

(1) US Congress...

May peace negotiations between the US negotiators and the Taliban members in Doha.

"Yet during the February and May talks in Doha between American diplomats and the Taliban, Afghan women were not represented. Afghan women voices need to be heard – not just on women's rights, but on the future of their country. We urge the State Department to protect Afghan women's negotiation position and hard-won gains in all discussions with the Taliban," the letter reads.

US lawmakers quoting the US Institute of Peace have said more than 68,000 Afghan women are employed in schools and universities, at least 10,000 Afghan women are doctors and healthcare professionals, and Afghan women entrepreneurs have created roughly 77,000 jobs for Afghans which are big gains that must be preserved.

"If you are not sitting around the table, you cannot remain in the government. Those who gather around the table, they make peace with each other; peace on their thoughts and peace on their different point of views. If you are not on the table, it means having a different point of view or having a shared point is not important," said Farkhunda Zahra Naderi, a women's rights activist and a former advisor to President Ashraf Ghani. "Afghan women have also called for their voices to be heard and today that the US Congress members have sent the letter. It is a positive step and it means that they completely support women's participation," said Shinkai Karokhail, an MP.

Siahmoi, a Kabul resident, said women should play an equal role in society. The US lawmakers in the letter have said the Afghan women and girls achieved their rights in the past 18 years and that this should not be sacrificed.

The Afghan women also repeatedly have called for their active and meaningful role in the peace talks and for their gains to be preserved. In response to the calls, Khalilzad has also said that women's rights and achievements will be protected. (Tolo news)

(2) Presidential...

illegally inside the ARG. It is the time that they come outside of the ARG so the discussions over the election take place in a location rather than Arg," said Shahab Hakimi, a Presidential Candidate. However, none of the sides have become ready to prepare set the ground for beginning the negotiations.

"We hope that the negotiations take place soon and the President should not fear from sitting and talking to the candidate," said Faramarz Tamana another Presidential Candidate.

At the same time, the presidential candidate claim that the President has created networks and opened offices for his election campaigns using government assets and facilities.

In contrast, ARG rejects these allegations and accuse the candidates of campaigning before the scheduled date.

"These sayings are demagogical and Arg wants to make the candidates busy with these issues," said Hakim Torsan, a presidential candidate.

Meanwhile, the presidential candidates are supposed to protest against the continuation of the government's tenancy in the coming days.

In addition, they are supposed to contemplate on boycotting the coming presidential election.

This comes as they [candidate] warns that in the case referred to this option, another crisis will be created in the country. (ATN)

(3) Youths, New...

Afghanistan's Sikh minority.

"In this round, we see two positive things: first the number of young lawmakers has increased and they have more motivation for work, and second, we have educated youths and we consider it a positive step," said Rahimullah Ghalib, deputy of parliament's secretariat chief.

There were 249 seats in the parliament in the previous rounds of the parliament, but the Afghan government later decided to consider one seat reservation for Afghanistan's Hindu and Sikh community. (Tolo news)

(4) Sliding Afghani's...

citizens are concerned about the depreciation of afghani, but money exchangers and vendors are also worried about the increasing value of dollar.

"Over the past two weeks, the dollar rate has not been stable, rendering money exchangers unable to do business freely because if afghani continues to devalue, our business suffers a lot," he said.

Mohammad Gul Mahmoodi, deputy head of the Herat Money Exchangers Union, blamed the depreciation of afghani on political instability and people had lost confidence in government.

Secondly, the private banking sector in the western region is another reason because they refrain from disseminating cash among people.

Emal Hahour, spokesman for Da Afghanistan Bank, said: "Besides insecurity, political and internal challenges, dollars are smuggled to neighboring countries which hampers the value of local currency."

He said Iran and Pakistan were biggest trading partners of Afghanistan as over \$6 billion goods were imported from the two countries. (Pajhwok)

(5) Kabul Residents...

leaving five dead.

Despite that, some Afghans have returned to the country from Europe and USA to celebrate the Eid jointly with their families in Kabul.

"Many of those who live abroad, they prepare for returning to the country at least 25 days ahead of Eid," said Zubair Hejran, a poet, who has returned to the country from the US.

"Most of the Afghans who live abroad are in favor of returning home to celebrate Eid and other festivals in their own country," said Mohammad Ayub Ahadi, a Kabul resident.

