

(1) Khalilzad Makes...

will continue to discuss technical details as well as steps and mechanisms required for a successful implementation of the four-part agreement we've been working toward since my appointment," Mr. Khalilzad said. "Agreement on these details is essential," he added.

This comes as the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Monday that "major progress" has been achieved in the ongoing talks between the US and Taliban negotiators in Doha, Qatar, and that a potential agreement between the two sides will lead to intra-Afghan negotiations.

The Afghan government is fully prepared for direct talks with the Taliban, a spokesman for Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sibghatullah Ahmadi, told TOLONews on Monday.

"There are reports of comprehensive progress in these talks and we hope to reach peace after intra-Afghan negotiations," Mr. Ahmadi said. (Tolo news)

(2) All Measures ...

are negotiating with the US in Qatar right now, a large amount of election budget was maintained by the Afghan government and the process was fully under the Afghans control, the statement added.

The statement said members of the Wolesi Jirga or lower house of the parliament were elected representatives of the people and they also supported holding the next presidential election in a bill today.

The Afghan government once again asked all institutes involved in the election to hold the ballot on its schedule.

Security forces are fully ready to protect people against threats and would not let anyone stop them from participating in a process that defines their own fate, the statement said.

"The Taliban who apparently chant slogans of peace but they threaten Afghans to death on a daily basis, we want to them to show their face of peace to the public and stop threatening them," the Presidential Palace said.

"Afghans in the past also proved that fear and threats cannot stop them from participating in national processes", it read.

The source said Afghans would again use their enfranchise and elect the leader of their choice. (Pajhwok)

(3) MPs Approve ...

the mid-year budget.

Earlier, the Wolesi Jirga had rejected the mid-year draft budget over unspecified funding sources for the presidential election, allocation of funds for two new entities and reduction in budget for 154 development projects. In the beginning of the fiscal year, 399 billion afghanis were set aside as general and development expenses in the budget plan but an increase of 24.9 million afghanis was made in the mid-year draft budget.

According to constitution, the Wolesi Jirga's summer recess begins on July 22 but the government requested lawmakers to decide the fate of mid-year budget before rising for the break. Mohammad Azeem Mohsani, Wolesi Jirga's budgetary and Finance Commission head, said everything was agreed except the newly created six budgetary units.

The State Ministry for Peace Affairs, State Ministry for Martyrs and Disabled, Independent Commission of Oil and Gas, Independent Commission Technical and Vocational Education, Independent Body for Kankor Examination and the Population Registration Department, which is newly merged with Central Audit Authority, are the newly created budgetary units. Muhsani said the total budget was 411 billion afghanis --- 297 billion general budget and 127 billion development budget.

Speaker Mir Rahman Rahmani first offered for voting the issue of newly created budgetary units, which was rejected with a majority vote. Then he offered the budget for voting, which was approved with majority. (Pajhwok)

(4) Taliban Denounce ...

threat, said the people had the right to choose their leader and the government was ready to hold a transparent election across the country.

"They should show peace through

their actions and not threaten people," the office said.

Ghani and his government are not involved in the peace talks because the Taliban refuse to deal with a government they say is a U.S. puppet.

Ghani's running mate, who last week survived a militant suicide attack on his Kabul office, condemned the Taliban as "sham Afghans".

"They are created and backed to suppress a nation, bring about medieval system in the name of religion to feed the greedy beast of Pakistani establishment," Amrullah Saleh said on Twitter.

Saleh, a former intelligence chief, is a fierce critic of Pakistan, which many Afghans accuse of backing the Taliban. Pakistan denies that. (Reuters)

(5) Abdullah ...

The CEO also asked Afghan security forces to bring into use all resources with them to ensure security of people during the election and not let enemies of the country to stop the process. (Pajhwok)

(6) Afghans, Turkmens ...

Khalil Ahmad Yarmand, a chamber of commerce and industry official, hoped the export of Herat marbles to Turkmenistan would help boost the provincial economy. (Pajhwok)

(7) Afghan-German...

, stakeholders and the Afghan-German Cooperation.

Deputy Minister for Industries and Private Sector Development at MoIC, Mr Zohoroddin Shirzada stated: 'We appreciate the SEDEP programme not only for creating sustainable jobs but for supporting the value chain of agricultural products in six northern provinces. SEDEP is a game-changer in improving the livelihood of Afghan citizens.'

About 23,000 people from 1,000 micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and farms - 23% of which are managed by women - will benefit from the extended programme. Additionally, 14,000 returnees and internally displaced persons will receive support for generating their own income.

The overall objective of SEDEP is to increase the economic capability of stakeholders - such as farmers, suppliers, cooperatives, and political decision-makers - in five select value chains. These value chains include poultry, dairy, vegetables, wheat and nuts.

Within each of the five value chains, SEDEP aims to improve the technical and entrepreneurial skills of farmers and MSMEs. It intends to facilitate access to improved irrigation systems, storage infrastructure and processing facilities. Further, it focuses on identifying barriers for business development at the district, province and national level, particularly addressing gender-specific obstacles. Finally, it aims to improve the starting opportunities for returnees. These objectives will help create new jobs and income opportunities.

