Indian sub-continent, were taken to hospital in serious but not life-threatening condition, while others were treated for dehydration and hypothermia.

The container was being unloaded at Tilbury docks in Essex from a ferry that had arrived from Zeebrugge, Belgium.

Essex police said that for the time being they were treating the incident as a homicide investigation.

“As a result of the ferry docking, staff at the port became aware of screaming and banging coming from the container,” Superintendent Trevor Roe told reporters.

An East of England Ambulance spokesman added: “It was a very difficult scene for our first crews there.”

Port staff were busy searching other containers from the ferry in case there were more people inside.

No further details were immediately available of how long the group had been inside the container or where they had entered it.

Tilbury, on the River Thames, is primarily a bulk cargo and container port and not such a prime target for illegal immigrants as those on the south coast, such as Dover. Immigration and health authorities were helping the investigation, police said.

Reuters

Chinese man detained for selling “Viagra liquor”

WUHAN, 17 Aug — A Chinese businessman has been detained for adding a drug for treating erectile dysfunction to Chinese white liquor, or baijiu, in order to profit, local police said on Sunday.

The suspect, surnamed Huang, an owner of a liquor factory from Jianshi Prefecture in central China’s Hubei Province, bought a kilogram of sildenafil from a website in January and began to add it to baijiu at his factory starting in February, according to the Jianshi police.

Sildenafil is a major chemical component of medicines for treating impotence such as Viagra. Huang paid 2,400 yuan (390 US dollars) for the sildenafil powder. He added 130 milligrams of sildenafil per 100 milliliters of liquor, producing 750 liters of the spirit in total, according to the police.

Reuters

Drunk commuter stabs three men on New York City subway platform

NEW YORK, 17 Aug — A drunken commuter stabbed and wounded three men with a knife as he got off a subway train arriving at New York’s Grand Central Terminal early on Saturday morning, police said.

Ivan DeLeon, 38, got into a dispute after a bumping into a child that was with the three men who were trying to board the train, Annette Markowski, a New York Police Department spokeswoman, said.

DeLeon was belligerent and appeared to be drunk, Markowski said.

The argument escalated on the subway platform as DeLeon slashed and stabbed at the three men with a folding knife, wounding one in his arm, another in his stomach and the third in his chest, Markowski said.

A witness on the platform helped subdued DeLeon until he was arrested by police, she said. The child was unharmed.

The three men, all in their 20s, were taken to a nearby hospital. The man with the chest wound was the most seriously hurt, and his condition was described as critical but stable by police.— Reuters

Rescue workers transfer an emergency patient in Fukuchiyama, Kyoto Prefecture on 17 Aug, 2014, as the road there was flooded by record rainfall.

Kyodo News

Russian military vehicles loaded with shipping containers for missiles of BUK-M1 air defence missile system drive along the road outside Kamensk-Shakhtinsky, Rostov Region on 16 Aug, 2014. — Reuters

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They accuse Moscow of arming the rebels, a charge the Kremlin denies. The reality, however, is that US and European leaders want to avoid a potentially nuclear superpower confrontation. Direct military action by NATO states remains entirely off the table, current and former officials say. “The West is already pushing at the limits of what it feels it can do without finding itself in a serious confrontation with Russia,” said Samuel Charap, a former US State Department official, now a senior fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

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Port staff were busy searching other containers from the ferry in case there were more people inside.

No further details were immediately available of how long the group had been inside the container or where they had entered it.

Tilbury, on the River Thames, is primarily a bulk cargo and container port and not such a prime target for illegal immigrants as those on the south coast, such as Dover. Immigration and health authorities were helping the investigation, police said.

Reuters

Chinese man detained for selling “Viagra liquor”

WUHAN, 17 Aug — A Chinese businessman has been detained for adding a drug for treating erectile dysfunction to Chinese white liquor, or baijiu, in order to profit, local police said on Sunday.

The suspect, surnamed Huang, an owner of a liquor factory from Jianshi Prefecture in central China’s Hubei Province, bought a kilogram of sildenafil from a website in January and began to add it to baijiu at his factory starting in February, according to the Jianshi police.

