

(1) World Bank...

Group fund, while the rest is for the Mazar-e-Sharif project. The package for Mazar-e-Sharif project includes a \$12m guarantee from IDA to backstop the ongoing payment obligation of Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS), and a \$23.8m senior loan. The project also includes \$1.5m in client risk-management swap from the International Finance Corporation (IFC), which will mobilise \$43.8m in parallel loans for the project as mandated lead arranger.

In addition, Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) is providing \$48.7m political risk insurance for the two private shareholders and a senior lender.

The guarantees are expected to provide protection against the risks of breach of contract, expropriation, transfer restriction and currency convertibility, and war and civil disturbance for a period of up to 15 years.

Furthermore, the investments by IFC and political risk guarantees from MIGA will be partly covered by the IDA Private Sector Window's (PSW) Risk Mitigation Facility and the MIGA Guarantee Facility, respectively. (Power Technology)

(2) Trump: It Is...

Afghanistan, Ret. General David Petraeus says that Trump Administration should work on a "strategy for staying" in Afghanistan rather than strategy for leaving.

"Every U.S. president would want to leave Afghanistan but the questions is under what conditions? We have to be absolutely certain that our national interest would be preserved," Petraeus adds.

This former U.S. commander further says that he doubts the possibility of a political settlement with the Taliban militant group.

"I think the Taliban would like to get us out whatever way they can and it is not clear to me if they intend to share power or participate in election," Petraeus said.

He also expressed concern that not all Taliban fighters would lay down their weapons, since in the recent months "many Taliban fighters have been defecting to Al Qaeda and ISIS."

Meanwhile, the Taliban reacted to Trump's comment, calling a pullout of U.S. forces favored solution for both countries. (ATN)

(3) Afghan Ambassador...

police have entered the area several times without informing the Afghan embassy, and they have removed Afghanistan's flag, against diplomatic convention and neighborly manners." According to reports, the ownership of the property is disputed, but the Afghan Embassy maintains that the market property belongs to the Afghan government.

On Thursday, Mashal expressed optimism that the incident would not damage relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

He claimed that a decision over the property ownership of the Firdous market has been reached between the two governments. (Tolo News)

(4) Afghanistan's...

was aware of this abuse and had the duty to report and prevent it," FIFA said in its judgement, adding that other Afghan officials are still being investigated.

Afghan women's national team players have accused federation officials of sexual abuse and cover-ups for years. Afghan judicial authorities and FIFA launched investigations last year when players went public with their allegations.

Aghazada was only elected in April to a four-year term on the AFC executive committee. (Inside World Football)

(5) Ghani Wants...

of Bakhtar Airline and a follow up report after every two weeks should be presented to the Presidential Palace.

Ghani said those damaging the reform process by interfering should be introduced to judiciary organs. (Pajhwok)

(6) Insecurity: Many...

manner, security problems have also increased, how a trader would show interest in such a situation to invest." Massoud Wahdat, spokesman of the provincial Chamber of Commerce, also said investments in the port had significantly decreased and probably no trader would stay there if the situation continued.

Kunduz governor's spokesman, Esamatullah Muradi said that the governor had met with traders and promised to resolve problems they faced.

Sher Khan Bandar is one of the country's key ports connecting Afghanistan with Tajikistan. (Pajhwok)

(7) 'Election...

The presidential election was held on September 28. According to the Independent Election Commission (IEC), around 2.7 million people participated in the poll.

Habibullah Shinwari, ETWA head, told a press conference here that a number of election commissioners and secretaries of the two election bodies were in contact with presidential candidates and they should be quarantined for at least until the announcement of the election results so their contacts with candidates could be cut off.

"Any type of contacts of election commissioners or leadership with candidates can pave the ground for fraud and push the process into a crisis," he said. Without giving details, he said former commissioners appointed as advisors (played the role of agents for candidates) and made a relationship between new commissioners and candidates in the election commissions.

He also asked candidates not to claim victory ahead of the announcement of the final election results as premature statements in this regard could lead to a chaos.

Shinwari called the September 28 election better than the 2014 election but said problems plagued the process.

Candidates' lack of programs, public mistrust on election commissions, militants threats, insecurity and mistakes from past elections were problems in the presidential poll, he said.

"We do not endorse the IEC statement when it says 2.7 million people participated in the election," he added.

He said voter lists were not present at 853 polling sites, there were problems in voter lists at 675 sites, biometric devices encountered malfunction at 45 percent of polling stations and 20 percent of women's polling sites were employed with men workers on the Election Day.

Mobinullah Aimaq, head of FWA talking at the conference, endorsed Shinwari account and said four candidates including Ashraf Ghani, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Rahmatullah Nabil started their campaigns earlier than the official date and supporters of Ghani and Abdullah encouraged people on the Election Day to vote for them.

Without giving details, he said Ghani and Abdullah's electoral teams used government resources for their campaigns.

He accused candidates of having no programs during their campaigns and said, "One of the reasons of low turnout on the Election Day was lack of programs with candidates as most of them attacked each other."

Most of government services were dedicated to the two leading candidates, Ghani and Abdullah, during the election campaign, he said.

Mohammad Rafi Seddiqi, head of the IEC media committee who was also present in the conference, said that only biometric votes were acceptable as valid. He also said candidates' campaigns were not programs-centric but blame-centric.

