

### (1) Ceasefire on...

he attempted to enter the secure conference area.

"We want to go to the dialogue but they are not letting us," Stanikzai said to an officer who replied, "we are not joking with you, stop shouting at us."

But he and the rest of the Taliban delegation, which included Suhail Shaheen, the group's Doha office spokesman, took their seats in the expansive ballroom shortly before the talks began at 0630 GMT.

'Allow women to work'

The Qatar foreign ministry special envoy on counter-terrorism Mutlaq al-Qahtani said: "We are so happy to see all our Afghan brothers and sisters meeting here in Doha.

"We want a roadmap for the future of Afghanistan," he told reporters after the hosts left the Afghan parties with mediators to begin discussions.

The so-called intra-Afghan dialogue follows six days of direct US-Taliban talks that have been put on hold for the two-day Afghan conference and are set to resume on Tuesday, according to both sides.

Delegate Asila Wardak, a member of the High Peace Council established by former president Hamid Karzai to engage with Taliban elements, told AFP news agency that "everybody is emphasising on a ceasefire".

Wardak added that Stanikzai spoke about the Taliban's position on "women's role, economic development, (and) the role of minorities."

He mentioned they "will allow women to work, to go to school and study - based on Afghan culture and Islamic values," she said.

US lead negotiator Zalmay Khalilzad said on Saturday that the latest round of US-Taliban talks "have been the most productive of the rounds we've had with the Talibs".

"Substantive discussions, negotiations, and progress" had been made on terrorism, foreign troop withdrawal, inter-Afghan dialogue, and ceasefire, he said.

Shaheen, the Taliban spokesman in Qatar, said they were "happy with progress... We have not faced any obstacles yet." Leading figures are attending the separate intra-Afghan talks, including political heavyweights, government officials, at least six women and other Afghan stakeholders.

The United States is not participating directly in the two-day summit although Khalilzad did pass by the hall hosting the Afghan talks.

"The aim is to get to negotiate to agree on terms for peace among themselves," he told AFP.

The Taliban, who have steadfastly refused to negotiate with the government of President Ashraf Ghani, have stressed that those attending are only doing so in a "personal capacity."

Ghani's administration, which the Taliban consider a puppet regime, has also been excluded from the direct US-Taliban talks.

Sunday's gathering is the third such meeting following similar summits in Moscow in February and May.

Unresolved issues

The first encounter marked a historic breakthrough and saw the Taliban hear the opinions of the two women attendees before laying out their constitutional and political programme on live TV for the first time.

An agreement with the Taliban is expected to have two main points - a US withdrawal from Afghanistan and a commitment by the militants not to provide a base for terrorists, the main reason behind the US invasion nearly 18 years ago.

But the thorny issues of women's rights, power-sharing with the Taliban, the role of regional powers including Pakistan and India, and the fate of Ghani's administration remain unresolved.

The Taliban, believing they have the upper hand in the war, have kept up attacks even while talking to the United States and agreeing to the Afghan dialogue.

While the talks were continuing on Sunday, a Taliban car bomb in eastern Afghanistan killed at least 12 people and wounded scores more, officials said.

Despite the violence, both the Taliban and US have been positive about their engagement. (AFP)

### (2) ESG Calls on all...

signed, and regulations enacted by the IEC.

This must entail support and respect of the independent electoral bodies. All candidates must ensure a level playing field for one another and to the voters nationwide. It is imperative to a successful election that all electoral officials be given the independence they need without undue interference.

"We also call on candidates to refrain from using state resources or positions for electoral gain."

"We remind all stakeholders in the process - whether they reside in Kabul or in the remote districts and villages in the country - of the presidential decrees on non-interference of public officials and security forces in electoral affairs that were issued in February 2019."

All government officials are legally bound to separate their duties in government from campaigning or conducting themselves in a manner that would benefit specific candidates. The fight against electoral impunity needs to be stepped up: all individuals who violate the election law to be prosecuted and judged directly and in accordance with Afghan laws.

The Election Support Group calls on all actors - including candidates, their supporters and election officials - to commit publicly to holding themselves to the highest standards of conduct which the Afghan people deserve. (Pajhwok)

### (3) Great to see...

representatives from Qatar and Germany would deliver welcoming remarks. Syed Hamid Gelani, head of the Mahaz-i-Melli Political Party, told Pajhwok Afghan News that such meetings could generate hopes for peace and reconciliation in the country.

