

**(1) Take Advantage...**

Meanwhile, US Central Command chief Gen Joseph Votal said his country would keep pressure on the Taliban until they arrive at the negotiating table.

He made these remarks during a visit to the capital of Tajikistan: "I would send a message to the Taliban that they cannot win the war."

Votal asked the Taliban to take advantage of President Ghani's offer and join the reconciliation process. (Pajhwok)

**(2) Afghan...**

a priority considering the demands of the Afghan nation and invites the Ulemas, influential figures, civil activists, and women to play their role in peace and reconciliation efforts and encourage the militants to participate in intra-Afghan peace talks. (KP)

**(3) Saudi Arabia...**

the statement said.

The Alkhaledi added that peace in Afghanistan was a basic priority and all effort in this regard needed to be supported. He reassured that Saudi would provide all possible support for Afghan peace process.

He says Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan are friendly countries and considered the people of Afghanistan as brothers and sisters.

The HPC chairman thanked the cooperation and assistance of Saudi Arabia with Afghanistan and termed Riyadh's role in Afghan reconciliation as crucial. He said the Afghan conflict could only be resolved through dialogue and stressed over Saudi and other Islamic countries' cooperation in this regard.

Referring to a collective and general consensus on peace in Afghanistan, Khalili said the HPC in the past eight months met people from different walks of life, including ulema, Jihadi leader, politicians, civil society activist, analysts, political parties and youth who fully supported peace and reconciliation in the country. (Pajhwok)

**(4) NATO Hails...**

in free and fair elections, this is because of you," the envoy said On occasion of the selection event for the Afghan team for the Invictus Games 2018 in Sydney, Australia.

"Today is an important day, as this year's Team Afghanistan for the Invictus Games in Sydney will be chosen. My special thanks go to Australia, one of NATO's closest partners and troop contributors to Resolute Support, and the generous host of this year's Invictus Games," he said.

Zimmermann said he was convinced that brave and courageous Afghans such as you would make this country a secure place for everyone to live in.

"You are the shining examples that prove that difficulties are surmountable and are not an excuse to quit. You show us that when the going gets tough, we must persevere. Through hard times NATO stands by you. We stand by you as long as it takes to bring about lasting peace and stability," he said. (Pajhwok)

**(5) UN Human...**

recognizing government's work on human rights, particularly its ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, which reinforces Afghanistan's compliance with international human rights standards, he urged the authorities to investigate and prosecute military or civilian perpetrators of so-called "bacha bazi" - a form of sexual abuse against boys. Turning to the vulnerability

of civilians in recent days during the registration process for elections in October, he referred to a report released by the UN Assistance Mission (UNAMA) on Thursday, that detailed a disturbing pattern of attacks at election-related facilities, which have resulted so far in 271 civilians killed and injured.

Meeting with President Ashraf Ghani on Wednesday, Gilmour welcomed Ghani's clear commitment to take additional measures to protect civilians.

At a conference on peace and reconciliation, he called the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) an impressive and crucial pillar of society, saying: "The people of Afghanistan want security and a lasting peace built on accountability and justice. I hope the government hear these compelling voices."

While in Kunduz province, Gilmour stressed to the provincial authorities the need to reduce civilian casualties during military operations.

He spoke with community representatives from Laghmani village, Dasht-e-Archi district about the Afghan forces' firing on April 2 of rockets and machine guns on a religious gathering - leading to the reported death and injury of more than 100 people, mainly children.

The UN rights official said he was deeply troubled by the incident and urged government at the highest levels to better protect civilians, hold perpetrators accountable in line with their obligations under international humanitarian law and restore trust between the residents of Dasht-e-archi and government.

"Accepting full responsibility for what clearly was a terrible mistake, and a sincere apology for the suffering caused, is always a useful step in advancing reconciliation and failure to do so provides great ammunition for terrorists and extremists," he said. (Tolo news)

**(6) Ghani Reshuffles...**

Gen. Dilawar Shah as Faryab Police Chief.

Meanwhile, Brig. Gen. Ahmad Fahim Qaem has appointed as police chief for northwestern Badghis province replacing Abdul Raouf Taj, Maj. Gen. Abdul Qaium Baqizoi appointed as police chief for northern Sar-i-Pul province replacing Abdul Khalil Dastiyar and deputy police chief of Maidan Wardak province, Mohammad Abdali appointed as police chief for Logar province.

