

**(1) Women Will...**

"On behalf of women in this hall, I call for a large presence of women in future government and in the election," a women's rights activist Arifa Paikan said. So far, six out of 18 presidential candidates have launched their campaign rallies while others have not held a public gathering since the start of the election campaign on July 28. (Tolo news)

**(2) US-Taliban...**

Mohammad Zaman Muzamil, head of the HIA executive council, said: "For the past forty years, Afghans are under oppression of a foreign power which should be stopped."

He urged the conflicting sides to protect poor Afghans from violence and the imposed war. (Pajhwok)

**(3) Finance Ministry ...**

A spokesman for Ministry of Finance, Shamroz Khan Masjidi, said on Monday that amendments will be brought in the budget of Ministry of Education and State Ministry for Peace Affairs after the mid-year budget was reviewed.

"We will try to add the recommendations of honorable lawmakers in the budget and send it back to the parliament this week," Masjidi said.

According to lawmakers, Afs521 million (\$6.6 million) has been removed from the development budget of the Ministry of Education as the ministry has not been able to spend the budget properly.

MPs said the Ministry of Education has only spent 17 percent of its budget in the first six months of the current fiscal year.

"The Ministry of Education has 25,000 students in hostels and it provides the required facilities to the students. A small percentage of the ordinary budget is for the school rents," said Baktash Ishchi, deputy head of the Finance and Budget Commission of the Wolesi Jirga, Lower House of Parliament.

Some MPs said that the amended draft budget will be sent to the parliament on Wednesday where the lawmakers will make a final decision on it.

Nooria Nazhat, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Education, said in a voice message that the cut in the budget was made without coordination with the ministry.

Critics said that the spending of 17 percent budget shows that there is a lack of management in the Ministry of Education.

"Lack of capacity and a proper plan for budget spending and lack of coordination between central and provincial offices damage budget spending in government institutions," said Taj Mohammad Talash, an economic affairs analyst.

The Finance Ministry has allocated Afs399 billion (\$4.98 billion) for the 1398 fiscal year's budget, 69 percent of which has been allocated for the standard budget while the remaining 39 percent has been allocated for the development budget.

According to the ministry, from the Afs399 billion, Afs 275 billion (\$3.4 billion) will be allocated to the standard budget and the remainder will be put aside for the development budget. (Tolo news)

**(4) MOMP Begins ...**

say that they have invested dozens of million dollars in marble extraction and process.

They add that they were facing many challenges due to the lack of raw materials in the last five years but their problems will be solved after the contracts are signed.

"The new contracts are very important to us. We can broaden our activities through the extraction of marble mines. We are grateful to the government," said Wahidullah, a member of the Marble Extraction and Process Council.

"The government should help us in terms of extraction so we do not lose our foreigner customers," said Ghulam Mohammad Eisa, a member of the Marble Extraction and Process Council.

This comes as the economic experts believe that the government should encourage and help the private sector in extraction and process of the mines if it wants to pass the economic catastrophe. (ATN)

**(5) Alice Wells to...**

President Trump, according to the report.

However, it's not yet clear that she will also visit Afghanistan during her trip to Pakistan.

Earlier on Thursday, Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan had assured Khalilzad of Islamabad's full cooperation for the restoration of long-lasting peace in Afghanistan. (Tolo news)

**(6) 3-Day Women's ...**

so foreign tourists were encouraged to purchase Afghanistan goods.

Spozhmai Wardak, deputy women's affairs minister, who was present at the expo, said organizing such programs was the best way to empower women in the country.

She said Afghan women were skillful and they could be a good income source for their families.

"Women should be encouraged to make international standard products. Besides Afghans, foreigners should be also encouraged to purchase Afghan handicrafts," she said.

Women who displayed their products at the event demanded permanent places for selling their goods.

Marjan Mohammadi, 23, who displayed some jewelries and dresses sewed by women, at the show, told Pajhwok Afghan News her factory produced domestic products and she had hired one hundred women.

