

**(1) Mattis Says...**

videos of government members and Taliban celebrating together. The pressure is increasing on the Taliban to enter discussions, but there is still a long way to go, Mattis said.

"It is still early in this reconciliation process," he added. (Tolonews)

**(2) Climate Change...**

representatives of civil society, private sector and media spoke on economic societal, regional and other aspects of the problem.

At the opening of the event, Ambassador Mayaudon said: "Afghanistan, as a member of the global community, is already experiencing the consequences of climate change."

Reduction of underground waters, severe drought throughout the country and excessive warm weather were the obvious consequences of climate change and global warming, the diplomat said in a statement from EU.

Mayaudon warned the situation could worsen in coming years if mitigation and adaptation measures were not put in place. Climate change affected rural and urban populations, the agricultural economy, and might lead to increasing numbers of internally displaced people.

"It is time to act and address it as a matter of extreme urgency that should unite the whole Afghan society" the ambassador stressed.

Participants called on relevant organisations, stakeholders and public to take necessary preventive and adaptation measures to limit the consequences of climate change in the coming years.

Together with member states, the EU supports multiple initiatives in Afghanistan in irrigation, water management, infrastructure, natural resource management and reforestation.

The European Union promised to continue to regard climate change in Afghanistan as a priority and would support the Afghan people and government in countering its adverse consequences. (Pajhwok)

**(3) Govt Plans...**

constitution overnight commission had been tasked with resolving the election issue in Ghazni.

He said the committee held a meeting yesterday but not reach a final decision about the Ghazni issue. (Pajhwok)

**(4) Govt Hoping...**

that at least that section of the port, which is shared by these countries, is not affected by US sanctions against Iran. There is some optimism around this," said Chakhansuri.

This comes after the first round of sanctions by the US against Iran came into effect on Tuesday - a move to force Tehran to renegotiate the 2015 nuclear deal that Trump walked out of in May.

This phase of trade sanctions will impact Iran's automotive sector, trade in precious metals such as gold, and will prohibit it from using the US dollar - the common currency for international trade.

In the second phase, scheduled to come into effect in November, Iran's ports and crude oil exports will be affected.

These curbs could also impact India directly, forcing it to curtail and cease buying crude oil from its third largest supplier.

According to a Hindustan Times report, New Delhi has sought a waiver, citing not only its oil imports but also the strategic importance of the Chabahar Port.

US officials have indicated condition-based waivers might be considered on a case-to-case basis but there has been no announcement

yet, read the report.

Just last month, India said it was moving with "speed and skill" on the Chabahar Port project and that it was "committed to the development" of the port.

In May 2016, India, Iran and Afghanistan signed an agreement on the establishment of a Transit and Transport Corridor among the three countries using Chabahar Port as the regional hub for sea transportation.

In February this year, Iran said it had agreed to lease operational control of Chabahar to India for 18 months and in June, India's Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said India is trying to make Chabahar fully operational by 2019.

However, officials are optimistic about the future of the port - especially after the US on Tuesday granted a waiver - for the Azerbaijan natural gas pipeline.

The Southern Gas Corridor received the waiver from US sanctions against Iran's energy customers, an expected win for the project, which has been designed to transport Caspian natural gas to Turkey and southern Europe while bypassing Russia.

British petroleum giant BP had been seeking a sanctions waiver for its development of Azerbaijan's offshore Shah Deniz fields, the source of the Southern Gas Corridor's natural gas.

This comes as Iran's NICO holds a 10 percent share in the second phase of Shah Deniz, which was a source of concern.

US energy sector sanctions being re-imposed in November will ban companies from the US financial system if they continue to do business with Iran. (Tolo news)

**(5) President Ghani...**

The commander in chief appreciated the performance of local officials in the defense of their country and the operations they conducted successfully in Tagab district. He stressed the security forces be equipped in time.

Ghani also called for tackling carefully a possible truce with the Taliban. He directed Kapisa officials to work for improving security and coordination on public safety and preparations for upcoming elections. (Pajhwok)

**(6) No Biometric...**

Sayyad said no decision has yet been made but that it would be discussed and decided on soon.

