

(1) Govt was Aware...

confirmed three sessions of talks were held with US officials in Doha. The head of HPC secretariat, Mohammad Akram Khpulwak, said Afghanistan has inched closer towards peace.

He said efforts by the US and Muslim countries are aimed at facilitating direct peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. Khpulwak added that no commitment has been made by the US to the Taliban during the talks.

"Official talks have not started by anyone in any place so far. These talks are aimed at facilitating direct talks with the Taliban. I am sure that direct talks (between government and Taliban) will start," he said.

Taliban has confirmed to Reuters that US officials held talks with their political office in Qatar three times in the last few months.

Sources close to the Taliban said the fourth round of talks between the group and US officials will be more serious and will focus on fundamental issues around peace talks.

"Such talks were preliminary. The next round of talks will discuss more fundamental issues about the peace negotiations," said Nazar Mohammad Motmaen, a political affairs analyst.

"Any individual and any institution which takes steps for peace is worthy of appreciation and it can take us one step closer towards peace," said Habiba Sarabi, deputy chairperson of HPC.

Afghan government has said on many occasions the process will be an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace initiative. However, some analysts said government is often informed by media outlets about such talks.

US officials last month made it clear that the Afghan government was fully involved in the effort to jump-start peace talks.

According to a report by the Wall Street Journal last month, the US and Afghan officials warned that official negotiations, if they ever happen, could be months away, and that those efforts, like previous attempts, could collapse.

But US officials said they had seen a serious, new interest from the Taliban in peace talks. (Tolo news)

(2) Omitting...

had been handed over to the National Security Council because in 42 districts nobody had registered as candidate while in 120 districts no woman had registered as voter.

Ahmad Khan Muslim, a Wolosi Jirga election candidate, termed the delay in district council polls as against the law. (Pajhwok)

(3) Taliban Says...

were fighting Islamic State, which he said had to be destroyed.

U.S. forces have launched air strikes against Islamic State fighters in Jawzjan in recent months, but the Taliban has rejected any suggestion of cooperation and accused the United States of trying to obstruct them.

The fighting prompted thousands of people to flee to the provincial capital of Sheberghan, where many gave shocking accounts of the brutality of Islamic State fighters and commanders in Darzab and QushTepa, the two districts they controlled before being driven out.

Mujahid said more than 150 Islamic State fighters had been killed and more than 130 captured by the Taliban with the rest surrendering to government forces rather than the Taliban.

Afghan government officials said 152 fighters from the Islamic State strongholds of Darzab and QushTepa surrendered to security forces in the early hours of the morning.

Mawlawi Habiburrahman, commander of Islamic State forces in the north, and another commander called Mufti Nematullah were among those who surrendered, they said.

Bands of Islamic State fighters have been increasingly active in northern Afghanistan in recent years, fighting the Taliban for control of resources and sparking alarm in neighboring

nations.

Government officials said the group's defeat in Jawzjan would ease concerns about its potential to expand and support militant activity outside Afghanistan.

"The worries of neighboring countries, and the presence of Daesh groups on their borders, have now been removed," said Mohammad Reza Ghafouri, a spokesman for the provincial governor. (Reuters)

(4) Ghani Holds...

The statement said that the provincial governor, commanders of Selab Military Corps and the provincial NDS chief briefed Ghani of the security situation.

The provincial officials said: "Daesh has suffered heavily in Nangarhar and because of this they have started destructive attacks in Jalalabad."

"The operational responsibility of Nangarhar province was handed over to the National Army," said Mohammad Radmanish, spokesman for the Defense Ministry. "We are sure that security will be ensured in Nangarhar as per people's expectations."

The Ministry of Interior Affairs meanwhile stressed the need for coordination between police and army personnel.

"One part of the duty has been handed to the Defense Ministry but in general, our mission is to support rule of law and we are doing our duty in Nangarhar," said Najib Danish, a spokesman for the Interior Ministry. Jalalabad has witnessed a spate of insurgent attacks in recent weeks.

An MP from the province, Zahir Qadeer, said they will make a collective decision on Nangarhar if the situation prevails.

"If the situation continues as it is, we - all the representatives of the east, tribal elders, religious scholars and civil society activists - will announce our final decision in this respect," the lawmaker said.

"Serious attention should be paid (to Nangarhar). So far we have lost 70 percent of trade in Nangarhar and people are in a bad condition," said Sayed Ikram, an MP from Nangarhar. An investigation by TOLONews last week shows that 160 people have lost their lives in insurgent attacks and crime incidents in Nangarhar in the last three months. The probe shows more than 490 people were also wounded during this period. (Tolo news)

(5) 30% of Afghan...

addiction to drugs paves the ground for many problems and the requisite to fight it is making the society informed. (IRNA)

(6) IEC Concerned...

voters have been entered into the database and the IEC will announce the list of voters in two weeks," Sayed Hafizullah Hashemi, the IEC spokesman said at a press conference on Wednesday. He said: "We are also trying to hire six experts to boost the presidential election process."

