

(1) Terror Blast...

(MOI) said the Afghan National Police are doing everything they can to provide security for registration centers.

"Suicide and terrorist attacks are more complicated, and terrorists are utilizing new techniques to carry out attacks on civilian targets. We had forces present at the center where the suicide attack took place, and we are investigating it," MOI spokesperson Najibullah Danish told VOA.

Expert opinion

Security experts, however, blame the Afghan intelligence agency for such attacks, and fear insecurity might further delay the parliamentary and district election.

"If we have strong intelligence, it would be very difficult for assailants to reach their targets. Our intelligence and reconnaissance are at best weak, and the enemies are using that weakness to achieve their objectives," retired Afghan army Gen. Zalmi Wardak told VOA.

Afghanistan parliamentary and district elections are set to be held October 20, 2018, after more than three years of delay. But experts predict they may be postponed further, due to insecurity and government intervention.

"The Afghan government has reluctantly started this [election] process, and this [reluctance] could further delay the election. Unfortunately, the Afghan government is the decision-maker, not the election commission," Fazil Ahmad Manawi, former chairman of the Afghanistan Independent Election Commission told VOA.

Election opposition

During a ceremony to open voter registration earlier this month, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani again called for the Taliban to join the political arena and participate in the election.

"President Ghani asked the Taliban to act as a political party and participate in the elections, while utilizing the prevailing opportunity and the peace offer," an Afghan presidential palace statement said.

The Taliban rejected the offer and called on Afghans to boycott the election. In a statement sent to the media, the Taliban called the election "fake and exhibitory," alleging the exercise is being staged at the behest of "foreign occupation" forces.

In a tweet on April 14, U.S. and NATO forces top commander in Afghanistan Gen. John Nicholson said the NATO alliance respected the electoral choices of Afghan voters and politicians. (VoA)

(2) UN Chief Condemns...

Last week three other attacks took place.

On Tuesday, unknown armed men attacked a voter registration center in Ghor province and kidnapped three IEC employees and two policemen.

Ghor police spokesman said the attackers were Taliban.

On Thursday, unknown armed men attacked two police force members in Jalalabad City who were guarding a voter registration center.

The two policemen were killed in the ensuing gunfight.

On Friday, unknown armed men attacked a voter registration center in Qala-e-Naw, the center of Badghis province, where a police officer assigned to maintain security was killed.

(Tolo news)

(3) India 'a Good...

new mission in Afghanistan and said India and Afghanistan had more friendly and close relations than any time before.

He said during his mission he would work for further strengthening relations between the two coun-

tries. (Pajhwok)

(4) China Promises...

and Islamabad, the envoy promised, pledging support for the Afghan peace process.

UN Secretary-General's Special Representative Tadamichi Yamamoto and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Nasir Ahmad Andesha also attending the gathering.

Tadamichi Yamamoto highlighted the importance of the events, which helped enhance people's knowledge about the two countries.

He commended the Chinese donations to the war-hit country in various sectors through the UN and directly, particularly on development and infrastructure projects.

China has been helping Afghanistan and provided assistance to the refugees who recently returned from Pakistan, Tadamichi noted.

China allocated two billion dollars to the UN besides supporting Afghan security forces in terms of equipment and training, Yamamoto added,

He praised China for its contribution to building cooperative relations between Afghanistan Pakistan.

Ambassador Liu called Afghanistan one of China's important neighbours in the heart of Asia, having land routes connecting different parts of the continent.

President Xi Jinping delivered keynote remarks at the Boao Forum annual summit in Henan province for the Asian people's prosperity and peaceful life.

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) goal is to provide facilities for global and regional connectivity. (Pajhwok)

(5) Emergency Alerts...

U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) appealed on Monday for \$10 million to help children and their families in drought-affected provinces.

The UN agency stated that food insecurity and reduced access to drinking water were beginning to take their toll in the 10 worst affected provinces, where 20 to 30 percent of water sources were reportedly dry.

"The priority is to prevent the situation from deteriorating, by responding to the needs of children and families in the worst affected areas," said Adele Khodr, UNICEF representative in Afghanistan.

Poor rains and scanty snowfall mean less winter wheat, Afghanistan's most reliable, resilient cereal crop.

