

(1) UK Announces £8...

as well as the contributions from the international community," the envoy said.

The UK, along with others in the international community, supports the Afghan Independent Electoral Bodies' call for all Presidential candidates to adhere to the Election law and the Code of Conduct.

It is critical that the election is conducted in a fair manner, without interference of government officials or the use of state resources to benefit particular candidates. The UK continues to support the independence of Afghanistan's Electoral Bodies in managing the process. (Pajwhok)

(2) Uzbek Envoy Briefs ...

the region. The two sides also discussed the delicacy of the process.

Mohib thanked the constructive role of Uzbekistan in regional peace and cooperation, saying Afghans were owners and key stakeholders in the process and could make good and decisive decisions about their future. (Pajwhok)

(3) I Will Change the ...

over territory, recognize the borders and people of the two countries travel without passports."

He said that he would try to have friendly relations with all countries, particularly regional countries.

About the 100th Independence Day of Afghanistan, he said, "Independence of the country is a principle for us and we would not deal over it,"

Pedram said that merit would be a fundamental rule in his government and people in the government will be employed based on their qualifications.

On peace, he said that the peace process should be prioritized but the method of negotiations should be specified and he would be ready for negotiations if the other party

Pedram said education and healthcare services would be free of cost in his government.

About election, he said that Afghanistan was under occupation and election could not be transparent and inclusive in such a situation. (Pajwhok)

(4) US Envoy ...

Ghani's spokesman Sediq Sediqqi rejected Nabil's statement as false allegations.

"These sources are so misleading that they can even mislead a well-known politician. This has no truth in it Mr. Nabil. Because of his deteriorating health conditions the government has put him under severe house arrest," Sediqqi responded to Nabil.

A brief background of Kabul Bank scandal

In 2015, President Ghani ordered that Mr. Frozi should serve out his full 10 years in prison and pay his court-ordered fine of \$137 million.

Kabul Bank once Afghanistan's largest financial institution collapsed in 2010 after reports of embezzlement of over \$900 million.

"Many of the Kabul Bank suspects who had high-level political relations in the present and the previous governments, were not treated legally and those involved in the collapse of the Kabul Bank were treated with a political approach," said Naser Taimoori, a researcher from the Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA). "Such cases have always been treated politically. The chaos that we see in Afghanistan has a link with corruption," said former presidential advisor Adila Bahram Nizami.

This comes after Mr. Frozi's colleague Sherkhan Farnood, former chairman of the old Kabul Bank, died in prison at the age of 57 last year in August.

He was serving his sentence at Bagram Prison after being found guilty in the \$900 million Kabul Bank embezzlement scandal in 2014.

The Controversial Contract

In November 2015, the government launched the 'Smart City Township' Project in which Khalilullah Frozi was a part.

Government officials said the aim of the program was to help the debtors of Kabul Bank repay their debt instead of being imprisoned.

The move, however, sparked an outcry. In February 2016, President Ashraf Ghani canceled the contract of the Smart City Township.

Sherkhan Farnood was the chairman of Kabul Bank until late 2010, which was Afghanistan's largest private financial institution with over one million customers at the time.

Farnood held a 28.16 percent share in the old Kabul Bank. By November 2010 both Farnood and Frozi had been sus-

pending.

As of early 2011, both were effectively under house arrest and could not leave the country. (Tolo news)

(5) ICRC Eager ...

Mr. Gravend added that the activities which have been halted include visits detention places, facilitating phone calls between detainees and their families, evacuating wounded people outside urban centers, and many more activities. But he said they are eager to resume their activities as soon as possible.

"One of the main points of the new release that we made is that not only are we concerned that the civilians are continuing to suffer a lot from this conflict. Despite that the talks... Civilians are still paying a very high price because of the conflict," Mr. Gravend said.

He said that threats to health and humanitarian workers further worsen the harm to civilians.

"We are very worried to see that this level of suffering is very high but this consequence, this impact on humanitarian workers and on health workers is actually on the rise in 2019 and this a source of deep concern of course," Mr. Gravend added.

