

(1) Hanif Atmar...

Afghan president Ashraf Ghani accepted the resignation Saturday of the country's national security adviser, Mohammed Haneef Atmar, and replaced him with Afghan Ambassador to the U.S. Hamdullah Mohib, according to government officials. A statement from the presidential palace said Atmar's resignation has been accepted and that Mohib has been appointed as the new national security adviser.

Haroon Chakhansuri, Ghani's spokesman, also confirmed Mohib's new appointment. Mohib also currently serves as the non-resident ambassador to Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Argentina and Columbia. (Tolo news/AP)

(2) Safari Defeats...

Hotak has so far defeated his Pakistani and Laos rivals and says he hopes to beat his Chinese rival in his next bout on Wednesday evening. Hotak defeated his Laos rival in the second round in a knock out and he defeated his Pakistani rival on points.

The international sports is on until September 2, 2018, in Jakarta and Palembang. Athletes from 46 sports categories are competing in the event. (Tolo news)

(3) Protest Camp...

Some political parties and movements earlier warned they would close of IEC offices in provinces and the capital if the government did not honour its claims of a transparent election process.

Earlier, heads of political parties and alliances termed the voters' registration process as inappropriate and rigged, demanding fresh registration based on the biometric systems.

The parties included Hezb-i-Islami Afghanistan, Jamiat-i-Islami, Wahdat-i-Islami Mardum, Jabha-i-Hirasat and Subat, Jumbish-i-Milli, Milli Mahaz, Jabha-i-Naween Milli and others.

Mohammad Nader Afghan, HIA media office head, said it parties' supporters were scheduled to launch protests on Saturday (today).

However, the Kabul garrison removed the tents from the entrance to IEC head office in Kabul and arrested some protesters.

"Right now, heads of parties have gathered; they will take a decision on the government action. The decision would be shared with the media this afternoon," Nader Afghan said.

However, he added party supporters had embarked on peaceful protests and would close the entrance to the IEC office in 11 provinces.

Pajhwok tried to contact Kabul police for comments in this regard, but failed. (Pajhwok)

(4) Daesh Ideology...

due to its transformation into a covert network, the activities of its regional affiliates, and the complex threat posed by returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters and their families."

While IS has been defeated in Iraq and "is in headlong retreat" in Syria, Voronkov warned that the rising threat from the militant group's fighters "will be diverse and hard to predict." (ATN)

(5) 1st Post-Hajj...

of Hajj regulations did not exceed 110,000 compared with 1,400,000 in 1433H.

About 29,699 Afghan pilgrims arrived in Saudi Arabia on 108 flights from airports in the four zones of the country. (Pajhwok)

(6) 5 Dead...

transferred to hospital from the site. The bombing took place after disqualified Wolesi Jirga candidate Javed Zaman and his backers staged the sit-in.

Ismail, giving an eyewitness account, said the bomber detonated his explosives close to a police checkpoint. (Pajhwok)

(7) Ghazni City...

the resident of locality said, the shifted to a secure place along with his family after receiving the news regarding Taliban's second attempt to capture the city.

The Taliban recently stormed the Ghazni City which was beaten back by security forces after five days of heavy fighting. (Pajhwok)

(8) ANA Forces...

Taliban militants almost daily attacked the ANA camp and the police station in Khas Uruzgan.

The Taliban have been in control of the district building, the NDS office, the education and other administrations and have besieged the city.

Officials of the district government institutions have been staying in Tirkot city and hadn't visited the district over the past three months. He termed the current situation as serious and urged effective steps in this regard.

Provincial council chairman Amir Mohammad Barakzai expressed serious concern about the situation and said ANA personnel had been without food in several other districts besides Khas Uruzgan.

He confirmed the only ANA base in the district had been besieged by Taliban militants and said they had shared the issue with provincial authorities several times, but to no avail. Uruzgan governor Mohammad Shafiq Asadullah Sayed said ANA forces were supplied food and other things in time and new police chief would be dispatched to the district after appointment. (Pajhwok)

(9) Govt Advised...

also said Afghanistan needs to create its own formula for peace.

He said: "Russians are playing with the back of the coin while Americans are playing with the face of it. The problem is that Afghanistan needs peace and Afghanistan must develop a formula for peace in all seriousness and effectiveness so that it can have an impact as soon as possible." For months now, the Afghan and US governments have hoped the Taliban would answer to their calls for peace.

Relying on this hope, President Ashraf Ghani announced a conditional ceasefire last week with the Taliban, despite the group's four-day siege on Ghazni city just days earlier and a string of other attacks across the country.

However, the Taliban failed to respond to government regarding its calls for a ceasefire or for direct talks and instead chose to accept Russia's invitation.

