

(1) Ghani, Dostum...

security situation of the country. Dostum returned to Kabul few days back after spending around 13 months in Turkey.

On return, Dostum said he had traveled to Turkey for medical treatment and chose to return after being advised by doctors there.

However, some sources say Dostum stayed in Turkey as he was wanted by the Attorney General Office in rape and torture case involving his political rival Ahmad Ischi.

An official, who wished to go unnamed, told Pajhwok that Dostum was following his case in the judicial organs after his return. (Pajhwok)

(2) £10m British...

part of a response being coordinated by the United Nations and the Afghan government of Afghanistan. It will help prevent displacement of families who could otherwise be forced to leave their homes and communities. (Pajhwok)

(3) Ghor Residents...

doctors and delivery of satisfactory services was not easy in absence of professional medicines.

Parsa called on families to keep the environment and care for their children to protect them from various seasonal diseases, including diarrhea and indigestion.

Pajhwok tried to contact the provincial health department for comment but failed. (Pajhwok)

(4) Impatient...

settlement, allowing the Taliban to squeeze concessions from a superpower fatigued with a grinding war that has settled into a stalemate.

"There's a danger that the Taliban will smell weakness," one foreign diplomat told NBC News.

Trump's impulsive nature, along with his openly expressed doubts about the U.S. military mission in Afghanistan, has injected a sense of urgency among senior officials and military officers. The last diplomatic attempt to end the war ended in abject failure in 2013, amid acrimony between Afghanistan's then-President Hamid Karzai and U.S. officials.

Although Trump reluctantly approved the deployment of several thousand additional U.S. troops to Afghanistan last year, he remains skeptical about keeping the 15,000-strong force in place. With no clear military victory in sight, U.S. officials are worried the president could abruptly pull the plug on the mission without advance warning.

"Just because he signed on to this policy in August, most of the people who work for him have no trust and confidence that he'll stick to his policies," said a former senior U.S. official.

As a result, the administration is now focused on a high-risk diplomatic wager to end the conflict. Spearheaded by Alice Wells, the senior State Department official overseeing South Asia, the diplomacy has featured a series of conversations with major powers in the region as well as contacts with Taliban representatives at venues outside of Afghanistan.

Although the U.S. has maintained a channel to the Taliban over the years, the discussions have become more frequent, more high-level and more ambitious, former U.S. officials and foreign diplomats said. However, the talks are still portrayed as preliminary, designed to set the conditions for an eventual negotiation between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

A senior Afghan Taliban official offered a similar description, saying the meetings are not formal negotiations but are meant to find a way to hold "fruitful and results-oriented peace talks in the future."

The most recent meeting took place within the past week in the Qatari capital of Doha, with Wells leading the U.S. delegation, foreign diplomats said. Taliban sources say meetings have also taken place in the United Arab Emirates.

"We have held a number of meetings with U.S. officials in the past,

but never found them this serious for peace talks with us," the Taliban source said. "They conveyed to us a 100 percent green light for peace talks and we decided to meet again very soon."

The former number three-ranking official at the State Department, Thomas Shannon, who helped shape U.S. policy for the region in Trump's first year in office, acknowledged the U.S. dialogue with the Taliban and suggested that the insurgents appear more open to peace talks than in the past.

"Our own engagement with the Taliban has indicated an interest and willingness on their part," Shannon said at the Aspen Security Forum on July 21.

Shannon also credited Afghan President Ashraf Ghani with creating the conditions for possible peace talks and for rallying other governments — including Islamic countries — to the cause.

He said he was not ready to say he was optimistic, but cited positive signs, like a three-day cease-fire last month, that could eventually produce momentum toward peace or at least a winding down of the war.

"I think we are in a position in which there are possibilities and potential out there for political resolutions," said Shannon, who retired from the diplomatic service in February. (abc news)

(5) 'Horrors that can't be...

Afghanistan.

While there have been reports in Nangarhar, the eastern province where Islamic State first appeared in 2014 and in Zabul in the south, deep taboos that can make it impossible for women to report sexual abuse make it hard to know its scale.

The group has a growing presence in Zarifa's province of Jawzjan, on the border with Turkmenistan, exploiting smuggling routes and attracting both foreign fighters as well as unemployed locals and fighting both U.S.-backed Afghan forces and the Taliban.

For Zarifa, the attack forced her to leave her home in the Darzab district of south Jawzjan and seek shelter in the provincial capital of Sheberghan. "My husband was a farmer and now I can't face my husband and my neighbors and so, despite the danger, I left," she said.