Sildenafil is a major chemical component of medicines for treating impotence such as Viagra. Huang paid 2,400 yuan (390 US dollars) for the sildenafil powder. He added 130 milligrams of sildenafil per 100 milliliters of liquor, producing 750 liters of the spirit in total, according to the police.

Reuters

Drunk commuter stabs three men on New York City subway platform

NEW YORK, 17 Aug — A drunken commuter stabbed and wounded three men with a knife as he got off a subway train arriving at New York’s Grand Central Terminal early on Saturday morning, police said.

Ivan DeLeon, 38, got into a dispute after a bumping into a child that was with the three men who were trying to board the train, Annette Markowski, a New York Police Department spokeswoman, said.

DeLeon was belligerent and appeared to be drunk, Markowski said.

The argument escalated on the subway platform as DeLeon slashed and stabbed at the three men with a folding knife, wounding one in his arm, another in his stomach and the third in his chest, Markowski said.

A witness on the platform helped subdued DeLeon until he was arrested by police, she said. The child was unharmed.

The three men, all in their 20s, were taken to a nearby hospital. The man with the chest wound was the most seriously hurt, and his condition was described as critical but stable by police.— Reuters

Rescue workers transfer an emergency patient in Fukuchiyama, Kyoto Prefecture on 17 Aug, 2014, as the road there was flooded by record rainfall.

Kyodo News

Russian military vehicles loaded with shipping containers for missiles of BUK-M1 air defence missile system drive along the road outside Kamensk-Shakhtinsky, Rostov Region on 16 Aug, 2014. — Reuters
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Energy

Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)

(17/2014)

Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in United States Dollars and Myanmar Kyats.

Sr No. Tender No Description Remark
(3) IFB-090(14-15) Air Hose Pipe Elevator (3) Nos. US$.
(5) DMPL-015(14-15) Air Hose Pipe (3) Items for ZJSOD Drilling Rig Ks.

Tender Closing Date & Time   16-9-2014, 16:30 Hr
Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 18th August, 2014 at the Finance Department, Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise, No.44/Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Russian accused of hacking detained by US

Seattle, 17 Aug—A Russian accused of hacking US retailers’ computer systems to steal credit card data has been ordered by a US District of Washington, Justice Department to his immediate release.

The arrest of Roman Seleznev, the 30-year-old international traveler, had U.S. Attorney Jenny Durkan said in a statement on Friday. It is trying to end three years of political unrest, which is keen to take every step to protect his son. "The defendant is entitled to every protection offered by our system, but will be afforded no special privileges," Durkan, US Attorney for the Western District of Washington, said in the statement.

RF: 17 Aug

Kenya Airways to suspend flights to Freetown, Monrovia due to Ebola

Nairobi, 17 Aug—Kenya Airways (KQNA, NR) will suspend flights to Liberia’s capital Monrovia and Sierra Leone’s capital Freetown due to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, the company said on Saturday.

The suspension of the flights will start at midnight on Tuesday 19 August, Kenya Airways said in a statement. The carrier, which is part-owned by Air France-KLM (AIRC.PA), flies a total of seven times a week to the two cities through Accra.

The company said it took the decision on the advice of Kenya’s Ministry of Health, which is keen to prevent the importation of a case of Ebola into the country.

Kenya will not allow passengers from Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone into the country starting next Tuesday, the private Citizen Television said on its website, quoting the Minister of Health James Macharia.

Health workers and Kenyans living in those countries will however still be allowed in after thorough screening, the report said.

The ministry earlier said four suspected cases of Ebola in Kenya had tested negative for the virus.

The first case was a Liberian national, travelling to India through Nairobi’s Jomo Kenyatta airport, while the second case was that of a Nigerian national who came to Kenya on 8 August, the ministry said in a statement.

Drone kills three suspected al-Qaeda militants in Yemen: official

Axen, 17 Aug — A drone attack killed three suspected al-Qaeda militants on Saturday in Yemen’s eastern Hadramout province, a local official told Reuters.

"The three armed men were traveling in a vehicle along a desert stretch between Yemen and Saudi Arabia’s border when the drone shot two rockets at them. All three are dead," the local official said.

No details were given on whether it was a US or Yemeni drone.

Earlier this month, the Yemeni army sent extra troops to the Wadi Hadramout region in north-eastern Yemen to counter attempts by militant group Ansar al-Sharia to declare an Islamic emirate in the city of Seiyoun.

