

(1) Urban District...

and vendor's management to the meeting.

After hearing from them, President Ashraf Ghani said that programs of urban districts should reflect the general image of Kabul city and increased coordination among districts.

He said the municipality should properly identify historic and green areas and come up with a clear picture of its capacity and shortcomings.

Ghani stressed proper management of Kabul's water and prevention of its wastage and said the municipality should consider public participation and their cooperation in its plans.

He said urban district heads would be granted more authority in the new municipality law. He also stressed over increased cooperation between urban districts and police.

Talking to the acting mayor and urban district heads, the president said that mayors and municipality officials should be accountable to the public and able to convince the people by implementing reformative programs. (Pajhwok)

(2) Former Spymaster...

presidential hopeful having an effective plan for dealing with problems in the country.

Last week, the Grand National Coalition of Afghanistan also announced its existence. First vice-president and head of Junbish-I-Islami Afghanistan, Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum, head of Jamiat-I-Islami Afghanistan, Salahuddin Rabbani, former Balkh governor Atta Mohammad Noor and others are members of the coalition. (Pajhwok)

(3) 35 Killed...

He warned that the death toll may go up as many of the wounded were in critical condition.

Security forces have cordoned off the area for precautionary measures in Khowja Hassan neighborhood mostly dominated by Shiite Afghans.

The mosque building was also severely damaged by the blasts.

Media and people were not allowed to enter the site and no one knows what exactly is ongoing inside the building.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack yet.

Over the past few months, Afghanistan has witnessed waves of terror attacks against Shiite mosques mostly claimed by the extremist Islamic State (IS) outfit.

In late March, one civilian was killed and nine others wounded after two IS gunmen attacked a Shiite mosque in western Herat province. (Xinhua)

(4) Sri Lanka Asked...

Ministry welcomes your offer and I am sure this is good news that they (our businessmen) would welcome... our geological surveys and mine management are at advanced levels," the minister remarked.

Over the past three years, printed books, newspapers and other printing industry products have been Sri Lanka's major exports to Afghanistan, but its imports from Afghanistan are negligible.

"We shall advice potential Sri Lankan investors to visit Afghanistan, get to know good partners and meet the Afghan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI) as well as the Afghan Investment Support Agency (AISA) so that your offer is utilised," said Bathiudeen. (Pajhwok)

(5) NATO Envoy...

peace and stability in Afghanistan. "We are engaging, we as the NATO members states, that the partners and the Resolute Support Mission engaging all neighbors of Afghanistan and very clearly passing on the message that we need their constructive cooperation on Afghani-

stan," the NATO ambassador said.

At a meeting with the NATO envoy, Paktia governor Shamim Khan Katawazai said Taliban is no longer capable of fighting against government forces anymore.

"Taliban (militants) are no longer capable of fighting because they don't have weapons, money and they do not have facilities. Their emotions have been misused. The Taliban leadership has been convinced that they must choose the path of peace," Katawazai said.

"It is clear for you all that our President (Ashraf Ghani) works hard both on national and international levels to bring peace. I hope that peace will be ensured in the country in the near future," said Dadan Lawang, Commander of 203 Thunder Corps.

This comes a day after a suicide bomber targeted a mosque in Gardez City, the center of Paktia, on Friday afternoon, killing at least 20 people and wounding 40 others. Eyewitnesses say the death toll is much higher. (Tolo news)

(6) Blaze at...

said the fire brigade reached the scene on time and extinguished the fire before spreading to other places. He said an investigation was underway to know the actual cause of the fire.

Zonal hospital spokesman Mohammad Rafique Sherzai said an arms depot for the bank's security had been completely destroyed in the fire. (Pajhwok)

(7) Projects...

professional school and the Bibi Fatima high school's building.

He added five hospital buildings were part of the projects to address healthcare related issues. He said construction work on these projects took one year and cost more than \$one billion provided by the Indian government.

Meanwhile, Minister of Public Health Dr. Ferozoddin Firoz promised with Samanganis to establish a 200-bed hospital in near future. (Pajhwok)

(8) Badakhshan's...

been saved," he said, adding four children had so far died of the highly contagious disease.

A public health official Dr. Mohammad Sabir Khashe confirmed receiving five children infected with measles in the civil hospital.

He said the children were discharged after treatment and said their blood had been sent to Kabul for further examination. He also said 15 other children suffering from measles were under treatment.

