

(1) China Donates...

assistance and also urged the international community to support Afghanistan in dealing with natural disasters.

Meanwhile, Liu Jingson, Chinese envoy to Afghanistan, said his country was committed to continued aid and cooperation with Afghanistan and added today's assistance showed friendship between the two countries. Liu said his country would play its role in advancing the Afghanistan peace process. He said Afghanistan was a neighbor of China and it needed assistance. His country has developed a policy under which Beijing would continuously provide assistance to Kabul. (Pajhwok)

(2) Safe Zones Not on...

further undermines the credibility of the Afghan government. This comes in the wake of reports that US officials met with Taliban officials in Doha, Qatar, to discuss the possibility of peace talks to end the war in Afghanistan.

"It is different, not, I think, in a positive way for the United States - certainly not for the government of Afghanistan. These talks apparently took place without the Afghan government being present. That's a huge deal because the Taliban has long insisted that they are ready to talk to us but not with the illegitimate - their term - Afghan government in the room. They got what they wanted. It will further delegitimize the Afghan government. So this may lead somewhere. I don't think it's going to lead anywhere good for the Afghan government itself," said Crocker.

But Ghani's Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah has said that the Afghan government is fully aware of these developments and that the main objective of the efforts by Washington is to pave the way for peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

"These contacts have also been held in the past, similar issues were also reported recently, the Afghan government is fully aware of that, the efforts are aimed at laying the groundwork for direct talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government," said Abdullah.

According to reports, these talks between the US and the Taliban were held in the last week of July in Qatar.

Alice Wells, the US's Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs and Mullah Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai, the head of the Taliban's political office, represented their sides in the talks.

Some media reports have however indicated that officials from the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) were also present at the talks.

The Taliban so far has not confirmed that these talks took place in Doha.

But media reports indicate that a number of Taliban officials have met with US officials on several occasions in the past few months.

Last month Wall Street Journal reported that Wells met with Taliban officials to discuss ways to lay the groundwork for peace talks.

The report said the aim of the discussion was to build on momentum created by the recent three-day ceasefire over Eid al-Fitr.

Afghan officials last month rejected reports about the possibility of direct peace talks between the US and the Taliban, and maintained any negotiations would be an Afghan-owned and Afghan-led process. (Tolo news)

(3) 1,500 Drug...

would not allow them to succeed.

"Athletes are models for Afghanistan's youth and a symbol of healthy nation and I urge the youth to be like athletes and refrain from using drugs because athletes raise the country's flag in the world." (Pajhwok)

(4) Above 60...

ongoing year, the minister said. However, he said shortage of irrigation water was a major problem facing wheat, and rice crops in the country.

Abdul Sammad Kamavi, NHLP project head, said the fruits and vegetables displayed at today's exhibition had good market inside and outside of the country.

He said NHLP was helping farmers to learn new horticulture techniques to increase their production and improve quality. (Pajhwok)

(5) Afghanistan...

Chaudhuri, sustaining the recent recovery will require enhanced government efforts to improve the business environment and catalyze private investment and job creation while ensuring smooth election processes.

"Sustaining international support is critical to overall confidence and underpins the capacity of the government to implement the reforms we all view as vital."

Chaudhuri noted that much faster rates of growth would be required to make a substantial impact on poverty. "Significantly faster growth could be achieved by mobilising investment in extractives, energy and connectivity, building and harnessing the skills of youth and women, and taking steps to realize the job-creation potential of agriculture." (Pajhwok)

(6) Iran's Non...

ACCI said trade volume was \$1.2 billion between Afghanistan and Pakistan and \$1 billion with China in the same period.

"Now Iran is our biggest (trade) partner," ACCI deputy chief, Khan Jan Alokozay, told TOLONews at the time.

"Iran has overtaken Pakistan's place, which means we have more than \$2 billion in imports and exports with Iran. Imports are high but exports are a lot less. Meanwhile, transit is also good through that route (Iran)," he said.

According to ACCI, Afghanistan's trade volume with all countries for the year totaled \$7 billion. (Tolo news)

(7) Insecurity...

Mohammad Mehdavi, a provincial council member, talking at the meeting, said insecurity and illegal armed men were two major challenges to the election process in the province.

