

**(1) US to Transfer...**

Shanahan said that the US military had more than 4,000 service members on the border, along with 19 aircraft.

All 10 Democrats on Senate appropriations subcommittees that handle defense, veterans affairs and related spending, wrote to Shanahan to oppose the decision. "We are dismayed that the Department has chosen to prioritize a political campaign promise over the disaster relief needs of our service members," they said.

A US official said the latest transfer would include \$604 million from funds for the Afghan security forces, which are struggling to hold territory against Taliban militants.

The United States had appropriated \$4.9 billion in support for those forces this year. The official said the money was taken from that account because they found savings in contracts.

"It took less money to meet the policy commitment than we thought," another U.S. official said, adding this was not the first time money had been reprogrammed from the account.

The United States is in talks with the Taliban to end the 17-year-long war. US and Taliban negotiators wrapped up their sixth round of peace talks on Thursday with "some progress" on a draft agreement for when foreign troops might withdraw.

But there is concern that overstretched Afghan forces could crumble if US troops leave.

The remainder of the money will come from a chemical demilitarization program, a retirement account, funds for Pakistan and Air Force programs.

Lawmakers have hinted they may respond by putting new restrictions on the Pentagon's authority to move money around, as it has done in the past to deal with natural disasters.

Immigration is a signature issue of Trump's presidency and re-election campaign. He declared a national emergency in order to redirect funding to build a border wall without Congress' approval, and his fellow Republicans in Congress sustained his veto of legislation that would have stopped it. (Tolo news)

**(2) Shaheen Wants...**

"They want to see the Afghan Constitution that was put in place after the overthrow of the Taliban that preserves human rights for all Afghans, particularly for women. "They don't want to go back to that time when women couldn't work, when there was no freedom of movement, when girls couldn't go to school. That is not a future stable Afghanistan," said Shaheen. (Pajhwok)

**(3) EU Envoy Stresses...**

the European Union member states acknowledging the sanctity of the role of women in the peace process. So we are there very much on your side you the women in Afghanistan to promote your inclusivity, to help you having the gains of the last eighteen years respected and brought forward and all together I would say to fight together on your side for the respect of the Constitutional order."

"Our EU vision of the Afghanistan of tomorrow is certainly not an Afghanistan where women would be subject of an emirate but rather full-fledged citizens of the republic," he said.

The EU Deputy Managing Director for Asia and the Pacific, Paola Pampaloni, said the European Union will strongly continue its

financial and political support to Afghan women.

"Just to confirm as the voice from Brussels the strong support that we will continue to provide to women here in Afghanistan and you can say that is really an important element of our bilateral relations between the EU and Afghanistan. And our support is not only financial support, in many aspects of our cooperation, but is a strong political support that is incorporated in any activities that we do and we undertake with the government of Afghanistan," Paula Pampaloni said.

She said the EU will accompany Afghanistan in reaching a peace deal with the Taliban, will support the deal implementation and will ensure that the values and women's rights will be preserved. A number of Afghan women who attended the ceremony meanwhile raised concerns over continued violence.

The women said Taliban during the Ramadan has increased their attacks in cities and recently they attacked a foreign aid organization in Kabul in which nine people lost their lives.

"Yesterday's attack on the Counterpart (International) office during this holy month of Ramadan, once again has left fear, destruction, injuries and loss of innocent lives and shows the brutality of the terrorist group we are dealing with," said Nabilla Muslih, Deputy Women Affairs Minister.

Muslih said Afghans are tired of the 40 years of war, but the people, especially women, have not lost their hopes for peace, even they have lost members in fights and have suffered from the violence.

This comes as the sixth round of talks between the US and Taliban ended in Doha on Thursday where they made progress on some issues agreed in draft in previous round. (Tolo news)

**(4) Taliban Fighters...**

the Western-backed government and its U.S. partners struggling to catch up.

Last month, for example the Taliban was swift to deny involvement in a suicide attack on the communications ministry in Kabul later blamed on Islamic State, while information from the government was slower to emerge.

Taliban spokesmen say they have also stepped up their outreach as the pace of direct talks between its negotiators and the United States on ending the war in Afghanistan has picked up in recent months. They are often quicker than U.S. officials to give their read-out from the talks - the sixth round of which wrapped up in Qatar on Thursday.

