

(1) Corruption Mai...

Spoko in address said corruption was the factor behind the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan because the menace threatened the ongoing fight and chances for the victory in the war against terrorism.

Institutions working against corruption should act independently and their viewpoints should be heard, he added.

EU Ambassador for Afghanistan Pierre Mayaudon said Afghanistan had come to an important cross-road and elections this year and next year were highly important for the future of the people.

He said participation in elections was crucial and meant discharging his/her responsibility. (Pajhwok)

(2) Turkish...

"In this way, the physical conditions, quality and capacity of the schools will be improved," Uludag added.

According to official figures compiled by Anadolu Agency, 9,633 students are currently studying abroad in schools taken over by the Maarif Foundation.

Turkey established the Maarif Foundation in 2016 after the defeated coup in Turkey as part of its efforts to take over the administration of overseas schools linked to FETO. It also establishes schools and education centers abroad.

FETO and its U.S.-based leader Fetullah Gulen orchestrated the defeated coup of July 15, 2016, which left 250 people martyred and nearly 2,200 injured.

Ankara accuses FETO of being behind a long-running campaign to overthrow the state through the infiltration of Turkish institutions, particularly the military, police and judiciary. (AA)

(3) Parents Concerned...

until the end of this process," said Sayed Ghulam Haidar Hussaini, principle of Abdul Rahim Shaheed High School.

Over 6,000 boys and girls are enrolled at this school.

"Both our families and ourselves are afraid of possible explosions at school," said one student Behroz.

"Five students go to school from our family, but over the past five days, none of them have gone to school," said one shopkeeper in Kabul, Assadullah.

But, officials from the ministry of interior have pledged to provide security to the schools.

"We accept that the presence of voter registration centers inside schools is a problem, we are trying to find alternative places for the centers and also security forces are committed to providing security to these schools," said interior ministry spokesman Najib Danish.

Over the past eleven days, at least five attacks have been carried out by insurgents on election-related facilities across Afghanistan.

Members of the public have meanwhile said that public confidence in the election process will be further damaged if the government does not outline full security measures. (Tolo news)

(4) Credible Elections...

rights, the United States reaffirms our support for the Afghan government, Afghan security forces, and the Independent Electoral Commission in their efforts to ensure that the elections process is transparent, credible, and safe," the official said. The United States remain committed to supporting the Afghan people's efforts to achieve peace, security, and democracy for their country, the spokesperson said.

Expressing condolences to the families that have suffered from the recent episodes of devastating violence, the official said these attacks by ISIS-K underscore the group's

destructiveness.

"The United States, along with our Afghan and international partners, remain committed to defeating ISIS-K in Afghanistan. We, the Afghan security forces, and our allies are prepared for the Taliban's Spring offensive. The ANDSF continue to improve and show themselves to be an increasingly capable fighting force," the spokesperson said.

According to the spokesperson, the NATO Resolute Support Mission works closely and constantly with the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) to expand their ability to combat the Taliban insurgency and make clear that the Taliban cannot win on the battlefield.

"The US government also supports Afghan security forces through the NATO train-advise-assist mission and the US Afghanistan counter-terrorism partnership and helps the Afghan government on the security situation throughout Afghanistan," the spokesperson said. (Pajhwok)

(5) Half a Million...

drought-affected provinces. Food insecurity and reduced access to drinking water were beginning to take toll in the 10 worst-affected provinces, it added.

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

Some 1.6 million children and 443,000 pregnant and lactating women suffer from malnutrition across Afghanistan, according to the statement. "The priority is to prevent the situation from deteriorating by responding to the needs of children and families in the worst-affected areas," said Khodr. The UNICEF and other partners in the nutrition cluster estimate emergency nutrition assistance is needed for 92,000 children and 8,500 pregnant and lactating women.

An estimated 100 families from the Bala Murghab district of Badghis have been forced to move to Herat to find alternative work due to failed crops and to access safe drinking water, according to the statement.

