

(1) Islamic State...

against Mines, Afghanistan is one of the countries most affected by landmines and explosive remnants of war in the world and this same program said that humanitarian mine action requirements are as great now as they have been since the international intervention in 2001. (PL)

(2) Terrorism...

global terrorist networks Al Qaeda and ISIS, the second regional terrorist and third Pakistani Taliban, he explained.

The terrorist tried this year to gain territory, weaken the government and its communication system, disrupt elections and spill over into Central Asia and other neighbours of Afghanistan. However, he added, they failed to achieve their objectives.

"We would work closely with our international partners, including Resolute Support (RS) mission while pursuing a peace strategy with Afghan networks," he further wrote.

Management and development of forces, training and education, increasing combat power, unity of command, counter-corruption and respect for human rights were major areas of reforms, the official concluded. (Pajhwok)

(3) UNAMA Chief...

party of Afghanistan and Junbish-e-Millilislami Afghanistan, Hizb-e-Islami and Hizb-e-Wahdat-e-Islami are among the mainstream Afghan political parties which have warned that the country another crisis will emerge if fake ID cards are used in the elections.

These parties believe almost fifty percent of those registered are ghost voters.

They have suggested that the voter registration process must be restarted and that a biometric system is implemented.

Supporters of Junbish-e-i-Millilislami have also closed down five site offices of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) - in Faryab, Jawzjan, Takhar, Sar-e-Pul and Samangan provinces.

"Extralegal actions are creating a crisis and it impacts on the remaining portion of the process. We have the presidential elections after the parliamentary elections, if we fail to implement the process in an appropriate way, certainly there would be another crisis ahead for Afghanistan and such an issue would have serious implications on Afghanistan's political stability," said Bashir Ahmad Tayyanj, the spokesman for Junbish-e-Millilislami Afghanistan. Hizb-e-Islami leader Gulbuddin-Hekmatyar on Tuesday said the voter registration process was being rigged and that there are more than five million ghost voters.

Hekmatyar rejected the IEC's tally that almost nine million people have registered to vote in the October parliamentary and district council elections.

"The process which is ongoing is facing large-scale fraud, if it carries on in the same manner, the consequences will be very harmful and there will be a major outcry," said Hekmatyar.

Hekmatyar suggested that in order for the elections to be fair and transparent a biometric system needs to be rolled out for the voter registration process.

The Election Support Group of Ambassadors (ESG) meanwhile issued a statement on Tuesday stating they were aware of complaints about irregularities regarding the issue of Tazkeras (IDs) and voter registration documents but noted "this was the first time in Afghan history these elections are Afghan-led and Afghan-

owned".

"We recognize the challenges and acknowledge the progress which has been achieved. Providing the Independent Election Commission (IEC) and the government take the necessary actions on time, for the first time, there will be a single list of all eligible voters, as well as specific polling station-based voter lists," said the ESG. (Tolo news)

(4) German Authorities...

rejection too late, as the local authorities weren't notified about the case's development.

The press hype rose after the NRD report at the behest of the deportee's lawyer, a member of the German Parliament representing the Social Democrats, Sonja Steffen. Although she welcomed the decision to return her client back to Germany, she stated that in Afghanistan he was in constant fear because his family is being threatened by the Taliban.

This dispatch of Afghan migrants has already made headlines and evoked criticism of the BAMF and Interior Minister Horst Seehofer after the made a remark about "69 deported refugees on his 69th birthday," while presenting his set of immigration policy improvements. Politicians from SPD, the Greens and the left-wing party Die Linke lambasted the official for his 'lack of humanity and cynicism' and called on the Chancellor to dismiss him. The uproar was fueled with reports that a young Afghan man who'd been convicted of assaults and theft in Germany and sent back to his homeland had killed himself upon arrival.

This topped the heated discussions over Seehofer's proposal to adopt a stricter refugee policy, which he summed up in his "Masterplan Migration." Strongly opposed by Angela Merkel, her Christian Democratic Union and its social democrat SPD coalition partners, the proposal to turn away refugees registered in other EU countries, brought the long-time CDU/CSU alliance to the verge of collapse. The scenario could be averted as the coalition partners, Merkel's CDU and the SPD, managed to reach a common ground on migration issues by agreeing to turn down certain asylum-seekers on the basis of bilateral agreements with other EU countries.