"Whatever developments occur during the Doha talks, we share it with journalists," said Mujahid, adding that the messages were aimed at domestic and international audiences. (Reuters)

**(5) India, China...**

their arms and end the nearly two-decades-long civil war in Afghanistan. Both sides have participated in several rounds of meeting in Qatar in an effort to chalk out a peace agreement.

On Tuesday, US Special Representative for Afghan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad held consultations with Indian government officials and other stakeholders, including External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj in New Delhi.

Khalilzad, who was on a recent two-day visit to India, also met National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale, and India's Ambassa-

dor to Afghanistan Vinay Kumar, among others.

During his meetings, Khalilzad welcomed India's support for the Afghan peace process, which "strengthens an emerging international consensus for peace efforts." He also recognised that many important contributions India has made to Afghanistan's development.

India has been a key stakeholder in Afghanistan's peace and reconciliation process and has been pushing for an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled peace process.

In November last year, India had participated in talks on 'Afghanistan peace process' in Moscow at a non-official level.

India sent two former diplomats to the meeting, which was also attended by Taliban leaders even though New Delhi has a policy on not engaging with the terror group. (ANI)

**(6) Leading WJ...**

"Elections were conducted in a more transparent manner Kabul than in other provinces. Election results across the country have been approved by the IEC, which cannot verify the outcome from Kabul. No excuse is acceptable to us."

She said they would continue demonstrations until final results from Kabul were announced and the selection of Administrative Board delayed. (Pajhwok)

**(7) US Deploying Even...**

boats belonging to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which President Donald Trump conveniently declared a terrorist organization last month. The US military, CNN said, "believes that cruise missiles could be launched from the small Iranian boats."

"We have been very clear that we have no interest in escalation," Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif told Al Jazeera earlier this week, adding that Iran would not "permit the US to threaten the Persian Gulf." Last month, he warned Trump that the more hawkish members of his administration might conduct a false-flag attack to push the US into war with Iran. On Friday, the US Maritime Administration issued a warning that "Iran or its proxies" may target commercial and military vessels in the area, advising commercial ships to alert the US' Fifth Fleet several days in advance before accessing the Strait of Hormuz. (RT)

**(8) Venezuela's Maduro...**

'interim president' of Venezuela by the US and 50 other countries, lamented that the opposition did not have enough manpower and supporters within government circles.

While the opposition seemed to have been poorly prepared for a decisive push to topple Maduro, it might be explained by the fact that Figuera was apparently in a hurry to rush the coup before his imminent arrest.

Maduro revealed that he was given a heads-up by Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino, Supreme Court chief Maikel Moreno, and chief of the General Directorate of Military Counterintelligence, Iván Hernández Dala, about Figuera's "strange behavior" in the run-up to the coup attempt.

Figuera was going to be fired and arrested at 9:00am on April 30, and that is what apparently prompted him to set the coup in motion, Maduro said.

The president also accused the former spy chief of spreading false rumors about Padrino and Moreno's intent to join the oppo-

sition, both considered "honorable patriots" by Maduro.

Figuera became one of the most senior officials to switch sides and join the Guaido-led opposition. In a letter circulated after he broke ranks with Maduro, he wrote that his decision was prompted by his desire to "rebuild the country" and fight rampant corruption.

His defection earned lavish praise from US Vice President Mike Pence, who cited Figuera's example as a rallying call for those Venezuelan servicemen who don't want to suffer under US sanctions. Pence personally announced the lifting of all sanctions from Figuera on Tuesday, commending him for "taking a stand for the Bolivarian constitution and libertad." (RT)

**(9) 'Very Standard...**

"But at this point no," he said, calling the tests "very standard stuff."

Trump sounded equally ambiguous when talking about his supposedly "excellent" relationship with Kim. He said that for the moment, the two remain on friendly terms, adding that this too might change "at some point."

Following their summit in Hanoi in February, the thaw between the two nations appeared all but over after the talks ended with no deal and were followed by strong rhetoric from Pyongyang questioning Washington's willingness to mend ties with the North.