Referring to the World Bank's recent concerns about meeting the election deadline, Sayyad said there should be no concerns about delays with the parliamentary elections as this would be held in October as scheduled. (Tolo news)

**(7) Maidan Wardak...**

recalled a Presidential Palace delegation had promised them to arrange their meeting with the president, but the proposed contact was yet to materialise. (Pajhwok)

**(8) IEC Employees in...**

IEC about our salaries and today we gathered to tell the commission that if does not pay our salaries, we will stage protests," he added.

Public relations and awareness in-charge at the IEC office in Paktia, Sher Ali Faizi, confirmed salaries of around 800 workers had not been paid for the last few months, but said the issue had been shared with the relevant organization.

He rejected corruption in the IEC and said salaries of commission's workers in other provinces were paid and their workers in Paktia would also receive their salaries in near future.

"Based on the agreement between the government and the international community, the UNDP pays 90 percent of budget of the elec-

tions and the government pays 10 percent, the government pays its share on time but unfortunately on the UNDP has delayed its part, we have shared the problem with the UNDP and IEC's central office," he concluded. (Pajhwok)

**(9) 51 Dead, 74 Wounded...**

forces and 40 insurgents wounded, the public representative said.

On Tuesday, the Ministry of Interior said a US forces' airstrike which had been called in mistakenly hit an Afghan police outpost, killing 14 personnel.

NATO's media office in Kabul confirmed the airstrike that had been requested by Afghan forces during an intense fighting with the Taliban.

The alliance provided no information regarding casualties, but said that the reports it had caused casualties were being investigated.

The Azra district administrative chief, Hamidullah Hamid, the gun-battle came to an end Tuesday evening and the situation was under control now.

Sahib Khan, a resident of the area, told Pajhwok that four civilians had been killed and four children and two women were among nine other civilians wounded in the assaults.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid had claimed the fighters were advancing on Azra district headquarters and they had so far killed 19 local police and wounded six others.

On Monday, residents and officials of Azra district told Pajhwok that the Taliban had laid siege to the district and asked the government to act immediately. (Pajhwok)

**(10) NSC Meeting...**

regard but the statement added that the participants of the meeting took necessary decisions regarding the report of the defense minister.

In other parts of the meeting, the participants held talks regarding the recommendation of the independent election commission chief report regarding the districts councils elections and the elections in Ghazni province, ARG Palace said.

According to ARG Palace, it was concluded that technical and practical studies as well as consultations are required in this regard and asked the election commission to present another report in the next meeting to include specific and practical alternatives regarding the aforementioned issued so that necessary decisions could be taken.

The Security and Defense Sectors also presented their reports regarding the security situation of the country and necessary decisions were taken for the improvement of the security of the country, ARG Palace added in its statement. (KP)

### PM Lauds Contribution of POF in Catering to Country's Defence Requirements

ISLAMABAD - Caretaker Prime Minister Justice (Retd) Nasir-ul-Mulk visited the Pakistan Ordnance Factories(POF) Wednesday and appreciated the valuable contributions of the POF in catering to the defence requirements of the country.

The Prime Minister said the POF held a pivotal position in view of the multifarious defence and security challenges that the country was confronted with. He also commended the commitment and continued efforts of the workforce of POF whose labour and expertise had earned the organization a reputed place in the region and beyond.

"POF's culture of innovation and excellence has left me deeply impressed and profoundly satisfied", the Prime Minister said in his comments recorded in the visitors'

book.

Earlier upon his arrival at POF Wah, the largest defence industrial complex of the country, the Prime Minister was received by POF Chairman Lt Gen Sadiq Ali HI(M). He was briefed in detail about the range of arms and ammunition products of international standards, being produced at the ordnance factory. He was also apprised about the contribution of POF in meeting defence and non-defence requirements of the armed forces during peace and war time.

The Prime Minister was informed that in addition to meeting the domestic requirements on cost-to-cost basis, the POF was also serving the country through import substitution and earning foreign exchange by exporting its surplus to 40 countries and thus furthering defence diplomacy.

He was also briefed about the commercial operations and corporate social responsibility services of the organization in the field of education, health and environment protection.

Later, the Prime Minister also visited Product Display Lounge, POF Brass Mills and the Weapon Factory and observed various processes at the production line. (Monitoring Desk)

### World Stocks Edge Up amid Corporate News, US-China Spat

BANGKOK - World stock markets mostly rose Wednesday as investors focused on corporate news and looked past the U.S. decision to follow through with plans to put higher tariffs on \$16 billion in Chinese exports.