An official at the agriculture ministry said it would start distribution of 2,000 metric tonnes of wheat imported from India and Kazakhstan before seeking fresh aid.

Last week, President Ashraf Ghani ordered officials to attend to the needs of distressed farmers and livestock producers.

But the situation is further complicated by an escalating conflict that often picks up with the start of warmer spring weather, leading to increased displacement and reduced access for humanitarian workers. (Reuters)

(6) Military Pressure...

the rebels into negotiations. Helmand Governor Hayatullah Hayat demanded military operations in some parts of Helmand to ensure free and fair polls.

"We discussed multiple issues with the NATO representative and we should begin work without wasting more time," said Hayat.

A US military representative at the meeting said Afghan security forces had strengthened and the security of Helmand had improved this year compared to the past.

He said as a result of the train and advice mission, Afghan forces would gain more strength and people's trust in them would restore.

(Pajhwok)

(7) Central Bank...

largest in the country - to double its balance sheet over the next two years, Ahmed said.

The central bank issued a regulatory framework for Islamic banking in 2015 to address this, with rules based on standards issued by the Bahrain-based Accounting and Auditing Organisation for Islamic Financial Institutions.

IBA's current products include a mudaraba savings account, a form of investment management partnership, as well as financing products based on ijara, an installment-based leasing contract.

It plans to introduce wealth management products and launch new digital banking services in coming months, Ahmed added.

Islamic banking has been offered in Afghanistan by a handful of firms through so-called Islamic windows, but there have been no full-fledged Islamic banks which are common in countries such as Malaysia, Pakistan and Bahrain.

Lenders with Islamic windows include Afghan United Bank, Ghaznafar Bank and Afghanistan International Bank.

This comes after officials from the Afghan Banking Union told TOLONews a few months ago that the Islamic banking system was one of the best strategies to leverage the economy and attract investment in the country.

They said the Islamic banking system is a trusted system and it ensures safe banking.

According to the union, currently up to 11 percent of the population in Afghanistan keeps their money in banks, adding that if the Islamic banking system is expanded in Afghanistan, more money will start circulating and Afghanistan's financial system will benefit.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industries (MoCI) said at the time Islamic banking can also help boost small and medium-sized businesses in the country.

Despite a growth in the banking sector in the country over the past sixteen years, private and state-run banks in Afghanistan have managed to attract only 11 percent of the population's money.

According to experts, the lack of up to date Islamic banking services in the country has been a key reason for Afghans not using banks.

Experts say that billions of Afghans are held in cash by 89 percent of the population. (Tolo news)

(8) Four ID...

security forces to be alert and to tighten security measures just a day before the attack.

"We had a meeting here and said the alley should be blocked to maintain the crowd's security better, but no one paid attention to our suggestion," Sayed Bashir, a resident of the area said.

"I was getting Tazkira (ID) for my sons and daughter and myself when the incident happened," Juma Khan, an eyewitness said.

"Yesterday I was coming to the center and just arrived in the alley when I heard a loud noise. Bodies were everywhere," Barat, another eyewitness said.

The interior ministry meanwhile said security officials held a meeting on Monday and discussed security around population registration offices and voter registration centers.

"Our aim is to review the security mechanism and make a new plan for maintaining security of population registration offices and voter registration centers," the interior ministry's spokesman Najib Danish said.

A number of members of parliament meanwhile said on Sunday if

security is not maintained, the elections process will fail.

"Our security and intelligence should take security issues seriously and make a good decision," parliament's internal security commission head Mohammad Iqbal Safi said.

"If the situation continues like this, I believe that the election and the preparations that have been taken, will fail," senator Jumadin Gyanwal said.

Sunday's suicide attack in Kabul was carried out against local residents applying for ID documents in order to register to vote in the upcoming elections. (Tolo news)

(9) Karzai Blames...

said US officials had attended a dinner at the Presidential Palace, "it was in ARG, we had a dinner, and the conversation went very rough and I told them look there is a lot coming from Pakistan, he (the official) suddenly got very angry and threw the serviette on the table and said Mr President Pakistan is 50 times more important than Afghanistan."

Meanwhile, a number of lawmakers in the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of Parliament) said Sunday's attack in Kabul is rooted in the weakness of the security institutions.