"In the past, people did not believe such meeting can take place, but I continued my efforts and was hopeful that this day would come," he said. (Pajhwok)

### (4) Henry Kerali...

Africa, East Asia, South Asia, and Europe and Central Asia.

Before joining the World Bank, Henry was a Professor at the University of Birmingham, England, specializing in the development of transport infrastructure. He holds a BSc (Eng.) degree from Makerere University, and MSc and PhD from the University of Birmingham, UK. About the World Bank activities in Afghanistan:

The World Bank Group's program in Afghanistan is currently governed by its Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for 2017-2020. The Bank also administers, on behalf of 34 donors, the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), the World Bank Group's largest single-country multi-donor trust fund.

The resources from the International Development Association (IDA), the World Bank Group's fund for the poorest countries, and ARTF underpin the Bank Group's long-term engagement and commitment to Afghanistan. Annual IDA and ARTF commitments to Afghanistan have been around \$200 million and \$900 million, respectively. The International Finance Corporation (IFC), the World Bank Group's private sector arm, aims to expand its support to Afghanistan from its current portfolio of \$54 million to a cumulative investment of about \$80 million over 2017-2020. The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), the Bank Group's political risk insurance arm, stands ready to provide additional support with a focus in the finance, manufacturing, agribusiness and services, and infrastructure sectors. (Pajhwok)

### (5) Qatar Intra...

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### (6) ACB Order...

That, ESPNcricinfo understands, wasn't the only occasion when Alam ran into trouble during the tournament - he was removed by the security from a hospitality suite during the India-Pakistan game in Manchester too.

While pulling up Alam, the ACB also suspended team manager Naved Sayem, while asking the board's disciplinary committee to conduct a probe into the Alam hotel incident and submit its report within a week. Alam was suspended as soon as the ACB decided to remove him from the World Cup squad - made official on June 27.

The latest development came at the ACB's annual general meeting, held in Kabul, today. "The disciplinary committee has already been assigned to carry out the investigation in the Alam incident and asked to submit the report in a week," Atif Mashal, an ACB board member, told ESPNcricinfo.

Mashal said Sayem was found guilty of not reporting the incident "properly". "He was found to hide things from the ACB. That is why it was decided to suspend him and investigate. As for the player (Alam), we will formalise the

sanction against him once the disciplinary committee submits its report."

It is understood that the ICC's anti-corruption unit (ACU) has concluded its investigation on Alam, finding him guilty of inappropriate behaviour, and has sent its report to the ACB to take action against the player.

Alam's last game in the World Cup was on June 22, against India, when Afghanistan fell short in their chase of India's 224 for 8 by 11 runs. He took a wicket and was then bowled for a duck. Incidentally, the team hotel where the alleged incident took place is inside Hampshire Bowl, where the Afghanistan squad was staying for their group matches against India and Bangladesh. It is believed that the ACU got the Afghanistan squad to assemble at the team hotel in Southampton on June 23 morning, but Alam wasn't present. He wasn't in his room either, and it emerged that he was with a relative in London. Alam is understood to have returned later in the day, but Phil Simmons, Afghanistan's head coach, suspended him for two matches for not being present at the ACU meeting. Alam was told he could not even participate in the practice sessions for those games. In the earlier game between India and Pakistan at Old Trafford, Alam turned up at the game unannounced and requested VIP access for himself and his friends. Using his player's accreditation pass, he made his way to one of the hospitality rooms and then refused to leave. When security was summoned, his friends left but Alam stayed. Eventually, however, security was called and he was removed.

Action against senior ACB officials too In an unconnected development, two senior ACB officials - acting chief executive Asadullah Khan and Dawlat Ahmadzai, former chief selector - who were found guilty of separate offences, are also going to be investigated by a panel comprising three board members, Mashal confirmed, saying that a "serious" decision had been taken on that front too.

Asadullah has been charged with breaching the ACB constitution and policies on various decisions he took after taking charge recently. Ahmadzai was pulled up for taking controversial decisions in squad selection for the World Cup. Ahmadzai, who was shifted to the junior selection panel midway into the World Cup, took controversial decision to replace Ashgar Afghan as the ODI captain with Gulbadin Naib, while also removing Afghan from the leadership of the Test and T20I teams. "A three-member committee comprising board members will conduct the investigation for the various breaches (by Asadullah and Ahmadzai)," Mashal said. (Pajhwok)

### (7) Zamina Who Lost 3...

about Bakht Zamina and he had assisted her with the help of traders some times.

