

(1) Ashgabat, Bishkek...

infrastructure projects in energy and transport sphere.

These projects include the construction of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline, the laying of power transmission lines and fiber optic communications along the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP) route, the construction of railroads from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan. (Trend)

(2) Above 9m Ballot...

in Dubai, he said.

He did not provide information about the cost of the ballot papers printing, but said the United Nations was paying the printing budget.

On the other hand, Ibrahim expressed concern over the closure of IEC offices and said they were faced with problems in appointing provincial commissioners and entering the voters' information into database has been halted.

He said government officials concerned were consulted about the re-opening of IEC offices and the commission was promised the problems it faced would be resolved as soon as possible.

Ibrahimi hoped IEC offices would be reopened early coming week and they work according to the schedule and programs.

Earlier, the Independent Electoral Complaint Commission (IECC) had removed the names of 35 candidates from the list of candidates as they could not meet the criteria to contest election.

Supporters of six disqualified Wolesi Jirga candidates closed the entrance of the IEC in Kabul eight days ago.

About one hundred supporters of the barred election contenders rallied in the high-security capital against the IEC decision. They wanted the panel to reverse the decision.

The rally was organized by backers of Mullah Tarakhel Mohammadi, Qais Hassan, Ziaul Haq Amarkhel, Sher Ali Ahmadzai, Zardad Faryadi and Akbar Stanikzai who are removed from the final list of Wolesi Jirga candidates.

The protestors complained the IECC had not informed the candidates before their names were struck off the final list.

However, the IECC on August 19 said that their decision regarding removal of 35 Wolesi Jirga candidates from the final list was final and irreversible. (Pajhwok)

(3) Unidentified...

agency, said Moscow has not received any information from Western partners on the origin of helicopters that could be involved in transporting terrorists to Afghanistan.

"Unfortunately, neither official Kabul nor our Western partners have been able to give any accurate and credible information on the origin and the goals of unidentified helicopters flying over the territory of the IRA (the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan) and possibly involved in transporting terrorists of the IS [Daesh] and the equipment they need," the Russian ambassador said in February.

TASS reported that the Russian diplomat stressed Russia has repeatedly raised the issue - also with UNAMA. (Tolo news)

(4) ACCRA Almost...

over nine million stickers for ID cards in preparation for the October elections.

"The information which exists on the sticker, you go and show me if an ID has extra information than this, this is the information which exists on the sticker, if ACCRA can not find it, then it is their problem," said IEC commissioner Sayed Hafiz Hashemi. "Some solutions have been found to this issue which can help us to use this database in order to prepare a transparent list for voting," added Mohtat.

Over the past six months, ACCRA has issued over five million paper IDs to the public across the country, but the Afghan political parties and MPs raised concerns over the credibility of the paper IDs and said that half of these paper IDs were fake and had been issued to rig the elections.

The parties warned if the voting process is not transparent, they will close electoral commission offices in Kabul and provinces.

Although the IEC insists that over nine million voters have registered their names for the upcoming elections, political parties have repeatedly claimed that less than five million voters are legitimate. (Tolo news)

(5) Former US Official Says...

Islamabad's double standard politics. "The Pakistani so-called deep state or intelligent-military state or whatever it is called, its number one interest is its own survival. And in that case, the use of Afghanistan is a rallying place or the place to put pressure on, not just Afghans, but also on Pakistanis who don't believe that the military should play this role. It can become very complex," said Sedney.

Meanwhile, Husain Haqqani, Pakistan's former ambassador to US and Sri Lanka, speaking at the institute said in theory there are two possibilities: the first possibility is that Pakistan really does not support Taliban; the second is that Islamabad is behind everything and wants to benefit from the peace process and political deals.

"President Musharraf in immediately after 9/11 didn't really expect the Americans to stay in Afghanistan for a very long time. So that is why he facilitated the whole operations. So his expectation was they will be gone in a few months, we will be back to being able to have Afghanistan as a backyard," said Haqqani.

Former Afghan ambassador to Canada and France Omar Samad said at the event that it is about 10 to 13 years that Afghan government is trying to start negotiations with the Taliban, but he said that so far they have been unable to do so.

Samad said even a political office was opened for Taliban in Qatar, but they do not know the people reside in the office have connection with Taliban leadership or no.

(6) Afghan Government...

in Moscow and begin discussions about ending the conflict with the countries of the region.

For Kabul, these initiatives "will not work and nothing will be achieved until the nation as such has been considered and accepted as the main actor," Ahmadi added.

Regarding the refusal of the United States to attend the talks, the spokesman of the Afghan Foreign Ministry stated that the Asian country had made its decision on its own.