Representatives from MoIC, the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development (MRRD), the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), the Afghan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), and the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WCCI) attended the ceremony. SEDEP cooperates with each of these bodies to carry out its aims.

Bilateral governmental negotiations last took place in Kabul in September 2018, where the German government agreed to fund SEDEP's programme phase from January 2019 until June 2020 with AFN 1,125,000,000. This brings its total budget up to AFN 2,000,000,000 for the programme from November 2017 until June 2020. (Pajhwok)

(8) Scandinavian...

society was vital and a necessary foundation for peaceful, prosperous and sustainable Afghanistan.

"Gender equality and women's empowerment are at the heart of Denmark's engagement in Afghanistan. We are pleased to continue our support to gender equality and women's empowerment through our partnership with UN-Women." (Pajhwok)

(9) Nimroz Growers ...

Growers are happy with melon and watermelon yield this year, but they

also expressed concern over the lack of cold storage facilities in the province. They urged the government to help them export these two fruits.

Abdul Rashid, a grower from Chakhansur district, told Pajhwok the yield was good due to rains, which had a salubrious effect on the crops.

He added he had collected around 100,000 tonnes of watermelon and melon this year. One kilogram of melon accounts for 12 afghanis and the same quantity of watermelon for five afghani.

Mohammad Akbar, another farmer from the same district, expressed happiness over the good yield and said he had collected nearly 50,000 tonnes of melon and watermelon this year.

He said, "We had received some medicine from the Agriculture Department, which also had a positive impact on the crops."

A number of other farmers held similar views and urged the authorities concerned to construct cold storage in the province, at the earliest possible.

Meanwhile, agriculture officials said efforts were underway to construct cold storage facilities in the province. (Pajhwok)

(10) Mps Want ...

peace talks and share their results with other lawmakers.

Mohammad Iqbal Safi, another lawmaker from Kapisa, said that the ongoing talks between the US and the Taliban had no clear result so far as both sides were still fighting each other.

He demanded practical steps regarding peace in the country and said that ceasefire between the warring sides could raise people's hopes for stability in the country.

On the other hand, Amir Khan Yar, first deputy speaker, said the government did not consult the lower house when it created the peace negotiating team.

"We are waiting for the result of the ongoing talks, if the outcome is based on people's demand and includes the views of people, we will welcome it, but if it is not based on people's demand we will raise our voices and resist it," he said.

He asked the government to reconsider members of the peace negotiating team and include lawmakers in it. (Pajhwok)

(11) Hiroshima Marks...

Survivors, their relatives and other participants marked the 8:15 a.m. blast with a minute of silence.

The Hiroshima anniversary ceremony came hours after North Korea launched suspected ballistic missiles in its fourth round of recent weapons demonstrations. The activity follows a stalemate in negotiations over its nuclear weapons.

The U.S. attack on Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945, killed 140,000 people. The bomb dropped three days later on Nagasaki killed another 70,000 before Japan's surrender ended World War II. (AP)

(12) Trump Freezes...

the U.S. the ability to apply the law beyond its borders to allies of Maduro like China, Russia, Cuba, Iran and Turkey," said Russ Dallen, the Miami-based head of Caracas Capital Markets brokerage. "Should those foreign entities continue doing business with Maduro they can have their U.S. assets seized."

The executive order signed by President Donald Trump justified the move by citing Maduro's "continued usurpation of power" and human rights abuses by security forces loyal to him. U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton hinted earlier Monday that far-reaching U.S. action was close at hand. Speaking to reporters on the eve of an international conference in Peru to show support for Guaidó, he said that the U.S. was readying measures "that will show the determination that the United States has to get a peaceful transfer of power."

Russia, which has staunchly backed Maduro, denounced the U.S. action. Konstantin Kosachev, the head of the Russian upper house's international affairs committee, said Tuesday the move amounts to "international banditry." He added in remarks carried by the state RIA Novosti news agency that it represents an "open meddling into Venezuela's internal affairs." The measures are likely to exacerbate

suffering in an already moribund economy marked by six-digit hyperinflation and a deep, multi-year contraction that surpasses that of the Great Depression in the U.S.

Previous sanctions targeting the South American nation's oil industry, the source of almost all of its export earnings, have already accelerated a crash in oil production that started with Maduro's election in 2013 following the death of his mentor Hugo Chavez. More than 100 officials and government insiders also have had their U.S. assets frozen and blocked from doing business with Americans. As part of the executive order, Americans or U.S. companies that do business with such individuals face penalties. The same Maduro supporters will also be banned from entering the U.S.

Exceptions will be allowed for the delivery of food, medicine and clothing. Transactions with Venezuela's still sizable private sector do not appear to be affected either. It's unclear how the actions will affect American oil giant Chevron, which last month received a three-month exemption from the U.S. Treasury to allow it to continue drilling for oil with state-run oil monopoly PDVSA.

The Maduro government has yet to respond. But Guaidó celebrated the U.S. action, saying it would protect Houston-based oil company CITGO, Venezuela's most valuable overseas asset, from attempts by Maduro to mortgage its assets.