Since the "open borders policy" was announced and Germany accepted more than 1 million migrants from the Middle East and Northern Africa, the BAMF has been criticized for failing to effectively handle the migrant influx. It found itself amid more controversy after it was revealed that its office in Bremen allegedly granted asylum to more than 1,200 seekers mostly from the Iraqi Kurd community, who had failed to meet the necessary criteria, in exchange for bribes between 2013 and 2017. In April the local prosecution service stated that six people, including the former director of the center, were being investigated for corruption. In June, former BAMF head Jutta Cordt and her deputy Ralph Tiesler were fired. (Sputnik)

(5) Protests Continue...

aide to Dostum said the first vice president will return home next week on Sunday.

"Mr. first vice president will return to the country the day after tomorrow. Government is fully ready to welcome him at a high-level event," said Abdullah Qarluq, deputy head of the National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan. Presidential Palace has not com-

mented about the agreement on Dostum's return. However, Qarluq said government's delegation has agreed on case of allegations against Dostum during their talks in Turkey. (Tolo news)

(6) US Munition...

of the Trump administration's strategy to end America's longest war, now in its 17th year. Under the new rules of engagement, the U.S. has been targeting drug labs used by the Taliban to generate revenue. The ultimate aim is to push the insurgents to the negotiating table.

U.S. military officials say the recent strikes have cost the Taliban \$220 million in drug revenue.

The air war in Afghanistan reached a climax after the U.S. troop surge in 2010. In 2011, the U.S. released 5,411 munitions in Afghanistan, according to Air Force data. Coalition commanders claimed at the time that the Taliban had taken "a real pounding," but the long-term effects of the bombing campaign were fleeting.

Six months into 2011, 2,458 munitions were released, nearly 500 fewer than the amount dropped during the first half of this year.

The recent uptick in strikes appears to have done little to end a stalemate with the Taliban. According to U.S. military data, the Afghan government continues to control or influences just 56 percent of the country.

Frustrated by the slow progress in the war, President Donald Trump has called for a review of the U.S. strategy.

The United Nations expressed concern in a report released on Sunday about the growing number of civilian casualties caused by airstrikes.

Aerial attack accounted for 353 casualties - including 149 deaths and 204 injured - during the first half of the year, a 52 percent increase from the same period last year, the report said. It attributed 52 percent of those casualties to the Afghan air force, 45 percent to international military forces - meaning the U.S. - and the remaining 3 percent to unidentified pro-government forces. (Monitoring Desk)

(7) No Big Shifts...

to work toward a peace agreement with the Kabul government.

Trump was opposed to remaining in America's longest war, but was convinced by his advisers to press ahead. He authorized last year the deployment of an additional 3,000 U.S. troops, bringing the total to around 15,000.

Trump has also piled pressure on neighboring Pakistan to crack down on militant safe havens on its side of the Afghan-Pakistan border.

Votel said he had seen positive signs from Islamabad but stressed that he wanted to see Pakistan put more pressure on Pakistan-based militants fighting in Afghanistan, including by arresting, expelling or targeting them.

He also noted the key role Washington wants Islamabad to play in promoting dialogue in Afghanistan.

"We also need to see them continue to make efforts to compel the Taliban to come to the table and take advantage of these opportunities," Votel said.

The remarks come amid growing speculation about moves to open talks with the Taliban following an unprecedented three-day ceasefire during last month's Eid holiday.

Last month, Pompeo said the United States was ready to "support, facilitate and participate" in discussions with the Taliban over

the role of international forces in Afghanistan but that the peace process would be Afghan-led.

The Taliban have rejected talks with the government of President Ashraf Ghani, which they see as illegitimate and instead insisted they would only talk with the United States. (Reuters)

(8) Families Flee...

government offer for peace talks which the Taliban have not categorically rejected has given rise to speculation of a possible end to the conflict, but the fighting in the north underlines how complicated the security situation in much of Afghanistan remains with many areas out of either government or Taliban control.

"When Daesh came to our area, they killed a lot of people because they said we'd helped the Taliban," said Masoma, a resident of the Aqsa area of Darzab who had taken his family to Sheberghan. "But now the Taliban have returned and they're saying we helped Daesh."