Ghor police chief, Col. Abdul Qayyum Safi, confirmed security situation had deteriorated in the province compared to the past, but said measures had been taken to ensure security for the elections.

Fazlullah Jalal, the provincial council head, said Afghan security forces were successful in frustrating militants' attempts at disrupting the election affairs particularly the voter registration process.

He said the IEC successfully completed the voter registration process in Ghor as 255,000 people registered as voters. (Pajhwok)

(8) Tasmanian...

sustainable in caring for the planet," said Women's Friendship Group member Jo Dean. (Pajhwok)

(9) 50 Civilians...

gun-battles were underway in different parts of Azra, sharing a border with eastern Nangarhar province.

Jamidullah Hameed, the district's administrative chief, confirmed that Afghan security forces, civil-

ians and Taliban suffered casualties in the ongoing clashes. However, he did not go into details. Meanwhile, the Taliban confirmed the attacks. Zabihullah Mujahid, the group's spokesman, told Pajhwok the fighters were advancing. He said nothing about casualties. (Pajhwok)

(10) Some Nangarhar...

department and a total of 1,400 posts in the department would be announced for newcomers.

He said still some officials were trying to hide vacancies in their ministries in order to pave the way for their own relatives. (Pajhwok)

(11) Pakistan's...

during same period of last year. According to the SBP data, the import of services from Afghanistan increased to \$13.58 million from \$9.9 million during same period of the preceding year.

On yearly basis, the export of services declined from \$727,000 in May 2017 to \$502,000 in 2018, showing a decline of 30.9 percent. But the import of services from Afghanistan increased by 44.26 percent to \$1.15 million in May 2018 from \$0.641 million in same month of the previous year. (Pajhwok)

Romania Gets \$68 Mln from EU to Modernize Danube Shipping

BUCHAREST, Romania — A European Union official says Romania will receive 59 million euros (\$68 million) to modernize shipping routes along the River Danube.

Corina Cretu, European Commissioner for Regional Policy, said in a Tuesday statement that the money from the EU's cohesion funds would unlock "the enormous potential of commercial river traffic," and boost the regional economy, predicting river traffic to increase by 50 percent.

Cretu said the funds would make river navigation safer and protect areas threatened by flooding. The money will be invested in modernizing two floodgates in eastern Romania that link the Danube to the Black Sea.

The Danube is Europe's second longest river after the Volga and flows through nine countries, starting in Germany's Black Forest, before passing through Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Ukraine. (AP)

Newest SpaceX Booster Flies Again with Indonesia Satellite

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — SpaceX used its newest style booster for a second time to put a communications satellite into orbit for Indonesia.

The Falcon 9 rocket blasted off early Tuesday morning from Cape Canaveral, Florida.

The first-stage booster previously soared in May, the first time out the gate for this upgraded rocket. After performing its latest job, the booster landed upright on a floating platform in the pitch-black Atlantic.

Each rocket in this new and improved line is intended for dozens of repeat flights. SpaceX is striving to lower launch costs through rocket recycling. SpaceX founder Elon Musk's goal is for swift launch turnarounds using the same rocket, even twice within 24 hours. He says that could happen as early as next year. (AP)

Beekeeping in Yemen Becomes a Dangerous Profession in War

SANAA - Yemen's beekeepers risk air strikes and land mines as they traverse the country's valleys,

transporting their hives on pickup trucks to produce some of the world's finest honey.

The impoverished Arab state, known for its Sidr honey made from the jujube tree, has endured three years of war that have pushed it to the verge of famine and shattered the economy.

"Before the war...we produced large quantities of honey. [But now] honey farmers who move their private farms at night sometimes get hit by mistake," said Faris al-Howry, who owns one of the main honey stores in the capital Sanaa.

"It's happened with two or three farmers we know where their farms were bombed [in air strikes]."

A Saudi-led coalition which intervened in 2015 to restore the internationally recognized government has conducted thousands of air strikes in its battle against the Iranian-aligned Houthi movement which controls the most populous areas of Yemen, including Sanaa. Some air strikes have hit civilian targets, although the coalition denies doing so intentionally. Houthi fighters have also placed landmines in territory under their control.

Yemen exported 50,000 tonnes of honey per year before the war but exports have since fallen by more than 50 percent, according to the Federation of Yemeni Beekeepers, which says there are around 100,000 people working in honey farms in Yemen.

