

### (1) McCain to...

based on the advice of some of our best military leaders that will provide a strategy for success in achieving America's national interests in Afghanistan."

The Pentagon said no decision has been taken on Afghan policy review. "We're contributing to a process that's being led by the White House that is looking across our instruments of national power, not just military, but diplomatic, financial, intelligence and information as well to lay out what our desired end state is," Pentagon Press Secretary Jeff Davis told reporters.

"From that will be derived any follow-on decisions about troops or anything else," Davis said when asked about the increase in troop numbers. In the past, he recalled, top Pentagon leaders had spoken of adopting a regional approach to finding a permanent solution to the crisis.

The White House has authorized the Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to set troops levels in Afghanistan. However, Mattis would not take such a call unless the strategy was in place, he said. Mattis, he claimed, wanted to get the strategy right before committing to a troop increase.

Also on Monday, The Wall Street Journal reported the Trump administration was also exploring the option of withdrawing US troops from Afghanistan. "Unable to agree on a plan to send up to 3,900 more American forces to help turn back Taliban advances in Afghanistan, the White House is taking a new look at what would happen if the US decided to scale back its military presence," the daily said.

"It's a macro question as to whether the US, this administration and this president are committed to staying," one senior administration official was quoted as saying.

"It doesn't work unless we are there for a long time, and if we don't have the appetite to be there a long time, we should just leave. It's an unanswered question," the official told the daily. (Pajhwok)

### (2) US Spending in...

during the period. The report said the estimated value of opium and its by-products produced in Afghanistan rose to \$3.02bn in 2016 from \$1.56bn in 2015.

The US was asked not to shrink from taking risks and venture beyond the heavily fortified US government compounds to keep an eye on its investments and spending in Afghanistan. "SIGAR is concerned that US officials, whether at State, USAID, Justice, Treasury, Commerce, or elsewhere, cannot oversee the billions of dollars the United States is dedicating to Afghan reconstruction if, for the most part, they cannot leave the US embassy compound," said John Sopko. (Pajhwok)

### (3) Afghan Forces...

challenge for Resolute Support, the NATO-led training and advisory mission trying to build up Afghan security forces. The United States is expected to send around 4,000 troops to boost the mission but has yet to announce its long-awaited new strategy for the region.

U.S. commanders and officials have warned repeatedly that Afghan forces have been suffering unsustainably high casualties against the Taliban, partly because of tactics that include a heavy reliance on vulnerable static checkpoints.

Just last week, around 30 Afghan soldiers were killed in the southern province of Kandahar when their checkpoint was overrun by Taliban fighters. U.S. officers say that troops defending checkpoints suffer as much as 10 times the level of casualties as they do when conducting offensive operations. But they have struggled to persuade Afghan commanders to cut their use, partly because local politicians say the checkpoints are needed as a visible sign of government presence in isolated areas.

The SIGAR report also quoted U.S. commanders who assess the fighting between government and insurgent forces as a "stalemate", with government forces in control of 59.7 percent of the country's 407 districts, the same as last quarter.

It said insurgents control 11 districts and influence another 34, equivalent to 11.1 percent of the total with another 29.2 percent contested, although it was unclear if they were actively contested or simply left alone by both sides.

The main centers of insurgent strength were in the southern provinces of Helmand, Kandahar, Uruzgan and Zabul as well as Kunduz in the north.

Around 3 million people, or about a tenth of the population, were living in

areas controlled or influenced by insurgents, with some 21 million living in areas under government control or influence. (Reuters)

### (4) 'Promote Project'...

five-year Promote Project was launched two years back to train more than 7,000 women and girls in relevant fields.

Wardak said MoWA had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with USAID as a donor of the project two months ago. Based on the MoU, MoWA was responsible to cooperate and facilitate implementation of the project and supervise it.

According to her, about 1,000 posts lied vacant at government organizations currently and the girls and women of the project could apply for any post of their choice.

The USAID launched the Promote Project in partnership with the Government of Afghanistan to preserve the gains made by Afghan women in the past decade besides providing a new generation of Afghan women with leadership skills to make vital contributions to Afghanistan's development in governance, civil society, and economy.

