

### (1) U.S. Peace...

The Taliban last month presented demands to Khalilzad that included a timeline for the withdrawal of U.S. troops and the release of senior Taliban from jails in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

In October, Pakistan released one of the co-founders of the Taliban and another high-ranking commander.

No date has been announced for another round of talks but the Taliban have stepped up their attacks on government forces, inflicting hundreds of casualties over recent weeks in assaults in different parts of the country.

A senior government official in Kabul said Khalilzad wanted Afghan society represented in talks.

"Ambassador Khalilzad met men and women from all walks of the Afghan society to bring them together as a stakeholder in talks with the Taliban," the government official said.

The emphasis on "Afghan society" appeared aimed at persuading the Taliban to accept an Afghan delegation that does not officially represent the government. Two Taliban officials in Afghanistan said they would continue engagement with Khalilzad, but would not say if their leaders would accept an Afghan delegation. "We're watching every diplomatic move of the U.S. officials. We'll continue our fight until the U.S. accepts our demands," said Zabiullah Mujahid, a Taliban spokesman. (Reuters)

### (2) Holding All...

"These discussions have been ongoing for the last five days and we hope we would be able to announce the election schedule as soon as possible," he added.

In response to a question about the prolonged delay in announcing election schedule, Ibrahim said the schedule was final but discussions on holding all the three elections together in Ghazni province were still underway.

Residents of Ghazni province during a protest in April this year had asked for holding elections in Ghazni based on electoral districts and the IEC finally on June 25 announced that the polls in the province would be based on electoral districts and 11 seats for the province would be divided into three regions.

However, a day after the IEC's decision about Ghazni elections, a number of lawmakers from the province opposed the decision. (Pajhwok)

### (3) Afghanistan...

what they would like to do as part of it in where they would like to be," he said. It is in the interest of the people of Pakistan that Pakistan has closer linkages and ties with India and Central Asia as a whole. "This whole region is ripe for being a very functioning economic ecosystem. Right now that is the least integrated region of the world economically. It's not helping anyone," Qayoumi said.

"We hope Pakistan can really see that as a way that on how we can work together as a region, as equals, as sovereign nations, but (also as a) region that can have a future together successfully where economically and politically the areas can work together," he said. (Pajhwok)

### (4) Pakistan Needs...

fight to Al-Qaeda. We need them to do the same thing with respect to the Haqqanis, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and the other terrorist groups that are active in the region," he said.

Sales was responding to concerns expressed by Congressmen in this regard. "I think they're not doing their job, despite terrorism, because the terrorists come in from Pakistan into Afghanistan, do their mischief, and run back across the border. I think they've been doing that for years," Congressman Ted Poe said.

"They take our money....millions of dollars we give Pakistan every year. It befuddles me why we do that when they don't -- and they allow a safe haven for terrorists in their own country that invade another country, namely Afghanistan," Poe alleged.

Sales said that his bureau in the State department has been funding a USD54 million program to boost the capability of Afghan forces to defend urban areas.

"In recent months we've seen the Taliban and the Haqqani Network mount an aggressive series of attacks in urban areas, particularly in Kabul," he said.

The United States, he said, has been providing training and resources and equipment to local officials to help them interdict operative before they come in to protected areas, to respond to crisis in the heat of the moment, do to effective screening of potential threats, and to respond after a terrorist incident takes place.

Sales said that the President's South Asia strategy is the policy for Afghanistan which is conditions based. "We're not going to set an arbitrary deadline because that will just cause the terrorists to wait us out," he said.

"We want conditions based approach under which the Afghan government partic-

ipates in a negotiated settlement with the Taliban, with other interested parties in the region to ensure that we have a strong unity government that can deny safe haven," he said.

From a counterterrorism standpoint, the US cannot afford to go back to a pre-2001 environment in Afghanistan or elsewhere where terrorists enjoy safe haven. "Because when terrorists enjoy safe haven they project power outward and attack us and our friends," Sales said. (Pajhwok)

### (5) Afghan Railway...

In spring 2017 Afghanistan's cabinet approved the construction of the additional 10 km of track at the terminal. There are also proposals to extend the line around 35 km to Andkhoy, the first significant town in Afghanistan.

Last year Turkmenistan funded work to upgrade the older Soviet-built cross-border link between Serhetabat and the freight terminal at Towraghondi in Afghanistan. (Agencies)

### (6) Number of Girls...

graduates among girls was 800 while this figure was between 200 to 400 girls in previous years," Abdul Qadir Paiwastoon, the provincial director of education, told TOLONews on Thursday.

