

**(1) Ghani Wants...**

supported those who got high marks. The outstanding candidates were awarded scholarships. Tahmina Painda, who obtained highest marks in this year's entry test, also spoke at the meeting and thanked the president for his support. She said the young generation needed to be on top wherever they worked.

President Ghani said: "I had promised you transparency in the entry test and we prevented interference in this important process. It is our common responsibility to ensure transparency in every process."

Ghani added: "The young generation should think about the wellbeing of their country, know Afghanistan better and improve others' lives by using their educational skills."

Ghani said the youth, representing Afghanistan, had the ownership of this country. They should get advantage of the current resources they had inside and outside the country to boost their educational skills, he concluded. (Pajhwok)

**(2) Russia, Tajikistan...**

The air attack followed a clash between gunmen and Tajik border guards in Durqad district of Takhar province, two Afghan officials said. Khalil Asir, a spokesman for Takhar provincial police, said eight Taliban were killed and six wounded in the air strike after a clash in which two Tajik border guards were killed.

"It was not clear if it was a Russian or Tajik aircraft," he said.

Jawed Hejri, spokesman for Takhar provincial governor, also said it was not clear where the aircraft came from but he said the six people killed in the clash with Tajik border forces were drug smugglers. An Afghan defense ministry spokesman declined to make any immediate comment.

A spokesman for Tajik border guards in Dushanbe said Tajikistan had not carried out any bombing and did not confirm the death of two border guards.

However, the official, who declined to be identified, said three Tajik forestry workers had been attacked by intruders from Afghanistan. Two were killed while the third escaped. The official declined to give any more details.

Russia said its military aircraft had not conducted any operations near Afghanistan's border with Tajikistan, the RIA news agency cited the defense ministry as saying.

Much of the porous Afghan-Tajik border is in mountains and difficult for Tajik authorities to police.

Afghan government officials say Russian forces, including aircraft, help Tajikistan with security against the Taliban and other militant groups. At the same time, drugs from Afghanistan are smuggled to the outside world through Tajikistan.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said there had been a clash, and an air attack, but it was between drug smugglers and Tajik border guards and the aircraft bombed a forested area used by smugglers.

"Taliban fighters have no permission to clash with neighbor countries," he said.

Lieutenant-Colonel Martin O'Donnell, a spokesman for U.S. forces in Afghanistan, said U.S. forces did not conduct any strikes in the area.

A retired Afghan air force general, Atiqullah Amarkhel, said those responsible for the air attack should be identified.

"Afghanistan has no control over its air space due to a lack of facilities. U.S. forces should follow up the case," he said. (Reuters)

**(3) Ready to...**

praised the government's efforts at preventing smuggling of products. President Ashraf Ghani termed industrialists' role in the country's development as important and hailed their efforts.

"The government is ready for all kind of support to see the industry improving and there is a special program in this regard," the statement quoted Ghani as saying.

The president asked the industrialists to invest in the wind and solar energy as well as in textile and said the government was ready to give investors land and park for producing solar energy.

He said the uniform of the Afghan army should be made from domestic textile.

On the other hand, Ghani said: "Prevention of illegal trafficking of goods is a priority, we have already controlled illegal trafficking at Torkham port, the government will also try to prevent it on all routes." (Pajhwok)

**(4) \$8.1m Japanese...**

The contribution will target 5.2 million beneficiaries - 2.1 million pregnant women and 3.1 million children under two years of age - and their respective families. Adele Khodr said: "UNICEF values the partnership with the government of Japan and the sustained support to children in need, especially within a protracted context such as Afghanistan."

"Continued investment in Afghanistan's children, especially the most vulnerable is a key building block for the future stability and development of this country," she stressed. Ambassador Suzuka remarked: "One aspect of Japan's development policy is promotion of improvement of the public health system, especially for women. This system continues for more than 70 years in Japan and has now been expanded in many parts of the world."

"This handbook is a collection of information that highlights the health of children. The mothers become happy whenever looks at the handbook and see the healthy growth of their children at growing stage and afterwards. Now it's time for Afghanistan to be distributed through their relevant authorities."