"Bakht Zamina is not alone, there are families who have lost up to 12 members to this war but the government has been careless about them," he said. Ghazni governor's spokesman, Mohammad Arif Noori, told Pajhwok Afghan News that the government had the plan to assist all families of soldiers killed in war. "Some families did not receive help but most of them had received it, the aid distribution process is still ongoing," he said. (Pajhwok)

### (8) Washington Wants...

contribution could take forms such as providing air support, logistics, training, and technical assistance, the diplomat hinted.

Berlin joined the US-led anti-IS campaign in 2015, but stopped just short of sending boots on the ground. Their contribution was limited to providing air reconnaissance and in-flight refueling for other Western nations' flying sorties in Iraq and Syria. Separately, German Navy ships saw occasional deployments in the Eastern Mediterranean. Germany has generally been wary of a direct intervention in the Syrian crisis. In May of last year, Chancellor Angela Merkel assured the public that the Bundeswehr "will not participate in possible military actions" although it is ready to assist other allies. Over time, that stance has not changed much. However, the US continued to pile pressure on Germany by year's end, tasking Ambassador Jeffrey - a fluent German speaker and a career State Department official - with securing Berlin's consent to engage in the Syrian war.

Last month, he said that several coalition members will soon announce their decisions to backfill US ground troops leaving Syria. "There's something pending to look forward to. Very pending," he told Defense One. The diplomat did not reveal which countries he expected would provide

the troops, but said some of them may choose to participate "quietly," and "that's fine by us."

The US has a limited number of troops in Syria, where they entered without the consent of the government or a UN authorization. Most of them are occupying the 55-kilometer zone in southern Syria which at times lay close to IS-infiltrated parts of the country. Damascus has always maintained that the Western military presence in Syria is illegitimate, pledging to liberate "every inch" of the country from uninvited foreign troops. (RT)

### (9) UN Official...

and leverage complementary funding sources, from the African Development Bank's Africa50 Fund, to the African Union's Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa, and China's Belt and Road Initiative," Mohammed told African leaders at the opening session of the 12th Extraordinary Summit of the AU Heads of State and Government in Niamey, capital of Niger.

The continental free trade pact "will create jobs and contribute to technology transfer and the development of new skills; it will improve productive capacity and diversification, and it will increase African and foreign investment," she said. The AfCFTA "will bring the promise of trade-led economic growth closer to reality for Africa's entrepreneurs, industrialists, investors, innovators and service suppliers," Mohammed said. The pact is "a tool to unleash African innovation, drive growth, transform African economies and contribute to a prosperous, stable and peaceful African continent, as foreseen in both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," she said. The African free trade accord was launched on March 21 last year in Kigali, capital of Rwanda.

On Sunday, the AfCFTA's operational phase was official launched at the extraordinary AU summit. It came into force on May 30, after the deposit of the required minimum of 22 instruments of ratification by AU member states to the AU Commission.

Five more instruments of ratification have since been deposited, including Gabon and Equatorial Guinea, which deposited their respective instruments on Sunday, bringing the total number of countries that have deposited their AfCFTA ratification to the AU Commission to 27.

Also on Sunday, Nigeria and Benin signed the free trade pact, leaving Eritrea as the only member of the African Union that has not signed onto the historic accord. (Xinhua)

### (10) Affected, Not...

Far from abandoning the market, some U.S. companies are actually expanding their business presence in China, counting on the long-term growth of the Chinese market.

Dow Inc., a U.S. materials science giant that has been operating in China for 40 years, broke ground last month on a new silicone specialty resin line in Zhangjiagang City of eastern China's Jiangsu Province, one of the largest in the Asia Pacific, to meet growing needs for high-performance materials from segments including transportation, home and personal care and consumer electronics.

"China is not only a strategic market, manufacturing and innovation hub for Dow but also an important part of the international supply chain of Dow," said Dow CEO Jim Fitterling, who attended the groundbreaking ceremony.