Abdul Raouf Uruzgani has appointed as police chief and Brig. Gen. Haq Nawaz Haqyar as deputy public order police commander for eastern Laghman.

On the other hand, Col. Farid Mashal has appointed as police chief for southern Ghazni province, Brig. Gen. Mohammad Sabir has appointed as police chief for northeastern Badakhshan province, Col. Sayed Abas Sadad has appointed as police chief for eastern Nuristan province and Brig. Gen. Ghulam Sakhi Ghafoori has appointed as police chief for southwestern Daikundi province.

Police chief of southeastern Khost province, Brig. Gen. Faizullah Jalal, Badghis police chief Brig. Gen. Ismatullah Alizai, Logar police chief, Kunduz police chief Brig. Gen. Abdul Hamid Hamid, Faryab police chief Brig. Gen. Dalawar Shah, Ghazni police chief Brig. Gen. Mohammad Zaman, Badakhshan police chief Brig. Gen. Abdul Khaliq Aqsai, Herat police chief Brig. Gen. Ayub Ansari and Daikundi police chief Mohammad Baqir Murtazawe have been introduced to the waiting list. (Pajhwok)

**(7) US Supports...**

society who wants to build a future Afghanistan in which everyone can live in peace," the ambassador said at a graduation ceremony of American University of Afghanistan's (AUAF) students on Friday.

The AUAF President Kenneth Holland meanwhile said the university continues its efforts to train young leaders for the future of Afghanistan and that they will contribute to the country's development and prosperity.

"We are trying to train the future leaders of Afghanistan and give them the skills they need to solve the problems of the country to bring peace, democracy, human rights and prosperity to Afghanistan," said Holland.

"The main objective of the university and students is to pull Afghanistan out of the current situation," Sharif Fayezi, AUAF founder, said.

The students got diplomas from political science, technology and business administration. They said they will contribute in Afghanistan's reconstruction. "Students from around the country are learning here and all are trying to find a better way for a better tomorrow," a graduate of political science said.

"Our goal is to lead Afghanistan from the current situation to development using the knowledge we learned here," a graduate said.

Two years ago, militants attacked the AUAF compound in which 16 teachers and students lost their lives and over 40 others were injured.

Breshna Musazai, a female student of the university, was injured in the attack. She was treated, but the incident left her with disability. Despite that, she continued her higher education at the AUAF and was one of those who were graduated on Friday.

"I was thinking that I would not be able to continue my lessons, but I had the support of my family and the university personnel. Today I am happy for getting my diploma," said Musazai. (Tolo news)

**(8) Terrified Andar...**

highway for traffic for the last several days, another problem, he said.

"The road is shut, people are in great trouble, some people use subways which are too unsafe," he said.

These and other residents of Andar urged the government to resolve their problems.

Mohammad Qasim Desiwal, administrative chief of Andar district, said militants used to hide in civilian houses --- a reason of the Afghan forces operation has been sluggish.

"Taliban invited their gunmen from other areas to join the battle, their special unit has arrived in Andar, the rebel group has planted landmines on roads and people cannot go anywhere," he said.

However, Desiwal said the Taliban would not be able to take control of the district.

Reinforcements have arrived in Andar district and security officials have promised to launch a wide-scale operation, he said. On the other hand, a Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid said that militants did not use people's houses as bastions. He said people had left their houses in areas where clashes were ongoing.

He confirmed the Taliban had planted bombs on roads but said they were remotely controlled and targeted only Afghan forces.

According to local officials, except four villages and the district center, all other areas of Andar are under Taliban's con-

trol. (Pajhwok)

**(9) Air Corridors with...**

Arabia will also take place next week.

He said around five tons of goods will be exported in the first flight to Saudi which will include Saffron and other trade commodities.

In the meantime, Rasa said the government is also engaged in boosting the trade of granite and marble.

Rasa further added that the government is working to include the marbles and granite trade in its national exports strategy which will pave the way for the exports of the marbles to China and other countries. (KP)

**(10) Afghan Fighting...**

A Taliban spokesman claimed its fighters killed 27 government forces and overran a "large outpost", seizing weapons and "large amount of equipment."

On Thursday, the Taliban attacked and killed 43 Afghan soldiers and policemen in Farah's Bala Buluk district, and overran two security posts there, Afghan television channel, ATN News, quoted the provincial council head, Farid Bakhtawar, as confirming.

