

(1) Abdullah Hopes...

"The release of Taliban prisoners is a goodwill gesture, but it will lose its actual impact if it takes the form of a [election] campaign," Abdullah said at the Council of Ministers meeting on Monday.

Abdullah also said that the peace process does not belong to a person, but it is the will of the people of Afghanistan.

"Afghans want peace and a healthy representation should be made of the will of the people of Afghanistan," said Abdullah, who recently mentioned that the Taliban is the main hurdle on the way of peace efforts in the country. (Tolo news)

(2) UK Announces...

"Fighting and extreme drought have left millions of people hungry and desperately seeking medical help, which is why UK aid is responding with life-saving food, water and basic healthcare, including polio vaccinations."

An estimated 13.5 million Afghans need humanitarian aid to ensure there is enough food for themselves and their families, Britain's development ministry said. (Reuters)

(3) Poultry Feed...

He said prevention of imported old chickens from abroad would help improve domestic poultry farms.

Poultry farms in Balkh and other provinces are enough to meet the needs of the country in terms of meat and eggs production, he said. Nasir Ahmad Durrani also visited factories producing flour in Balkh. The plants have the capacity of producing 7,000 tons of flour in 24 hours. (Pajhwok)

(4) Thousands...

register their assets.

He said registration of assets by government officials was part of the government's commitment to the international community regarding fighting corruption.

"Those officials who refuse to register their assets, their foreign trips and salaries would be suspended," he said.

He did not name officials refusing to register their properties but said such officials would be exposed to the media if they did not register their assets. Registration of properties of officials is now mandatory and no one is exempted.

In response to a question, Bashiryar said, "The assets of 500 government officials are under review, and if we find any violations, the offenders would be introduced to judiciary organs, the salaries of a number of officials have been suspended for violations."

Bashiryar did not provide further details about the issue but said more information would be shared later with media after an ongoing review of the office was completed. However, a number of experts say ARVD has been ineffective and call for its dissolution.

Dr. Ramazan Bashardost, a lawmaker from Kabul, criticized the performance of ARVD and said the office had not been able to register assets of officials whose wealth had significantly increased.

He called for sending the organ packing and said, "This office has embezzled public purse and must be dissolved and its expenses should be distributed to poor people."

He said a majority of officials who had registered their assets had provided wrong information while filling assets registration forms and they did not disclose their original properties.

"In the last term of Wolesi Jirga, only I and Baktash Siawosh registered our assets, others refused to do so," he said.

However, Shekiba Hashemi, a former lawmaker from Kandahar

province, said she registered her assets when she was contesting the lower house election. She also said most of lawmakers did not register their assets.

Only a limited number of legislators last year started registering their properties after the president emphasized that their salaries and privileges would be suspended if they did not reveal their wealth, she said.

But she said salaries of lawmakers who did not register their assets were not suspended despite the president's order.

Hashemi also said ARVD was an ineffective organ and was yet to hold any violators accountable.

Ahmad Shankar, a lecturer at Kabul University, also accused the organ of poor performance and said it had no achievements since it was created.

"We know officials who would come on bicycles but now they travel in luxury vehicles, who asked them? When ARVD has no ability to investigate about the assets of officials, then it should be dissolved," he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(5) Baghlan Mines ...

mine in Chasma Mamor Ghiawor area was extracted illegally.

He said some illegally armed men controlled such mines and it was out of their ability to drive them away. (Pajhwok)

(6) Troop Pullout ...

US and the Taliban reach a consensus in the seventh round of talks, then the development will also pave the way for intra-Afghan talks.

"I think the Taliban and the foreigners had reached very close to an agreement in the sixth round of talks, but they couldn't reach a decision on the exact date," said former Taliban commander Sayed Akbar Agha.

"Both the US and the Taliban delegations are busy visiting the neighbors of Afghanistan. I think when they complete these visits, the 7th round of talks will start in Qatar. As I know, currently, the Taliban delegation is visiting China and them likely to visit Iran after China. Khalilzad has also visited some countries and is due to visit some more," said Hassan Haqyar, a political analyst.

Meanwhile, Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, after returning from the 5th summit of heads of state and government on Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in Tajikistan has said that a consensus has been built in the international level about bringing peace in Afghanistan.