Some residents of Kabul went to security outposts in the city and greeted as well as admired police force members for their dedication in ensuring the safety of the people.

"The safe environment for us during the Eid says is the result of the utmost efforts of the security forces," said Dor Mohammad Watandost, a Kabul resident.

"May the Almighty Allah brings enduring peace to our country," said Khan Mohammad Safi, a Kabul resident. (Tolo news)

(6) US, NATO...

demand for peace and we support that demand," Butler said.

Meanwhile, on Thursday Khalilzad met with the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini and discussed Afghan peace. Khalilzad said the US and EU believe that the Afghan peace should be prioritized.

"We (US and the EU) share a strong conviction on why peace is the priority, how intra-Afghan negotiations get us there, and what regional economic potential peace unlocks," Khalilzad tweeted.

Meanwhile, Acting Defense Minister Assadullah Khalid on Thursday said the government will stop any deal in the peace talks which would lead to the collapse of the Afghan Defense and Security Forces.

"We will stand against any 'secret deal', under any name, under any cover and in anywhere, which creates a problem for Afghanistan or starts another war, or causes us to lose the achievements of the (past) 18 years," Khalid said at a ceremony in Zabul.

Khalilzad is supposed to meet the Taliban members in Doha in the near future which will be his seventh meeting with members of the group. (Tolo news)

(7) 84 People...

said he was captured by the Taliban four years ago in Qaisar district. He said the Taliban prison where they were kept in was an inappropriate place. He said they were deprived of everything. "We are so happy that today we were freed to reunite with our families."

Among the freed men was a 70-year-old resident of Qaisar district. He told Pajhwok Afghan News that the Taliban arrested him a month back over the murder of his four family members. He said the Taliban never tried him and were refusing to release him.

Another person, soldier Mohammad Zahir, said they were sold things worth 10 afghanis for 50 afghanis in the Taliban prison.

Faryab governor Naqibullah Faeq thanked the NATO forces for their cooperation and the Afghan forces for their achievements. He said the Afghan forces had the ability to frustrate every design of the rebels but it would be better if the insurgents reconcile.

The Taliban have said nothing in this regard so far. (Pjhwok)

(8) Afghan Forces ...

Taliban influence for nearly two years. In this visit, Khalid assured Zabul residents that the Afghan forces have the ability to maintain and defend their outposts.

Tribal elders in Zabul province said they are concerned about the Taliban's presence in the province.

"Taliban with support of ISI (Pakistan's

Inter-Services Intelligence) is trying to take control of parts of Zabul. We want your attention and Zabul needs your attention," said Ghazni Mohammad Zargi, a tribal elder from Zabul. (Tolo news)

(9) Afghan Forces...

the Afghan security forces retook control of Deh Yak district in central Ghazni province which was under Taliban influence for nearly two years. (Tolo news)

(10) 18 Militants...

On the other hand, the Ministry of Interior (MoI), claimed 18 Taliban insurgents were killed and four others wounded in the operation.

The ministry in a statement said three Kalashnikovs and some ammunition were also seized from Taliban during the battle.

Abasin, a resident of the area said that Taliban suffered casualties during the operation, but he had no exact figures. Taliban, however, said that the operation targeted a mosque in the area and those killed were civilians.

He said more details about the incident would be shared later. (Pjhwok)

(11) Putin Stands...

of the emerging digital era in some circles."

The world risked slipping into an era when "general international rules will be exchanged for the laws of administrative and legal mechanisms ... which is how the United States is unfortunately behaving, spreading its jurisdiction over the whole world," added Putin.

"...It's a path to endless conflicts, trade wars and maybe not just trade wars. Figuratively speaking, it's a path to battles without rules that pit everyone against everyone else."

China's Xi struck a more conciliatory tone, calling for world powers to protect the global multilateral trade system.

Russia has long complained about Western sanctions imposed on it over disputes including its behavior in Ukraine. Moscow casts the restrictions as an attempt to contain its growth.

Washington has asked countries to reject Huawei technology in the development of new mobile phone networks, arguing that it could be vulnerable to Chinese eavesdropping. Huawei denies its equipment is a security risk. (Reuters)

(12) EU's Barrier...

about people in Ireland, on both sides," Barnier told a conference in Slovakia.

"In any case, a new prime minister will not change the problem. The problem is there and the new prime minister will have the responsibility with us to solve this problem." (Reuters)

(13) Total Gears...

sprout from the sea almost like giant multi-storey buildings but with dark waves of water lapping at their foundations in strong winds.