"Breeders must now be mindful that when they're trying to move from location to location, they could be targeted or bombed by mistake," said Abdullah Abdullah Yareem, head of the Yemeni Organization for Honey and Agriculture Development.

He was speaking at a honey farm in al-Mahwit governorate where men tended to wooden hive boxes as bees flitted between sunflowers in a field.

He added it has also become costlier to export honey due to stringent measures imposed on maritime flows by the Saudi-backed coalition, which accuses the Houthis of smuggling Iranian-made weapons, a charge denied by the group and Tehran.

There is only one outlet - to Saudi Arabia, so all exports must flow through there, said Abdullah.

"This has created a problem that raised transportation costs making the product reach the consumer at a very high price."

Howry said business is bad as few people could afford luxuries. The price of honey in Yemen ranges from \$100 for 1 kilo of Sidr to \$68 for less premium types. Outside of Yemen the honey sell for around \$180 dollars per kilo.

"Sales are down 75 percent...There is no income, no salaries and no spending," he said in the store, where boxes of honeycomb are on display on the counter. (Reuters)

Colombia's Duque Takes Office with Full Agenda of Thorny Issues

BOGOTA - Colombia's new President Ivan Duque has his work cut out for him as he takes office Tuesday amid heightened tensions with neighboring Venezuela and the lingering difficulties of peace-building with the nation's rebel groups.

The right-wing Duque, who is just 42 years old, succeeds Juan Manuel Santos -- and could work to undo the deal his predecessor reached with leftist FARC guerrillas to end a half-century of conflict.

The former lawyer and senator also must face an ongoing battle against drug traffickers, a shocking spate of murders of rights activists

and a promise to implement agrarian reform.

And Colombia's political left, soundly defeated in June elections, will protest on Tuesday as Duque is sworn into office in the presence of several regional leaders including Mexico's Enrique Pena Nieto and Ecuador's Lenin Moreno.

Duque's success will depend in large part on his connection to popular former president Alvaro Uribe (2002-2010), who hand-picked the political novice to help the right -- which opposed the deal with the FARC -- to regain power. "His mentor's situation and relations with Venezuela are the keys" to Duque's presidency, political scientist Diana Avellaneda from Javeriana University told AFP.

Relations with Caracas took a dive at the weekend when Venezuela President Nicolas Maduro claimed to have been the victim of an "assassination" attempt -- and put the blame on Santos, "ultra right-wing" domestic opponents and the US.

Bogota called the accusation "absurd."

Duque looks set to stand up to Colombia's neighbor to the east, demanding "free elections" following a May poll that saw Maduro re-elected, which was boycotted by Venezuela's opposition.

The neighbors share a 2,200-kilometer (1,400 miles) long border that is hard to police.

Bogota has accused Caracas of harboring Marxist rebels, while hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans have crossed the border to escape food and medicine shortages, failing public services and hyperinflation in their homeland.

If Duque "starts answering everything Maduro says... he will add fuel to the propaganda and political fire to keep ratcheting up the tension," said international relations expert Jairo Velasquez.

The analyst added that the new Colombian leader could become Venezuela's "enemy, real or imagined."

At home, Duque's firebrand rhetoric has increased tension and rocked already fragile relations with rebels, both former and current.

Upon his election in June, he vowed to make "corrections" to the peace deal with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which he criticized for being too lenient in allowing former rebels accused of atrocities to serve as lawmakers. (AFP)

American Company may Implement Projects in Uzbek IT Industry

TASHKENT - The American IT company EPAM Systems and the Uzbek Mirzo Ulugbek Innovation Center (MUIC) may implement joint projects in IT industry of Uzbekistan, a source in the American company told Trend.

According to the company representative, the sides are also willing to cooperate in creation of conditions for advanced training of IT professionals in Uzbekistan and sharing advanced international experience in conducting IT business. The source, however, noted that the process is in early stage yet and only explanatory meetings were held.

It was earlier reported that Minister for Development of Information Technologies and Communications of Uzbekistan Azim Akhmedkhatjaev met with EPAM Systems CEO and President Arkadiy Dobkin, who arrived in Uzbekistan to get acquainted with the potential of the country's IT industry. Dobkin also visited the MUIC, where the sides discussed prospects for establishment of cooperation. (Trend)