"Any individual, company, institution or nation that tries to do business with the regime will be seen by the international justice system as collaborating with and sustaining a dictatorship," Guaidó said in a series of late-night tweets. "They will be subject to sanctions and considered an accomplice to crimes."

Geoff Ramsey, a researcher at the Washington Office on Latin America, said that the measures will aggravate a humanitarian crisis even with the exceptions in place to protect the most vulnerable as Western banks avoid processing even legitimate transactions.

"The truth is that no financial institution wants to run afoul of the Treasury Department," he said.

Instead of doubling down on the same embargo strategy that has failed for decades to produce regime change in communist Cuba, he thinks the U.S. should do more to support ongoing negotiations being sponsored by Norway between Maduro and Guaidó representatives.

Bolton and U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross are representing the United States at what host Peru has dubbed the International Conference for Democracy in Venezuela, a gathering of 59 nations that with few exceptions back Guaidó and consider Maduro's reelection last year to be fraudulent.

Moments after the executive order was announced, Bolton tweeted that he was looking ahead to what he hopes will be a "productive" day in Lima, Peru. (AP)

(13) China Vows...

PM Scott Morrison, after pledging to work with the US to counter Chinese activity in the region, quickly explained that Canberra had not volunteered to host the missiles itself and that it would refuse if asked in the future.

Washington unilaterally left the pivotal Cold War nuclear arms treaty under the pretext of alleged violations by Moscow. Russia, which formally left the agreement the day after the US, said it would continue to respond defensively to any threats, taking "corresponding steps to balance" the deployment of US missiles be it in Europe or Asia. (RT)

(14) Philippines' Duterte...

first three years in office for not pressing China to abide by a historic arbitration win, preferring instead to curry favor with Beijing.

That ruling in international law invalidated China's claim, based on its so-called nine-dash line, to historic sovereignty over most of the busy South China Sea waterway.

In exchange, Duterte received vague pledges of billion-dollar investment, most of which have yet to materialize. Opponents say Duterte has been duped. (Reuters)

(15) 'We Will...

North Korea's repeated warnings, "we will make them pay (a) heavy price," a North Korean foreign ministry spokesman said in a statement released through state news agency KCNA.

Trump has played down the tests by saying they did not break any agreement he had with Kim but the talks have yet to resume. Analysts believe the tests are designed both to improve North Korean military capabilities and to pressure Washington to offer more concessions.

"Part of what's happening now is that North Korea is expressing frustrations with a general lack of progress on inter-Korean agenda while increasing leverage in U.S.-North Korea negotiations by demonstrating how its programs could and will continue to advance," said Jenny Town, managing editor at 38 North, a website that tracks North Korea. (Reuters)

(16) Two Nuclear...

western section of the China-India border, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said in a statement Tuesday.

"The recent unilateral revision of domestic laws by the Indian side continues to undermine China's territorial sovereignty, which is unacceptable and will not have any effect," Hua said.

India's Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Raveesh Kumar said Tuesday the creation of a new union territory of Ladakh was an internal matter. "So far as the India-China Boundary Question is concerned, the two sides have agreed to a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement," Kumar said in a statement. "India does not comment on the internal affairs of other countries and similarly expects other countries to do likewise."

'We Will Retaliate'

Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan said India's move may lead to a war, while its army pledged to go to "any extent" to defend the people of the disputed state that's claimed in full by the two nuclear-armed nations.

"We will retaliate any attack" on part of Kashmir controlled by Pakistan, Khan said at a meeting of parliament that was called to debate the move. "This is not a nuclear blackmail. The world will be responsible if it doesn't take action against India."

Earlier, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi wrote a letter to the secretary general of the United Nations on the "critical situation", according to a tweet by the government on Tuesday. (Bloomberg)

(17) Erdogan Says...

but Ankara has so far dismissed the warnings and instead put its hopes on sympathetic remarks from Trump at a G20 summit in June. Trump however has not ruled out sanctions.

Speaking to Turkish ambassadors in Ankara, Erdogan said it was wrong to question Turkey's commitment to NATO over the Russian deal.

"There is no concrete evidence showing the S-400s will harm the F-35s or NATO, nobody should deceive each other. Many NATO member states have purchased from Russia. We don't see this being turned into a crisis," Erdogan said.

"Turkey made a business decision for its security and what pushed Turkey to do this was the uncompromising stance of its allies. Trump's statement at the G20 that Turkey was treated unfairly is the confirmation of this fact at the highest level," he added.

"I believe Trump won't allow Turkish-US relations to become captive of the S-400 issue."

Ties between Ankara and Washington have been strained over a host of issues, including conflicting strategies in Syria, but the dispute over the Russian systems has brought the NATO allies to the brink of one of the biggest ruptures in ties. (Reuters)

(18) Lebanon's Hezbollah...

that Hezbollah is receiving the same financial support from Iran but its responsibilities have increased following the party's involvement in Yemen and other countries.

"The party's responsibilities have increased which drove them to cut lots of their expenses and delay the payment of their employees' salaries," he said. (Xinhua)