

### (1) United Nations...

The United Nations urges the Taliban to respect and protect civilians and not to threaten them or carry out violence should they engage in their constitutional right to participate in elections. The United Nations emphasizes that attacks directed against polling centres and civilians participating in the electoral process are clear violations of international law, and perpetrators of such crimes must be held accountable. (PR)

### (2) Peace or Election...

On the other hand, Zahra Bayan Shiwari, the IECC chief, said the commission was fully ready for receiving and addressing complaints the same time. Yousuf Rashid, head of Free and Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan (FFFEA), also said uncertainty about the election and peace processes had increased. (Pajhwok)

### (3) Ghani, CEO...

significant achievements and contributions," the president said. Ghani extend his heartfelt sympathies to the president, prime minister and people of India on behalf of the Afghan government and nation. Chief Executive Officer Dr. Abdullah Abdullah also voiced shock over the death of Swaraj. "Very sad to hear of the passing away of Sushma Swaraj." The CEO called Swaraj a brave stateswoman and steadfast friend of Afghanistan. "We will sorely miss her. My deepest condolences to her family, the government & people of India." Ex-president Hamid Karzai, acting foreign minister Salahuddin Rabbani and deputy foreign minister Idress Zaman also extended their condolences to India over the demise of Swaraj. (Pajhwok)

### (4) Denmark Pledges ...

The project will start with a total budget of USD 4.26 million. Speaking at the ceremony, Denmark Ambassador Nicolaj Hejberg Petersen reiterated his government's support to the rule of law and justice institutions of Afghanistan in their fight against corruption.

"The Anti-Corruption Justice Center has achieved result in prosecuting high-level corruption cases. This is vital to end the culture of impunity in Afghanistan. However, the institution still needs strong political, technical and logistical support to reach its full potential" said Ambassador Petersen.

"Denmark is pleased to continue its support to the Anti-Corruption Justice Centre (ACJC) and the Afghan Civil Society Organizations to fight corruption in Afghanistan through partnership with UNDP. A vibrant civil society is crucial in the fight against corruption", he added.

Joining the signing ceremony, UNDP's Resident Representative for Afghanistan Abdullah Al Dardari emphasized on the need to fight corruption in all its forms so Afghanistan can develop and achieve the SDGs.

"Corruption is one of the most daunting challenges Afghanistan is facing today as it impedes security, economic development and a fair access to essential public services," said Dardari. "For every development goal Afghanistan has set for itself, for every SDG, corruption stands in the way," he added.

Dardari reiterated UNDP's full support to the government of Afghanistan to enhance its justice sector institutions "With the continued financial support of the Royal Danish Embassy, we will deepen our support to the ACJC and strengthen our engagement with civil society, with a view to support the efforts of the Government in tackling corruption and ultimately realizing the SDGs."

As per the new UN reforms and UNDP's role as the integrator of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UNDP is supporting the government of Afghanistan to achieve the goals. (Pajhwok)

### (5) Afghan Forces ...

The NDS officials said that the insurgents were produced "suicide vest, marantic mines, and type of IEDs."

Those living in neighboring of the house under raid said they saw suicide vests and explosives in the house after the operation ended.

Dozens of people were instructed to evacuate their homes or stay inside in order to prevent from being harmed in the raid, residents of the area said.

The raid in Bagrami district in the east of Kabul targeted members of Daesh, the Interior Ministry's spokesman Nusrat Rahimi said.

Bagrami residents said they heard explosions and gunfight throughout the night. (Tolo news)

### (6) No Going Back ...

Seddiqi, who was 18 when the Taliban seized Kabul in 1996, knows all too well how ambition can be smothered.

"It was a time when we all thought of studying and learning, and education was the most important thing for us, but our lives changed," she said. The Taliban banned women from education and work and only let them leave their homes in the company of a male relative. Overnight, women disappeared behind the all-enveloping burqa, their activities restricted to their homes.

Seddiqi and her sisters started a small tailoring business that thrived. After the Taliban were ousted, she worked with international organizations before launching her own businesses.

The international aid effort that arrived with foreign forces put girls' education and the empowering of women at its core but there are fears a final withdrawal of U.S. troops, the winding down of international engagement and the re-emergence of the Taliban in politics will see the progress snuffed out.

But women's strides in business will not be reversed, Seddiqi said. "These are not women who will go back." (Reuters)

### (7) 560 Samangan ...

and dresses and 500 women received health kits, including soaps, shampoos, toothpaste, and toothbrushes.