He assured a proper measles vaccination drive would be launched next month in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) across the district. (Pajhwok)

(9) Kabul Water...

by an Afghan and a Turkish company.

The Medium-Term Program is part of a 20-year project which will be implemented in four phases, officials said.

"Right now, work on up to 75 percent of (first phase of) the project has completed. The second phase includes construction of a water reservoir and the third phase is extension of the network. The project starts from the PD4 and continues to PD10 in Taimani to Lab-e-Jar area in Khairkhana," Muzafarkhail said.

Lack of water has become an endemic problem for Kabul residents recently as water reserves in the city have reduced to an unprecedented level.

On July 13, the National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) has warned that underground water reserves in Kabul will dry up within the next 10 years amid an increasing demand and use of water in the

capital city.

Thirty-two million cubic meters of water is used from Kabul's underground water reserves every year while the capacity of the city's water is 29 million cubic meters in a year, head of the authority, Najib Aqafahim, said at a ceremony on Thursday.

There are 213,000 wells in Kabul City, he said, adding that "it is a crisis" for the residents.

Statistics show that dozens of companies are utilizing Kabul's underground water for their businesses. Officials say it is illegal.

Some residents of Kabul's PD10 who live in irregularly-built areas such as Bibi Mahro, Qala-e-Wakil, few meters from Wazir Akbar Khan area, said people in that part of Kabul are facing with severe lack of water.

A large percentage of people are using from wells in their houses while a low percentage are benefited from government-owned water supplying system.

"We are faced with lots of problems in terms of our access to water," one resident of Bibi Mahro said.

"The water reserves are dry. You will not be able to get water from them even if you dig a 60-meter well," a resident of Kabul said.

Last year, the World Health Organization stated in a report that at least 3 in 10 people worldwide, or 2.1 billion, lack access to safe, readily available water at home, and 6 in 10, or 4.5 billion, lack safely managed sanitation. (Tolo news)

(10) Panjshir Symposium...

that Panjshir women have been reluctant to bring cases of violence against them to legal and judicial institutions.

"We must have a cohesive approach and strong coordination in our efforts across government departments, civil society groups and religious leadership," Shikhani stressed.

Zarifa Razaee, a prosecutor working in Panjshir, offered similar observations, and cited positive steps toward increasing the number of female staff members in the province's main prosecution office and in the districts.

"Lack of female defense attorneys and minimal public awareness about women's fundamental rights are the two main challenges preventing women from enjoying their full rights," Razaee said.

Maulavi Fazal Ahmad, deputy head of the province's Hajj and Religious Affairs Department, explained how public outreach about key social issues is one of the department's priorities.

"We now have a mobile team that visits mosques, villages and public gatherings with an agenda of speaking out against forced marriage and violence against women, and encouraging girls' education," he said. "We intend to multiply our efforts to increase public awareness about women's rights from the Islamic perspective and as protected in the constitution of Afghanistan."

At the end of the symposium, following lively discussion, the participants agreed that, going forward, coordination among groups working for the promotion of women's rights as well as raising awareness about harmful traditional practices would be the most effective steps toward addressing violence against women in the province.

Panjshir is one of the six provinces in Afghanistan's central region. A mountainous and sparsely populated province whose residents mostly live in rural communities, Panjshir is surrounded by Baghlan and Takhar to the north, Badakhshan and Nuristan to the east, Laghman and Kapisa to the south, and Parwan to the west.

The Panjshir event was supported by UNAMA's central regional office

as part of a countrywide outreach program aimed at creating platforms - using radio, television and social media - where Afghans can engage in dialogue and discuss critical issues affecting their communities. (Tolo news)

(11) IECC Task Team...

has received 500 complaints on possible parliamentary candidates.

Officials from Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA) have welcomed the move by the IECC's special committee to crackdown on controversial candidates.

In addition, a number of political parties and political movements have said that the IECC has dealt politically with some of the candidates.

The IECC is expected to disqualify candidates who are involved in security issues, coordinated crimes, drug smuggling, and misuse of public and private assets. (Tolo news)

Russia Denies Letting in New North Korean Workers

MOSCOW - Russia on Friday denied a report by the Wall Street Journal that said Moscow was allowing thousands of fresh North Korean laborers into the country and granting them new work permits in potential violation of U.N. sanctions.

Over 10,000 new North Korean workers have registered in Russia since September, the newspaper said, citing records from Russia's interior ministry.