TEN MONTHS OF TERROR

Another woman, Samira, who escaped Darzab and now lives in Sheberghan, said fighters came to her house and took her 14 year-old sister to their commander. Like Zarifa, she did not want to use her full name because of the stigma against victims of sexual violence.

"He didn't marry her and no one else married her but he raped her and his soldiers forced themselves on her and even the head of the village who is in Daesh forced himself on my sister and raped her," she said. Daesh is an Arabic term for Islamic State.

"This girl was there with Daesh for 10 months but after 10 months she escaped and now she's with us. But I can't tell anyone about this out of shame."

Stories like those told by Samira and Zarifa have emerged in recent months as thousands have fled Darzab.

"Daesh has committed many horrors in Darzab that can't be told," said the Taliban's main spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid.

"Daesh does not abide by any rules and there is no doubt about the horrors people have been speaking about."

Islamic State has no known spokesman in Afghanistan. But the accounts were broadly endorsed by government officials who say Islamic State is trying to import an entirely foreign ideology.

Documents captured in Syria in 2015 revealed ways in which Islamic State theologians regulated the use of female captives for sexual purposes.

"It is completely against our culture and traditions," said Mohammad Radmanish, a defense ministry spokesman, who said that Darzab

was not the only area where rapes and sexual slavery by Islamic State had been reported.

"When they came to our area, everyone knew what these Daesh had come for," said Kamila, a woman from Darzab, who said that three girls were taken from the area where she lived.

"They would bind a girl or woman from a house and take her with them. At first they said that we would have to marry them. But then, when they took them, many men forced themselves on them and raped them." (Reuters)

(6) 'Beijing Huddle...

to the past as representatives from the three countries vowed to come up with practical steps instead of pledges only.

He said the Chinese were of the view that peace and progress in Afghanistan was in the interest of all regional and neighboring countries including China and should be achieved with joint efforts. (Pajhwok)

(7) ADB Unveils...

ADB has noted.

Meanwhile, officials from the International Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ICCI) have said that taking into consideration the important role of the Asian Development Bank in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, the National Unity Government (NUG) should outline more inclusive programs to attract ADB's financial cooperation in future.

Mapping out the strategy, the ADB report noted the following seven points as key factors.

Afghanistan's Ministry of Finance (MoF) has said that the new strategy will benefit Afghanistan.

"The financial cooperation by the Asian Development Bank which is spent through the national budget has had a positive impact on various sectors such as agriculture, transport, energy and other sectors," Ajmal Hamid Abdul Rahimzai, MoF spokesman said.

The ADB has provided over \$4 billion to Afghanistan since 2002. (Tolo news)

(8) WB Pledges...

and \$210 million from the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), administered by the World Bank on behalf of 34 donors. The IPDPG aims to help the Government of Afghanistan continue maintaining a stable macroeconomic environment and pursue an ambitious program of policy reforms to support economic growth, private sector investment, poverty reduction, and improved public financial management.

\$50 million for the Public-Private Partnerships and Public Investment Advisory Project, which aims to develop a pipeline of feasible private and publicly funded projects to further develop Afghanistan's infrastructure. The project will be financed by a \$20 million grant from IDA and \$30 million co-financing from ARTF.

The agreements were signed in the presence of Hartwig Schafer, a newly appointed World Bank Vice President for South Asia, who is currently visiting Afghanistan to discuss reforms and development progress in the country with the Afghan government and its international partners.

Speaking about the Public-Private Partnerships and Public Investment Advisory Project, Hartwig Schafer said: "This is a step towards maximizing the financing available for Afghanistan's development. By mobilizing private capital for large investments, this project can boost progress towards some of Afghanistan's key development priorities. It is a way to create partnerships that can benefit not only the Government and private sector businesses, but most importantly the people of Afghanistan." (Pajhwok)

(9) Taliban Release...

the remaining 30 captives as well before upcoming Eid-ul-Adha, he said.

Ghausuddin said the Taliban told him his company should have

their permission before launching work.

Security officials and Taliban have not yet commented so far about the release of the road construction workers.

Shorabak district is located 230 kilometers south of Kandahar capital near the Durand Line.

Around 90 kilometers of the road from Spin Boldak to Shorabak district is in a rundown condition and residents of the area use the road for traveling to Pakistan for shopping. Construction of the road was recently started but the Taliban militants stopped it.

The Taliban not only abducted 43 workers of the company, but also torched 15 construction vehicles that caused around \$2 million loss to the company.

The company officials say the Taliban transferred their workers across the Durand Line. The company stopped construction of the road after the incident.

According to another report, the Taliban freed two of nine passengers the group had abducted in Sheikh Ali district of Parwan province.