"Alongside attending the summit we had series of meetings with some heads of states and a general consensus has been built in supporting peace in Afghanistan and all other common threats which exist in the region," said Abdullah.

The US forces withdrawal from Afghanistan, counterterrorism assurances, a ceasefire and direct talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban were the main key issues which had been under debate in the six rounds of the negotiators between US chief negotiator Zalmay Khalilzad and Taliban members.

But Khalilzad has recently clarified that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. (Tolo news)

(7) Peace Dependent ...

"Foreigners have taken the elections hostage so that a powerful government is not created in Afghanistan," added Hekmatyar.

"There is no clear and independent address for peace in Afghanistan, an address which will decide on peace independently," he said.

According to Hekmatyar, efforts are underway to "weaken" political parties and disrupt unity among the people. He added that Afghanistan needs inclusive parties if "we want to strengthen democracy". (Tolo news)

(8) Uplift Schemes ...

was their primary demand.

Malak Mohammad, a tribal elder, said residents needed more uplift projects in areas of agriculture, health and education.

He also asked the government to work on improving security in the district near the Pakistan border.

Earlier, Governor Shah Mahmood Miakhel, during a trip to Batikot, had pledged the launch of uplift schemes. (Pajhwok)

(9) EU Leaders...

but only in December," when the leaders hold their annual year-end summit.

- 'On board' -

The growing stress on climate action comes after May 23-26 elections to the European Parliament where Green parties made massive gains.

Spurred by a wave of student strikes, voters in many countries put climate at the top of their concerns and the parliament's main political blocs for the first time adopted climate action as a rallying cry.

The World Wildlife Fund said Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Britain are "on board" for the 2050 goal.

The British government last week presented draft legislation to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2050 in what it said would be a first for a major economy.

The WWF said Austria and Ireland appeared increasingly likely to support the target.

Still uncertain or hesitant, it added, are Belgium, Croatia, Estonia, Lithuania and Slovakia, though they are "unlikely to block" it. It said Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria remain "strongly opposed," but Hungary and Romania could overcome opposition to do a deal.

Under the 2015 Paris climate change treaty, the EU pledged to reduce its carbon emissions by 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. The 195-nation UN pact sealed in Paris calls for capping the rise in Earth's temperature at "well under" two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit), and 1.5C if possible. (AFP)

(10) Xi to Pay...

well-established and long history of bilateral ties, Song said the CPC and the Chinese government have always attached great importance to the relations with the DPRK.

The two political parties and two countries have maintained the tradition of high-level visits since forging diplomatic ties 70 years ago, and have conducted cooperation and exchanges in culture, education, science and technology, sports, and in areas important to people's livelihood, he said.

Stressing that the CPC and the Chinese government have stayed committed to the China-DPRK ties since the 18th CPC National Congress, Song said Xi and Kim have met four times in less than a year, exchanging in-depth views on bilateral ties and the situation on the Korean Peninsula and reaching a series of important consensus, which opened a new chapter for China-DPRK relations.

Both sides have agreed that it is in the interests of the two countries and the two peoples to safeguard, consolidate and develop bilateral relations, said Song.

Both sides have agreed to encourage parties concerned to cherish the hard-won momentum of dialogue and alleviation of tension on the peninsula, stick to the goal of denuclearization, safeguard the peace and stability on the peninsula, and solve the Korean Peninsula issue through dialogue and consultation, Song said.

China supports the DPRK in implementing the new strategic line, focusing on developing economy and improving people's livelihood and steadfastly following a path that suits its national condition, he said.

Both sides have agreed to continue to give full play to the important role of party-to-party exchanges, enhance strategic communication and mutual trust so as to safeguard common interests, Song said.

The DPRK attached great importance to the upcoming visit and will receive Xi and his entourage with warm hospitality, said Song.

According to him, during the visit, Xi will meet and hold talks with Kim and pay homage to the Friendship Tower. The two leaders will review the development of bilateral ties in the past 70 years, and have an in-depth exchange of views on the bilateral ties in the new era so as to guide the future development.

The two sides will further exchange views on the Korean Peninsula situation in the hope of achieving progress in promoting the political settlement of the issue, Song said.