Insurgents control or contest a majority of Farah's 11 districts. The province borders Iran and it is a major opium-poppo growing area in western Afghanistan. The Taliban launched its so-called spring offensive on April 25 and has since inflicted heavy casualties on Afghan forces besides capturing new districts.

The U.S.-backed Kabul government last week informed parliament that during the first eight days of this month, insurgent killed more than 250 Afghan forces and wounded 400 others. Critics cite lack of manpower and rampant corruption for the increased battlefield setbacks Afghan forces have suffered since 2014, when NATO transferred national security responsibilities to them and most of the international forces withdrew.

The Taliban has since expanded its influence to most of the 34 Afghan provinces, advances the U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, or SIGAR, has again noted in its latest quarterly report.

The watchdog said that government forces have suffered large casualties but Kabul has recently asked the U.S. military not to release those casualty figures publicly.

"As of January 31, 2018, about 65 percent of Afghanistan's estimated 32.5 million people lived in areas under Afghan government control or influence. Insurgents controlled or influenced areas containing 12 percent of the population. The remaining 23 percent of the population lived in contested areas," according to SIGAR.

The intensified violence threatens the peaceful holding of long-delayed Afghan parliamentary and district council elections now scheduled for October 20. (VoA)

**(11) Lack of Social...**

cannot trust you. By hearing this, I concluded that there is no job for me therefore I returned to drug use," said Sharifi.

Hamid, 26, is also under treatment at the rehabilitant center. "Drug addicts come here with no awareness about treatment conditions. We have awareness department through which we motivate them to leave drugs," said Sayed Tamim Aziz, a counselor.

There is a need for awareness campaigns on drugs by the Ministry of Education at schools, said Ahmad Zahir Sultani, a supervisor of Ministry of Public Health.

"Such campaigns can be held at universities too," Sultani added.

(Tolo news)

**(12) Taliban Advances in...**

Separately, unidentified gunmen shot dead Rasoul and injured his son residents of Ferozkoh City on Friday, Nizami said, adding Rasoul and his son were on way to attend a gathering.

Security forces had launched investigation into the incident, he concluded. (Pajhwok)

## Iran Foreign Minister Sets Off on Tour to Save Nuclear Deal

DUBAI - Iran's foreign minister embarks on a tour of world powers on Saturday, state media reported, in what is seen as a last-ditch effort to save Tehran's nuclear deal after Washington's withdrawal from the accord.

President Donald Trump pulled the United States out of the deal on Tuesday, raising the risk of conflict in the Middle East, upsetting European allies and casting uncertainty over global oil supplies.

Iran said it would remain committed to the deal without Washington if Tehran achieved its goals - namely being protected from sanctions against key sectors of its economy such as oil - in cooperation with other countries that have signed up to the agreement.

President Hassan Rouhani said he had asked Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif to negotiate with European countries, China and Russia in the coming weeks. "If at the end of this short period we conclude that we can fully benefit from the (nuclear accord ...), the deal would remain," he said.

Zarif is due to leave for Beijing on Saturday and will later travel to Russia. He will then go to Brussels to meet counterparts from Germany, Britain and France "about the fate of the nuclear deal", Iranian state television said.

"Iran has asked the European Union and particularly Germany, France and Britain to announce as soon as possible their stand on how Iran's interests can be fulfilled and guaranteed under the nuclear agreement after America's withdrawal," the TV report said. (Reuters)

## U.S. Fighters Escort Russian Bombers during Training Flight: Russian Military

MOSCOW - Two U.S. F-22 fighters escorted Russia's Tu-95MS strategic bombers and Tu-142 anti-submarine aircraft when they were on a routine flight Friday, the Russian Defense Ministry said Saturday.

Accompanied by MiG-31 and Su-35 fighters, the Russian jets flew over the neutral waters of the Arctic Ocean, the Bering Sea and the Sea of Okhotsk and conducted re-fueling in the air, the ministry's spokesman Igor Konashenkov said.

The U.S. F-22 fighters escorted the Russian aircraft for 40 minutes and kept a distance of over 100 meters, he said in a statement.

"All flights are carried out in strict accordance with the international rules for the use of airspace, without violating the borders of other countries," he added.

According to CNN reports, U.S. military confirmed the escort in a statement, saying two Alaska-based F-22 fighters "intercepted and visually identified the Russian bombers."

The U.S. statement also said that the Russian aircraft never entered U.S. airspace. (Xinhua)