

(1) HPC Sets No ...

their support to the peace process." He said the promotion of the peace process by Afghanistan and Pakistan media will change things in the region. "We had a discussion with Pakistani journalists who visited Kabul (this week) and talked about the peace process and their role in it," he said. Last month, Khalili, traveled to Indonesia where he held discussions with high-ranking Indonesian officials, including President Joko Widodo, on the peace process in Afghanistan. Khalili said the Indonesian government is interested in helping the Afghan peace process to end the war in the country.

"Indonesia was never involved in the regional conflicts and the Indonesian religious scholars have announced their support to the Afghan peace process and want to play their role to constitute a regional consensus of religious scholars," the High Peace Council's chief said.

"The Indonesians want to put an end to the ongoing war in Afghanistan and bring stability," he added.

At the same event, Akram Khpulwak, head of the secretariat of the High Peace Council, said they are ready to open talks with the Taliban "through whatever mechanism they suggest".

"We hope Taliban gives a positive response to the call for peace. No one thinks war is a solution to the problem in Afghanistan," Khpulwak said.

The HPC is optimistic that Indonesia will share its experience for peace with Afghanistan as the country itself has faced major ups and downs in search for peace. (Tolonews)

(2) Pakistani Envoy ...

Afghanistan," he said, adding there was a sense in Pakistan that India was also using Afghanistan to create a double squeeze against Pakistan.

India, he claimed, had "very little interest" in stabilizing Afghanistan. Chaudhry said the situation in Afghanistan was not good. Security had deteriorated by all accounts, he pointed out. "The situation, unfortunately, in Afghanistan is not that optimistic in my view. I think, the security situation has deteriorated and it has emerged as a singular most challenge for Pakistan as well," he said.

Afghanistan, he continued, had emerged as a prime reason for differences between the US and Pakistan. "It is ironical, because we both see Afghanistan situation with objectives which are similar; although the approaches are different."

Pakistan wanted to see stability in Afghanistan because it had suffered the most when the Soviets left, he argued. Similarly, the US also says it wants to stabilize Afghanistan and would not like to leave it in a state that prevailed before 9/11. (Pajhwok)

(3) Existing ID ...

She added the current available Tazkera cards would be used in voters' registration process.

She was addressing the third National Election Summit attended by representatives from political parties, election watchdogs, experts and civil society activists.

Badghisi hoped the people of Afghanistan, government, political parties and international community would welcome the new strategy.

The IEC had earlier announced it would use technology in voters' registration and identification process for upcoming Wolesi Jirga and District Councils elections in order to prevent fraud.

The acting IEC head said eligible voters would be registered at specific voter registration centres and they would cast their votes at particular centres on the election day.

IEC spokesman Abdul Dadai Sayyad said the Population Registration Authority had distributed 10 million tazkera and work on preparing voter lists had been started.

Without naming anyone, he said some people were trying to conspire against the IEC for their personal advantage.

Yousuf Rashid, head of the Free and Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan (FEFA), work on creation of voter lists as vital.

However, he warned time was running out for the election commission as millions might be unable to vote or the

elections might be deferred. (Pajhwok)

(4) Elections May...

Voters' registration will take place in three phases, with the first beginning from March 26 and reaching completion on April 25, 2018.

The second phase would start in district centers from May 5, 2018 to May 24. The third and final phase will begin in villages from June 5, 2018 and come to an end on June 14.

Employment of regional heads, deputies and other staff members of the election commissions will start from December 1, 2017 to March 2, 2018.

Based on this schedule, all processes for election preparations would be completed until August 14, 2018.

Meanwhile, Transparent Election Foundation of Afghanistan (TEEFA) Chief Executive Yousuf Rashid called any change in the poll timetable a matter of concern.

"This schedule shows the date for holding elections would be changed. It's debatable why the Independent Election Commission (IEC) secretly plans to delay the elections," he remarked.

He said preparing the list of voters was also important and the IEC should have started the registration process. Rashid feared that millions of people might be unable to vote.

Jandad Spin Ghar, FEFA head, said the date previously announced by the IEC was in contradiction with the fresh schedule. He added the possible delay would create problems.

However, the commission said the schedule drawn up by the panel's technical team was not yet final.

Abdul Badea Sayyad, IEC spokesman, told Pajhwok Afghan News: "This draft has been prepared by our technical experts. But a final decision it is yet to be taken."

He said the IEC had decided to register voter names based on their paper identity cards and a memorandum of understanding had also been signed with the population registration department. (Pajhwok)

(5) US Assured ...

that the US had assured Pakistan that there will be no military intervention by India in Afghanistan.

Pakistan has repeatedly expressed its serious concerns regarding India's role in Afghanistan to the US and Afghan leadership, according to reports.

In September Mattis visited New Delhi and his Indian counterpart had said that India has no intention to send its troops to Afghanistan and that the country was increasing economic relations with Afghanistan to assist the war-torn country.

Pakistan's Express Tribune also reported that the sources said that the issue of India's role in Afghanistan remained top of the agenda for Pakistan during the visit of Mattis, while the United States asked Pakistan to act against the Haqqani network and other elements targeting the US and NATO forces in Afghanistan.

