

(1) Pak-Afghan...

APAPPS inaugural session, five WGs held their respective group meetings at the level of relevant ministries and departments.

The WGs, besides discussing important issues in each area, also deliberated on the terms of reference for future course of action and the agenda items for their next round of meetings to be held in Islamabad at mutually agreed dates.

The concluding session noted the great importance of APAPPS to deliver on the commitments made under the forum within the mutually agreed time frame.

"The APAPPS framework provides a comprehensive and structured mechanism to enhance engagement between counterpart institutions of the two countries. APAPPS is comprised of five Working Groups on Politico-diplomatic, Military, Intelligence, Economic & Trade and Refugees issues. Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister and Foreign Secretary of Pakistan led their respective sides in the politico-diplomatic WG besides co-chairing the opening and closing sessions of the APAPPS," it said. (Agencies)

(2) Afghan Traders...

trade volume has increased tremendously in the last few years," said Afghan Ambassador to India Shaida Mohammad Abdali. "The trade volume between India and Afghanistan has reached almost \$1 billion. But the demand is much more so we are looking for \$2 billion in trade by 2020," Abdali said during the trade mission.

The "Made in Afghanistan: Nature's Best" trade event is a follow-up to the USAID-supported "Passage to Prosperity" trade show that was held last September in New Delhi, where Afghan agricultural exporters made US\$30 million in sales. It also prepared Afghan exporters for the upcoming USAID-supported second-annual "Passage to Prosperity" Trade and Investment Show which will take place in Mumbai from September 12-15.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) and the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI) also supported the "Made in Afghanistan: Nature's Best" event. Other USAID programs contributing to the event included the Regional Agricultural Development Projects East and North and Promoting Value Chains - West program, implemented by the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization. (PR)

(3) Junbish Confident...

and judicial institutions for not being strong enough to tackle the case. Both the Presidential Palace and the Attorney General's Office refuse to give out details about Dostum's case or about the arrest of Qaisari.

"This case has not been investigated properly; the government is wasting time in this respect, it could have wrapped this up in six months if the government had worked on it," said Eshchi.

Legal experts have called on legal and judicial institutions to ensure that everyone is treated equally in the eyes of the law.

"The legal and judicial institutions should implement the law on citizens in an equal manner," said legal expert Ainuddin Bahaduri.

Meanwhile, Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah said he hopes that with Dostum having returned, the process of peace and stability can be strengthened in the country.

"We welcome the return of the First Vice President General Abdul Rashid Dostum to the country, we hope that his presence in the country leads to the promotion of national unity and also peace and stability," said Abdullah. (Tolo news)

(4) Wolesi Jirga Speaker...

said MP Kamal Safai.

Some lawmakers meanwhile said that the case involving Nizamuddin Qaisari, the former police chief of Qaisar district and a close aide to Dostum, should not be politicized. Qaisari was arrested by Special Forces in Faryab three weeks ago after allegedly insulting security officials.

The day after his arrest, hundreds of Qaisari supporters took to the streets of Faryab, and later in other northern cities, calling not only for the district police chief's release but also for the return of Dostum.

Government meanwhile insisted it had not stopped Dostum from returning home.

But the first vice president's aides reject these claims.

Lawmakers also criticized government on Monday over its failure to prevent Sunday's suicide bombing at the main gate of the Hamid Karzai International Airport minutes after Dostum had left the area.

The explosion left at least 14 people dead and more than 60 others wounded.

"There was joy and happiness at the Sedarat Palace (on Sunday); it was like nothing had happened in the country and no one had been martyred in Afghanistan; but the dead bodies of those martyred as a result of the explosion were lying on the ground (outside the airport)," said MP Ghulam Farooq Majroh, referring to the bombing.

The suicide bombing happened amid tight security outside the airport's main gate just minutes after Dostum's convoy drove out of the complex.

Dozens of supporters had gathered in the area to welcome Dostum home when the explosives were detonated.

Daesh has claimed responsibility for the incident. (Tolo news)

(5) Govt Asks...

"President Ghani made it clear at the meeting that any outside influence, by anyone, including government employees, in the election process will be considered a crime and action will take," read the statement. CEO Abdullah Abdullah on Monday also said that the Council of Ministers meeting that the IEC has been asked to announce the date for next year's polls. He also said "there should be no uncertainty over the will of the NUG for holding of elections."