"There are some problems in this sector but we continue our efforts to address them and they will be solved in the near future," he added.

Students from Kandahar girls' schools said they pay lots of efforts for completion of their school terms due to problems in their society.

Maryam, a high school graduate from Kandahar, said three girls from her class left school at 10th grade.

"Many girls from our relatives and neighbors went to school and were very talented but they left school when they got married and all their dreams remained unfulfilled," said Maryam.

Sona, a high school graduate from Kandahar, said she is concerned that despite some improvements still many families are not giving their daughters the equal rights as they provide it for boys.

"This problem is more common in Kandahar compared with other provinces because families are concerned about our security and they think that the society is not ready to accept that girls would go out of home for school and education," said Sona.

Figures out by Ministry of Education in September show that 3.7 million children are deprived of education in the country. According to figures by UNESCO in September, Afghanistan has one of the lowest literacy rates in the world, currently estimated at about 31 percent of the adult population (over 15 years of age).

Female literacy levels are on average 17 percent, with high variation, indicating a strong geographical and gender divide, the UNESCO indicate.

The figures show that the highest female literacy rate, for instance is 34.7 percent, found in the capital, Kabul, while rates as low as 1.6 percent was found in two southern provinces of the country. Male literacy rates average about 45 percent, again with high variation. The highest male literacy rates are in Kabul, at 68 percent, while the lowest is found in Helmand, at 41 percent. (Tolo news)

### (7) Politicians Warn...

we would not have another option except to press for the establishment of an interim government," said Hekmatyar.

Noor Rahman Akhlaqi, a member of Jamiat-e-Islami meanwhile said reports of any delay are simply rumors.

"Jamiat-e-Islami party of Afghanistan has not made any kind of agreement with anyone to delay the elections and the rumors about the issue is just propaganda," he said.

"We do not support the idea of a delay in presidential elections, [but if delayed, it must be] on condition that the war ends and peace is achieved," said Abdullah Qarloq, deputy head of National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan.

But Karzai's close aides have said the current situation does not lend itself to presidential elections.

"Parliamentary elections were different, but the presidential elections are held at a time that peace has not come to the country, this means that the Taliban will remain away from the scene," said Karzai's close aide Abdul Karim Khurram.

But the Afghan government and the US have rejected claims about any delay in elections.

The US Department of State spokesperson Heather Nauert said Wednesday that Washington is committed to the election process and any decision to move out the date would be at Kabul's discretion. Nauert said: "One of the things that is important to us is we're committed to the overall electoral process. If there were to be any changes made to the scheduling, that would entirely be a decision on the part of Afghanistan, one in which we would not interfere."

In a meeting with the US ambassador

to Afghanistan John R. Bass on Tuesday night, the CEO Abdullah Abdullah discussed some of these issues with him. However, after the meeting Abdullah tweeted that the scheduled elections would go ahead as planned.

Bass in turn responded and said: "We remain committed to helping the electoral commissions and the Afghan government prepare for presidential elections in April 2019. Timing of Afghan elections is for Afghans to decide." (Tolo news)

### (8) Pakistan-Afghanistan...

the body was later handed over to Pakistani officials.

Pakistan's Foreign Ministry summoned the Afghan Charge d' Affairs for the third time over the last two days to lodge a protest over "brutal murder" of the police officer.

"Afghan Cd'A in Islamabad was called to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs twice yesterday, and again this afternoon to register our strong protest over the inordinate delay and manner of return of the body. Written and verbal demarches were made, which resulted in the visit of an official delegation to Afghanistan, who brought it back to Peshawar this evening," said a statement by Pakistan's Foreign Ministry.

"It is hoped that Afghan authorities will offer full cooperation in ascertaining the circumstances under which a Pakistani police officer was found killed in Afghanistan", it added.

Blame game  
Citing unnamed sources, Pakistani media accused the Afghan intelligence agency of being involved in the officer's murder.

Also, Pakistan's powerful military indirectly accused Kabul of having a hand in the incident, which, according to analysts, might put further strain on already frosty relations between the two neighbors.

"We have lost a brave police officer. His abduction, move to Afghanistan, murder and follow up behavior of the Afghan authorities raise questions, which indicate involvement and resources more than a terrorist organization in Afghanistan," Maj. Gen. Asif Ghafoor, the military spokesman, said in a statement.

Ghafoor called on Afghanistan to cooperate in border fencing and bilateral border security coordination to deny use of Afghan territory against Pakistan.

The Kabul government has yet to officially respond to the remarks made by spokesman for the Pakistan Army.