Abdul Raouf Sarwari, head of sectorial services in Sheikh Ali district, said that militants abducted nine passengers from a car in Lali-Tangi area of the district on Sunday evening.

He said the passengers en route to Bamayan province belonged different areas of the country.

Afghan security forces engaged the Taliban in a clash for about an hour for releasing the passengers, he added.

The Taliban released two of the passengers belonging to Nangarhar and Logar provinces this morning, he said.

Local elders visited the Taliban seeking release of the rest of captives but the Taliban told them they would investigate the captives and would release them if they were civilians. (Pajhwok)

(10) Taliban Attack...

Baghlan province."

However, he did not provide further details about the attack.

The Taliban have not yet commented. (Tolo news)

(11) Daesh Centers...

stability may not come," he said, referring to the recent terror attacks in Nangarhar.

Hazrat Ali claimed that centres of Daesh were situated in Jalalabad, from where they planned and executed their attacks. He, however, said security institutions and the government were unaware of the fact.

Shinwari also expressed concern over growing corruption and presence of unauthorized armed groups in Nangarhar.

He said the presence of illegal armed groups and operations of local and foreign forces were resulting in civilian casualties which had widened the gap between government and the people.

He said the current security crisis would remain unresolved until the government eroded its gap with the masses.

He said people could play more effective role in restoration of security than anyone.

The residents of Nangarhar have also been voicing their frustration with what they call increasing insecurity.

Mentioning recent attacks in Jalalabad, the provincial capital, the residents said such incidents resulted from negligence of security officials.

Gunmen stormed a midwife training center in Jalalabad on Saturday, fighting security forces for several hours and killing three staff.

On the other hand, the provincial council office said around 600 civilians suffered casualties in attacks over the past few months.

Dr. Anwar Biag, who lost thousands of US dollars after his house caught fire during the brazen attack on the midwife training cen-

ter, told Pajhwok Afghan News that the incident had been a result of security forces' negligence.

He said his home was near the midwife training center and his \$30,000 and some household items were reduced to ashes after his house caught fire. (Pajhwok)

(12) Nabi Ranked...

the record for the fastest fifty by an Afghan cricketer in Twenty20 Internationals.

Nabihails from a well-to-do family that moved to Peshawar in Pakistan, seeking a safe haven during the Soviet war in Afghanistan. Today he lives in Jalalabad in Nangarhar.

An efficient allrounder - a strong middle-order batsman who can bowl flighted offspin - Nabi's rise, like Afghanistan's, has been staggering.

He has been at the center of the Afghan team since their time in the ICC's World Cricket League Division Five, from where Afghanistan began their rise to the international stage. (Tolo news)

(13) IECC Finalizes...

human rights violations.

"We are extremely concerned about this issue. In the past we have seen that there are people in parliament from whom people do not have a good memory, they had been accused or involved in various crimes," said Lal Gul Lal from Afghanistan Human Rights Organization (AHRO).

The task team is led by the head of the IECC and members of the commission are from the Ministry of Interior (MoI), Ministry of Defense (MoD), National Directorate of Security (NDS) and the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG). (Tolo news)

(14) Paktians Want...

The public representative said security posts should be established in areas where a comeback of the rebels was feared after being driven.

Similarly, civil society activist Samiullah Ahmadzai said armed robberies, kidnappings and targeted killings had increased and should be prevented by security forces through strong coordination.

He blamed the fall of several security posts into the hands of insurgents on negligence of high ranking security officials because security forces on the battlefield could not be supplied logistics and other needed equipment in time.

Jalal Ali, a resident of Zazi Aryub district, expressed similar views and accused former security leadership of failing to turn the tide on insecurity.

He urged security forces to conduct effective operations as Paktia's security had deteriorated compared to last year.

In response to these remarks, police chief Brig. Gen. Raz Mohammad Mandozai admitted the security situation had recently deteriorated, but said the ongoing operations had forced the rebels to flee. (Pajhwok)

(15) Gen. Haqbin...

district of Sar-i-Pul, Dasht-i-Archi district of Kunduz and Kohistan of Faryab.

Haqbin said currently security forces operations were underway in Kunduz, Faryab and Takhar provinces and most of the areas had been retaken from insurgents.

He said most of highways connecting Maimana, the capital of Faryab, with other districts, had been reopened and people could easily travel.

He said Daesh presence had only been reported in Darzab district and an operation to eliminate them would be launched soon.

Tens of civil society activists visited the Saheen Military Corps headquarters and praised their sacrifices and achievements.

Civil society activist Syed Mohammad Yazdan Parast said in the current situation the Afghan security forces direly needed people's support. (Pajhwok)