

(1) Iran, India, Afghanistan...

on the fringes of the event provide for the establishment of Chabahar-Muscat and Chabahar-Karachi shipping lines and the inauguration of an international passenger terminal. The MoUs were inked between the General Department of Ports and Marine Transportation and an Omani company. Iran, Oman, India and Pakistan also signed memoranda of understanding on working together to establish a commercial shipping line for the transit of goods from Chabahar to ports in the United Arab Emirates and Oman as well as an MOU on the establishment and inauguration of a specialized container yard to set up a commercial shipping line.

Afghanistan's deputy transport minister said at the conference that Iran, India and Afghanistan had undertaken to run projects in Chabahar. The three countries are also conducting surveys to create a competitive market there in order to attract more investors from the private sector.

India's deputy transport minister also said Iran enjoys rich oil and natural gas reserves, an opportunity that Indians can utilize by investing in Chabahar port. (IRNA)

(2) Take Responsibility...

corruption, organized crimes, and bullying," he said.

This comes after the ministry released a list of 12 wanted criminals and said they are involved in different crimes. A statement by the Ministry of Interior Affairs released on Saturday reads that six suspects were arrested on charges of drug trafficking in Kunduz.

Other statement says that a suspect who wanted to kidnap a 12-year-old boy was arrested in Imam Sahib district in Kunduz. (Tolo news)

(3) Afghan forces...

militants' attack on Shorab base was continuing until Saturday and scores of Afghans and American service members were killed or injured.

However, spokesman for Helmand's provincial governor Omar Zawak has rejected Taliban spokesman's claim, saying no foreigner was hurt.

Meanwhile, the 205th Atal Corps in the southern region said in a statement on Saturday that 51 militants had been killed and dozens of others injured in the southern Kandahar, Zabul and Uruzgan provinces over the past 48 hours.

Afghan observers believe that both the Taliban and government forces would continue to increase military activities amid ongoing peace talks between the Taliban outfit and the U.S. delegation to have upper hand at possible direct talks between the Afghan government and Taliban delegation expected in coming months. (Xinhua)

(4) Taliban: Afghan...

between Taliban and U.S. working groups on Tuesday and Wednesday exclusively revolved around withdrawal of U.S.-led foreign forces "and the nature of this pullout," as well as Taliban guarantees to prevent terrorists from using Afghan soil to harm other nations in the future.

"When the (American) occupation is ended, I think we will have a countrywide consultation with scholars and influential Afghans about the shape of a future government," Shaheen said.

The Taliban, he said, remains committed to the dialogue process with the U.S. because neither side has been able to achieve its objectives militarily in the past two decades.

"So, the only solution is through peaceful means, through diplomatic means, because if we achieve an agreement through peaceful means, that would be better for both sides because that would end hostilities and replace hostilities with cooperation and good relations," Shaheen said.

U.S. President Donald Trump has said that if the talks with the Taliban make progress, he would consider a reduction in American troops in Afghanistan.

The Trump administration's reconciliation envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad,

is leading the American team in the talks with the Taliban.

In a series of tweets Thursday, the Afghan-born diplomat described as "productive" his two-day meetings with the Taliban in Doha.

"We continue to take slow, steady steps toward understanding and, eventually, peace," Khalilzad said, adding "all four key issues remain on the table" but did not elaborate. Khalilzad has repeatedly stated he wants the Taliban to engage in direct talks with the Afghan government to find a political solution to the problems facing the country. But the Taliban staunchly opposes any talks with Kabul, dismissing it an American "puppet."

Shaheen dismissed concerns that a complete foreign troop withdrawal without a solid political reconciliation process in place would worsen the security crisis in Afghanistan. He said the Taliban has already opened talks with Afghan opposition politicians during a recent meeting in Moscow because "we don't want anarchy in the country, we don't want repetition of the chaotic situation of the 1990s."

"We hope we resolve all the issues (with U.S.) and there are no foreign troops on the Afghan soil and we hope we have an Afghan inclusive government in place in the country. So, only in that case there will a sustainable peace and stability in the country," Shaheen said when asked whether talks with the U.S. would deter the Taliban from unleashing its upcoming spring offensive in Afghanistan.

'Spring offensive'

The Taliban usually announces its so-called "spring offensive" around late April that leads to intensification in the war, now in its 18th year, and inflicts heavy battlefield as well Afghan civilian casualties.

The Taliban, meanwhile, has maintained battlefield pressure and launched fresh attacks against Afghan security forces.

On Friday, a large group of insurgents in military uniforms, including suicide bombers, stormed a major army base in southern Helmand province, which also housed U.S. forces. The predawn attack lasted until late afternoon, killing dozens of Afghan forces.

The United Nations, while issuing its annual report on civilian casualties last week, called on warring sides to seize the opportunity for peace to end the Afghan human tragedy and misery. The report documented almost 4,000 civilian deaths in conflict-related incidents in 2018, representing the highest number of Afghan civilian fatalities in a decade.