KEEPING SCORE: In Germany, the DAX was up 0.3 percent to 12,688, while France's CAC 40 was about flat at 5,525. Britain's FTSE 100 gained 0.9 percent to 7,787, driven by a drop in the pound, which helps the country's main exporters and multinationals. Sentiment was also driven by higher earnings at commodities trader Glencore, suggesting the industry is recovering from years of trouble. The future contract for the Dow edged up 0.1 percent while that of the S&P 500 was flat.

THE DAY IN ASIA: Japan's Nikkei 225 index gave up early gains to fall 0.1 percent to 22,644.31 and the Shanghai Composite index fell 1.3 percent to 2,744.07. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index added 0.4 percent to 28,359.14. Australia's S&P ASX 200 climbed 0.2 percent to 6,268.50 while South Korea's Kospi edged 0.1 percent higher to 2,301.45. India's Sensex climbed 0.4 percent to 37,802.19.

TESLA: Shares in Tesla surged after the Financial Times reported that Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund had invested in the company and CEO Elon Musk later said he might take the company private. Musk, who owns about 20 percent of Tesla's stock, said he had not made a decision about taking the company private but such a move would make it easier for Tesla to focus on long-term goals. Musk said he would pay \$420 a share, well above Tesla's all-time high from September. The stock gained 11 percent to \$379.57.

TRADE MOVES: The U.S. Trade Representative announced it will begin imposing 25 percent tariffs on an additional \$16 billion in Chinese imports beginning Aug. 23. The list is heavy on industrial products such as steam turbines and iron girders. So far, the tariffs that the U.S. and its trading partners have announced recently are still small and haven't affected the broader market very much. China reported Wednesday that its exports to the U.S. rose 13.3 percent

year-on-year in July while total exports jumped 12.2 percent.

CHINA TOWER IPO: Shares in the state-owned monopoly that operates China's vast network of mobile phone towers are flat as the company makes its stock market debut in Hong Kong after raising \$6.9 billion from investors. China Tower Corp. closed at 1.26 Hong Kong dollars (16 U.S. cents) per share, unchanged from its initial public offering price of 1.26 Hong Kong dollars (16 U.S. cents). China Tower says it operates 1.9 million cell tower sites across China, the biggest mobile phone market. It has given no indication of plans to expand abroad.

ENERGY: U.S. crude oil fell 36 cents to \$68.81 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude, the standard for international oil prices, fell 22 cents to \$74.42 a barrel.

CURRENCIES: The dollar fell to 111.07 yen from 111.37 yen. The euro dipped to \$1.1597 from \$1.1599. (AP)

### China Provides High-Level Scholarships for 29 Ethiopian University Students

ADDIS ABABA - The Chinese government on Wednesday provided 29 scholarships to Ethiopian university students to pursue further studies in China.

The 29 recipients will pursue graduate studies in Chinese universities both in social and natural science disciplines, majority of them set to take on their doctoral studies, it was noted.

Samuel Kifle, Ethiopia's Deputy Minister of Education, told Xinhua that the scholarship grant from the Chinese government to Ethiopians depicts "one of the best partnerships in the world in all the diplomatic, cultural and economic arenas."

"We will continue to have this strong relationship, because we are sending another 29 bright students who will make the difference in this country's future," Kifle said.

Noting the Ethiopian government's commitment in strengthening access to higher education, Kifle has also commended the support from the Chinese government in filling the gap in terms of access to higher education.

"As we are investing in our human capital, the contribution from China, mainly in terms of scholarship provision, is immense," he said.

"I would like to thank the people and government of China for supporting all our endeavors of development, mainly in the education sector," he said.

Tan Jian, Chinese Ambassador to Ethiopia, who reiterated his country's commitment to support African countries' efforts in the education sector, also said that partnership in education is "very meaningful and important work."

Tan further called on scholarship recipients to serve as the connecting bridges in the people-to-people relations among the two countries, which he said is the basis for the comprehensive, strategic and cooperative partnership that the two countries are successfully celebrating presently.

BirhanTeka from Ethiopia's Aksum University, who is one of the recipients, also commended the opportunity.

"I have been looking for opportunities to further my doctoral education, which I had not been able to do since we don't have any academic institution in Ethiopia with PhD in archaeology," she told Xinhua.

"I am very happy, because this is a great opportunity for me given how many years I have waited for this to happen," she said. (Xinhua)