"This is the demand of the people that they have a transparent (election)," Abdullah said. (Tolo news)

(6) UNAMA Condemns...

and complex attacks by Anti-Government Elements caused 1,413 civilian casualties (427 killed and 986 injured), a 22 per cent increase in civilian casualties compared to the same period in 2017.

"At a time when Afghans are exploring ways toward much-needed peace, we must not allow such attacks to deter our collective resolve to make progress on ending the conflict," said Yamamoto, who is also head of UNAMA. "The UN stands with Afghans in solidarity and remains committed to an Afghan-led peace process that will end the war and enable Afghanistan to allocate more resources to protect all citizens from such atrocities."

On behalf of the United Nations in Afghanistan, Yamamoto expressed his condolences to the loved ones of those killed in the attack and wished a full and speedy recovery to those injured. (PR)

(7) Dostum Stresses...

was not the way out and Afghanistan needed a national understanding and compromised.

No party has the ability to continue with fighting neither the govern-

ment nor the political opponents, he added.

"I am interested more than anyone to strive for a political settlement in Afghanistan and want the Taliban to set on the table of talks and put forward their demands for discussion," he added. (Pajhwok)

(8) Do More for...

to the Resolute Support mission as well," Votel said.

According to the CENTCOM commander the RS mission had observed remarkable change in the environment, largely driven by our new strategy. The Afghan people and many Taliban grow more ready for peace, as evidenced by peace marches, local and international religious Ulema condemnations of the insurgency, broad diplomatic support to the Afghan-owned peace process and, of course, the cease-fire that I mentioned earlier.

He told reporters that Afghan Security Forces were improving, but they did require the time and support to contend with both Taliban and Islamic State fighters in the country. "They are fighting and they are taking casualties but they are also very offensive-minded and inflicting losses on the Taliban and the ISIS enemy daily, while expanding their own capabilities and proficiencies every day," he said.

Referring to the US South Asia strategy, he said, there was cause for cautious optimism and evidence that the South Asia strategy was working.

"The most dramatic evidence of this was manifested recently when our conditions-based approach allowed President Ghani and the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces to set the conditions for the first-ever nationwide cease-fire. Although the cease-fire was temporary, all parties respected the terms and there were very few reported breaches," he said.

According to Gen. Votel, the cease-fire demonstrated the increased desire for peace, not only from the Afghan people, but from the belligerents of the conflict, as well.

"We saw numerous instances of this during the ceasefire, and we have seen many since its conclusion, even in the midst of ongoing combat operations. Our campaign approach of military pressure provided the time and space for diplomatic and social pressure to pursue this opportunity," he noted.

Hailing the performance of Afghan security forces, the US general said all six of Afghan national army corps had been frequently engaged in offensive operations simultaneously, and at one point this spring, they were conducting offensive operations in 13 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces at the same time. This was a testament to the great work by not only our forces, but also others in the NATO-led coalition.

"The Afghan National Defense and Security Forces are orchestrating unprecedented reorganization this year, moving over 30,000 border police and Afghan National Civil Order Police from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Defense, and initiating a Territorial Army project for long-term local security," he said. (Pajhwok)

(9) Kunduz Lawmaker...

to sabotage his upcoming Wolesi Jirga election campaign.

"First the identity of these people should be proved to show if they are our relatives and secondly which institution has supported their claims," He said.

He alleged the complainants had hired women and girls to promote his image as a land grabber. (Pajhwok)

(10) 20 Taliban...

Ghani police chief Col. Farid Ahmad Mashal told Pajhwok.

The resultant clashes left one security personnel and six insurgents dead and four security personnel and five Taliban wounded.

Elsewhere in Ghazni, eight Daesh rebels were killed in an airstrike by Afghan forces in Tangi Sado area of Nawa district on Monday morning. Meanwhile, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid on his twitter account claimed security forces were inflicted heavy casualties during last night attacks in Ghazni province. (Pajhwok)

(11) Group of Taliban...

the government vehicles and were also carrying out coordinated attacks on the security posts.

The militants were arrested during an operation conducted based on a tip off, the provincial government said, adding that the detained militants have confessed to their crimes. The anti-government armed militant groups including Taliban militants have not commented regarding the report so far. (KP)

(12) IECC to Assess...

formal meetings about it over the past two days and in some way, decisions are made about such cases. Decisions were taken on some part of these issues, however, they have not yet been officially notified," said Rouhani.