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) had exploited a power vacuum brought by the 2011 uprising that eventually ousted President Ali Abdullah Saleh to carve out areas of dominance in south and east Yemen.

Since then, AQAP has repeatedly attacked state institutions, including army camps and state buildings across the US-allied country, killing hundreds of people.

A US ally, with a population of 25 million, Yemen is trying to end three years of political unrest, which began when mass protests erupted in 2011 against President Ali Abdullah Saleh, the president of 33 years, who stepped down.

Reuters

Weather report

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is generally moderate in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 18th August, 2014: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Lower Saurashtra and Kutch, scattered in Mandeluy, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi Regions, Shan, Chin, Kayin and Mon States and fairly widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavy falls in Rakhine State.

Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Seas will be moderate in Myan- mar waters.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuation of decrease of rain in the Southern Myanmar areas.

The microbiology society of Myanmar Medical Association will hold a Symposium on “Pathogens Without Borders”. The speakers include Dr. Khan Yi Oo (National Health Laboratory), Professor Michael S. DuBow (Universite' Paris-Sud), Professor Soe Lwin Nyein (University of Medicine 2) and Professor Ko Ko (University of Medicine 1). The microbiology society of Myanmar Medical Association will hold a Symposium on “Pathogens Without Borders” at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44)Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Advertisement

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Dystopian young adult film ‘The Giver’ pits love over violence

LOS ANGELES, 17 Aug — A world where pain and mankind’s memories are erased along with war, violence and prejudice may seem like utopia, but ignorance is not always bliss, as explored in the latest young adult film.

“The Giver,” in US theaters on Friday and based on Lois Lowry’s novel, explores a futuristic society cultivated and controlled by Elders, whose leader is played by three-time Oscar winner Meryl Streep (“The Iron Lady”).

The Elders have formed an efficient working society but erased any color, music and frivolity. At 17, the teenagers of the society graduate from school and are assigned a place in the workforce according to their personality traits. Jonas, played by rising actor Brenton Thwaites (“Maleficent”), is chosen as the Receiver of Memories, a singular job that leads him to The Giver, the man who holds all the memories of humankind’s past — from wars and death to the beauty of nature and love.

As Jonas learns more about the world before his, he realizes that not everything is perfect within his own society and its selection process from birth, and he begins to question it.

“It’s very reflective of our times,” said Academy Award winner Jeff Bridges (“Crazy Heart”), who plays The Giver. “We live in a society that’s swept up by technology and our ethics haven’t really caught up with us, and it’s time to slow down a bit and think about what we’re willing to pay for our comfort and happiness.”

The Weinstein Co’s “The Giver” comes on the heels of dystopian young adult film franchises such as “The Hunger Games” and “Divergent,” but offers one key difference to the genre.

“This movie has no violence in it. Some of these other dystopian books and films have a great deal of violence to them, children killing other children,” said Lowry. “I can’t write that myself and I’m glad it’s not in this film.”

Sarajevo’s film festival marks 20th birthday with record line-up

SARAJEVO, 17 Aug — Sarajevo’s film festival, founded as an act of defiance while the city was besieged during the 1992-95 Bosnian war, marks its 20th anniversary on Friday with its biggest line-up of movies.

Nine films are competing for the top Heart of Sarajevo Award, among them Kosovo’s “Three Windows And A Hanging” about a school teacher giving an account of her rape during the conflict.

Other contenders for the for the 16,000-euro ($21,397) award come from Georgia, Turkey, Croatia, Bosnia, Greece, Austria, Germany, Hungary and France.

Festival director Mirsad Purivatra said future events would look even further afield for competitors. “I think the Festival is entering a new phase in which we want to build a stronger bond between the region and the rest of the world,” he said, adding the event had been building contacts in the Middle East, Mexico, India, Lebanon and North Africa.

The Sarajevo Film Festival has grown into the largest event of its kind in the Balkans and draws around 100,000 fans to the Bosnian capital every year. This year’s programme lists nearly 250 films from 60 countries.—Reuters

‘Singham Returns’ makes Shilpa respect policemen more

NEW DELHI, 17 Aug — Watching ‘Singham Returns’ had a positive effect on actress Shilpa Shetty as far as respecting the police force is concerned.