North Korea accused the US of using a strong-arm approach to the negotiations, urging it to drop "its current calculation method" and vowing to increase its own defensive posture in the meantime, including resuming missile tests.

The talks in Vietnam ended abruptly after the US reportedly refused to relieve North Korea of sanctions in exchange for it halting nuclear and ballistic missiles tests, while insisting on full and irreversible denuclearization. In the wake of the short-range missile launches by Pyongyang, the US test-fired an intercontinental ballistic missile and conducted a submarine missile test.

The US military insisted that the timing of the tests is in no way connected to the North Korean launches. (RT)

**(10) Rebels Set to...**

countries of the US-British-Saudi-Emirati aggression and their allies to implement the (Stockholm) accord," the rebel leader said on Twitter.

The United Nations announced late Friday that the rebels will begin a long-delayed withdrawal from Hodeida and two other Red Sea ports on Saturday, the first step on the ground since the ceasefire deal was struck in Sweden.

The withdrawal of rebel forces will be completed by Tuesday, the head of the UN redeployment committee, General Michael Lolloesgaard, said in a statement.

A UN observer mission led by Lolloesgaard will monitor the withdrawal.

The information minister of the internationally recognised government, Moammer al-Eryani, welcomed the UN announcement but warned the rebels might be trying to "mislead" the international community. (AFP)

**(11) Indian Air Force...**

According to the media reports, the aircraft did not follow the authorised Air Traffic Services (ATS) route and was "shadowed and forced" to land at Jaipur for necessary investigation when it was flying at 27,000 feet.

Immediately after its landing at the Jaipur airport, security per-

sonnel belonging to the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) cordoned-off the airport area. (Xinhua)

**(12) 200,000 Syrian...**

the newspaper that the process of return is still adopted by Lebanese authorities and trips to Syria will increase again after the end of Ramadan and during the summer. More than 1 million Syrian refugees are registered with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Lebanon, while the Lebanese government estimated the true number of Syrians in the country at 1.5 million.

To facilitate the return of Syrian refugees to their homeland, Russia has drafted a strategy and presented it to the Lebanese authorities.

The strategy aims at securing the return of 890,000 Syrian refugees to their homeland. (Xinhua)

**(13) Venezuelan Navy...**

The instruction was obeyed," the Venezuelan Navy said in a statement.

The Navy had already spotted the vessel a day before when it was transiting through Venezuela's exclusive economic zone, and sent a patrol vessel to start monitoring its maneuvers.

A state's territorial waters reaches up to 12 nautical miles, while a "contiguous zone" in which a state can enforce limited control for the purpose of preventing "infringement of its customs, fiscal, immigration or sanitary laws and regulations" can be set to up to 24 nautical miles.

An exclusive economic zone extends up to 200 nautical miles.

Venezuela's UN envoy, Samuel Moncada, slammed the US ship's actions as a clear provocation aimed at inciting unrest. (RT)

**(14) Trump Orders...**

Friday with no deal, but no immediate breakdown either, offering a glimmer of hope that Washington and Beijing could find a way to avert damage to the global economy.

"Over the course of the past two days, the United States and China have held candid and constructive conversations on the status of the trade relationship between both countries," Trump tweeted. (AFP)

**(15) Iran Not Much...**

The official also noted that Iran's exports in the metal industry sector did not decline over the past year following Washington's withdrawal from the nuclear deal, but rather increased compared to its previous year.

Last year, he added, Iran produced 25 million tons of steel, which make up 1.5 percent of the world's steel output.

Iran plans to boost steel output to 55 million tons a year by 2025, of which 10-15 million tonnes would be earmarked for export.

In a statement released on Wednesday, Trump said that the new anti-Iran sanctions target "Iran's revenue from the export of industrial metals - 10 percent of its export economy." (Press TV)

**(16) Pakistan Believes...**

Replying to a question, Dr. Arif Alvi said, there is no debate going on to have a presidential system in the country.

Pakistan's Parliamentary system is very strong and presidential system if comes can give birth to many new problems and issues.

The rights given to provinces under 18th amendment cannot be taken back and Pakistan is used to this system now. We can discuss the presidential system but cannot implement it in Pakistan, he added. (Monitoring Desk)