The program has been designed to target and train educated women, 12th graders and bachelor's degree holders aged 18-30 who have interest to work at government institutions.

Herbie Smith, USAID director in Afghanistan, said: "This is an essential step for women to identify job opportunities in government offices and know how they can enter a field of work."

According to him, about 1,700 girls and women, graduated from 12th or university, had participated in the training programs in Kabul, Herat, Balkh, Kandahar, and Nangarhar provinces and 118 of them, after undergoing a one year training, had achieved permanent jobs at government organizations.

Sharifa Mosavi, one of the apprentices in Kabul, said: "We learned subjects which weren't taught at universities." She asked the government to take serious the phenomenon of youth joblessness and create work opportunities for educated and specially trained individuals. (Pajhwok)

### (5) India Backs US...

of Union external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj. PTI

She referred to the joint message against terrorism issued by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US president Donald Trump during the former's visit to Washington in June which sent a "clear and unambiguous message" against terrorism "to be pursued with resolve by the international community".

"An important theatre of cooperation over the last decade and half between India and US has been Afghanistan," Swaraj said.

"We deeply appreciate the sacrifices made by the US to preserve peace, security and democracy in Afghanistan. However, it is important that the international community, particularly the US, must remain engaged in Afghanistan so that the gains of the last 16 years are not frittered away."

The external affairs minister said that India has made its own contributions and remained committed to continue supporting the people and government of Afghanistan.

"We have pledged another \$1 billion to the earlier \$2 billion as reflection of our continued commitment," she stated.

"During Modi's visit to the US, our leaders have agreed to work together and with the government of Afghanistan to secure a democratic, peaceful, prosperous and stable Afghanistan." India is among the biggest aid donors for the reconstruction of war-torn Afghanistan. (IANS)

### (6) Afghan Film...

society, and culture from various regions around the world.

The Afghan Film Directorate has faced major ups and downs during its history including the plundering of its assets during the various wars.

There are dozens of incomplete films by Afghan artists which were never completed due to wars in the country.

Recently President Ashraf Ghani's daughter Maryam, who is a filmmaker and social activist, said she wants to make a documentary about these films.

"The equipment which we have today, we see that it was hidden, along with rolls of film in roofs and every other place possible, by the grace of Allah, the Taliban failed to harm our archive," said Abdul Azim Karimi, head of the Afghan Film Archive.

"We have nearly 6,000 hours of Afghan films in our archive and more

than 30,000 hours of international films," said Mohammad Ibrahim Arifi Kaihan, chairman of the Afghan Film Directorate.

"If our archive, which is a treasure, is shown to an audience, the people would be able to get very interesting things from it," said Habibullah, an employee of the Afghan Film Directorate.

Among the films in the archive are some from before the first World War including one called 'Love and Friendship' which was jointly produced by Indian and Afghan artists. (Tolnews)

### (7) ACCI Calls...

way to connect Afghanistan to China and Russia, therefore, in an unprecedented move, passing through Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the Afghan government succeeded to connect Afghanistan to China by railway.

In September 2016, the first Chinese train reached to the Hairatan port of Afghanistan and transported Afghanistan's exporting goods in its way back to China.

The NUG has also inked agreements with Uzbekistan in other areas such as the agreement to rise electricity imports from Uzbekistan by 10%, purchase wheat, improve transit and trade between the two countries and etc. These agreements have, to some extent, facilitated trade for Afghanistan and have freed Afghanistan from other countries limitations. (ATN)

### (8) Powerful Elements...

Badakhshan governor Ahmad Faisal Begzad.

According to analysts, the issue of impunity for some has led to the vacuum between people and the government.

"The issue is that the law is not being implemented against powerful elements, the law is implemented only on the poor; if this issue is not resolved, the people will distance themselves from government," said political analyst Samad Sherzad.

He said that if such interference is not curbed, the AGO will not be able to investigate cases properly. (Tolnews)

### (9) Loan Applications...

from the Banks Union said in the first three months of this year, loan requests increased by 15 percent.