He said government needs to provide the necessary facilities for the IEC to hold presidential elections.

In the meantime, Haroon Chakhansuri, a spokesman for President Ashraf Ghani said: "A few days ago, the leadership of the National Unity Government asked the Independent Election Commission to announce the date for the presidential elections and fortunately the election commission announced that it would be on the 31st of Hamal. The leadership of the National Unity Government, particularly the president himself, welcomes this move. All resources available will be provided to the Independent Election Commission." Biometric system

The head of the political committee representing political parties on Wednesday confirmed that a meeting between the government, political parties and the IEC was held and an agreement was reached that a biometric system should be used for voters on election day.

He also said that it is expected that a company will brief the committee over a biometric system.

"Yesterday (Tuesday) we had two meetings at the Sedarat (Sedarat Palace) with Mr. Danish and the UN,

it was decided that the voters go through a biometric process on election day and that this will prevent fraud and vote-rigging 100 percent. Today a company is expected to make a presentation to the committee to see how biometric systems really work," said Mohammad Natiqi, head of the political committee representing the political parties.

"At yesterday's meeting, it was decided that consultations should move forward, today the companies will explain biometrics in terms of its technical perspective, we hope that this problem is resolved," IEC commissioner Sayed Hafiz Hashemi said. This comes after political parties said last week that of the nine million registered voters over five million where ghost voters and that these fake registrations need to be invalidated.

The political parties have been calling for changes to be brought to the electoral system, for the suspension of the voter registration process, the rolling out of a biometric system for voter registration and declaring each province a single constituency. (Tolo news)

(7) US, Pakistan...

efforts to expand its cooperation with Kabul, including through the Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS). (Pajhwok)

(8) Ninety first...

and support peace in different parts of the world. He vowed support to the Afghan Peace Process and economic development.

Gen. Tariq Shah Bahrami, the Afghan Defense Minister, said, "China is a regional strategic partner of Afghanistan". China has always stood by Afghanistan and has supported Afghanistan's role on the international stage", he said. (Daily Outlook Afghanistan)

(9) Afghans Hoping...

peace activist who joined the movement seven months ago in Helmand. He says that the Taliban is also tired of war.

"There was no war or violence in areas where there was a ceasefire. Taliban and the soldiers met each other. I think both the Taliban and government are tired of war now," said Pacha Khan Mawla Dad, PPM's public relations chief.

"If the ceasefire is announced for a short period of time, the country will face a similar situation and the turmoil will continue which we have witnessed in the past forty days. The important issue is that certain countries and intelligence agencies must stop their interference in Afghanistan," said Bismillah Watandost, PPM's spokesman.

In June, President Ashraf Ghani announced a ceasefire with the Taliban after a religious scholars meeting in Kabul issued a fatwa against the ongoing war in the country.

In a reciprocal move, the Taliban, on June 9, said in a statement that it had ordered its fighters not to clash with Afghan security forces for the first three days of Eid.

In the statement sent to the media, the Taliban said its fighters would not launch attacks against Afghan security forces but that they would defend themselves if necessary. (Tolo news)

(10) Former Envoy...

agreement on the agenda would not be easy because the Taliban wanted was to discuss withdrawal of the US troops in a time period, he suggested. "They do not seem to be ready or willing to discuss anything beyond that that has to do with the Afghan government on a political settlement of the issue.

"I think the second track of the US policy is still applicable, which means they will want to make sure that security in Afghanistan does not deteriorate..."

He underlined the need for a long-term strategic view of what Afghanistan to achieve, as well as shorter-term policies to help it achieve those objectives. (Pajhwok)

(11) WB VP Vows...

opportunities with representatives

from NGOs, the women community, private sector and international partners.

"I am delighted to visit Afghanistan and see first-hand how the WB is helping the government serve Afghan people in areas such as health, education, citizen empowerment, agriculture, water supply and sanitation, and institutional reforms," said Schafer.

Despite prevailing security challenges compounded by capacity constraints, he noted progress across all sectors and commended the government for implementing key policy reforms.

The WB group programme in Afghanistan is currently governed by its country partnership framework for fiscal year 2017-20. The WB administers the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF).

Together, ARTF and the International Development Association (IDA), the World Bank Group's fund for the poorest countries, provide more than \$1 billion a year in grants (\$250 million from IDA and about \$800-\$900 million from the ARTF).

Additionally, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the largest global development institution focused on the private sector development, has committed a total of \$54.5 million to Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(12) Senior Daesh...