However, Imtiaz Wazir, a local tribal leader in Nangarhar province, pronounced the killing of Dawar as a ploy by the Pakistan's top spy agency to sow hatred among the Pashtun community in the two countries. Relations between the two neighbors have been rocky in recent years as both sides accuse each other of supporting and providing sanctuaries to the militants.

The two neighbors share 18 crossing points. The most commonly used ones are Torkham and Chaman.

Afghanistan does not recognize the Durand Line -- a 2,640-kilometer (1,640-mile) long border, which was established in 1893 in line with an agreement between India under British colonial rule, and Abdur Rahman Khan, the then-ruler of Afghanistan.

But, it rather sees it as an annexation of the "Greater Afghanistan" by the British Raj before Pakistan and India came into being in 1947. (AA)

### (9) Any Step...

well as creation of different committees when the peace talks begin.

Sayed Ikramuddin, Ghulam Farooq Majroh, Raz Mohammad Dalili and Eng. Abdul Rahim talked on behalf of the Coordination Council of Jamiat-i-Islami at the meeting, the statement said.

The council representatives supported the government's ongoing efforts about peace and welcomed the president's action on creating the consultative peace board. They said the HPC and political forces' capacities should be used in the peace drive.

The JI Coordination Council stressed all the warring sides should take part in the peace process and that the consultative peace board should be inclusive.

After listening to the meeting participants, President Ghani said that the government was working based on people's consensus demand and any steps being taken regarding the peace process would be based on consultations.

He said consultations about the peace process were ongoing with different classes of people in the country and the results of the discussions would be shared with the public once they concluded. (Pajhwok)

### (10) Our Electoral...

decision. Hekmatyar said his party had shared views with 25 political parties, including the Jamiat-i-Islami, on the presidential election, but the Jamiat had a different view.

He said President Ashraf Ghani was intended to seek his reelection with Sarwar Danish, Abdullah Abdullah, Mohammad Younas Qonuni and Zazar Ahmad

Muqbil in his electoral ticket, but this ticket was a failure.

Hekmatyar said the previous presidential election triggered tribal differences in the country and no one would vote for Ghani and Abdullah this time.

He suggested that a person who was acceptable to all the Afghans and one who enjoyed good relations with regional countries should be chosen as a presidential candidate.

Hekmatyar opposed the idea of establishing an interim government to pave the ground for a peace agreement with the Taliban, saying those insisting on such a set up wanted to retest their luck, but it would not be allowed.

He said the proposal of an interim government had come from those who lacked public support.

He said if the incumbent government had the intention to rig the presidential election, in such a case an interim government should be established to prevent possible rigging. He said the interim set up should be acceptable to all political parties. (Pajhwok)

### (11) Akbar Agha...

with President Ashraf Ghani.

Sayed Akbar Agha, head of ASC, told a press conference here that the key of peace was with the people not with the Taliban or the government.

"It is better for the US envoy to meet ordinary people and prominent neutral figures of Afghanistan instead of meeting with politicians," he said.

"Both the current government and the Taliban think the conflict in Afghanistan is unsolvable, so approaching the nation is a solution and the Afghan nation should be given authority", he said.

Akbar Agha said a majority of politicians benefited from the current situation and a prolonged war and they were not interested in peace. "It is better for Khalilzad to take advice from Afghans on bringing peace to Afghanistan," he suggested.

He welcomed Khalilzad's offer for creating a provisional government or delaying presidential elections and amendments to the Constitution and said initial steps were important for peace negotiations.

He also welcomed the release of Mullah Baradar and a number of other Taliban key members from Pakistani jails and said the released figures trusted by the Taliban and the international community could play an important role in peace talks.

Akbar Agha asked the Afghan government to release key Taliban members who could help push forward the peace process. He said the release of Taliban from government jails would build trust between the insurgent group and the government.

Mualvi Tarakhel Mohammadi, a Kuchi (nomads) representative in the Parliament, also supported Zalmay Khalilzad's efforts for the Afghan peace and said, "We voice on Khalilzad to rescue us from this ruinous war."

He said the people would accept creation of a provisional government, delay in elections, holding of a Loya Jirga for amending the Constitution or any other demands that take them to peace.

"We see some politicians are opposing Khalilzad's recent peace struggles, we ask them to put aside their personal interests and work for a real peace which is a long standing demand of Afghans," he said. (Pajhwok)

### (12) NSC Orders...

from the NSC said the Afghan defense and security forces were currently battling the insurgents across the country particularly in Ghazni, Farah, Baghlan, Kunduz, Takhar, Zabul and Ghor provinces.