The movie, directed by Rohit Shetty, stars Ajay Devgn and Kareena Kapoor. It features Ajay as Bajirao Singham, an unforgiving police inspector on a mission to wipe out corruption.—PTI

Chris Martin, Jennifer Lawrence dating?

LOS ANGELES, 17 Aug — Coldplay singer Chris Martin and ‘Hunger Games’ actress Jennifer Lawrence have sparked romance rumours. Martin, who separated from wife Gwyneth Paltrow in March after 12 years of marriage, is dating Lawrence since late June, after she split from her actor Nicholas Hoult, reported Us magazine.

Lawrence was recently spotted at the singer’s concert in New York City, where multiple eyewitnesses say she got a special shout-out from the stage. Onlookers said Martin appeared to blow a kiss in the Oscar winner’s direction. She and some friends were seated in an upstairs VIP booth overlooking the stage.

Both the stars were also in attendance at a bash in London in early July, an after-party for Coldplay’s show there, according to another insider. No representatives for Lawrence, 24 or Martin, 37, have commented yet on the reports.—PTI

Chris Martin, Jennifer Lawrence dating?
**Obituary**


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Van Gaal’s United lose opener, Arsenal and Spurs win

LONDON, 17 Aug — Manchester United manager Louis van Gaal found no instant fix as a new era dawned in dispiriting fashion at Old Trafford where Swansea City’s 2-1 victory on the opening day of the Premier League re-opened old ghosts.

Wayne Rooney had cancelled out Ki Sung-yueng’s near-great display, but Quickly after halftime but Gyfi Sigurdsson’s late strike condemned the Old Trafford side to their first opening-day top-flight home defeat for 42 years.

“It was a disastrous start for us but we have to move on,” Rooney said. “We’re not happy, the manager’s not happy.”

“We’ll have to go through what went wrong during the week. We’ll do that. I thought today we didn’t play as well together as a team as we can do. We have to put that right,”

Arsenal, tipped as serious title contenders this term, left it late to beat managerless Crystal Palace, with Aaron Ramsey pouncing in stoppage time to earn a 2-1 victory at the Emirates after the home side had slipped behind.

Tottenham Hotspur, who finished one place above United in sixth last season, began life under new manager Mauricio Pochettino with a 1-0 win at London rivals West Ham United thanks to a stoppage-time goal from new signing Eric Dier.

Promoted Leicester City twice battled back to draw 2-2 with Everton, while West Bromwich Albion and Sunderland also shared four goals — Saisto Berahino scoring twice for the hosts.

Queens Park Rangers were beaten 1-0 at home by Hull City on their return to the top flight, missing a penalty in the process, while Aston Villa earned a notable three points with a 0-1 win at Stoke City — Andreas Weimann grabbing the goal.

Champions Manchester City visit Newcastle United on Sunday after Liverpool entertain Southampton while Chelsea travel to promoted Burnley on Monday.

A year ago almost to the day Manchester United enjoyed a comfortable victory at Swansea but it proved one of the few high-lights for former manager David Moyes who was sacked in May.

After a buoyant pre-season campaign, the fans arrived on Saturday hoping new boss Van Gaal would right the wrongs of last season but the problems, notably a lack of pace and invention, returned to haunt the 20-times champions who looked vulnerable.

Van Gaal began with his favoured 3-5-2 system but changed to an orthodox 4-4-2 at halftime and on Saturday’s evidence there will be lots of tinkering to come for the Dutchman who has won league titles with Ajax Amsterdam, Barcelona and Bayern Munich.

United dominated possession in the first half but offered little attacking surge against a Swansea side content to sit deep and wait for the occasional counter-attack.

One such break saw Nathan Dyer flick the ball on to Sigurdsson down the right and the Icelandic international burst forward before teeing up Ki to beat keeper David De Gea just before the half-hour mark.

When Rooney hooked in Juan Mata’s corner in the 53rd minute to restore parity and then clipped the post with a curling free kick the home side looked set for a comeback victory.

However, Swansea had other ideas and Ecuadorian substitute Jefferson Montero’s dangerous cross caused problems in United’s unfamiliar-looking defence and the ball eventually deflected to Sigurdsson, back at Swansea after leaving Spurs, to fire home.