On August 12, ICRC said in a report that the ongoing peace talks have not diminished the intensity of violence in Afghanistan and its impact on civilians as the civilian casualties remained high. The report said that the air bombardments, night raids, and attacks conducted in both rural and populated areas result in the killing and maiming of women, men, and children who had no part in the fighting.

The ICRC called on all parties to the conflict that the medical workers, too, must be protected and respected by all sides. (Tolo news)

(6) Taliban, U.S. ...

Afghan officials estimated the number is higher, and could be about to get a boost.

"It's a big opportunity for Daesh to recruit fighters from the Taliban, and, no doubt, many Taliban fighters will happily join," said Sohrab Qaderi, a member of the provincial council in Nangarhar province on the border with Pakistan, referring to IS.

IS militants, who battle government forces and the Taliban, and have carried out some of the deadliest attacks in urban centres, will not be part of the deal between the United States and the Taliban.

For some Taliban, IS will offer an opportunity to continue jihad against those they see as infidels and their supporters. For others, who fear retribution if they try to reintegrate into society, it could be a refuge.

"They've killed and been killed, they have feuds," Qaderi said of the Taliban. "Many fighters won't feel safe returning to normal life."

A spokesman for President Ashraf Ghani said there was a major concern about the growing strength of IS and their attraction for some Taliban.

"Most Daesh are ex-Taliban, and there could be a possibility of some Taliban joining," said the spokesman, Sediq Sediqqi.

"The Afghan government and the U.S. have shared goals combating terrorism. We need the support of our international partners."

The government has a reintegration programme for insurgents who surrender but critics say it can take too long for people to be vetted and the care they get is inadequate.

FROM WHITE TO BLACK

But a Taliban commander and some members of the group dismissed the possibility of fighters breaking ranks to join IS.

"The Taliban leadership has enough control over their fighters to give them orders, and they obey them," Mawlawi Jamal, a Taliban commander in the western province of Farah, told Reuters by telephone.

But a Taliban fighter in eastern Kunar province said he had no choice but to join IS, and he thought others would too.

"During the fighting local people got killed, many people have enemies," said the fighter, who declined to be identified.

He said had killed one of his father's cousins who opposed the Taliban and could not return to his village.

"To survive, I have to go to Daesh," he said. "Our aim is to fight the infidels and corruption, no matter under what name."

One former Taliban member who joined IS in Kunar two years ago denounced the Taliban for negotiating with "infidels".

"They're selling the precious lives we've sacrificed ... I'm sure more true mujahideen will soon join us," said the fighter, who spoke by telephone and sought anonymity.

A former senior Taliban member who has defected to the government said fighters might be inadvertently driven into the arms of IS if the government did not rehabilitate them properly.

"If nothing else makes Taliban fighters join Daesh, it'll be government negligence," he told Reuters in an interview in a safe house provided by the government in Kabul, the capital.

He said he had former Taliban comrades who had wanted to leave the Taliban but been unable to strike a deal with the government, so had joined IS instead.

Rivalries, feuds and the anger among some fighters over what they see as their leaders' compromise with the Americans were also likely to drive defections to IS, he said.

"It's the easiest thing, just change the white flag to a black one," he said, referring to the white Taliban flag and the black IS banner. (Reuters)

(7) Darul Aman Palace...

palace's reconstruction had been 95 percent completed and would be inaugurated by the president on the Independence Day (August 19).

He said all works at the palace had been completed and only electricity related works were being completed. The official said the reconstructions cost nearly \$10 million provided by the government. (Pajwhok)

(8) Probe Team ...

and were killed the "01 Unit" of the National Directorate of Security at a night raid in Zurmat district on August 11.

The operation was carried out in Gul Koh village.

The National Directorate of Security (NDS) in a statement said that at least 11 militants including two commanders of the Taliban were killed in a special operation in Zurmat district. This statement is rejected by local residents.

The officials held talks with Paktia governor Shamim Khan Katawazai, Paktia governor Mujib-Ur-Rahman Samkanai, the Commander of 203 Corps Brig. Gen. Khanullah Shuja, the provincial NDS chief Major Gen. Qadr Mohammad Qadr, the statement said.

The statement added that the officials discussed the security situation and claims of civilian casualties in a government forces operation in Zurmat district and assigned a probe team to assess the incident.