"I want the government to open a permanent market for women-made products to find permanent customers," she said. (Pajhwok)

**(7) Jawzjan Security ...**

"Insecurity has increased in Jawzjan. We are working to put pressure on the government to launch clearance operation in the province," Mr. Eshchi said. Jawzjan residents and activists who attended the gathering said there is a need for more attention to the security of the province.

Jawzjan is home province for First Vice President Abdul Rashid Dostum who visited the province on July 10 where he said the Taliban is using their full strength on the battlefields but the group will not win and that they will be suppressed by the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces.

Dostum visited three districts of Jawzjan, where he met with security forces on the frontlines and with the local residents.

Jawzjan and its neighboring province, Faryab, have witnessed heavy clashes between

security forces and the Taliban in the past few months. (Tolo news)

**(8) 7 Police ...**

who managed to enter police ranks, had carried out the attack. He claimed 14 policemen were killed by the attacker, who took away nine weapons and managed to flee the area. But local security officials denied the killing of 14 policemen. (Pajhwok)

**(9) Australia Won't...**

between Washington and Beijing, both over trade and rights of navigation in both the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait, has put Australia in an awkward spot, as the United States is its biggest ally, while China is its biggest export market.

Beijing last week described Australian efforts to improve the bilateral relationship as "unsatisfactory".

Australia worries China is using foreign aid to secure greater influence over small Pacific countries which control vast swathes of resource-rich ocean.

Australia, traditionally the major power in the South Pacific, has promised up to A\$3 billion (\$2.03 billion) in grants and cheap loans to counter what Washington describes as China's "payday loan diplomacy". (Reuters)

**(10) Russia Says...**

Tokyo to soon station the U.S. MK-41 missile-launching system in Japan.

"The universal MK-41 launch system that will appear, it seems, in Japan can also be adapted to be used to launch medium-range cruise missiles ... So these new systems when they appear in Japan will without doubt also be taken into account during our corresponding planning," he said. (Reuters)

**(11) UN Probes ...**

medicine, fuel and money from desperate Yemenis amid their country's five-year civil war.

More than a dozen U.N. aid workers deployed to deal with the wartime humanitarian crisis have been accused of joining with combatants on all sides to enrich themselves from the billions of dollars in donated aid flowing into the country, according to individuals with knowledge of internal U.N. investigations and confidential documents reviewed by The Associated Press. The AP obtained U.N. investigative documents, and interviewed eight aid workers and former government officials.

The upshot: WHO internal auditors are investigating allegations that unqualified people were placed in high-paying jobs, millions of dollars were deposited in staffers' personal bank accounts, dozens of suspicious contracts were approved without the proper paperwork, and tons of donated medicine and fuel went missing.

A second probe by another U.N. agency, UNICEF, focuses on a staffer who allowed a Houthi rebel leader to travel in agency vehicles, shielding him from potential airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition. The individuals who spoke to AP about the investigations did so on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals. (AP)

**(12) Turkish, US...**

their part, the Syrian Kurds say Ankara's statements mask a grab of territory inside Syria that the Kurdish forces had liberated from IS militants.

The Syrian Democratic Council issued a statement on Monday

saying that its military wing — the U.S-backed and Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces — is a "force to defend" Syria's ethnic and cultural pluralism.

The council added that Ankara "is trying to deceive the public" and to get the U.S. and other parties to "participate in the crimes that Turkey is committing against humanity." (AP)

**(13) Syrian Army ...**

withdraw from the de-militarized zone in northwestern Syria as planned in recent Syrian talks. The Nusra Front, the backbone of the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) group, rejected to withdraw 20 km in depth of Idlib province as agreed upon by Turkey and Russia.

Citing remarks by Abu Muhammad al-Golani, leader of the Nusra Front, the newspaper said that Golani declared his rejection to withdraw the 20 km regardless this request is made by "friends or enemies."

