

### (1) Civilian Deaths...

But with heavy fighting seen across the country during the first half the year and repeated suicide attacks in Kabul and major provincial cities like Jalalabad, the report underlines the dire security situation facing Afghanistan.

It also pointed to increased activity by Islamic State, reflected in a doubling in casualties in Nangarhar, the eastern province whose capital is Jalalabad, where the militant group has conducted a series of attacks over recent months.

The main causes of casualties were ground engagements between security forces and militants, roadside bombs, as well as suicide and other so-called complex attacks, which caused 22 percent more casualties than in the same period last year.

Hundreds of civilians were killed in attacks on targets as diverse as Shi'ite shrines, offices of government ministries and aid groups, sports events and voter registration stations.

Fifty-two percent of the casualties from suicide and complex attacks were attributed to Islamic State, often known as Daesh, while 40 percent were attributed to the Taliban.

With parliamentary elections scheduled for October, there is concern about more violence as polling day approaches.

The Taliban, fighting to restore their version of strict Islamic law, have rejected President Ashraf Ghani's offer of peace talks, demanding that foreign forces leave Afghanistan.

Sunday's report said that the biggest cause of civilian casualties continued to be ground engagements between government forces and militant groups, with 360 deaths and 1,134 wounded. But it noted that these casualties had nonetheless declined by 18 percent.

At the same time, casualties from air strikes, which have risen sharply under the U.S. strategy of trying to force the Taliban to accept peace talks, went up by 52 percent, with 353 casualties including 149 dead and 204 wounded. (Reuters)

### (2) Afghan President...

exile Dostum has kept his formal title of vice president and his influence among the ethnic Uzbeks of northern Afghanistan has remained strong, fueled by growing enmity among the country's mix of different ethnic groups including Pashtuns and Persian-speaking Tajiks and Hazaras.

With parliamentary elections due in October ahead of the more important presidential vote next year, tensions have risen sharply as Afghanistan's political strongmen position themselves and the cracks in Ghani's unwieldy unity government widen.

On Saturday, a meeting of the main parties demanded that voter registrations be annulled because of concerns over electoral fraud, a demand Ghani angrily rejected, pledging the elections would go ahead as planned.

Although Dostum joined Ghani as one of two vice presidents in the national unity government formed after the disputed 2014 presidential election, he has always been an uncomfortable partner.

While in exile, he has formed a loose coalition with Atta Mohammad Noor, one of the leaders of the mainly Tajik Jamiati-Islami party and Mohammad Mohaqiq, a leader of the Hazara ethnic minority.

All three are veterans of decades of conflict in Afghanistan and bitter former rivals but for the moment they have set aside their rivalry to band together against what they see as Ghani's favoritism for his own Pashtun group. (Reuters)

### (3) Karzai...

Daesh or self-styled Islamic State group as example.

Karzai doubted the genuine intention of Afghanistan's western allies for combating terrorism because of "the emergence of new terrorist groups in Afghanistan while the US was present in Afghanistan." He said, "The emergence of Daesh in Afghanistan is a great question, concern and suspicion. Who brought Daesh to Afghanistan? How it has emerged while the NATO and the west were fully present there?" He further asked, "Has it fallen from the sky?"

He urged the US to reconsider its policy in Afghanistan.

Karzai also asked Pakistan to play more active role in addressing terrorism. In the forum, in which high delegates from Russia, Iran, Pakistan and India participated, Karzai said that "Pakistani people" suffered as much as Afghan people did as a result of terrorism pointing to the recent deadly terrorist attack in Baluchistan. "We in Afghanistan feel that Pakistan can do a lot more to address some of the issues, especially with regard to extremism and violent extremism and the use of it," he said.

Calling China and Afghanistan as "historic friends, close neighbors and strategic partners", Karzai appreciated China for its constructive role regarding Afghanistan's peace and stability and said that "China's support for peace in Afghanistan is fundamental." He also emphasized China's importance in the Quadrilateral Coordination Group consists of Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the US. "China's role in bringing peace in Afghanistan is imperative and one that we hope will be enhanced," he said.