Washington declined to participate, but delegations from Russia, Pakistan, China, Iran, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are expected to attend in Moscow.

On the other hand, Russian Foreign Ministry told Sputnik the conference scheduled for September 4 will take place, even if the Kabul representatives do not attend.

The first meeting of the Moscow Format was held on April 14 last year, with the participation of representatives of Ashraf Ghani's executive, but without promising results. (Prensa Latina)

(7) Taliban Launch...

roamed the city for four days, destroying communications towers and cutting power and water supplies before government forces regained control with the help of U.S. air strikes.

The government and international aid agencies have been struggling to restore services in the city over recent days.

The latest clashes came days after

President Ashraf Ghani offered the Taliban a three-month ceasefire but the insurgents rejected it, two senior militant commanders said, and vowed to maintain their attacks on the government and its foreign allies. Repeated assaults on Ghazni has exposed the fragile grip Ghani's Western-backed government has on security and its apparent inability to prevent large-scale militant attacks.

Ghani has ordered an investigation into the attacks and announced disbursement of \$20 million for immediate relief and reconstruction process.

The Taliban are fighting to expel foreign forces, defeat the government and impose their version of Islamist rule.

(8) 250,000 Workers...

Khalid also thanked media men who covered this year's Hajj season, as well as whoever contributed in serving the pilgrims.

Prince Khalid said that the number of manpower providing services to the pilgrims exceeded 250,000 workers. The number of violators of Hajj regulations does not exceed 110,000 compared with 1,400,000 in 1433H, he said.

He said that the holy sites' train transported 360,000 pilgrims, while 18,000 buses transported 1,800,000 pilgrims. Prince Khalid pointed out that the health sector deployed 32,000 health practitioners. As many as 25 hospitals and 135 health centers with a capacity of 5,000 beds were available in Makkah and the holy sites to serve pilgrims.

He also affirmed that moderation is an Islamic vision emerging from Islam and its teachings. The leader of moderation in this country is the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. With regard to some media reports claiming that Saudi Arabia bans Qatari nationals from performing Hajj rituals, Prince Khalid said that such reports did not affect them and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia announced its willingness to receive pilgrims from any country in the world.

Unfortunately, Qatar prevented its citizens from performing Hajj rituals, he said. He said that the number of Iranian pilgrims in this year's Hajj season reached 86,000. (Pajhwok)

(9) Geneva Conference...

laws," said ACCI chief Khan Jan Alokozai.

Previously Tadamichi Yamamoto, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan had called on the national unity government to take solid steps towards fighting corruption, ensure holding transparent elections and finalize the investment law in the country before the conference.

Goal of the Geneva Ministerial Conference on Afghanistan

The goal of the conference is to show the solidarity of the international community with the Afghan people and the government in their efforts for peace and prosperity; and for the Afghan government to renew its commitment to development and reform. This is a crucial moment for the government and international community to demonstrate progress, commitment and maintain the momentum for elections and opportunities for peace.

The conference will also be an opportunity to emphasize the importance of the development and reform agenda and the need to advance it as a constructive contribution to peace and security. This particular conference will also be crucial in measuring results against the \$15.2 billion committed by the international community for Afghanistan in 2016.

The Geneva Ministerial Conference on Afghanistan will be held between two pledging conferences: the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan (2016) and the next pledging conference expected to be held in 2020. (Tolo news)

(10) Operations to Continue...

in the recent weeks of operations and that the areas are safe right now, an army officer said.

Security forces have said they will secure parts of Nad Ali, Gereshk and Garmsir districts in Helmand ahead of the parliamentary elections in October, but since President Ghani's conditional ceasefire announcement, the intensity of military operations has reportedly decreased. On August 19, President Ghani announced a conditional ceasefire. He said the ceasefire would start on Monday and end on November 19 - which is three months.

He said the ceasefire would only be implemented if the Taliban respect it. "As we approach Eid-ul-Adha, and to respect the wishes of different segments of Afghan society including religious scholars, political parties, politicians, women and civil society leaders, youth and members of high peace council in all 34 provinces, and to respect the wishes of the religious scholars of the Islamic world that were gathered in the holy mosques and to respect the wishes of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) and the custodians of the two-holy mosques, the King of Saudi Arabia, we announce a ceasefire that would take effect from tomorrow, Monday, the day of Arafah, till the day of the birth of the prophet i.e., Milad-un-Nabi, (November 19) provided that the Taliban reciprocate."

Not long after Ghani's announcement, Jens Stoltenberg, NATO's Secretary-General, welcomed the announcement of a ceasefire.