Russia's embassy in Kabul recently said that the US has held meetings with the group - because it has been in their interests to do so.

The US meanwhile has already stated that the Moscow meeting will not help efforts for peace in Afghanistan.

On Thursday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs objected to Moscow's proposed talks on Afghanistan and said any talks for peace should be carried out under the leadership of the Afghan government and the people.

The ministry said in a statement that although it appreciates the efforts by Russia for peace in Afghanistan, the Afghan government expects its regional and international partners to pave the way for intra-Afghan dialogue.

Taliban has defied the goodwill gesture of the Afghan government for peace and stated that participation of the group at the Moscow talks would not hold any importance while it rejects regional and international principles for peace, the statement said.

Delegations from Iran, Pakistan and Uzbekistan and a four-member team from the Taliban led by Mullah Abbas Stanekzai, head of Taliban's office in Qatar, are expected to attend the Moscow meeting on September 04. (Tolo news)

Moscow Warns Washington against 'Reckless Steps' in Syria

MOSCOW - A senior Russian official warned the United States on Saturday against making any "reckless" moves in Syria, the RIA news

agency reported.

Reacting to comments by U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton about Washington's possible strong reaction in the event of a chemical or biological attack in the Syrian region of Idlib, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said: "We warn the Americans and their allies against taking new reckless steps in Syria."

"We are hearing ultimatums from Washington ... and it does not affect our determination to continue our policy for the total elimination of terrorist epicenters in Syria and the return of this country to a normal life," RIA quoted Ryabkov as saying.

The Idlib region, a refuge for civilians and rebels displaced from other areas of Syria as well as powerful jihadist forces, was hit by a wave of air strikes and shelling this month, in a possible prelude to a full-scale government offensive.

Russia earlier this week presented proposals to the Turkish authorities on resolving the situation in Idlib, a northwestern Syrian region that borders Turkey. (Reuters)

Maradona Stadium Name Change Causes Controversy

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina - A plaque at the main entrance of the Argentinos Juniors club stadium reads: "The best player of all times made his career debut in this stadium on October 20, 1976."

Diego Maradona played his first professional game in this small club in a Buenos Aires neighborhood. The club honored Maradona, one of soccer's most iconic players, by naming its stadium after him.

But Argentinos Juniors recently announced an agreement with the sponsor of the club's playing shirt - a financing company that offers credit - to re-name the stadium by including the company's brand. Staring next week, it will be called "Autocredito Diego A. Maradona." The re-naming of stadiums using sponsor brands is not new to worldwide soccer. But it's a first in Argentina, and it has caused indignation among some fans who took to social media to protest.

"I'm totally against it. The name of a stadium is an attribute to our club, especially the name Diego Armando Maradona," said Argentinos Juniors lifelong fan Alberto Perez, who has been a club member for more than 60 years. "This stains the name." Argentinos Juniors takes pride in having produced many world-class players, including Juan Roman Riquelme, the Boca Juniors star playmaker, former Real Madrid captain Fernando Redondo, and Esteban Cambiasso, who also played in Real Madrid before joining Italy's Inter Milan.

The Argentinos Juniors deal with Autocredito will run until 2019. The deal's amount has not been disclosed, but club president Cristian Malaspina said it was roughly double what the company paid to sponsor the team's shirt.

"The club was in a complex position and we had to find a way to generate genuine resources and use a lot of creativity," he told The Associated Press. "I'm proud of generating genuine resources for the club that can help us continue to grow." (AP)

Iran Resumes Talks with Russia to Build New Nuclear Power Plant

TEHRAN - Iran has resumed talks with Russia to build a new nuclear power plant capable of generating up to 3,000 megawatts of electricity, energy minister Reza Ardakanian said Saturday, according to the Tasnim news agency.

The Islamic Republic currently has the capacity to produce 1,000 megawatts of nuclear electricity, Tasnim

reported.

Iran already runs one Russian-built nuclear reactor at Bushehr, its first. Russia signed a deal with Iran in 2014 to build up to eight more reactors in the country.

The United States in May pulled out of a deal between Tehran and major powers to limit Iran's nuclear ambitions, and Washington imposed new sanctions on Tehran in August. (Reuters)

Thais Digging in to Keep an Asian Game at the Asian Games

PALEMBANG, Indonesia - Of the Asian games at the Asian Games, sepaktakraw should get some billing as a festival event.

With origins in rural southeast Asian provinces - several countries lay claim to creating it - sepaktakraw is like an aerial soccer or hands-free volleyball where players can use their feet, knees, heads, elbows or shoulders to propel a woven, synthetic ball. No hands.