Russia's action potentially violates U.N. sanctions to reduce cash flows to North Korea and puts pressure on Pyongyang to give up its nuclear weapons, the Journal reported, citing U.S. officials.

Russia's ambassador to North Korea denied Moscow had allowed any new workers to enter Russia, saying fresh documents had been issued to laborers already based in Russia who were working on old contracts, Interfax news agency reported.

Alexander Matsegora, the ambassador, said the laborers were allowed to work in Russia until November 29, 2019 as their work contracts had been signed before sanctions came into force, Interfax reported.

He said 3,500 new work permits had been issued to workers who had signed contracts in Russia before November 29, 2017, Interfax reported.

Labour Ministry records obtained by the Journal showed that a minimum of 700 new work permits had been issued to North Koreans in Russia this year, the paper said.

U.N. officials are probing potential violations of the sanctions, which contain narrow exceptions, WSJ reported citing sources.

"It's absolutely clear that Russia needs to do more. Russia says it wants better relations with the United States, so Moscow should prove that by cooperating with us, not working against us, on this urgent threat to all nations," a U.S. State Department spokesperson told Reuters.

"It is estimated that North Korean laborers in Russia send between \$150-\$300 million annually to Pyongyang. Now is the time for Russia to take action: Moscow should immediately and fully implement all the U.N. sanctions that it has signed on to."

The labor prohibition is a part of a broader array of sanctions that are aimed at eliminating an important revenue stream for Kim Jong Un's North Korea. Most of the money North Koreans earn abroad ends up in government coffers as workers toil in grueling conditions, the Journal reported.

In a report released on Thursday by the non-profit research organization C4ADS, it said initial restrictions in China and Russia - where around

80 percent of North Korean laborers are believed to work - appear to have loosened.

"For a time, both Russia and China appeared to be expelling North Korean workers well before U.N. deadlines, but more recent reporting suggests that North Korea may have again begun to dispatch labor to both countries," the report concluded.

A separate report released this week by the Seoul-based Asan Institute for Policy Studies said between 2015 and 2017 the Moscow-based Independent Petroleum Company (IPC) sold far more oil to North Korea than what was officially reported. (Reuters)

NASA Assigns Astronauts to SpaceX, Boeing Test Flights

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. - NASA has assigned the astronauts who will ride the first commercial capsules into orbit next year and bring human launches back to the U.S.

SpaceX and Boeing are shooting for a test flight of their capsules to the International Space Station by the end of this year or early next, with the first crews flying from Cape Canaveral, Florida, by next spring or summer.

The five astronauts assigned to the first flights gathered Friday at Johnson Space Center in Houston for the announcement.

Boeing's first Starliner crew will include a former NASA astronaut who commanded the last shuttle flight in 2011, Chris Ferguson, who is now a Boeing employee. The four other commercial crew members are still with NASA.

U.S. astronauts now ride on Russian capsules to the space station. (AP)

White House Slams 'Weak' Chinese Tariff Threat, 'Lousy' Economy

WASHINGTON - Top White House economic advisor Larry Kudlow on Friday ridiculed China's threat of \$60 billion of retaliatory tariffs as "weak" and said the world's second-largest economy was in significant "trouble."

After China threatened to impose new retaliatory tariffs on a variety of American goods -- everything from beef to condoms -- the war of words between Washington and Beijing escalated yet further.

Warning that China had "better take President (Donald) Trump seriously," Kudlow insisted the Asian giant "is in trouble right now -- their economy is lousy, investors are walking out, the currency is falling."

"Foreign investors don't want to be in China. I noticed today that Japan's stock market is now worth more than China's -- I love that," he told journalists at the White House. Beijing's latest salvo came after the Trump administration upped the ante in its plans for additional tariffs on Chinese goods worth \$200 billion, suggesting the rate could be increased to 25 percent.

"I might think the \$60 billion is a weak response to our \$200 (billion)," Kudlow said dismissively, while admitting that "there is a lot they can do to damage our companies in China."

The two countries have been embroiled for months in a trade conflict that has threatened to hurt consumers in both countries.

The US imposed 25 percent tariffs on \$34 billion of Chinese goods in early July, with another \$16 billion to be targeted in coming weeks, drawing an in-kind retaliation from China.

Days later, Washington unveiled a list of another \$200 billion in Chinese goods, from areas as varied as electrical machinery, leather goods and seafood, that would be hit with 10 percent import duties. (AFP)