The purpose of distributing such equipment was to adapt culture of urbanization and cleanliness, to prevent the spread of various diseases and physical health, he added.

Amin said women were trained in seven fields, including sewing, baking cakes, learning English language, computer, math and sports in nine months.

Lailuma, 26, a resident of Kat-i-Sulh area of Aibak, the provincial capital, told Pajhwok she after receiving training in sewing through ACTED organization, all her economic problems were solved.

She said, "I have great interest in this field and after completing my course, I would serve the society." (Pajhwok)

### (8) No for Politicization ...

Al-Sudais described the Haj as a "message of peace" and asked the guests of God to stay away from behaviors that would politicize the pilgrimage.

"You should perform your Haj rites in peace, ease and comfort away from political slogans and behaviors that are against the noble values of Islam," he told the media delegates Sudais said, "Islam is against all forms of extremism, terrorism and destruction and asked the pilgrims to spend their time in getting to know each other and cooperate for the good and welfare of all.

"Hajj is not a platform for politics or sectarianism, but for unity among Muslims, the head of the General Presidency for the Affairs of the Two Holy Mosques Al Sudais has said that Saudi Arabia is promoting moderation and peaceful coexistence because Islam rejects all forms of terrorism, and media in Muslim countries have to play an important role in this regard.

Saudi Arabia is projecting Islamic moderation and peaceful coexistence and rejects all forms of terrorism. He added.

"We all have to work hard to defend Islam by all means and do not let those terrorists hijack Islam." he said Referring to the Islamic media, Imam-e-Kaaba - who is also General President of Haramain Sharifain - said that the journalists in the Muslim countries have a major responsibility to defend the real Islam, which totally rejects terrorism and advocates peace and tolerance.

He pointed out, "The government of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques will always keep on serving the pilgrimage and Umrah performers, since we consider it as our duty to serve the guests of Allah seeking rewards only from Allah", during difficult times. He stressed that Muslims should project the real values of Islam; support the Muslim causes; defend the Haramain Sharifain and Masjid-e-Aqsa, in addition to combating terrorism and projecting Islamic moderation. Saudi Arabia, he said, has the sovereign right to administer the Haramain Sharifain. The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman always gives clear direction to serve the guests of Allah round the clock for seeking His blessings, he added. Those who want to create 'Fitna' (rift) in the Islamic world will fail since the leaderships in both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have the wisdom, courage and power to crush those creating rift, he said. He prayed to Allah Almighty to save the two countries and make their peoples prosper and live in peace. Sheikh Al Sudais informed the delegation that the presidency has completed all the preparations to receive the 'Guests of Al Rahman' of current hajj season. He further informed that the presidency has established a comprehensive services plan which the government has provided. "The presidency's main objective is to improve the services being given to the guest of Allah Almighty in the Harman Sharifain. He also apprised the visiting media personnel that it was

for the second time sermons of Hajj from Masjid Al Namrah and from the Holy Kaaba would be translated into six languages with addition of the sign language for equal facilitate speech and hearing impaired pilgrims as well. (Pajhwok)

### (9) Taliban Claim ...

Ashraf Ghani, said on Twitter. "Continued Taliban attacks indicate that they have no commitment to peace," Sediqqi later told the news conference.

The blast came a day after the Taliban called for a boycott of a Sept. 28 presidential election and threatened to attack election rallies.

Separately, security forces conducted raids on two Islamic State militant hideouts in Kabul overnight and killed two militants and seized a large quantity of explosives and bomb-making equipment, the National Directorate of Security (NDS) said.

Three members of the security forces were also killed, an agency spokesman said.

Both the US, peace envoy leading talks with the Taliban, and the Taliban reported significant progress this week in their talks in Qatar aimed at ending America's longest war.

The militants control more territory than at any point since the United States bombed them out of power in 2001 and many government officials fear their war with the Taliban will not end if US troops leave.

About 20,000 foreign troops, most of them American, are in Afghanistan as part of a U.S.-led NATO mission to train, assist and advise Afghan forces. Some US forces carry out counter-terrorism operations. (Reuters)

### (10) US Carrier...

setting up defense installations in the area, also claimed by the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia. However, Beijing has always said that it was open to resolving any disputes with neighbors through direct negotiation, without outside influence or interference.

Amid escalating trade tensions and US commitments to advance their interests in the Indo-Pacific region, last month the Chinese military published a white paper making it explicitly clear that the People's Liberation Army is ready to fight to defend country's sovereignty. (RT)

### (11) Macron Did...

JCPoA - in return for a lifting of multilateral economic sanctions.