Shaheen noted that the presence in Doha of the newly appointed Taliban deputy political leader, Abdul Ghani Akhund, popularly known as Mullah Baradar, is playing a "pivotal" role in furthering the dialogue process with the U.S.

Baradar was given the new responsibility in January, months after he was freed from a prison in Pakistan on Khalilzad's request to meet a key Taliban demand to boost the dialogue process.

"The negotiation team every day has consultation with him and they receive his instruction and guidance how to proceed with the talks. So, that's very important that we have access to him otherwise it would have taken days if not weeks to have the same instruction from the (Taliban) leadership," Shaheen said. (VoA)

(5) UNHCR Resumes...

it needs to be well-informed, voluntary, safe and dignified," said UNHCR Representative in Pakistan Ruvendrini Menikdiwela.

Menikdiwela said the UNHCR acknowledges and appreciates the people and government of Pakistan for hosting Afghan refugees for four decades.

She said the firm generosity has contributed to the global refugee cause at a time when pushbacks of refugees and asylum fatigue are witnessed globally.

As the year 2019 marks the 40 years of the Afghan displacement, Menikdi-

wela reiterated her call to the international community to help enhance Afghanistan's absorption capacity and provide targeted development assistance in high return areas in Afghanistan for sustainable reintegration of returnees. She also called for support to Afghan refugees and their host communities.

She also reaffirmed UNHCR's commitment to work with the governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan on long-term solutions for 1.4 million registered Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

The UNHCR provides approximately 200 U.S. dollars to every registered individual upon their return to Afghanistan. Returnees receive the cash grant at UNHCR encashment centers in Afghanistan.

On Thursday, Pakistan State Bank announced that registered Afghan refugees can now open bank accounts in Pakistan following the decision by Prime Minister Imran Khan.

A bank notification said the refugees' PoR card will be considered equal to Pakistani national identity card for biometric identification of the refugees. (Monitoring Desk)

(6) HPC Chief Remains...

In reaction to Atmar's remarks, President Ashraf Ghani's spokesman Haroon Chakhansuri said the president will run his office until the presidential elections.

Second Deputy of Chief Executive Mohammad Mohaqiq meanwhile said postponing the presidential elections for the peace talks is justifiable.

"We believe that peace is not against democracy. Peace should finally end to democracy. I do not think that peace can be implemented without having an Islamic republic and the result of the Islamic republic is that elections should take place either early or late," Mohaqiq said. (Tolo news)

(7) Calls Mount for...

- Aurwang Zeb, 39, who got eight votes, is from Paktia province, has a bachelor's degree in agriculture.

- Hawa Alam Nursitani, 46, who got eight votes, is from Nuristan province. She has a bachelor's degree in law.

- Geti, 42, who got seven votes, is from Kapisa province and has a bachelor's degree in law.

- Zuhra Bayan is from Parwan province and has a bachelor's degree in law.

- Zakir Zaki, 43, who got seven votes is from Samangan province. He has a master's degree in agriculture.

- Qutbuddin Roidad, 39, who got seven votes, is from Paktia province and has a bachelor's degree in religious sciences.

- Hanif Daishyar, 35, who got seven votes, is from Ghazni province. He has a bachelor's degree in sociology.

- Najibullah Kamawal, 35, who got six votes, is from Nangarhar province. He has a master's degree in public health.

- Din Mohammad Azimi, 44, who got six votes, is from Ghor province. He has a master's degree in criminology.

According to sources, the education documents of some of the individuals have not been approved by the Ministry of Higher Education.

President Ashraf Ghani is expected to announce the new commissioners and heads of the secretariat of the IEC and IECC within the next 24 hours. Former head of the IEC, Najibullah Ahmadzai, said few numbers of those who got the highest votes have knowledge about elections.

"Three or four of them are professional individuals and have knowledge about elections but others are unprofessional individuals and I think that the next elections cannot be held with such commissioners," he told TOLONews.

"We are concerned about going back to the scenario of the previous parliamentary elections if the new faces actually lack the required experience on elections," said Marwa Amini, spokesperson for Free and Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan.

The voting was held at the Presidential Palace on Friday.

"The individuals for whom the presidential candidates voted are among

the trusted individuals," said Lal Gul Lal, member of Free and Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan.

The Afghan government has described the voting as a transparent process.

"The voting was held in a transparent and reliable environment," the Second Vice President Sarwar Danish said at a ceremony in Kabul on Saturday. "This is a sign of hope and shows respect to democracy."

From the 18 presidential candidates, one of them did participate in the voting process for new election commissioners.

"The people of Afghanistan are asking why the parliamentary elections votes were not invalidated while they were invalid. I will not vote for new commissioners until the parliamentary votes are not invalidated," said Noorullah Jalili, a presidential candidate.

Some residents of different provinces said those who are appointed as new commissioners should try to restore public trust in the electoral process.