"I encourage the Taliban to demonstrate their concern for Afghans by respecting it," Stoltenberg tweeted. Taliban has not officially responded to the conditional ceasefire announced by President Ghani. (Tolo news)

(11) Farnod, Former...

Ferozi were fired from their positions at Kabul Bank in 2010 after reports surfaced that the bank had lost hundreds of millions of dollars. Kabul Bank was then brought under the control of Afghanistan's central bank, De Afghanistan Bank.

Abdul Qadir Fitrat, former head of the central bank had said that \$910 million was illegally withdrawn from Kabul Bank in the form of undocumented loans to well-connected individuals.

Special primary court of the Kabul Bank scandal awarded three months to five years of jail charges to 20 people including former Kabul Bank officials involved in the case.

The court in its final decision sentenced Shir Khan Farnod and Khalil Ferozi each to five years of detention.

After Kabul Bank, once the country's largest private lender, plunged into a deep financial crisis in 2010, the government injected \$825 million to overcome the crisis.

Reports put at 937.7 million the loans issued to a number of people, including stakeholders.

The government says it has so far recovered \$437 millions. Twenty-four defaulters have paid back their debts until now. (Pajhwok)

(12) 5 Daesh Insurgents...

corps' forces detected and defused a magnetic bomb in Tagab district of central Kapisa province.

However, the source did not provide more details about the issue. (Pajhwok)

(13) 'A Bit Dangerous'...

not that dangerous, because when you fly you have full control over it," Hozoori told AFP in Bogor, the Asian Games' paragliding venue. "In Afghanistan it is a bit dangerous. There are some nice mountains in the country but unfortunately because of insecurity we cannot go there."

- 'I want women to fly' - More important for Hozoori is the signal she's sending out to people in Afghanistan, where women were barred from sport under the Taliban and which remains deeply conservative in many areas.

"As the first women paragliding pilot, I want to inspire other women, so they can forget about the wars we have had and can play sport," she said.

"It doesn't matter if it is taekwondo, gymnastics or volleyball -- I want women to fly."

Hozoori's team-mate Navid Popal formed the Afghanistan Air Sports Federation about 12 months ago, after years spent convincing the Afghan government that the parachutes weren't going to be used by militants.

Popal recalled that in the early days, he was sometimes faced with nervous Afghan villagers carrying stones, having never seen a "flying man" before.

"At first, they thought I wasn't from Afghanistan," Popal said. "Or they thought I was in the airforce, or from the US, or NATO," the 32-year-old added with a chuckle.

Security concerns mean paragliders usually stick to Kabul's airspace, although they occasionally receive police escorts when exploring new areas outside of the capital.

The federation has quickly grown to 120 members, often sharing equipment and looking to raise funds to make the expensive sport more accessible.

Just 25 are women, but traditions are shifting, Popal said, with more families encouraging young girls to try the sport.

"When we came to Indonesia people here couldn't believe we were Afghans. They would ask: 'how can you paraglide in a country that is full of violence?' Hozoori added. "When people think of Afghanistan, they think of war and conflict. They think of the Taliban."

But "things are changing", she said, with role models emerging in a number of sports.

"We want to show the world that we can fly." (AFP)

(14) Zaranj Faces Water...

He said pumps of two among six deep wells that supplied water to Zaranj city were not working.

Eng. Shah Wali, Nimroz Water Utility head, acknowledged the water network project had problems in the beginning because it had not been properly surveyed and designed.

The engineers who worked on the project planned water supply for 200,000 residents of Zaranj while the city's population was 300,000 today, he said.

He said the engineers had divided the project into two phases --- deep wells and pipes -- but the contractors failed in both the phases.

In the phase one, eight deep wells had to be dug to pump 1,200 cubic meters of water, but the contractor created only six wells, Shah Wali said, adding the six deep wells provided water to only 50,000 people.

The contractor for the second phase --- extension of pipes from wells to the city -- has also failed to properly execute the project, Wali said, adding construction of a 27-meter high water reservoir with the capacity of 500 cubic meters to was part of the second phase.

However, Eng. Farid Azim, head of Rural Rehabilitation and Development Department in Nimroz, rejected his claims and said the water network project was properly implemented and then handed over to the Water Utility last year.

He said poor management and shortage of personnel in the Water Utility caused the project to face problems.

Around \$800,000 has been taken as guarantee from the contracted companies and the money cannot be returned if the project faces issues, Azim said.

Local officials say a team for assessing the project has arrived from Kabul to Nimroz. (Pajhwok)