"The priority is that Iran adheres to its nuclear obligations," the French diplomat told Reuters.

Iran's first vice-president, Eshaq Jahangiri, said Macron and Rouhani had during a phone call "discussed many issues".

Rouhani said on Thursday that Iran was ready for the worst in an uphill struggle to salvage the nuclear deal, but that Tehran would eventually prevail.

Fears are escalating of a Middle East war with global repercussions as the U.S.-Iranian stand-off festers. Tackling the crisis will be in focus at the Aug. 24-26 G7 summit.

Britain on Monday joined the United States in a maritime security mission in the Gulf to protect merchant vessels travelling through the Strait of Hormuz after Iran, responding to U.S. oil sanctions, seized a British-flagged vessel.

The tanker dispute has tangled the United Kingdom in the diplomatic differences over Iran between the EU big power signatories to the deal and the United States.

The E3 grouping of France, Germany and Britain are trying to set up Instex, a barter-based trade conduit with Iran, but an Iranian mirror mechanism has yet to be established. Iranian officials have repeatedly said Instex must include oil sales or provide substantial credit facilities for it to be beneficial.

Al-Monitor cited three anonymous sources as saying Macron had raised the establishment of a \$15 billion credit line. Asked if the report was accurate, the French diplomat said it was premature to negotiate an amount and that any measure would depend on Iran's respect of its nuclear commitments.

"France is ready to work with the E3, United States, and guarantors of the JCPoA, without predetermining an amount or a financial mechanism that will require in any case international cooperation and in-depth expertise," the diplomat said. (Reuters)

### (12) North Korea...

security and actual war capacity" of the weapon, KCNA said, echoing analysts who said the launches showed North Korea's confidence in its missile technology. The United States and South Korea kicked off their largely computer-simulated Dong Maeng - or "alliance" - exercises this week as an alternative to pre-

vious large-scale annual drills that were halted to expedite denuclearization talks. North Korea decries such exercises as a rehearsal for war aimed at toppling its leadership.

U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper, on his first tour of Asia, said during a meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Tokyo that North Korea remained of great concern.

Esper said on Tuesday the United States won't overreact to the missile tests.

Lee Sang-min, a spokesman for South Korea's Unification Ministry that handles inter-Korean ties, urged the North to stop the tests and explore confidence-building measures such as returning to a joint military committee.

Leif-Eric Easley, who teaches international security at Ewha University in Seoul, said South Korea and the United States had reduced and refocused their joint military exercises to allow space for diplomacy with North Korea.

"But Pyongyang shows no appreciation for this, keeping its own exercise schedule unchanged, conducting provocative weapons tests, and dialling up its rhetoric," he said.

Denuclearization talks are yet to resume after being stalled since a second summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and Kim broke down in February. The two leaders agreed to revive them during their impromptu meeting at the Demilitarized Zone between the two Koreas in June. U.S. national security adviser John Bolton highlighted on Tuesday Kim's pledge to Trump not to resume tests of intercontinental-range missiles that threaten the United States. (Reuters)

### (13) NATO Needs...

address the rise of China, and we do that not least by working closely with our partners in this region - Australia, New Zealand, but also Japan and South Korea," Stoltenberg said.

Beijing has said the country's economic and military advancements are no threat to other nations.

However, tensions have risen as a trade war between Washington and Beijing escalates, and U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper said he would like to place intermediate-range missiles in the Asia-Pacific region.

On Sunday, while on a visit to Sydney, Esper said China was destabilizing the Indo-Pacific region, accusing Beijing of predatory economics, intellectual property theft and "weaponising the global commons". "I spoke with Secretary Esper yesterday and he said clearly that it would take time to develop new intermediate range weapons, and any potential deployment in this part of the world will take time and no decision has been taken," Stoltenberg said.

He spoke after meeting Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison and its foreign and defense ministers to discuss China, the war in Afghanistan, terrorism and cyber security.

"For me it is extremely useful to listen to Australia, with the knowledge, the experience and just the presence in this region, that provides you with an understanding which is important for NATO," he said.

China is Australia's largest trading partner but the diplomatic and trade relationship has cooled significantly as Canberra raised concerns about China's influence in the country and banned Chinese telecom firm Huawei from Australia's 5G network.