Among the affected provinces, Bagdhis, Bamyán, Daikundi, Ghor, Helmand, Kandahar, Jawzjan, Nangarhar, Nimroz, Nuristan, Takhar, and Uruzgan are of critical priority for nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene assistance. (Pajhwok)

(6) Conditions for...

and 10,000 afghanis for district council.

Should consider election campaign violations that lead to jail terms of three months to five years.

Should take into account cash fines for election law violations.

Educational qualifications and work experience in government and non-governmental organisations have been prioritised over securing a high number of votes.

Mohammad Naeem Ayubzada, head of the Transparent Election Foundation of Afghanistan (TEFA), said: "Unfortunately, there have been no encouraging changes in the new election law."

"Conditions for women should have been simplified so that they are encouraged to participate in elections. Women should have been allowed to win even with limited votes to pave the ground for their active participation in elections. But unfortunately, such conditions don't exist," he said.

"There are no rules for preventing strongmen, warlords, criminals and traitors from contesting the vote. The law says courts can decide crimes against nominees. But no courts have so far been specified for

investigating the crimes," Ayubzada explained.

Yousuf Rashid, chief executive of the Free and Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan (FEFA), said conditions mentioned in the new law for candidates were not enough. The only way people can follow was to vote for qualified candidates and strictly watch the election process, he commented.

Syed Hafizullah Hashimi, an Independent Election Commission (IEC) member, said any complaints about conditions for candidates should be referred to the Wolesi Jirga and the Presidential Palace.

Accepting or rejecting suggestions of election observers and the civil society about the law is the prerogative of parliament and the Presidential Palace. The IEC was obliged to follow the new law, he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(7) Peace in Afghanistan...

should also identify states that encouraged, supported and financed terrorist groups, she added.

She said India had operationalised the air freight corridor between Kabul, Kandahar, New Delhi and Mumbai besides developing the Chabahar Port in Iran. (Pajhwok)

(8) Pakistan-US...

Shura and Lashkar-i-Taiba on Pakistan's soil.

The official said Pakistan reiterated its position that it had already done what it could to vanquish all insurgent outfits. He denied Islamabad was stilling following the policy of good and bad terrorists.

According to the official, who did not want to be named, the involvement of a US defence attaché in a road accident that killed a Pakistan man also figured at the talks.

Wells visited Islamabad for meetings with senior officials, the US embassy in Islamabad said. "She discussed the status of the United States' South Asia strategy and efforts to make progress on regional security and stability."

No concrete progress as could be achieved in the fresh round of dialogue, the Foreign Office source said, acknowledging Islamabad and Washington was yet to agree on an endgame in Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(9) Kabul, Kandahar...

registration turnout in the week.

The worst voter registration turnout was seen in Wardak, with only 458 people registering. Next was Nuristan with only 578.

Election observers and monitoring groups have blasting the election commission for not having rolled out a comprehensive election awareness campaign.

Critics said the IEC's failure to conduct such a campaign, and the absence of a voter registration database, were indicative of poor leadership and mismanagement in the election commission.

But the IEC on Monday said it will finalize the voter registration database within the next two days.

"The commission should have made the database very early so that the data would be directly entered in to the database and would be available to the people on the website," said Yousuf Rashid, chairman of Free and Fair Election Commission Forum of Afghanistan (FEFA).

This also comes just days after the IEC announced the timeline for the country's parliamentary and district council elections which are due to be held in October.

According to the timeline, the voter registration process will end on June 12.

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A preliminary list of candidates will be announced on June 28 while the final list will be out on August 3.

The candidates can withdraw their nominations between June 29 and August 1.

The campaign for parliamentary elections will begin on September 28 and end on October 17, while that for district council elections will be between October 3 and October 17.

The final results of parliamentary elections will be announced on December 20 while the final results of district council elections will be on January 24.

IEC has meanwhile said that public confidence in the electoral process was badly damaged during the crisis following the 2014 presidential elections and that the commission will do everything possible to rebuild the trust in the process. (Tolo news)

(10) US Focused...

the Pentagon said it remained committed to staying in Afghanistan till the time terrorists were defeated.