The statement said the enemies of the Afghanistan's people, after sustaining heavy casualties and due to sacrifices offered by the Afghan forces, had opted to target civilians --- a strategy that shows their weakness.

Praising the sacrifices of all the security forces for protection of their motherland's territorial integrity and their families for raising brave sons, the NSC said the enemies of the Afghans would not reach their desired goals by spreading terror.

The brave Afghan people, who have historically supported their security forces, would not let the enemy materialize their terrorist designs.

The statement said the Taliban's inhuman attacks had multiplied people's problems and who were already faced with drought and cold winter.

The NSC asked the security organs concerned to intensify their attacks on the enemy for protection of people's lives and reducing casualties among security forces. (Pajhwok)

### (13) National Unity...

whether or not he should contest the presidential vote as a candidate or support another candidate.

He said talks were ongoing on a presidential ticket in case he opted to contest the poll, saying his team would have representation from all tribes in order to enhance

national unity in the country. To a question, Abdali said it would be premature to say who would be his running mates.

The former envoy said the Independent Election Commission (IEC) lost people's trust for its own mistakes, but hoped the commission would work hard not to repeat past mistakes in the upcoming presidential election.

He also hoped the IEC would address all complaints about the recent Wolesi Jirga polls and bring reforms. He warned if the IEC did not address people's complaints it would further lose trust among people.

The former ambassador said though there was no constitutional bar on the number of presidential candidates, yet a less number of contesters would be in the country's interest keeping in mind the current situation. About President Ghani last four years presidency, he said the people would give their verdict about his performance on April 20 next year, the date of presidential election.

Under Ghani, he said the Afghans suffered huge difficulties and their unity and peace harmed. About Kandahar people's complaints against President Ghani that they were not given enough representation in his administration, Abdali said only promises were made with the people of Kandahar and therefore their economic and security situations deteriorated.

When asked about a interim government as proposed by US special envoy for Afghanistan reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad, Abdali said if true peace could come to the country, he would support the idea.

He said Afghanistan should be the area of cooperation not confrontation for China, Pakistan and Russia. Abdali called India as the only country that offered its assistance with full sincerity.

According to him, India has donated above \$3 billion to Afghanistan in civil and military sectors.

Referring to Iran's Chabahar port, he said the port was constructed with India's hundreds of million US dollars investment and connected Afghanistan with the world.

Currently, 160, 00 Afghan students have been studying in India and around 60000 others have graduated from different universities there. He termed relations with India as important. (Pajhwok)

### (14) 69 Taliban...

the MoD said in a statement.

The statement said 19 militants were killed in Paktia's Zurmat district, 16 in Chaharsadda district of Ghor, six in Nawzad district of Helmand, six in Chaparhar district of Nangarhar province.

It said another four Taliban were killed in Maidan Wardak's capital Maidan Shahr, three in Uruzgan's capital Tirinkot, as many in Paktika's Khoshmand district, two in Faryab's Pashtunkot district and two in Ghazni province.

The 15 Taliban were injured in Farah, Uruzgan, Paktika, Ghazni and Faryab provinces, the statement said, claiming the forces captured a large quantity of weapons and ammunition during

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

### (15) 2 Girls Fajh...

the child was rescued and the manager had been evacuated to hospital for treatment. The manger would be investigated after his treatment.

The women's bodies had been sent to hospital for forensic examination. The police official said no wedding ceremony or other program was taking place on the incident night.

Malik Mullah Mohammad Payman, owner of the hotel, said a man with his wife and another woman had come to the hotel room. But he did not go into details.

However, there were rumors in social media that the girls had died after consuming Tablet-K. But this claim could not be officially verified. (Pajhwok)

### (16) Indian Teams...

team has released nine players including the trade-off of Shikhar Dhawan to Delhi Daredevils.

Meanwhile, Wriddhiman Saha is a big name released by the franchise, the SRH think tank also decided to let go of some famous overseas players in Alex Hales, Carlos Brathwaite and Chris Jordan.

In the meantime, Kings XI Punjab have retained their core team ahead of next year's league with nine players set to continue with the outfit.

Afghanistan's wily spinner Mujeeb Zadran and the Karnataka duo of Lokesh Rahul, who was KXIP's leading run scorer in this year's edition of the IPL, and Karun Nair are set to continue. Ravichandran Ashwin has been retained too.

The team would like to thank the players who have been released for their contributions and wishes them the very best for the future.

This leaves KXIP with at least eight more spots to complete the squad, which will be addressed in the player auction ahead of the next season.

The decisions come after the three Afghan players showed tremendous performance in their teams in this year's IPL tournament. (Tolo news)