“It’s more than disappointing for the fans,” said Van Gaal, who was without Netherlands striker Robin van Persie through injury and the likes of defensive midfielder Daley Blind and Nemanja Vidic, both of whom left in the close season.

They are expecting a lot because we have won every game in pre-season. Then you lose the first match. That’s disappointing for the players and also for me.

“It’s a very bad day for us,” he added.

Federer, Ferrer advance to Cincinnati final

Federer, with former Barcelona hitman Alexis Sanchez making his Premier League debut, were stunned at a Palace side reeling from the departure of manager Tony Pulis 48 hours earlier.

Brede Hangeland’s glancing header gave Palace a 35th minute lead but Laurent Koscielny nodded home a free kick from Sanchez on the stroke of halftime to equalise.

Palace seemed to have earned a point with a stubborn defensive display but Welshman Ramsey tucked in a rebound after Mathieu Debuchy’s shot was half-saved by Julian Speroni.

Foster had been reduced to 10 men shortly before Arsenal’s late winner when Jason Puncheon received a second yellow card.

Ramsey’s goal secured the day’s only Premier League home win with Rangers manager and former Manchester United manager Arsene Wenger fully aware of the difficulties of winning the opening league fixture.

“If you look at the (earlier) results today, no home team won, we were the only one so it shows in the table so it is not easy to win. Our desire got us through,” he said.

Federer, Ferrer advance to Cincinnati final

Toronto, 17 Aug — Five-time champion Roger Federer tamed big-serving Canadian Milos Raonic with a comfortable 6-2, 6-3 win on Saturday to join Spain’s David Ferrer in the final of the Western and Southern Open in Cincinnati.

Ferrer won all 16 of his service points in the first set and closed out the match in 68 minutes, sending a clear message to his rivals that he is in top shape heading into the year’s final grand slam at the on 25 August - 6 September US Open.

The 33-year-old Swiss, in a rematch of the Wimbledon semi-final that he won in three sets, improved to 6-0 against the Canadian 10th seed and will be playing in his second final in seven days after he lost to Jo-Wilfried Tsonga at last week’s Rogers Cup in Toronto.

For Raonic, 23, his usual booming serve produced six aces to Federer’s two, but he also had three double faults compared to none by his opponent.

He put a bit of a dent in Federer’s seed but the Swiss managed to break serve for a third time in the eighth game of the second set, clawing back from a 0-40 hole, to record the straight sets victory.

“I’m playing much better (than last year). I can move freely again,” said Ferrer, told ESPN after the match.

“I’m happy the results show. It’s more fun playing this way. Now I am playing the right way.

“It’s great for the confidence to switch from clay to grass and hard courts and keep on playing well. I’ve had a very complete season so far.

“This is my eighth final of the season. I hope I can win another final here.”

Ferrer said he was a nervous man, playing his first semi-final in 11 trips to Cincinnati, breezed past Frenchman Julien Benneteau 6-3 6-2 to move one win away from his 22nd title and second of the year.

Ferrer, who has reached at least the quarter-finals of all four tournaments he has played so far, is coming off a surprise win over third seed Stanislas Wawrinka.

“Of course I am in a good moment,” said Ferrer. “I am in my first final this year in a Masters 1000, so I am happy for that. (I take 1-1) so it is a good step and focus for tomorrow.”

Ferrer enters Sunday’s final having won all four of his matches with Ferrer, the most recent being a three-set victory in the Toronto quarter-finals earlier this month.

Second Young Games open in wet Nanjing

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon was also present at the light, music and dance, fireworks and cultural ceremony which ended with Olympic diving champion Chen Ruolin lighting the cauldron. The prelude to the Youth Games is the brainchild of former IOC president Jacques Rogge and first held in Singapore four years ago, but had been disrupted by some West African athletes banned from competing in a few combat sports and pool events because of the deadly Ebola virus in the region.

Japanese athletes have also been warned not to wear official clothing in the region, the scene of a 1937 massacre where Chinese soldiers say 300,000 people were killed by Japanese troops. Sunday’s first official day of competition will see medals awarded in shooting, weightlifting, triathlon, taekwondo, swimming, judo and fencing.