Australia and other Western allies worried that 5G would be a foundation technology for critical infrastructure that could be compromised by Beijing, which rejects those concerns. (Reuters)

### (14) Turkey Says...

it is undermining security in the region. Aboard the Yavuz drill ship, off the northeastern coast of Cyprus, Donmez told reporters that a second exploration vessel would begin work in the area by the end of August. A Turkish frigate and patrol boat accompanied the Yavuz.

"Fatih is continuing to drill in the Finike-1 borehole in the areas licensed to Turkey. Yavuz is continuing its operations in the Karpaz-1 borehole," he said in comments made on Tuesday but embargoed until Wednesday.

"The Oruc Reis seismic exploration ship will join this work as of the end of August," he said.

Turkey's operations in the region have drawn a reaction from its Western allies, including the European Union and the United States.

"We support a peaceful, stable region and we discourage provocative actions by any players," U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Energy Resources Francis Fannon said on Tuesday, when asked about Turkey's moves in the region.

EU foreign ministers last month suspended negotiations on a comprehensive air transport agreement and decided not to hold further EU-Turkey high-level dialogue for the time being.

Cyprus was divided in 1974 after a Turkish invasion triggered by a brief, Greek-inspired coup. Several peacemaking efforts have failed and the discovery of offshore resources in the eastern Mediterranean has complicated the negotiations.

On Friday, Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci will discuss a way out of an impasse in peace talks, which have been stalled for two years.

Akinci said the Greek Cypriot side was making unilateral attempts to explore for natural gas in the eastern Mediterranean despite repeated Turkish Cypriot proposals to resolve the issue.

"This doesn't leave the Cypriot Turkish side and Turkey with any choice other than what we are doing right now," Akinci told Reuters TV in an interview.

Speaking to Turkish ambassadors in Ankara on Tuesday, President Tayyip Erdogan said Turkey would continue to protect the rights of Turkish Cypriots.

"We cannot remain indifferent to the attempts at theft and sabotage that are being carried out under the name of drilling," he said. (Reuters)

### (15) Tunisian Defense...

vice president Abdel Fattah Mourou as a candidate. He is the first presidential nominee from the moderate Islamist party since Tunisia transitioned to democracy after the 2011 uprising that toppled veteran autocrat Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali. Other candidates include liberal former prime minister Mehdi Jomaa and Moncef Marzouki, who served as interim president for three years after 2011.

Zbidi served as defense minister after Ben Ali was overthrown until March 2013, when he quit a cabinet led by Ennahda. In 2017, Chahed re-appointed Zbidi as defense minister.

Tunisia was where the Arab Spring protests that swept the Middle East and North Africa in 2011 began, and the only country where the uprising was followed by a peaceful transition to democracy. Nevertheless it remains mired in a severe economic crisis that has fueled social discontent.

Tunisia's president controls foreign and defense policy, governing alongside a prime minister chosen by parliament who has authority over domestic affairs. (Reuters)

### (16) Irish Minister...

from the European Union.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said that he will take the United Kingdom out of the European Union on Oct. 31 come what may, even without a transitional deal needed to pave the way for future relations with the EU.

Wrenching the United Kingdom out of the bloc without a deal means there would be no formal arrangements to cover everything from post-Brexit pet passports to customs procedures on the Northern Irish border with Ireland.

Any reworking of a deal to meet Johnson's demands would require the support of the Irish.

While Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar said on Tuesday that he believed a no-deal outcome was still avoidable, D'Arcy struck a more sceptical tone, warning that an abrupt departure of Britain from the European Union was very likely. (Reuters)

### (17) Chinese, Egyptian...

to Confucius, harmony is achieved via mutual understanding that will be reflected eventually on the behaviors of individual and society," he said.

Al-Sawy Ahmad, a professor of philosophy in Banha University who attended the symposium, told Xinhua that who reads the principles of Confucius could easily understand the bases of the Chinese foreign policy and the Chinese people.

On the other hand, Fan Lizhu, a professor of the School of Social Development and Public Policy at Fudan University, said Confucianism has also impacted the policy of reform and openness.

"The Chinese behavior and thoughts have never been worked in isolation all over history from the Confucianism," said Fan, noting the principles of Confucius has been dominating the souls of Chinese people.

"The principles of the Chinese foreign policies have also been derived from Confucianism, which are based on shared future for mankind, cooperation despite difference," she added.

Former Egyptian Prime Minister Essam Sharaf also joined the symposium and said that "the current human civilization has hurt the relations either between people and people or the human and nature."

"The world needs new ecological civilization to preserve the connection between mankind and nature," said Sharaf, who is also a committee member of the Silk Road NGO Cooperation Network. (Xinhua)