"We strongly condemned the deplorable suicide attack on a voter registration center and Kabul that killed approximately 60 people and wounded over 100 others," Col Robert Manning, Pentagon Spokesman told reporters during an off-camera news conference.

"This senseless violence targeting innocent civilians exercising their fundamental democratic rights exposes the savagery and inhumanity of terrorists," he said. The US, along with its Afghan and international partners, were committed to destroying ISIS in Afghanistan, he added.

"We stand with the people and government of Afghanistan and their fight against terrorism. The US reaffirms its support for the Afghan government, Afghan security forces and the independent electoral commission in their efforts to ensure the elections process is transparent, credible and safe," Manning said.

The Trump administration, he said, was still focused on its South Asia strategy -- the ability to regionalise support to defeat terrorists in the region. "It's a tough fight obviously. But we still continue to move forward in accordance with the strategy," Manning said.

The attack on the polling station reaffirmed American commitment to Afghan partners and the reason why it had had to focus on rooting out violent extreme extremism.

"When citizens can't go and register and exercise their democratic right to vote, that's a problem. They certainly deserve it and that's why we're going to stay there to make sure that we can work with our Afghan partners to allow them that right," Manning concluded. (Pajhwok)

(11) 5 Public Order...

spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid claimed 17 POP personnel were killed and two others captured alive in the attack.

He confirmed injuring to two of their fighters, saying the rebels seized two Humvee vehicles, 20 weapons and overran the check-post.

But the governor's spokesman denied the check-post had fallen to the Taliban militants. (Pajhwok)

Iran Warns Trump It Might Withdraw From

Non-Proliferation Treaty

LONDON - A senior Iranian official said on Tuesday that Tehran might quit a treaty designed to stop the spread of nuclear weapons if U.S. President Donald Trump scraps the nuclear accord Iran signed with world powers in 2015.

Trump has said that unless European allies fix what he has called "terrible flaws" in the accord by May 12, he will restore U.S. economic sanctions on Iran, which would be a severe blow to the pact.

The other powers that signed it - Russia, China, Germany, Britain and France - have all said they want to preserve the agreement that curbed Iran's nuclear program in return for the lifting of most international sanctions.

In a news conference broadcast on state television, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Ali Shamkhani, said the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran was ready for some "surprising actions" if the nuclear deal was scrapped.

Answering a question about the possibility of Tehran withdrawing from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Shamkhani said: "This is one of three options that we are considering."

The objective of the NPT, which took effect in 1970, is to halt the spread of nuclear weapons-making capability, guarantee the right of all members to develop nuclear energy for peaceful ends. The original five nuclear weapons powers - the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France - would also phase out their arsenals.

Iran has been a non-nuclear-weapon state party to the NPT since 1970. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani also warned Trump on Tuesday to stay in the nuclear deal or face "severe consequences" (Reuters)

Indonesia Plans to Challenge U.S. Anti-Dumping Duty on Biodiesel to WTO

JAKARTA - The Indonesian government has arranged and prepared a lawsuit to the World Trade Organization (WTO) on U.S. high anti-dumping tariff against bio-diesel imports from Indonesia, a senior trade official said.

The U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC) added more duties on the already steep anti-dumping tariff and countervailing duty on biodiesel import from Indonesia to between 126.97 to 341.38 percent on April 9, essentially making it almost impossible for the Indonesian biodiesel product to enter the U.S. market, according to the trade ministry. Trade Director for Security of the ministry Pradnyawati Pambagyo said that Indonesian exporter companies have submitted the appeal to the U.S. court and now the Indonesian government and the firms are waiting for the decision of the U.S. court. The ministry will also file a lawsuit to the WTO if the court decision remains seriously harming Indonesia's bio-diesel shipments to the United States, according to the official.

"Basically, the government and the companies are ready to seek justice to the highest level," Pradnyawati was quoted by Kontan media as saying. Export of Indonesia's biodiesel grew 47.31 percent on average from 2014 to 2016, according to the ministry.

"At present, there is no more exports of bio-diesel to the United States," said Pradnyawati. (Xinhua)