According to the IECC, most of the complaints filed are related to the preliminary list of candidates.

The IECC is scheduled to wrap up the assessment of the complaints filed against the candidates by August 2.

On the other hand, President Ashraf Ghani has assigned a special commission to assess the demands of Afghanistan's political parties around elections, a government official said on Monday, as concerns over fraud in the voter registration process grows.

Meanwhile, Humayoun Jarir, a member of Gulbuddin Hekmatyared Hizb-e-Islami group has said that the commission will work on the implementation of the plan outlined by the political parties aimed at ensuring transparency in the elections.

Officials from the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan (IEC) have welcomed the move.

This commission will be led by Second Vice President Mohammad Sarwar Danish. Representatives of the political parties, the government and the IEC will be members of the commission.

"The president told us that a commission has been established. Representatives from the three sides including the political parties, election commission and government will be part of the commission. The commission will be headed by Mr. Danish. We consider this a positive step," said Jarir.

"The political parties have recommended the voter registration process be a biometric system, but because there is not much time until elections, political parties have recommended that at least the process of voting in the elections must be based on a biometric system," added Jarir.

"A single person has received up to 50 IDs, if elections are held in such circumstances, the elections will not resolve any problems and instead will push the country towards another crisis and this would be a repetition of the past elections and the parties do not want this," said Muhaiyyudin Mahdi, a member of Jamiat-e-Islami party of Afghanistan.

But political parties have said that the voter registration process is rigged, and it will create a crisis in future and have insisted that a biometric system be implemented for election day.

"We welcome the formation of this

(commission), but they should come and check the system. It is very late now, any change in the system will harm the elections," said IEC commissioner Sayed Hafiz Hashemi.

Political parties and critics have said that over five million ghost voters have registered and that these records should be invalidated. (Tolo news)

(13) Victims of...

told him not to go to work and instead go with us to an engagement ceremony of a relative. He did not go with us and went to work. Last night a number of our relatives came to our house and only this morning did I hear I had lost my father," said Omid.

One of Akhtar Mohammad's relatives, Sayed Hafiz, said: "The organization he was working for and also government should support Akhtar Mohammad's family and make sure his children can continue their education."

Farshad Noori, 17, was another victim of Sunday's attack. At his burial ceremony in Tapa-e-Bibi Mahro in Kabul, his relatives said he worked during the day and went to school at night.

His relatives said government has failed to maintain the security of the people and that security officials must do their jobs properly in order to safeguard civilians lives.

"Farshad had lots of dreams. He always wanted peace and security to come to the country and that he should get a good job. But this incident took his life," said Mangal, Noori's eldest brother.

"We want peace. For how long can such incidents take lives," said Tamim, Noori's uncle.

Elsewhere in Tapa-e-Bibi Mahro, another victim, Yasin, 36, was buried. Yasin is survived by three children and his wife.

Yasin had a shop close to the airport and according to his relatives, he was struggling financially.

Angry relatives of Yasin blasted security officials for failing to prevent such attacks in Kabul.

"There is no bigger shame than this for you (government leaders). If you cannot govern, then step down. You have filled your pockets and now you have everything. It is enough and you should leave government to someone else," said Ghulam Yahya, the brother of Yasin.

"Who will take care of Mohammad Yasin's children? Who will feed them now?," asked another relative, Hakim Khan. (Tolonews)

French Minister Defends Himself over Violence of Macron Aide

PARIS — France's interior minister has insisted that it wasn't for him to inform judicial officials of violence by a presidential security aide against a May Day protester even though he was informed the following day.

Answering questions Monday from lawmakers, Gerard Collomb said his top aide informed him of a video showing Alexandre Benalla beating up a protester and that both the president's office and police chief had been informed.

The minister said he was later told that the office of President Emmanuel Macron had taken sanctions against Benalla and it wasn't his job to do more.

The failure to immediately inform judicial officials has developed into a major political crisis for President Emmanuel Macron.

Benalla was only publicly identified last week as the man beating a protester on May 1 and handed preliminary charges on Sunday, along with four others, including three ranking police officers. A parliamentary inquiry commission is trying to determine the facts, including the chain of command and the exact role of Benalla in Macron's office. (AP)