"You're just left helpless, you don't know what to do."

Local officials say the situation in Darzab has been dire for months, with schools closed and food running short for many families. "These families have no shelter and their children are in a very bad condition," said Halima, a member of the local provincial council.

Like its neighbouring Faryab and Sar-e Pul provinces, Jawzjan has important smuggling routes for weapons and contraband that have been controlled for decades by armed groups.

"Commanders from the time of the (anti-Soviet) Jihad and the resistance are still around and still control the contraband traffic in weapons," said Mohammad Faqir, a police commander in Jawzjan. Darzab, where security forces control the district centre but little else, and the adjacent district of QushTepa, have both seen regular fighting for a number of years with control passing from one group to another.

Ghafouri said Taliban forces from Sar-e Pul and Faryab were also involved in the fighting and hundreds of families had been forced to flee their homes and move to the provincial capital Sheberghan. Officials from UNOCHA, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, said they had an unconfirmed estimate that around 500 families, or some 3,500 people may have been displaced by the fighting but some local officials said the total may be twice that level. (Reuters)

(9) Iran-Afghan...

countries, including Afghanistan. Uzbekistan's First Deputy Prime Minister Achilbay Ramatov said in April that speeding up the construction of Khaf-Herat railway will make Chabahar Port in southeastern Iran and Bandar Abbas, south Iran, more accessible for shipping millions of tons of goods. (Pajhwok)

Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to Launch New Bus Routes

DUSHANBE - A number of new routes between the cities of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan may be launched in the near future, "Podrobno.uz" reported referring to Minister of transport of Tajikistan Khudoerzoda.

A regular bus service was opened between Khujand and Tashkent in mid-May. It was also planned to open new bus routes to other cities of Uzbekistan, but this issue has not been resolved so far. Khudoerzoda noted

that it was only a matter of time, and the Ministry of transport had instructed to resolve this issue within one month.

"The states have certain fees for the transportation of passengers and cargo. The Uzbek government has abolished the additional fee for the entry and transit of cargo carrying vehicles and buses from Tajikistan after the signing of the intergovernmental agreement between the two states," he said.

He said noted that, it was noted after the recent meeting of transport workers of both states that, Tajikistan also needs to take a decision to abolish all duties on bus services from the neighboring country.

"We can launch the bus service now, but the existing costs of payment of duties in Tajikistan will affect the prices of tickets from Uzbekistan. The protocol has been signed, the Land transport department of the Ministry of transport of the Republic of Tajikistan is engaged now in the process of coordination with the ministries and departments of the country, and the bus service will be launched both on our and Uzbek side within a month", said Khudoerzoda.

The minister noted that, the issue of cancellation of payment for entry and transit of foreign freight transport and buses crossing the border of Uzbekistan with Tajikistan has also been resolved now.

Vehicles from Tajikistan can enter the territory of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, as well as Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan through the roads of Uzbekistan. (Trend)

Rival Warplane Projects Underline Europe's Divisions

FARNBOROUGH, England - Britain's showy launch of a new fighter jet project at this week's Farnborough Airshow has laid bare political tensions that are threatening to tear Europe apart and deepened scepticism about the future of European defense cooperation.

The new UK program - launched with 2 billion pounds (\$2.6 billion) of seed money just nine months before Britain leaves the European Union - rivals a Franco-German project begun over a year ago that has yet to be funded.

France had hoped to work with Britain on the project, bringing together Europe's two biggest military powers, but turned to Germany after failing to make progress on a Franco-British drone program.

This had got caught up in Britain's political turmoil, with the government not only at odds with the EU over their future relationship - casting doubt over defense and security cooperation - but also at war with itself. The junior minister responsible for defense procurement became the latest government official to resign this week over Brexit negotiating strategy.

Impatient industry executives say Europe must move quickly, setting aside national employment interests and political divisions, or risk losing out in a global market to bigger players led by the United States, or even China in the future.

"What we want is new developments, new programs," Eric Trapier, head of France's Dassault Aviation told Reuters. "Whether we do it with the Germans or ... the British, we need facts."

Dassault and Airbus are leading the Franco-German program, while the UK project will be run by BAE Systems, Italy's Leonardo, engine maker Rolls-Royce and missile maker MBDA. (Reuters)