Nematullah along with his fighters handed themselves over to security forces in Darzab district of the province.

"More than 10 of these fighters are foreigners," Ghafoori said, adding that "the identity of the foreign fighters is unclear but it appears most of them are from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan."

Local officials said the move happened after heavy clashes broke out between Taliban and Daesh in Darzab two days ago.

Habiburrahman is a resident of Darzab and was assigned as the group's military head for the region a year ago after the death of his predecessor Qari Hekmatullah.

Nematullah, is also a resident of the district. Habiburrahman was originally a Taliban commander who then surrendered himself to Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum, First Vice President, during an operation in the area. However a few months later, he joined Daesh.

In the meantime, Gen. Faqir Mohammad Jawzjani, provincial police chief, said that "the surrendering of Daesh's military head shows the defeat of the group in Darzab."

"Soon these people will be transferred by helicopter to Sheberghan, (capital of Jawzjan) from Darzab district," Jawzjani said.

Darzab has been one of the most insecure districts in the province and has been the scene of heavy clashes in the past three years between government forces, Taliban and Daesh insurgents. (Tolo news)

(13) Efforts Underway...

which people and media can work to access archive material. According to Murtazavi, people will also be able to access the archive through its web site.

"There is no limitation to access to the information or media access to the archive. Government is committed to trusteeship, because it is the historical heritage of Afghanistan and it belongs to all Afghans and to the future generation of Afghanistan. No one has the right to censor or steal from the highly valued historical storage of the Afghan people," said Murtazavi.

Historical films, documents, documentaries and other cultural heritage items were until recently kept at the national archive and was known as the Afghan Film Archive.

Staff who worked for the Afghan Film Archive were transferred and now work at the ARG archive. These employees however said the digitalization process will take at least two to three years to complete.

"We transferred all the equipment from the Afghan Film Archive here. What we do here is the same as we did there," said Yar Mohammad, an

archive staff member.

"We will start our work in the next few days. Digitalization of films is not easy, at least it will take two to three years," Nazifa Hashimi, another staff member said.

But officials said once they receive the necessary equipment, they can start the digitalization process and finish it within five months. (Tolo news)

(14) UNAMA Condemns...

"These attacks deliberately targeting civilians are abhorrent," said Tadamichi Yamamoto, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan.

"The killings amount to atrocities, and everything must be done to bring the planners to account."

The United Nations stresses that all parties to the conflict must at all times uphold their obligations to protect civilians and reiterates its call to immediately cease targeting civilians and civilian objects, including schools and health facilities, in compliance with international humanitarian law.

The statement was issued after insurgents carried out an attack that lasted over six hours on Tuesday. (Tolo news)

(15) Gunmen Harassing...

armed men do not show mercy on anyone and they beat all people (including minors and elders)," he added.

He asked security officials to pay attention to security on the Ghor-Kabul highway and prevent further harassment of people on the route.

A transport agency official, who play the Ghor-Kabul highway, told Pajhwok Afghan News that a number of unidentified armed men stopped their vehicles on the highway and beat their passengers.

The official, who wished to go unnamed, said the armed men stopped passengers in Lal-wa-Sarjangal district and then beat them.

He said all transport agencies had shared the issue with Ghor police and they would shut their agencies if the security situation on the highway was not improved.

Ghor security officials confirmed the issue and said they were trying to arrest illegal armed men on the highway and improve security situation there.

Meanwhile, Brig. Gen. Abdul Qayum Safi, Ghor police chief, said that a small group of illegal armed men was stopping passengers and harassing them on the highway.

However, he said efforts were underway to capture the armed men and Afghan forces had been sent to the area for ensuring security. (Pajhwok)

(16) Afghan Power Project...

strategy in southern Afghanistan, according to the SIGAR-commissioned audit.

"In all, the audit questioned \$1,350,382 that Black & Veatch received, mostly consisting of the \$1.31 million reimbursement the audit thought improper," the daily said. (Pajhwok)

(17) IOM Employee...

appalling crime. The architects of this crime must be brought to justice," according to the statement.

The statement was issued after insurgents carried out an attack that lasted over six hours on Tuesday.

Officials said a car bomb was detonated close to the entrance of the compound at about 11.30am and was followed by two gunmen storming the building.

A number of employees were able to escape during the course of the day, but many remained trapped inside.

Throughout the day gunfire could be heard coming from the area while plumes of black smoke could also be seen soon after the attack started.

This comes just three days after a complex attack on a midwife training center in Jalalabad.

This attack lasted almost six hours - and claimed the lives of two people. On Monday Nangarhar provincial health officials raised concerns over the sharp increase in civilian deaths in the past three months in the province.

They said 160 people had been killed and over 490 wounded in the province in serious security incidents in this time. (Tolo news)