Paris-based Total, which took over Culzean with a \$7.5-billion purchase of the oil and gas exploration arm of Danish giant Maersk in 2017, is expected to drill for so-called "First Gass" soon.

Total has a 49.99-percent share of the Culzean field, with the rest owned by partners BP and Japan's JX Nippon.

If and when Culzean reaches optimum output by the end of 2020, Total says it will produce around 18 percent of Britain's total gas needs.

On Friday, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said that 2018 was a "golden year" for natural gas with global demand soaring, but environment and energy sector analysts say the gas boom could have dire effects on Earth's climate, as warnings of the need to slash fossil fuel use grow ever stronger.

- Revival -

Meanwhile, independent experts agree that the North Sea still had much gas left.

"We have seen quite an increase in production -- a 20-percent increase in (oil and gas) production over the past five years -- which is really quite remarkable for a mature basin," said Professor Paul de Leeuw, head of the Oil and Gas Institute at Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen.

He added that the "revival" of North Sea output was also the result of an improved UK corporate tax environment.

Authorities are keen to encourage more production in the North Sea basin, where operations support about 280,000 jobs both directly and indirectly according to industry organisation Oil & Gas UK.

That number is nonetheless half the amount of jobs provided during the industry's peak in 2014.

In addition, around half of the North Sea's precious energy reserves have already been extracted, according to industry estimates, making it one of the

world's most mature basins.

Meanwhile despite a sizeable rebound in UK North Sea production over the last five years, current output remains far from peak levels enjoyed in the 1990s and 2000s, when it regularly topped 5.0 million barrels of oil and gas per day.

It stood at only 1.7 million barrels of oil equivalent per day (oepd) in 2018 and the amount is set to decline further, according to the Oil & Gas Authority regulator.

Total wants Culzean's gas production to reach between 60,000-90,000 barrels oepd by 2021 for a lifespan of at least 13 years. (AFP)

(14) India to Buy...

flight path according to changing factors.

Since February's brief clash, India and Pakistan have traded hostile rhetoric, with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi accusing Pakistan in April of allowing terrorists to attack India, and threatening to hit Pakistan with "the mother of all nuclear bombs."

That comment prompted Pakistan military spokesman Major General Asif Ghafoor to warn India against testing his country's "resolve."

India's Air Force hasn't always been so lucky to possess cutting-edge technology. Last month, Modi was widely mocked after suggesting that the IAF may have used clouds to evade Pakistani radar during February's air raid. (RT)

(15) Hundreds of...

migrants had taken to arrive to the U.S.-Mexico border. Some Africans recently told NPR they traveled from Africa to Brazil and then north though Colombia and Central America.

CBP called the "dramatic rise" in migrants from Africa a "humanitarian crisis," according to BBC News. The City of San Antonio is asking for French-speaking volunteers to help them cater to this new group of migrants.

"BREAKING: City confirms hundreds of migrants from the Congo have arrived in SA. The city is in desperate need for French speaking volunteers," local news reporter Jaleesa Irizarry wrote on Thursday.

A city spokesperson told the BBC that officials are "operating a resource center for those traveling" and have "partnered up with local charities" as African migrants flow in from the border.

It's unclear if the migrants in Texas were seeking asylum, and the agency is still processing them. The number of migrants apprehended at the U.S.-Mexico border skyrocketed last month to levels not seen in more than a decade, with U.S. Customs and Border Protection reporting nearly 133,000 arrests in May. "We are in full-blown emergency," a CBP official told Fox News on Wednesday. The number of apprehensions was the highest monthly total in more than 13 years. In April, authorities recorded 99,304 arrests. (Fox News)

(16) Qatar Emir...

pressure" campaign against Iran.

For two years Saudi Arabia and its allies the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt have barred Qatari flights from their airports and airspace, banned most Qatari visitors, cut trade and shipping links, and closed their borders, unhappy about Doha's insistence on maintaining its own approach to regional relations.

Washington was less than enthusiastic about the embargo on Qatar, which hosts two US military bases and the forward headquarters of the US Central Command, which oversees the Pentagon's operations across the Middle East. Qatar is also slated to take part in the June 25-26 Bahrain conference on the Trump administration's Israeli-Palestinian peace initiative, where Washington hopes to raise financial pledges to support the Palestinian economy. (AFP)

(17) Former President...

who had expected Nazarbayev either to run next year in regularly scheduled elections or to organize a dynastic succession that would see his daughter, Dariga Nazarbayeva, who has held various government posts, come to power.