"The government itself has paved the way for it, it means that there is no security measures for 2,000 centers, the lack of such measures provides an opportunity for the enemy to attack," said MP Humayoun Humayoun.

"Unfortunately, our security institutions are committing negligence in not providing security to the citizens," said another MP Ahmad Behzad.

But the Afghan government has said attacks on civilian targets in Afghanistan have been plotted in cooperation with militant groups and intelligence services of other countries. (Tolo news)

(10) Rashid to Play...

Eoin Morgan.

More names are expected to be added to the World XI squad in the coming days.

Following the announcement of his participation, Rashid said: "It is a matter of great honor and pride for me and my country that I have been chosen to support one of cricket's oldest and most loyal members.

"I don't think it will be incorrect to say that a number of cricketers from this and previous generations were inspired and attracted to cricket due to the heroics of the West Indies sides of the 70s, 80s and 90s. And if the West Indies are now looking upon us for help, then there shouldn't be a hesitation for even a second.

"Apart from my cricket obligations and responsibilities, the incentive of playing in this great match at the Home of Cricket at the age of 19, with and against some of the best cricketers of this generation, is just too tempting, irresistible and an icing on the cake.

"I urge all cricket fans and supporters to join hands with the match organizers and the players in making 31 May a hugely successful day so that the funds raised from this match can be reinvested into cricket that, in turn, will not only bring the smiles back on the faces of local cricket supporters but will also lead to the resumption of cricket activities in those regions." (Tolo news)

(11) After a Month...

coming to their schools by tomorrow."

Meanwhile, Kabir Haqmal, the ministry of education spokesman, also confirmed to Pajhwok the re-opening of the closed schools.

Under the new agreement with the Taliban, a new Kabul Bank branch would be opened in every district

of the province.

He said: "Opening of new Kabul Bank branches in every district would help teachers get their salaries easily."

Khal Mohammad, a resident of Qala-i-Zal district, said it was being heard that the schools had reopened but so far no student was seen going to school.

On the other hand, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said their delegation had been in the area for few days and they might have been reached a solution the issue of closed schools.

Some more than 300,000 students attend 507 schools in Kunduz. (Pajhwok)

(12) Daesh Beheads...

their home and killed on Sunday night.

According to AFP, the eldest brother Nisar, 27, was a doctor at a private clinic, the middle brother Naeem, 24, was working as a vaccine campaigner and the youngest Wahab, 19, was a medical student.

AFP also quoted Khogyani as saying the father of the victims was a doctor who was beheaded last year by Daesh. (Tolo news)

China Says 32 Nationals Killed When Bus Falls off Bridge in North Korea

BEIJING - Thirty-two Chinese tourists and four North Koreans died when a bus crashed off a bridge in North Korea, China's foreign ministry said on Monday, with two Chinese nationals in critical condition.

Chinese tourists make up about 80 percent of all foreign visitors to North Korea, says a South Korean think-tank, the Korea Maritime Institute, which estimates that tourism generates revenue of about \$44 million each year for the isolated country.

Chinese diplomats visited the scene of Sunday's crash in North Hwanghae province, the foreign ministry said.

State television's main Chinese-language news channel showed images of a crashed blue bus with its wheels in the air, in footage taken in pouring rain in the dark.

It also showed at least one person being treated in hospital.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang told reporters he could not give additional details of the accident as an investigation was under way.

Chinese President Xi Jinping had asked the Foreign Ministry and Chinese embassy to take "all necessary means" to handle the accident, the ministry said in a later statement.

In a separate statement, China's health ministry said it was sending a team of medical experts, along with equipment and drugs, to North Korea, to help treat survivors.

The North Hwanghae province that borders South Korea is home to Kaesong, an ancient Korean capital thronged by tourists.

North Korea is a popular, if offbeat, tourist destination for Chinese, especially those from the country's northeast.

China said more than 237,000 Chinese visited in 2012, but stopped publishing the figures in 2013.

China is North Korea's most important economic and diplomatic backer, despite Beijing's anger at Pyongyang's repeated nuclear and missile tests and support for strong United Nations sanctions against North Korea.

North and South Korea are in the final stages of preparations for a summit between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and South Korean President Moon Jae-In at the border truce village of Panmunjom on Friday. (Reuters)