For U.S. coffee giant Starbucks, China is its largest and fastest-growing international market. The Seattle-based coffee chain has planned an ambitious expansion in China by doubling its number of coffee shops to 6,000 by fiscal year 2022. "We are committed to long-term investment in China," said Kevin Johnson, Starbucks president and chief executive officer.

GREAT PLACE FOR INVESTMENT Many U.S. companies are seeking opportunities in China's huge domestic market, abundant human resources, dynamic industrial eco-system and consumption upgrade.

"Our surveys have consistently told us that American companies view China as one of their top markets for growth. For global companies, the China market is indispensable," said Ker Gibbs, president of AmCham Shanghai.

U.S. industrial conglomerate General Electric Co. (GE), one of the first multinationals to enter the Chinese market over a century ago, sees tremendous opportunities provided by China's economic restructuring and high-quality development.

"China's national economic growth strategies, including urbanization, accessible healthcare, clean energy and Internet plus, have provided tremen-

dous opportunities for GE," Rachel Duan, President & CEO, GE Global Growth Markets, told Xinhua.

Duan noted that, over the years, GE has invested more than 1.2 billion U.S. dollars in Shanghai, its headquarter in China, benefiting from China's market vitality, industrial upgrade and preferential policies on capital, talent and land.

"China's determination to reform and open-up has given us confidence in expanding our business in China," said Duan, GE's first home-grown CEO in China.

For Dow CEO Jim Fitterling, he believes China's sustainable urbanization is a great opportunity for the company. "To support the 300 million people expected to move to cities in the next two decades, China will need to offer energy efficient and comfortable housing, advanced infrastructure and clean air and water -- several challenges which match Dow's product offerings," he said.

### A LAND OF INNOVATION

As a veteran businessman who has been living in China for years, Ker Gibbs said China is a very good place to do business and a great place for innovation.

"Anyone saying that China is not innovating is just not paying attention because there is a lot of innovation here, especially in technologies and mobile," said Ker Gibbs, president of AmCham Shanghai. In the meantime, U.S. firms are also innovating their business to adjust themselves to the Chinese market, developing the strategy of "In China, for China." "In China, for China" is a strategy to localize manufacturing and sourcing within China to mainly serve the China market. Such strategy constitutes a rational choice for many companies to insulate themselves from the effects of tariffs while maintaining their ability to pursue domestic market opportunities.

Starbucks Reserve Roastery Shanghai is the first Starbucks location in China to seamlessly integrate a real-time, in-store and online customer experience. Customers are invited to immerse themselves in the first Starbucks augmented reality (AR) experience, which is accessible through the custom-designed Shanghai Roastery digital web-app platform or on Alibaba's Taobao app, by simply pointing their mobile devices at key features around the Shanghai Roastery to bring to life information about the Starbucks bean-to-cup story. "Thanks to the elevated customer experience delivered by our over 53,000 partners, Starbucks is growing and innovating faster in China than anywhere else in the world," said Kevin Johnson, president and chief executive officer at Starbucks Coffee Company. Talking about China's economic prospect, Gibbs suggests China to further keep its market open and ease market access for global companies, adding that U.S. companies are investing behind the idea that China will rise and continue to rise. "In the business context, when we look at China's rise, we are not afraid of it; in fact, we are predicting it, and we are counting on it," he said. (Xinhua)

### (11) S. California...

state of emergency in the county on Saturday morning, asking the Office of Emergency Services to provide local government with assistance to the county.

The office shall ensure adequate state staffing to expedite disaster response and recovery efforts, he said.

Newsom also requested a presidential emergency declaration for federal assistance to offer aid to residents.

The governor said he has activated the State Operations Center in Mather, California, to its "highest level." The center is already working closely with state, federal and local emergency managers and first responders.

The California National Guard sent 200 troops, logistical support and aircraft after the 7.1-magnitude earthquake.

David Baldwin, major general of California Military Department, said the Pentagon had been notified, and the entire California Military Department was put on alert.

Multiple earthquakes in southern California left U.S. Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake "not mission capable," the base announced on Saturday.

Safety of personnel is currently the highest priority, said the base in its Facebook post. "Non essential active duty, drilling reservists, civilian employees, and dependents are authorized to evacuate to a radius of 100 miles (about 161 km) from safe haven Naval Base Ventura County."

The last time southern California saw a major quake was in 1999, when a magnitude-7.1 quake jolted the state in the Hector Mine area of the Mojave Desert. (Xinhua)