"The figures show that a large number of people trust the banking system and that they have increased their deposits and also the banking services has increased," said Aimal Ashor, spokesman of the central bank.

But despite an increase in deposits and an increase in loan requests, banks have approved a fewer loans to people - 11 percent less against the same period last year.

According to Bank Union, currently 3.5 million people, which is 12 percent of the population, keep their money in banks.

Bank Union officials said this year every bank customer earned 2.5 percent interest.

"All the banks laws and procedures have been set by the Central Bank to improve banking. We want the central bank to in some places follow the procedures seriously and in some places be more cautious to ensure the implementation of the laws and procedures will improve the banking system," Najibullah Amiri, CEO of Bank Union said.

Meanwhile a number of banks officials said due to problems with customers' documents and identities, they cannot always offer them full services. (Tolnews)

### (10) Taliban Judge

on security forces, he said, but provided no figures.

He also claimed a tank belonging to security forces was destroyed and four personnel were killed during the ongoing clash in Kalta Shakh village. (Pajhwok)

### (11) Khost Lakan

of siding with the Kuchis in the land dispute. He said he had invited Kuchi representatives in the parliament from Kabul to help resolve the dispute through jirgas or refer the issue to the judicial organs.

"We have tried in the past and are trying now to resolve the dispute. We have sent a delegation to closely assess the matter and prevent any untoward incident," said the governor, who accused the insurgents of trying to create differences among tribes over land ownerships. (Pajhwok)

### (12) Taliban Group...

, Subhan said he was encouraged to surrender and join reconciliation process after reaching to an understanding that the violence was being waged on the instructions of the outsiders.

The anti-government armed militant groups have not commented regarding the report so far. (KP)

### (13) Fighting in Wardak...

confirmed to Pajhwok passenger buses had been off the highway since morning. He said that only small vehicles were moving between Ghazni and Zabul. (Pajhwok)

### (14) Iraqi Delegation...

to Kabul on Monday, after he survived the attack on the embassy.

In this meeting, Atmar expressed his condolences over the attack on the Iraqi Embassy in Kabul.

The two sides emphasized on joint combat against terrorism, the National Security Advisor's office said in a statement on Tuesday.

At least four Daesh insurgents carried out the attack on the Iraqi embassy in Kabul on Monday morning in the Ansari area of the city.

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) said in a statement that three attackers were killed by security forces after a gunfight that lasted almost four hours. The MoI said that "one policeman was wounded in the attack."

"No embassy staff members were hurt in the attack. The security forces rescued the ambassador, deputy ambassador and other staff and took them to a safe place," the MoI said.

According to the MoI, a suicide bomber first detonated explosives near the entrance to the embassy. At least three others then stormed the compound. One source said the insurgents were wearing police uniforms when they launched the attack.

Daesh claimed responsibility for the attack. (Tolnews)

## 35pc Progress in Bakhshabad Dam's Detailed Design

FARAH - Geotechnical work on 640-meter deep 13 wells in the Bakhshabad Dam area in western Farah province and topography of the dam has been completed, with the detailed design of the project progressing by 35 percent, the Ministry of Energy and Water said on Tuesday.

In a statement, the ministry said geotechnical work on two other wells for researching purposes near the dam's water circulation tunnel would be started this week and construction of roads to the dam was underway.

The detailed design contract of the dam was signed with Helmand Construction Enterprise and Hydro Arch, an Italian company in May. Bakhshabad Dam is located in Bala Bolok district of Farah on the Farah Rod River.

The dam has the capacity to store 1.3 million cubic meters water and generate 27 megawatts of electricity besides irrigating 68,000 hectares of farmland. Farah residents said they were happy about the progress in construction of Bakhshabad Dam.

Aminullah, a resident of 5th police district of Farah City, told Pajhwok that the Bakhshabad dam was important for the Afghans, particularly for Farah people.

He asked Afghan security forces and militants to ensure security during construction of the dam and let people's dream come true.

Few days back, a Taliban spokesman in Farah said the rebels supported all welfare projects including Bakhshabad dam and would help ensure its security.