"Commissioners should not violate the rights of the people," said Hashmatullah, a Balkh resident.

"They should not compromise on national issues," said Shirbaz, a Kabul resident.

The new election commissioners are expected to address the irregularities in the October 20 parliamentary elections after they are appointed to the posts. (Tolo news)

(8) Hayat Endorses...

"All brothers, sisters, mothers, and elders who have supported us are all welcome to the 20th Corps; the door is always open," he said, "We will be vigilant, never sleep, and provide security. Soon peace will prevail."

As residents adorned the 205th Corps with flowers and praise to show their support to Security Forces, Provincial Governor Hayat addressed his province and the parade of security forces who were in attendance.

"Thank you so much from the bottom of my heart. You chose this career, you could have left for anywhere else in the world but you chose to stay and be defenders of the people."

Governor Hayat went on to appeal to the people of Afghanistan to support and ask for peace.

"Our President wants peace and our people want peace. I hope these talks lead to peace. We must destroy and kills our enemies who do not want peace."

Governor Hayat observed the traditional security forces parade and closed the parade by rallying for security and peace as the top priority before the elections. (KP)

(9) Probe Team Faces...

the investigation by probing the people and institutions which their statements are necessary for the case," Rasuli said.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said visas were requested for the two members of the AGO from a European country's embassy in Kabul, but so far, the request has not been responded.

Meanwhile, sources told TOLONews that the fact-finding team so far has investigated and interviewed more than 30 people in the country in relation to the case.

The sources, however, said a number of people who had lodged complaints against the AFF officials over sexual and physical abuse against women players of the federation, have withdrawn their complaints "due to unknown reasons". A number of them have disappeared, the sources said.

The sources also said that the fact-finding team has made good progresses in Kabul.

The Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA), meanwhile, said the AGO should have implemented a system which could expedite the case.

"The systems which are needed for expedition of the case and quality of complex cases have not been established by the AGO; therefore, there are many cases in the Attorney General's Office which have been left uninvestigated for years," said Nasir Taimori, an IWA researcher. The issue of sexual and physical as-

sault against women players raised in last December when a number of former women players claimed that the AFF chairman Keramuddin Karim and some other officials abused them sexually and physically.

Following the claims, the AGO announced a list which included the AFF members who were suspended and banned from travelling.

The list includes following individuals:

- Keramuddin Karim, head of Afghanistan Football Federation
- Nader Alemi, head of goalkeepers' committee
- Sayed Ali Reza Aqazada, secretary general of the federation
- Abdul Saboor Walizada, head of provinces relations
- Rustam, an employee of the federation

(Tolo news)

(10) Bamiyan Hosts...

and it was an absoletely incredible race," an Australian skier said.

"I got to Afghanistan about a week ago and we have been skiing everyday. And then today did the race and it was fantastic," an American skier said.

On Thursday, also Bamiyan host the fifth round of girls ski competition as well as the traditional ski competition or wooden ski for boys. (KP)

(11) Achin Needs...

are now worried about the lack of development projects in the district. They said they want development projects to be implemented in the district.

"During Taliban and Daesh war, we suffered a lot and we witnessed bad days and they destroyed our homes," said Mohammad Ishaq, an Achin resident. "I built two rooms for myself while bearing many difficulties."

"The area was a Daesh stronghold but now it is under government's control," said Obaidullah Shinwari, Deputy Head of Nangarhar Provincial Council. "People call on government to build roads, hospitals, and schools in the district."

President Ashraf Ghani in his trip to Nangarhar on January 10 vowed to implement more development projects in Nangarhar districts while he praised the Afghan forces and the residents' resilience in the fight against Daesh.

Meanwhile, a local official in Nangarhar said development projects in the district will be implemented in the near future.

"A survey in the district is underway as per President Ghani's direction to soon start development projects in Achin," said Mujib-ur-Rahman head of the provincial Rural Development Directorate. (Tolo news)

(12) Taliban Suffer Heavy...

The statement further added that most recently, in Tarin Kot and Dehrahwod Districts, the 205th Corps destroyed 6 insurgents along with weapons and vehicles. The Uruzgan operation took place on Afghan National Security Forces Day, celebrating their continued defense of the Afghan people.

"We will remain vigilant, we will never sleep, and provide security. Soon, peace will prevail," said Brigadier General Shafiqullah, the 205th Corps Executive Officer. (KP)

(13) 4-Hour Clash...

militants were killed in the clash and 5 other were wounded during the clash which ended at a3:40pm local time.

According to 209th Shaheen Corps, the clash started at around noon time after Taliban militants attacked a military convoy in Do Aab area but was repulsed after the armed forces received artillery and air support. The 209th Shaheen Corps also added that four armed members of the armed forces also sustained injuries during the clash and two vehicles were partially damaged.

The military convoy has now reached to the operations site in the outskirts of Refugees Camp and Township, the statement by 209th Shaheen Corps added. (KP)