The officials called on Paktia and Paktika governors to have a "direct role" in the assessment of the Zurmat incident, the statement said.

The Defense Ministry in a statement confirmed the visit but said the officials assessed the security situation in the south-eastern provinces in this trip.

According to Paktia residents and tribal elders, Hayatullah, an employee of Ministry of Education in Kabul; Mohammad Shafi, a teacher; Ansarullah, a student at Paktia University; and Akhtar Mohammad, a student at Kabul University who went to visit their families in Zurmat district, as well as Mohammad Asif, principal of Dawlat Khan School in Zurmat; Inam, a madrasa student; Rahmatullah; Hekmatullah; and Nusratullah (who are brothers), Fida Mohammad, Nasrullah and Fathullah, farmers in the district, are the 11 people who the residents said were killed in the raid. (Tolo news)

(9) Jihadi Figures ...

comrade says that the Taliban are attempting to enter into the peace process and in the political arena of Afghanistan through weapons which could influence him to be prepared alongside other Jihadi leaders to defend the people of Afghanistan against possible threats in the future.

"The Taliban are looking to keep their weapons and their territory both and enter into the political scene of the power. This doesn't mean peace but a fragile ceasefire and such a move can spark another war. If the Taliban try to enter into peace with weapons, this will not be peace. In that case, of course, we will consider some measure to defend our people," Mr. Registani said pointing at efforts on peace efforts as the Afghans impatiently wait to see what comes out of the recent talks between the US and the Taliban in Doha.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Mohaqiq, another powerful Afghan Jihadi and political figure who has commanded fierce battles against the Taliban in the past says that if the Afghan government fails to form an inclusive peace negotiating

team for talking peace with the Taliban, any negotiation with the group will not yield an outcome and instead, this will push the nation towards a new crisis.

Mr. Mohaqiq says that the peace negotiating team should represent all ethnic groups of Afghanistan and also there should be a role for the Afghan political parties in the process.

"An issue in Afghanistan that we talk about is the redline which is the issue of the Islamic republic on which we will not compromise. I don't say it from my own, I say it on behalf of a major segment of the people of Afghanistan and a firm majority," said Mr. Mohaqiq.

This comes at a time that many Afghans in the country have concerns over a possible compromise on the gains the country has made in its strides towards democracy in the past eighteen years. (Tolo news)

(10) Afghan Forces ...

US and NATO forces coordination and cooperation with Afghan forces.

He said when foreign forces leave Afghanistan, Afghan forces have the capability to ensure security of the country and its people.

He said there is chance of casualties during war, militants have no respect to the law they strikes in cities and explode bombs in crowd.

Regarding night raid in the Zurmat district of Paktia, Khalid said the National Directorate of Security (NDS) conducted the raid and the president ordered investigation.

He added till the evening the primary investigation would be conducted and the concerned officials would be questioned.

Khalid said the casualties of security forces declined this year compared to the past and reason was that small checkpoints were removed and more advanced and powerful bases were installed.

The defence minister claimed with surge in attack the Taliban strived to get more privilege in talks underway in Qatar.

Regarding the activities of Daesh and Al Qaeda, Khalid said security forces conducted operations against all militant groups. (Pajwhok)

(11) Reports on Changes ...

The withdrawal figure is subject to change, however, depending on the course of the ongoing conflict and the talks trying to end it, US officials said as quoted by Newsweek.

This comes as the US and the Taliban negotiators wrapped up the eighth round of peace talks in Qatar. The two sides are expected to sign a peace agreement within the next few days which will provide the ground for US troop withdrawal and reduction of violence in Afghanistan. (Tolo news)

(12) Trump to Meet Top ...

concluded the talks which began on August 3 and that they were productive. He said he is returning to Washington D.C. for consultations on next steps in the peace process.

Mr. Khalilzad said that the US is "working hard toward a lasting and honorable peace agreement and a sovereign Afghanistan which poses no threat to any other country".

On August 12, a Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen said in a tweet that negotiators from the two sides are now reaching their leaders to consult about the details of the topics which came under discussion in the recent talks between the US Special Representative and the Taliban delegation. (Tolo news)

(13) Civilians Among ...