By saying friends, Golani meant Turkey, which is backing and negotiating on behalf of the rebels, according to al-Watan.

The 13th round of Syrian talks in the Nur-Sultan, capital of Kazakhstan, previously known as Astana, concluded on Aug. 2 with the guarantors of the talks, as well as government and opposition delegations, agreeing to revive a cease-fire in the de-escalation zone and the retreat of the rebels 20 km in depth of Idlib.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported violations to the cease-fire, which went into force on the evening of August 1. The Observatory, however, said that there was a halt in the ground confrontation and airstrikes.

Meanwhile, Golani said that battles could continue after the end of Eid al-Adha feast, a four-day feast that starts on Aug. 11.

His remarks mean that the recent cease-fire could fail entirely given the fact that the Nusra Front and its umbrella of the HTS are the strongest among other groups in Idlib.

The de-escalation zones' deal was established last September under the supervision of Turkey and Russia.

It includes Idlib, as well as countryside areas of the nearby provinces of Hama and Latakia and areas in Aleppo province in northwestern Syria.

Idlib, in particular, is the last major rebel stronghold in the country. (Xinhua)

**(14) Journalist's Death...**

in her son's name have successfully pushed the U.S. government to overhaul the hostage rescue process, advocated legislation to punish kidnappers and pressed for additional attention for thousands of Americans detained unlawfully. Through research and public statements, she's also challenged the conventional wisdom that ransom payments and concessions to captors are inherently counterproductive.

"There was no structure or no accountability to bring Americans home at that point," Foley said in an interview with The Associated Press, "and how I wished our government had been honest with me that they really didn't know how, if possible, they could bring him home. I really wish they had been more honest."

The goal is to prevent other families from experiencing the fragmented, ineffective government

response she says she endured, when multiple officials and agencies worked the case without anyone being singularly responsible for getting him home, and warned her and other hostage families of potential prosecution if they paid ransom to kidnappers. (AP)

**(15) Iran Signals...**

through which about one-third of the world's seaborne oil passes.

The U.S. administration has also imposed unprecedented sanctions against Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, who has final say on all state matters. Last week, it also added Zarif to its sanctions list.

Zarif was asked to comment on a report in The New Yorker that he had been invited to meet with Trump in the White House last month, with Kentucky Senator Rand Paul extending the offer. He stopped short of denying the report, saying he never discloses details of his meetings. (Bloomberg)

**(16) Caspian Economic...**

governments, ministries of economy and business structures interested in working in the Caspian Sea.

"In this regard, the idea of regularly holding the Caspian Economic Forum, put forward by Turkmenistan, turned out to be very timely," he said. "This proposal was indicated in the five-sided intergovernmental agreement on trade and economic cooperation, signed a year ago at the same time with the convention and in the communiqué adopted at the presidents' meeting following the Fifth Caspian Summit."

"It is great that the agenda of the Forum includes a wide range of issues to intensify the trade and economic ties, improve the investment climate, expand practical cooperation in the fields of industry, transport, innovations and science," he added.

"Russia attaches great importance to this event," he said. "The level of the Russian delegation, headed by Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, testifies to this."

The agenda includes the creation of conditions for big projects, the discussion about the role of the economy of the Caspian region in a global context, investment attractiveness in the oil and gas, power, transport, trade, agro-industrial, tourism and other sectors of the economies of the Caspian countries which are of mutual interest, according to the website of the Organizing Committee of the forum.

The prospects of joint investment projects and programs will be discussed at the event.

On the eve of the forum, a meeting of ministers of the competent bodies of the parties responsible for the implementation of agreements between the governments of the Caspian countries on trade and economic cooperation and cooperation in the field of transport will be held. In parallel, the draft Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of the Business Council of the Caspian countries will be discussed. Besides the delegations of the Caspian countries, representatives of interested countries close to the Caspian region, leaders and representatives of international economic, financial, transport, environmental and other organizations have been invited to the forum. (Trend)