The name of the game is a literal translation. Proponents explain that it's a combination of languages with "sepak" coming from the term used for kick in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia, and "takraw" being the Thai word for the woven ball.

While the acrobatic, overhead kicks and athletic, somersaulting leaps to the height of the net are eye-catching, the sport's place on the Asian Games program is far from secure. At the 2018 Games being co-hosted in Jakarta and Palembang, only eleven countries entered the team regu - or team of teams - competition. With the next Asian Games traveling to China, there has been speculation sepaktakraw will be cut from the program.

Understandably, that notion has not been well received in Thailand, winner of the first three gold medals in this tournament.

"This is one of the sports that really shows the athleticism and it is really exciting to watch," Sakha Siriwat, gold-medal winner in the team regu, said. "It is very thrilling and also it's a sport with such a long heritage, so it should not be dropped.

Thailand coach Kamol Tankimhong sounded confident sepaktakraw would be retained for the continental Olympic-style games, which attract more than 11,000 athletes in 40 sports.

"We have great confidence in the international federation, and the Asian federation - they are working hard so that we raise the awareness of the sport," Tankimhong said. (AP)

Anniversary of Rohingya Crisis Marked in Bangladesh Camps, Myanmar

COX'S BAZAR, Bangladesh - Refugees in Bangladesh held demonstrations and prayers on Saturday to mark the passing of a year since the outbreak of a conflict in western Myanmar's Rakhine state that drove hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims from their homes.

Across the border in Myanmar, the government said security patrols had been increased in the conflict area ahead of the anniversary for fear of further violence. Members of the mostly Buddhist Rakhine ethnic group and Hindus from Rakhine state said they would hold events to remember those killed by Rohingya militants in attacks that triggered the crisis.

Thousands of refugees, from children to the elderly, marched prayed and chanted slogans in events across the sprawling camps in southern Bangladesh. Many wore black ribbons to commemorate what they said was the start of the "Rohingya genocide".

"We prayed the morning prayers inside our house over the sound of

bullets. We were so scared," said Aisha, 47, one of dozens of women at a gathering in the Kutupalong camp, recalling the outbreak of the conflict. "Today marks 365 days since that day. So I want to say, we want justice."

After the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) attacked 30 Myanmar police posts and a military base in the early hours of Aug. 25, 2017, Myanmar troops swept through villages. Around 700,000 Rohingya have since fled, according to United Nations agencies.

Rohingya who crossed the border reported killings, rapes and arson carried out by security forces, in what the UN's top human rights official said seemed to be a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing".

The government of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi has denied allegations of atrocities made by the refugees, saying that security forces lawfully suppressed Muslim militants in Rakhine.

Government spokesman Zaw Htay told Reuters on Friday that Myanmar did not tolerate human rights abuses, and had set up a commission of inquiry that included two veteran international diplomats to look into the Rakhine crisis.

International pressure on Myanmar has been growing, however. U.N.-mandated investigators are set to publish a report on the crisis on Monday and the United Nations Security Council will hold a briefing on Myanmar on Tuesday.

In a statement ahead of the anniversary, 132 sitting parliamentarians from five other countries in Southeast Asia issued a statement calling for Myanmar officials to face trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC). (Reuters)

Egypt Says No Faults in Hotel Room of UK Couple Who Died

HURGHADA (Egypt) - Engineers have found no fault in the air conditioning unit or any other equipment in the Egyptian hotel room of a British couple on holiday who died within hours of each other, the public prosecutor said Saturday.

Tour operator Thomas Cook has moved all its customers from the hotel in the Red Sea resort of Hurghada after the couple died in what their daughter on Friday called "suspicious" circumstances.

The company said it was unclear what had caused the deaths on Tuesday of the Britons, identified as 69-year-old John and Susan Cooper, 63, from Burnley in northern England.

Experts from the engineering faculty of Ganoub el-Wadi University were called in to inspect the room at the plush Steigenberger Aqua Magic Hotel, Egypt's public prosecutor said in a statement.

"They examined and carefully checked all devices present in the room, especially the air conditioning," which British media have said could have resulted in carbon monoxide poisoning through a gas leak, it said.

"The committee (of experts) documented in its report that all the appliances were safe and that no leakages or any poisonous or dangerous gases were present".

The prosecutor's office added that it was still awaiting the forensics' report of samples taken from the couple.

A medical source in Hurghada told AFP that the bodies were being kept in a local hospital and doctors were waiting for authorisation from prosecutors to release them to relatives or UK diplomats.

Investigators from the local prosecutor's office have already examined both bodies and the couple's hotel room and found nothing abnormal, a judicial source said Friday. (AFP)