"Although, it is important, of course, the distribution of the handbook itself does not guarantee the health of the mothers and healthy growth of the children. It is essential to have a good public health network, access to health facilities and the cooperation of public health personnel. I hope that the handbook will be used better in Afghanistan and further developed." (Pajhwok)

**(5) Uzbek FM...**

previously agreed upon and on how to bolster Afghan and the Uzbek economies and the regional economy," the statement read.

In return, Kamilov said that his country stands with the Afghan government regarding the Afghan-owned peace process in light of the Tashkent conference and Kabul Process conference.

Ghani thanked the Uzbek leadership for supporting the Afghan-led peace process.

Ghani also stressed the need for Afghanistan-Uzbekistan's long-term cooperation agreement to be finalized as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, Abdullah's office said in a statement that Afghanistan strongly values the expansion of trade relations between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan.

Abdullah said that Afghanistan and Uzbekistan are bound by an historic relationship and said that the two countries are ready to cooperate over strengthening ties and working for regional peace and sta-

bility.

Kamilov said that peace in Afghanistan is in the interests of the entire region.

The two sides also exchanged views on the peace process, efforts by regional countries towards peace and on infrastructure development.

In December, Ghani and his Uzbek counterpart, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, signed a bilateral cooperation agreement in Tashkent based on which the two countries agreed to expand their bilateral, economic and transit relations.

Afghan and Uzbek officials also signed more than 20 agreements which include economic, transit, security, electricity, agriculture, health and higher education cooperation between the two countries. (Tolo news)

**(6) Abdullah Praises...**

"Security officials must be held accountable," Abdullah said.

Immediately after President Ashraf Ghani accepted Atmar's resignation on Saturday, the Presidential Palace announced that Hamdulah Mohib would take over as new NSA.

Government has not yet said what led to Atmar stepping down, but in his resignation letter the former NSA said his decision was due to "serious differences over policies and approaches at the top level of government."

He said he differed in opinion "when it comes to national unity, national consensus, peace and security political management, electoral affairs, good governance and regional affairs."

Atmar also stated that "because of my differences of these things in recent months I am stepping down because we haven't reached a consensus."

Atmar, 49, was appointed to the position when the National Unity Government was established in 2014 and signed the Bilateral Security Agreement between Afghanistan and the US in the same year.

On Saturday night, officials said that Ghani had meanwhile called for the resignation of his other top three security chiefs - Wais Ahmad Barmak, Minister of Interior; Masoum Stanikzai, the National Directorate of Security (NDS) chief; and Tariq Shah Bahrami, the Defense Minister.

However, early Sunday Ghani's office issued a statement that the president had rejected their resignations and ordered them to continue their work.

During Monday's meeting, Abdullah also confirmed the death of Daesh leader in Afghanistan Abu Sayed Orakzai, also known as Sad Arhabi.

Orakzai was killed in an airstrike on Saturday night in Nangarhar province.

Abdullah said this would help improve security in the country.

"This guy was responsible for most of the violence in Nangarhar, Kabul and other parts of the country and his death is a good step for security of the people," Abdullah said.

Abdullah also rejected claims by Russia that unidentified helicopters are delivering weapons to Taliban and Daesh fighters in Afghanistan. "These days, again, I heard (claims) that helicopters are supplying Daesh fighters which is completely baseless," Abdullah said.

On Election:

On the election Abdullah said that as the CEO of National Unity Government "I assure the people that our full commitment is to maintain the system and hold elections and until elections are held, no issue in this case will affect the NUG's functions," said Abdullah.

On Peace And Moscow Peace Conference:

Abdullah also thanked countries

that are paving the way for Afghanistan's peace, but added that the process must be Afghan-led and Afghan-owned.

He said: "You all know about the stance of Afghanistan regarding Moscow peace conference on Afghanistan."

"The sovereignty of the peace process should not be questioned; the sovereignty must be with Afghanistan's people and government must take the lead with such efforts," Abdullah added.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) on Wednesday said the Afghan government will not participate in the upcoming peace meeting on Afghanistan in the Russian capital Moscow in early September. The ministry said government firmly believes in intra-Afghan dialogue.

According to officials, the Kabul government has not received a formal invitation to attend the talks so far. (Tolo news)

**(7) Conflict Displaces...**

fled home along with his eight family members is now living in Faizabad city.

"The Taliban would not only ask us to provide them food and clothes but they also forced families to pay 10,000 afghanis each. If anyone refused to pay the money, the Taliban would cut their hands. So we left our homes," he said.