He said that three Taliban fighters, an uprising group member and an eight-year old child were killed and two insurgents, two uprising group members and seven members of a family wounded during the fight.

Seven members of a family were injured and a child killed after a mortar the Taliban fired hit a house during the clash, he said.

However, Abdul Razaq Kakar, Dawlatabad district chief said that Taliban militants stormed security posts of the district center with heavy weapons and two mortar shells hit two houses.

He said that a 10 year old girl was killed and a woman and two children of another family were wounded in the incident.

Abdul Ahad Ilbig, a provincial council member was unaware about the Taliban casualties but confirmed a commander of uprising group and a 10 year old girl were killed and eight civilians and two pro-government fighters wounded in last night fight.

Pajwhok tried to contact the Taliban for

a comment about the incident but failed. Except the center, all other areas of Dawlatabad district of Faryab are under the Taliban control. The district is 60 kilometers away from the provincial capital. (Pajwhok)

(14) 5 Security ...

militants and as a result five security men were killed and seven others wounded," he said.

One of the injured policemen, who refused to be named, said a group of Taliban gunmen entered the Qaisar district bazaar on Thursday evening and stormed the police headquarters. He said the clash continued until 11pm.

"When a number of security forces were arriving with three tanks to repulse the attack, they were ambushed," he said, adding five assailants were also killed and a sixth injured.

The Taliban have so far said nothing in this regard. (Pajwhok)

(15) Poland May...

Wednesday she believed the idea of a European naval mission in the Strait of Hormuz would be discussed again at informal meetings of European foreign and defense ministers in Finland later this month.

The U.S. has pushed to secure the strait, which lies between Oman and Iran and through which almost a fifth of the world's oil passes, as tensions have risen between Iran, Britain and the United States in recent months.

Poland has in the past offered military support to U.S.-led missions - its soldiers took part in missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. (Reuters)

(16) Amid Crises...

criticism in official circles about economic policy and how the government had handled the trade war with the United States, sources told Reuters at the time.

With that same annual beach gathering likely wrapping up this week in China in the midst of the two deepening crises, there are no obvious dissenting voices.

"In the early months there were some criticisms on the government for not opening up so quickly," said one Chinese government advisor, speaking on condition of anonymity, referring to the rare internal dissent during the opening salvos of the trade war last year.

"But right now in China, the rising consensus is that the U.S. is trying to contain China no matter what we do."

The source, who closely follows U.S.-China trade talks, said Trump's threat in early August to impose 10% duties on Sept. 1 on another \$300 billion of Chinese imports was evidence to many in China that he was not sincere in wanting a deal.

On Tuesday, Trump backed off that deadline for tariffs on cellphones, laptops and other consumer goods, in the hope of blunting their impact on U.S. holiday sales. But this month he also branded China a currency manipulator, despite the International Monetary Fund's view that the value of China's yuan was largely in line with economic fundamentals.

"Many people will feel it is worthless to negotiate with Trump," the advisor said. (Reuters)

(17) PM Hariri...

Paris last year - the centerpiece of the Hariri government's plans to revive the sluggish economy.

"We will present to (Saudi and the UAE) the projects we have in Cedre because they want to contribute and invest. The relationship between us has returned to what it was before and may be better," Hariri told reporters during a visit in Washington, his office said in a statement on Friday.

He added that talks were under way with Riyadh on some 23 economic deals, it said.

Saudi Arabia's historically close ties to Lebanon, including the Hariri family, deteriorated in recent years as the influence of the heavily armed Shi'ite Hezbollah, which is backed by Riyadh's enemy Tehran, grew.

Relations hit a low in November 2017, when it is widely acknowledged that Hariri was held during a trip to Riyadh and abruptly declared his resignation in a televised address.

Though Riyadh has always denied detaining Hariri, French President Emmanuel Macron - who helped mediate a resolution of the crisis - last year confirmed the Lebanese PM had been held in the kingdom.

After a thaw in ties, Riyadh lifted a travel warning this year and three ex-premiers who met Saudi King Salman last month said the kingdom was ready to support Lebanon. (Reuters)