The two will also brief each other on their own countries' development, he added.

China believes that with joint efforts of both sides, Xi's visit will be a success that will open a new chapter of the relations between the two parties and the two countries and make new contribution to regional peace, stability and prosperity, said Song. (Xinhua)

(11) Boris Johnson...

newspaper, which tapped him as a strong contender to become finance minister.

"My view is that we need to start coming together sooner rather than later."

Johnson, the face of the official campaign to leave the European Union in the 2016 referendum, has promised to lead the United Kingdom out of the EU with or without a deal. But parliament has indicated it will try to stop a no-deal Brexit, which investors warn could roil markets and shock the world economy, while the EU has said it will not renegotiate the Withdrawal Agreement that May agreed.

According to economists polled by Reuters, the likelihood of a no-deal exit has jumped in the past month. (Reuters)

(12) CEO: Boeing...

Max, give pilots all the flight information - including speed, altitude and engine performance - that they need to fly safely.

But the botched communication has eroded trust in Boeing as the company struggles to rebound from the passenger jet crashes in Indonesia and Ethiopia.

"We clearly had a mistake in the implementation of the alert," Muilenburg said.

Pilots also have expressed anger that Boeing did not inform them about the new software that's been implicated in the fatal crashes.

Muilenburg expressed confidence that the Boeing 737 Max would be cleared to fly again later this year by U.S. and all other global regulators.

"We will take the time necessary" to ensure the Max is safe, he said.

The model has been grounded worldwide for three months, and regulators need to approve Boeing's long-awaited fix to the soft-

ware before it can return to the skies.

Muilenburg called the crashes of the Lion Air and Ethiopian Airlines jets a "defining moment" for Boeing, but said he thinks the result will be a "better and stronger company."

In the United States, Boeing has faced scrutiny from members of Congress and the FAA over how it reported the problem involving a cockpit warning light.

The feature, called an angle of attack or AoA alert, warns pilots when sensors measuring the up-or-down pitch of the plane's nose relative to oncoming air might be wrong. Boeing has admitted engineers realized within months of the plane's 2017 debut that the sensor warning light only worked when paired with a separate, optional feature but didn't report the issue for more than a year, after the crash in Indonesia. (AP)

(13) Safety and Pollution...

unveiling of a full-size model of the new fighter jet that France and Germany are promoting as a symbol of their efforts to boost European defence autonomy at a time of growing strain in ties with the United States.

The stealth plane is part of the ambitious Future Combat Air System (FCAS) that includes next-generation drones and missiles, which would help reduce the EU's long reliance on US planes and equipment.

The cooperation framework was later signed by the defence ministers of France, Germany and Spain, so far the only other EU nation to join the project, which aims to have its new plane in operation by 2040.

"European countries tend to buy American. We're offering a European plane for Europeans, independent of American technologies," Dassault Aviation CEO Eric Trappier, whose firm is building the plane alongside Airbus, told CNews television earlier Monday. Macron then toured the vast exhibition halls at Le Bourget, where dozens of companies are touting their efforts to make flying cleaner amid criticism of airlines' carbon emissions.

Airbus officially unveiled its A321 XLR jet, the latest iteration of its hugely popular single-aisle A320, which can now cross the Atlantic thanks to increased fuel efficiency. That makes it an option for airlines which currently have to use bigger, fuel-hungry twin-aisle planes on longer routes.

The US-based Air Lease Corporation has signed a letter of intent to buy 27 of the planes, with deliveries to start in 2023.

- Boeing on the backfoot -

Executives at Airbus's archrival Boeing faced a fresh barrage of questions about its handling of the 737 MAX crisis, following the two deadly crashes since October which together claimed 346 lives.

"We want to leave no stone unturned" in the investigations into an anti-stall system suspected of causing the crashes, Boeing's head of commercial airplanes Kevin McAllister told journalists on Monday.

Critics accuse Boeing of failing to properly test a system that used just one sensor to determine if the 737 was at risk of stalling, and of failing to adequately inform and train pilots on its use.

McAllister said the update would use two sensors, but it has yet to submit a fix to regulators, who have grounded the plane indefinitely. "We are very confident that the three layers of protection we are planning with the software update will prevent anything like this happening again," McAllister said. (AFP)