He said all residents of Arghanj Khwa district requested the government to clear their areas from militants and recruit their men in Afghan security forces.

Naik Mohammad Nazari, Badakhshan governor's spokesman, said that the governor had asked charity organizations and relevant government departments to survey the displaced families from Arghanj Khwa and provide them with humanitarian assistance.

"Security organs would launch a clearing operation in areas from where families have been displaced to ensure security and facilitate their return," he said.

Abdul Wahid Tebi, the provincial refugee and repatriation director, said a team has been tasked with surveying the Arghanj Khwa displaced families.

He said assistance to the displaced families would be delivered in one week after the survey was completed. (Pajhwok)

**(8) Afghanistan...**

spin star.

"He's a very good bowler. Come the end of the week and if he hasn't had a very successful week, then I think we'll have had a very good week." (Tolo news)

**(9) Nangarhar Public...**

could not control such a small area, how they would be able to control security situation during the upcoming elections.

He urged security forces to explain the recent attack on the protesters because it took place in an area where two check-posts exist.

His deputy Obaidullah Shinwari expressed similar views and said if security forces could not protect a small gathering, how they would protect large public gathering as part of electioneering.

However, Attaullah Khoyani, the governor's spokesman, told Pajhwok that measures had been taken to ensure security during the elections. He said the elections would be held under full security measures.

Khogyani said the bomb attack on the protestors was being investigated and the probe's details would be shared the people later. (Pajhwok)

**(10) Taliban in...**

between officials of the battalion and the Taliban by mediation of tribal elders for withdrawal of the government forces and handing

over the district to the rebels.

Gen. Amanullah Mubeen, commander of 109th Shaheen Corps in the north, said the Ghormach district previously belonged to Badghis province and was temporarily included in Faryab province during Hamid Karzai government "Now it has been decided that the district's security should be handed over to the Zafar Military Corps and current security forces would go to Faryab."

The Ghormach district changed hands several times last year.

Faryab Governor Naqibullah Faiq said around 1,000 Afghan forces have been killed over the past three years in Ghormach district.

Meanwhile, civil society activists welcomed the withdrawal of the Afghan forces from the troubled district. (Pajhwok)

### Russia Postpones Peace Talks with Taliban: Afghan President

KABUL - Russia has agreed to postpone multilateral peace talks with the Taliban, a week after the insurgents accepted an invitation to go to Moscow for a Sept. 4 summit, the office of the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said on Monday.

Russia invited 12 countries and the Taliban to Moscow for peace talks next month. But though the Taliban had accepted the invitation, Kabul turned it down on the grounds that peace talks with the insurgent group must be led by Afghanistan. Ghani spoke with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov "to iron out the differences and ensure talks with the Taliban happen in presence of the Afghan government," a senior Ghani official told Reuters. Lavrov assured Ghani that the summit dates "will be changed to ensure Afghanistan's participation," the official said.

"A decision has been made to postpone the Moscow meeting for more preparation and to make it effective so that Afghan and Russian governments together will manage and host the meeting," Ghani said in a tweet.

The United States had also declined to attend the Sept. 4 event. (Reuters)

### Iran's Rouhani Asks Europe for Guarantees on Banking Channels and Oil Sales

TEHRAN - Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on Monday urged the remaining signatories to its 2015 nuclear agreement to act to save the pact, though France's leader called again for broader talks on Tehran's missile program and its role in the Middle East region.

In a phone call to French President Emmanuel Macron, Rouhani said Iran wanted the Europeans to give guarantees on banking channels and oil sales as well as in the field of insurance and transportation, according to the state-run Iranian news agency IRNA.

"Iran has acted upon all its promises in the nuclear agreement and, with attention to the one-sided withdrawal of America ... expects the remaining partners to operate their programs more quickly and transparently," Rouhani was quoted as saying.

Rouhani was speaking in the light of U.S. sanctions re-imposed by Washington after President Donald Trump pulled out of a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers in May.

Macron reiterated France's commitment to maintaining the accord, a remark aimed at soothing Tehran.

But he repeated his earlier calls for broader discussions with all relevant parties that would include Iran's nuclear program after 2025, its ballistics program and its influence in the wider Middle East region. (Reuters)