Mattis told Pakistani officials that the US was ready to play its role in addressing Pakistan's reservations. "We are not putting forward any demands to Pakistan, but we want to work together," the report said. (Tolonews)

(6) Political Talks ...

During the visit, in addition to aspects of bilateral cooperation, issues of regional and international importance, in particular, countering terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking, as well as strengthening security in Central Asia were considered. (Trend)

(7) US Support ...

Atmar, National Directorate of Security Chief Mohammad Masoom Stanekzai, Secretary General of the High Peace Council Akram Khpulwak, the statement said.

The visiting US diplomat discuss issues of mutual importance and bilateral cooperation. Ambassador Wells also met with Resolute Support Commander General John W. Nicholson, NATO Senior Civilian Representative Ambassador Zimmermann, and other Coalition partners.

In addition, she hosted a meeting with Independent Election Commission commissioners and met separately with leading

Afghan civil society figures.

During her visit, Ambassador Wells underscored U.S. support for Afghanistan's

continued economic and political development, the holding of timely and credible elections, as well as efforts to bring peace, security, and stability to the country and the region as part of the U.S. South Asia strategy. (Pajhwok)

(8) Respiratory Diseases ...

Musa Qane said.

A Kabul resident, Nargis, on Tuesday had brought her baby to the hospital and said all of her six children have been infected with microbes.

"One part of the baby's lung has been infected with microbes. It is because of the weather and when he breathes the polluted air his illness becomes serious," said Nargis.

The National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) meanwhile said their recent findings show that the suspended particles have decreased by 500ppm (parts per million) in part of Kabul city, compared to last year.

"In the last years, there have been a lot of suspended particles in the air. In every cubic meter of air, there were up to 1 500 suspended particles. But our reports show that, based on examinations that were done two days ago, the suspended particles are between 400 and 500 per cubic meter of air," NEPA deputy head Abdul Wali Modaqiq said.

NEPA officials said they have many plans on hand to decrease air pollution in Kabul city. In cooperation with Kabul municipality, the NEPA says it has started an assessment on cars and will ban the old cars in the city to prevent air pollution. (Tolonews)

(9) SCO Countries ...

Through the exercise, SCO members increased trust and improved counter-terrorism cooperation, said Shi Jun, vice minister of public security, at the drill.

It has been the first joint anti-terrorism drill attended by eight members since India and Pakistan joined the SCO in June, said Yevgeniy Sysoyev, director of the SCO RATS Executive Committee. At the drill, SCO members displayed their resolve and ability to act against terrorism, separatism and extremism, which was of great significance for the region to actively respond to new challenges, Sysoyev said. (Xinhua)

(10) Residents As

of the Lashkargah City are still under threat by the Taliban and that the group continues to threaten the outskirts of the city."The situation in Helmand is critical. It has been for the past 16 years. Helmand residents have sacrificed a lot. They were deprived of education, particularly in the northern parts of the province. They suffered economic losses and they lost their agricultural lands," said Abdulhaq Zwakman, a civil society activist.

"The remote districts in Helmand have been under control of Taliban for the past 16 or 17 years. Nawzad, Musa Qala and Washir district were under control of the government for a very short time. The northern districts in the province are deprived of education and they have zero access to healthcare services," said Abdul Wali Patiyal, a civil society activist in the province.

According to Helmand police, districts of the province under government's control are also faced with serious threats.

"There are threats in all districts (in Helmand), but to suppress the threats, we the require plans," Helmand Police Chief Gen. Abdul Gafar Safi told TOLONews. "We will conduct separate operations in every district. Our only goal is to remove threats to Helmand." (Tolonews)

(11) Governor Rules...

services at the center of the districts. Nuristan Governor said dozens of midwives completed the training courses, and others were getting trainings. He reiterated that Nooristan was a poppy free province and there were no addicts in that province

Highways in the province were currently one of the safest roads in the country, he added. (Pajhwok)

(12) Afghan Peace ...

Mattis emphasized the vital role that Pakistan can play in working with the United States and others to facilitate

a peace process in Afghanistan that brings stability and security to the region.

"The Secretary reiterated that Pakistan must redouble its efforts to confront militants and terrorists operating within the country," he said.

In the meantime, the Taliban group has so far rejected to participate in any form of reconciliation process.

On the other hand the commander of the US forces and the NATO Resolute Support Mission General John Nicholson has warned the group that it cannot win on the battlefield.

Speaking to reporters in Pentagon last week, Gen. Nicholson said pressures on Taliban, Haqqani network, and their enablers will rise in a bid to force the militants to start talks for negotiated settlement.

According to Gen. Nicholson, Afghanistan and the coalition will use three forms of pressure to make this happen, he added: military pressure, diplomatic pressure and social pressure.

"In the face of this pressure, the Taliban cannot win," Nicholson said. "Their choices are to reconcile, live in irrelevance, or die." (KP)

(13) Afs 1.5b Projects ...

on the project, which would help improve security.