But some analysts consider that Nazarbayev wanted his family and himself to take a breather while the country wrestles with the problems of economic diversification and social discontent.

"The direct promotion of his daughter to the top post would have hit Nazarbayev's reputation very much," analyst Vyacheslav Polovinko wrote in a piece for the Carnegie Moscow Center. "Now, as President, Tokayev looks like the main conductor of domestic policy, which Kazakhstan society is less and less satisfied with, and thus becomes the main public target for criticism."

In the first anti-government rallies in years, Kazakhs in the big cities took to the streets to protest what has been perceived as an orchestrated handover of power and call for a boycott of the election.

The emerging movement is mostly composed of young, Western-educated Kazakhs who benefited from Kazakhstan's economic boom and relative openness and are now baffled at the autocratic handover of power. Albeit relatively small, the protests in April and May made the government jittery to the point where several independent online media outlets were briefly blocked and the internet was temporarily down in some areas. But organized opposition is diffuse and unlikely to affect the vote.

After the fall of Communism, the huge Central Asian nation of 18 million went on to become one of the most prosperous former Soviet republics, but Kazakhstan is now standing on a crossroads between Russia to the west and China to the east. In recent years, Kazakhstan has played an increasingly prominent role in China's signature, trillion-dollar foreign policy and infrastructure project known as the Belt and Road Initiative, with the transit hub of Khorgos on the Chinese-Kazakh border playing a key role for the movement of goods. At home, Nazarbayev and his successor Tokayev, however, are under pressure for a seeming lack of action to help ethnic Kazakhs held in Chinese interment camps.

China in recent years has moved to the forefront as a major investor in Kazakhstan, pouring in billions of dollars into major infrastructure projects and creating much-needed jobs. (AP)

(18) India Sees New...

economy, new areas in nuclear sector, space, energy.

Most of the agreements will relate to the development of Russia's eastern regions, the official noted. "The Far East is the priority for Russia and we take Russian priorities very seriously," said the ambassador, adding that the Indian government strives to support multilateral economic order in which the interests of all countries will be protected.

Prime Minister Modi will be the principal guest at the Eastern Economic Forum which will be held in September in Vladivostok, Russia's largest city on its Pacific coast. The annually-held high-profile event is aimed at fostering Russian trade and joint projects with the Asia-Pacific.

Moscow and New Delhi are enjoying fruitful economic cooperation, particularly in the military sphere. Last year, the countries agreed on supplies of Russia's S-400 missile systems worth \$5.4 billion and sealed a deal on four Russian guided-missile frigates for the Indian Navy. Investments between the countries exceed \$30 billion with officials hoping to increase that figure to \$50 billion by 2025. (RT)

(19) Japan Plans...

regulators spend more time on inspections under the stricter post-Fukushima standards, while utility companies have opted to scrap aged reactors instead of investing in additional safety measures. Nearly half of the 54 reactors in Japan have been designated for decommissioning, and only nine have resumed operation since the accident.

The slow reactor restarts have added to Japan's large plutonium stockpile from spent fuel. Japan has resorted to reducing the 47-ton stockpile by burning plutonium in conventional reactors after the country's fuel recycling program stalled. The plutonium is currently enough to produce about 6,000 atomic bombs.

But the amount is not decreasing, and experts are now calling for more drastic steps to reduce the stockpile amid criticism that it makes Tokyo's calls for nuclear non-proliferation less credible.

About 37 tons of spent Japanese fuel is being stored in France and Britain where it has been reprocessed since Japan lacks the capability to do it at home.

Japan's main reprocessing plant at Rokkasho, where plutonium and spent fuel are stored but reprocessing has not started, says the 10 tons stored in Japan is under close monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency and there is no risk of proliferation.

In a recommendation to the government this week, the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, a Japanese policy research group, said Japan should drastically reduce the stockpile to just 2-3 tons and keep it under IAEA oversight to ensure the international community of Tokyo's commitment to peaceful atomic use.

The recommendation by a foundation panel goes far beyond government guidelines last year that put the cap at 47 tons, with a pledge to eventually reduce it at an unspecified rate. (AP)