At the end, he suggested China, Russia and India to "join hands in a collaborative exercise in adopting security mechanism" and address the three evils "terrorism, separatism and extremism" and "not wait for any outside force." (Outlook Afghanistan)

### (4) Ghani Assured...

for Afghanistan.

Zimmermann recalled that Afghan side talked about some of their efforts such the implementation of reforms and fight against corruption.

"The purpose of NATO presence in Afghanistan was to support Afghan security forces and create a strong environment for peace and reconciliation," he said.

He hailed Afghan government reform agenda and added that the eradication of corruption from the Ministry of Defence and other security institution was a major achievement.

When asked about upcoming polls, the NATO SCR said President Ghani assured NATO members during Brussels summit to conduct free fair and transparent election.

He, however, said there had been some challenges which could be eradicated with the support of NATO train and advise mission and Afghan government.

He said in the initial stages people dared to register as voter but not the number of registered voters crossed from over eight mil-

lion.

People now understood that election was not merely casting the vote but it was a very important process of a nation-building. When asked about peace process, Zimmermann said NATO fully supported the Afghan peace process.

He said the Taliban should understand they could not win it on the battlefield so they should join peace process. (Pajhwok)

### (5) Ghazni: IEC...

recruitment and training process for voter registration staff will begin on July 23 and run until July 27. Transportation of elections materials to polling stations will start on July 16 and conclude on July 27.

Filing of complains and their scrutiny, scheduled to begin on July 14, will continue until the 31st of August. The list of voters will be released in August.

The registration process for Wolesi Jirga and district council candidates will start on the 1st of Aug and run until the 14th the same month.

Collecting information about poll runners will start from the 1st of August and end on 17th. The preliminary list of candidates will be released on August 18. Complaints against the initial lists would be filed from August 18 to August 21.

Under the election law, evaluation of complaints against the initial list of candidates must take place within a month.

However, the commission says it considers reducing the period to 15 days for Ghazni. The IEC will have to reach an agreement on the issue with the complaints panel.

Withdrawal of nomination papers will start on August 18 and end on September 1. The final list of candidates will be announced on September 8. (Pajhwok)

### (6) Jawzjan Protestors...

week, protestors removed President Ashraf Ghani's portrait from the governor's office. This has since however been put back although government offices in the province remain closed.

"We have always said it and say it again that you can only prevent issues like this when you (central government) give the people their rights. We have no other option except to close down the Kabul-North highway after the president failed to bother to address the demands of millions of people over the past twelve days," said Qudratullah Watan, head of Junbish Youth Council. "We want peace, we want schools. You know that currently Daesh is in Darzab district and they are beheading people; the government should try to destroy Daesh instead of arresting Qaisari," said one protestor, Noor Mohammad.

The protestors accuse ARG of having a double standards policy and said government, instead of arresting Qaisari, should launch a crackdown on insurgents.

Qaisari was arrested about 12 days ago over claims that he had insulted security officials. Reports meanwhile indicate that about 20 of Qaisari's bodyguards were also arrested. However, seven are believed to have been released.

The seven were close aides to the police chief while Qaisari is a close aide to Dostum.

Qaisari's spokesman, Karim Rasa, who was also arrested but since released, said it is not clear why they were detained by security forces and that government needs to answer questions in this

regard.

Footage posted on social media shows Qaisari's men being mistreated and assaulted by government forces at the time of their arrest in Faryab on July 2. (Tolo news)

### (7) Ghani Reacts...

President Hamid Karzai and member of the Front for Security and Stability of Afghanistan Mohammad Younus Qanooni.

The participants of the meeting called on the government and the independent election commissions to invalidate the process for the registration of voters for the upcoming elections, bring changes in the elections system of the country, use the biometric system for the registration of the voters, and give more share to the political parties in the elections.