Naeemi said half of Laghman's people would be directly or indirectly benefited by completion of these projects.

"We invited tribal leaders and civil society activists from Laghman and Nangarhar to this ceremony to spread a positive view of Laghman." He called media participation in this regard as significant.

The governor emphasized on protection of the projects and urged communities to take care of the schemes.

Gul Ahmad, a resident of Mehtharlam, said construction and reconstruction affairs had recently improved in Laghman.

Imranullah Khanjar, a civil society activist, expressed happiness and said the implementation of the projects would not only add beauty to the province, but also create jobs for thousands of youth.

Another civil activist Khan Mohammad Omarzia said development projects had washed out the past insecure image of the province from his mind. (Pajhwok)

(14) NATO, US Confirm ...

offensives unveiled the strength of Special Forces and we will continue our cooperation with them," he said.

Several commanders had been killed by the Special Forces including the group commander Mullah Shawali Aka, in the Musa Qala district of Helmand province.

On the other hand, US Secretary of Defense James Mattis also verified the killing of the senior Al-Qaeda leader in Afghanistan.

However, Taliban rejected the claims. Zabihullah Mujahid, the group's spokesman, said no operations had been carried out in Ghazni, Zabul and Paktia. (Pajhwok)

(15) Ghani Awarded ...

up by worthy ancestors, said President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani.

This university is one of the largest higher education institutions of our country. Seven thousand students and graduate students have been studying at eight faculties of the university.

The president left a note in the Book of honorable guests of the university. (Pajhwok)

(16) Uzbekistan Donates ...

between Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Afghan President Ashraf Gani on Dec.5. (Trend)

(17) Pakistan to ...

with the refugees.

He said an agreement was also signed during the meeting, based on which Pakistan agreed to extend Afghan refugees' stay in that country until December 31, 2018.

Under the previous agreement, Afghans stay in Pakistan would end at the end of December 2017.

Miakhel said UNHCR provided enough assistance to Afghan refugees who voluntarily returned to their country last year. However, the UN agency reduced its aid and thus the number of returnees decreased.

He said the Afghan delegation had

asked UNHCR to increase back its assistance with Afghan refugees based in Pakistan, so they could return to their country in spring season. (Pajhwok)

(18) 'Maqur Police ...

senior government leaders about the issue.

Naimullah, another protestor, said besides murder cases, the district police chief was also involved in drug smuggling.

"This commander is a robber and a gangster, he takes money from people by force, he is also involved in gamble," he said.

The protestors asked the government to remove the police chief and replace him with an honest officer.

They warned of blocking the Kabul-Kandahar highway again if their demand was not responded.

Pajhwok tried to contact Maqur police chief for his comment about protestors' allegations, but failed.

However, Ghazni provincial police chief said he would investigate protestors' claims and then decide about the district police official. (Pajhwok)

(19) British Govt...

the UK in 2015. Husseinkhel told the daily: "I tried to follow the rules. I waited in Austria for a year, but they told me I couldn't get asylum there because they aren't part of NATO..."

"So I decided to come to the UK, because they know me better and I worked for them. I saved British lives. But the Home Office doesn't care. I feel betrayed," the Afghan added. (Pajhwok)

(20) Carpet Industry ...

province," said Nematullah Temori, spokesman for Kunduz governor. Factory owners say the Iranian, Turkmen, Belgium and Turkish carpets have dominated the local markets. Despite their high prices, they have more buyers than for Afghan products. (Tolonews)

Donors Set to Finance Pul-e-Khumri-Surkhan Power Project

KABUL - Donors will be willing to finance the establishment of the Pul-e-Khumri-Surkhan Power Project within the framework of the Afghanistan reconstruction fund, officials of Asian Development Bank (ADB) said on Wednesday.

This follows after Afghan and Uzbekistan officials signed more than 20 agreements which include economic, transit, security, electricity, agriculture, health and higher education cooperation between the two countries, including the Pul-e-Khumri-Surkhan power project, a project which will inject over a 1000 megawatt of electricity into the Afghan power grid.

President Ashraf Ghani's second vice president, Mohammad Sarwar Danish, has meanwhile said that the new agreements signed between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan will open a new chapter of the relationship between the two neighbors.

Ghani and his Uzbek counterpart, Shaat Mirziyoyev, signed a bilateral cooperation agreement in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, on Tuesday.

"You know that Afghanistan is a trade corridor, and among the economic corridors, central Asia is one where Uzbekistan has a lot of potential. The government managed to pursue effective diplomacy and succeeded in opening a strong and effective chapter of relations with Uzbekistan," said deputy presidential spokesman, Dawa Khan Menapal. "Currently the needs of Afghanistan's infrastructure are much higher than the financing available to the ADB. The ADB administers the Afghanistan Infrastructure Trust Fund AITF and so the fund is a mechanism where other financiers and the private sector can invest money to help implement it," Samuel Tumiwa, ADB Country Director for Afghanistan In the line with the new agreements signed between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan on trade and commercial relations, the establishment of an air transit corridor between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan will help Afghanistan to get access to Chinese markets. (Tolonews)