On Saturday, Farah residents in response to Iran president's remarks about construction of dams in Afghanistan, carried out a rally and announced their support development projects.

Iranian president Hassan Rouhani had criticized construction of many dams in Afghanistan.

But the Afghan government said it was Afghanistan's right and construction of dams did not pose any threat to neighboring countries. (Pajhwok)

## Germany's Immigrant Population Hits new High in 2016

BERLIN - The number of people in Germany with immigrant roots rose 8.5 percent last year to a record 18.6 million, powered by the influx of refugees and other migrants up to the spring of 2016, official statistics showed Tuesday.

The Federal Statistical Office said people with an immigrant background - defined as those who either weren't born as German citizens or have at least one parent who wasn't - made up 22.5 percent of the country's total population of 82.4 million in 2016. The figure was the fifth annual record

in a row and the year-on-year rise the strongest since the measurement began in 2005, the office said.

Germany saw a large influx of migrants from the Middle East and elsewhere in 2015 and early 2016. That hurt Chancellor Angela Merkel's popularity for a time and boosted the four-year-old nationalist Alternative for Germany party.

Migration has since declined as a political issue though Merkel's center-left challenger, Martin Schulz, has sought lately to highlight the risks of a new refugee crisis.

Polls indicate that Merkel's conservatives, and her personal popularity, have recovered ahead of a Sept. 24 election in which she is seeking a fourth term, and show Alternative for Germany - which also has suffered from infighting - some distance short of the levels it was reaching last year. (AP)

## Xi Reaffirms CPC's Absolute Leadership over Army

BEIJING - Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday reaffirmed the Communist Party of China (CPC)'s absolute leadership over the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

"To build a strong military, [we] must unwaveringly adhere to the Party's absolute leadership over the armed forces, and make sure that the people's army always follows the Party," Xi told a grand gathering in Beijing to mark the 90th founding anniversary of the PLA.

According to Xi, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, the Party's leadership is a "fundamental guarantee" for the PLA to maintain its great cohesion, creativity and combat capabilities.

It is an essential trait of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and a major political advantage of the Party and the state, he said.

"It is what the PLA was first built upon, and the very soul of building a stronger army," said Xi.

"No matter how times develop and how circumstances change, this army of ours will always remain one of the Party and one of the people," Xi said. He ordered the PLA to raise its awareness of political integrity, the overall situation, the core and conformity with the core and firmly protect the authority of the CPC Central Committee.

It must resolutely implement the fundamental principle and system of the CPC's absolute leadership over the army, and always follow the command of the CPC Central Committee and the Central Military Commission, Xi said. (Xinhua)

## Trump Continues to Push for Healthcare Revamp, but it could be too Little, too Late

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump is still pushing for a healthcare revamp, even though his bill -- considered a last-ditch effort to pass legislation -- failed in the Senate last Friday.

Despite years of promise that they would repeal and replace the 2010 healthcare law, known as Obamacare, Senate Republicans failed last week to pass a draft bill. That sparked the White House's wrath, but President Trump did not give it up.

Trump "will not accept those who said, quote, 'it's time to move on,'" Kellyanne Conway, one of Trump's senior advisers, told conservative TV program Fox News on Sunday.

"If a new Health Care Bill is not approved quickly, BAILOUTS for Insurance Companies and BAILOUTS for Members of Congress will end very soon," the president tweeted Monday in a bid to tighten the screws on the Republican Congress.

However, Trump's threats to the Congress may be futile, as the party simply does not have the votes to repeal Obamacare, despite the controversy the bill has elicited over the past years. "It is too little, too late. Republicans don't have the votes for any significant repeal of Obamacare," Darrell West, the vice president and director of governance studies at the Brookings Institution, told Xinhua.

"The Senate tried several different alternatives and none of them passed. The Senate Majority Leader has said it is time to move on to other issues so he isn't very optimistic that anything new can be achieved," West said.

"The only real option would be a bipartisan effort, but it would require Republicans to give up on a repeal of Obamacare and move to shoring up its financing. (Xinhua)