The leaders of the political parties and movements said the government must return with a positive feedback regarding their demands, warning that they would block the elections if case the government and election commission rejected their demands. (KP)

### (8) Taliban Impose...

schools but Education Director Nasrullah Zahid said they had received no such threat. All schools across the province remained open, he concluded. (Pajhwok)

### (9) At Least Seven...

who say the Western-backed government in Kabul is illegitimate, have so far rebuffed the appeal and insisted that international troops must leave Afghanistan for talks to begin. (Reuters)

### (10) 36 Armed...

casualties during the strikes, Noristani added.

Noristani did not give details about civilian or security forces casualties.

Taliban has not commented about the operation. (Tolo news)

### (11) Gunmen Set...

of the area, told Pajhwok the gunmen expelled the school's guard before setting alight the building.

He said flames continued to rise from the building till morning but district officials did not take any step to put out the blaze.

There was no immediate claimed of responsibility for the incident. (Pajhwok)

## High-Intensity Exercise May Help Teenagers Lower Heart Disease Risk

LONDON - Participating in high-intensity exercise can help teenagers drive down blood pressure, which may lead to a lower risk of developing heart disease later in life, according to a new study released by the University of Exeter.

To find out the correlation between heart disease and exercise, researchers at the Children's Health and Exercise Research Centre at the University of Exeter, recruited healthy male teenagers, most of whom are 13 to 15 years old. They underwent testing on four separate occasions across three weeks.

The results show that teenagers who participate in high-intensity exercise have lower blood pressure.

The fall in blood pressure of healthy teenagers may have a long-term clinical importance if translated to those with high blood pressure, as previously reported in adults.

Similarly, the blood pressure reducing effects of the exercise

could lead to better blood pressure control, particularly when young people face stressful situations, according to the study.

However, the study has some limitation, and benefits of high-intensity exercise need confirmation with further research, as the effects of exercise training on the control of blood pressure following exercise in teenagers remain to be seen, the researchers said. (Xinhua)

## Europeans Must Give Necessary Guarantees on JCPOA: Ayatollah Khamenei

TEHRAN - Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says European signatories to the nuclear deal with Iran, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), must provide Tehran with necessary guarantees about the continued implementation of the deal.

The Leader made the remarks in a meeting with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his cabinet in Tehran on Sunday. The meeting mostly focused on economic problems facing the country with Ayatollah Khamenei offering ways on how to overcome them. Ayatollah Khamenei noted that drawing up a "stable economic roadmap" was needed to solve the country's economic problems, emphasizing that solution of those problems must not be made conditional on the continuation of the JCPOA.

US President Donald Trump announced on May 8 that Washington was walking away from the nuclear agreement and that he planned to reinstate US nuclear sanctions on Iran and impose "the highest level" of economic bans on the Islamic Republic.

Under the JCPOA, Iran undertook to put limits on its nuclear program in exchange for the removal of nuclear-related sanctions imposed against Tehran. Since the US president pulled Washington out of the nuclear deal, European countries have been scrambling to ensure that Iran gets enough economic benefits to persuade it to stay in the deal. The remaining parties have vowed to stay in the accord. (Press TV)

## Iranian Karatekas Win Seven Medals in 15th Asian Karate Championships

TEHRAN - Iranian karate practitioners have managed to collect seven medals, including three gold ones, at the 15th edition of the Asian Karate Federation (AKF) Senior Championships in Jordan.

On Saturday, Majid Hassannia showed great punching, knee strikes as well as open-hand techniques in the final contest of the male kumite minus 55-kilogram weight class at the Prince Rashed Martial Arts Center of King Hussein Sports City in the Jordanian capital city of Amman, and overcame Saudi representative Saud al-Basher 6-2 to clinch the gold medal.

Saleh Abazari prevailed over his Japanese rival Hideyoshi Kagawa 8-0 in the male kumite over 84-kilogram category, and collected another gold medal for Iran.

Ali Asghar Asiabari, though, conceded defeat against his Jordanian opponent Bashar al-Najjar 4-6 and received the silver medal of male kumite minus 75-kilogram weight division.

Additionally, Madi Khodabakhsi managed to win a bronze medal in male kumite minus 84-kilogram section. (Press TV)