Seddiqi said candidates and media who violated electoral law during election campaigns would be dealt with in accordance with the law. (Pajhwok)

(8) Only Three Percent...

"A girl who goes to school and gets education is not perceived as a decent person here," she said.

It is worth mentioning that besides Uruzgan, girls in other provinces are also deprived of basic education. (Pajhwok)

(9) Aisha Khurram...

Khurram is also expected to represent her peers at international events, including engagements at the Security Council. A number of students have asked Khurram to use her new position to highlight the issues Afghan youth face. "Our expectation for Ms. Aisha is to raise the voice of millions of young people — and young women — who have been deprived of education," said a student named Amin.

A young woman herself, Khurram outlined some of her goals for the year as they relate to Afghan women and girls, as well as young people in the country. "My red line is not only the women who live in the center and have access to education, but my red line is all those women who live in the provinces, those women who live under the control of the Taliban and those women who do not even thinking of getting an education," said Khurram.

"We must raise the voice of Afghan youth in the international community and outline programs for our youth so they can learn more in areas of governance, politics and other important subjects that will influence their future," added Khurram.

In the upcoming weeks, Khurram will

travel to Germany to meet the German Youth Representative, government officials and civil society. Currently a member of the Security Council, Germany is sponsoring the Youth Representative program. Khurram's selection follows a multi-stage process involving video and in-person interviews, as well as a debate that took place on October 7th in Kabul, according to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

The panel of judges for the selection of representatives included Peter Prugel, Germany's ambassador to Afghanistan; Idrees Zaman, Afghanistan's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs; Sofia Ramyar, Executive Director of Afghans for Progressive Thinking; and Tadamichi Yamamoto, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan.

Khurram will officially start her work with the UN in two months. (Agencies)

(10) China's President...

to greet the Chinese leader.

The town was under tight surveillance, with thousands of security personnel. Mamallapuram is 55 kilometers (35 miles) south of Chennai, the capital of Tamil Nadu state.

China claims some 90,000 square kilometers (35,000 square miles) of territory in India's northeast, while India says China occupies 38,000 square kilometers (15,000 square miles) of its territory on the Aksai Chin Plateau in the western Himalayas. Officials have met at least 20 times to discuss the competing border claims without making significant progress.

The two countries fought a border war in 1962.

India also is concerned about China's moves to build strategic and economic ties with its neighbors, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh and the Maldives.

Tensions in Kashmir, which is divided between Pakistan and India but claimed by both, have escalated since August, when India downgraded the semi-autonomy of Indian-administered Kashmir and imposed a security and communications lockdown.

China supported Pakistan in raising India's actions at the U.N. General Assembly meeting in New York. China said India should not act unilaterally in Kashmir, a portion of which China also controls.

Xi arrived two days after hosting Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan in Beijing.

India says Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India. "China is well aware of our position. It is not for other countries to comment on the internal affairs of India," India's External Affairs Ministry said in a statement Wednesday.

Lalit Mansingh, a former Indian ambassador to the United States, said he expected an overview of relations by the two leaders and "instructions on how the relationship should proceed."

He said the diplomatic damage the Chinese inflicted over India's action in Kashmir has been done. "This is not going to be undone. India has stuck to its position and received international support," he said.

China for its part resents India's hosting of the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, who fled Tibet in 1959 and took refuge in India.

The Tibetan Youth Congress in a statement on Friday urged Prime Minister Modi to take up the Tibetan issue with Xi during the summit. "TYC condemns the Communist government of China and its president as long as the Communist Party continues to suppress the struggle of the Tibetan people," it said. China says Tibet has been part of its territory for centuries, although many Tibetans say they were essentially independent for most of that time. Communist troops took control of the region in 1950 after a brief military struggle.

Referring to India's support for China's position on Tibet, Mansingh said that India backs China's territorial integrity. "China will not keep on challenging our territorial integrity. Otherwise we will have to have to take a different view on the issue," he said. (Fox News)

(11) 'Border on Fire...

Turkish-allied Syrian rebels entered Syria from Ceylanpinar. Some made victory signs, shouting "Allahu akbar" (God is greatest) and waving Syrian rebel flags as they advanced towards Ras al Ain. Some 120 km (75 miles) to the west, Turkish howitzers resumed shelling near the Syrian town of Tel Abyad, a witness said.

"In these moments, Tel Abyad is seeing the most intense battles in three days," Marvan Qamishlo, a spokesman for the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) said.

Overnight, clashes erupted at different points along the border from Ain Diwar at the Iraqi frontier to Kobani, more than 400 km to the west. Turkish and SDF forces exchanged shelling in Qamishlo

among other places, the SDF's Qamishlo said.

"The whole border was on fire," he said. Turkish forces have seized nine villages near Ras al Ain and Tel Abyad, said Rami Abdulrahman, director of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the war.

At least 32 fighters with the SDF and 34 Turkey-backed Syrian rebels have been killed in fighting, while 10 civilians have been killed, Abdulrahman said. The SDF said 22 of its fighters were killed on Wednesday and Thursday.

Turkey says it has killed hundreds of SDF fighters in the operation and one Turkish soldier has been killed.

In Syria's al Bab, some 150 km west of the offensive, some 500 Turkish-backed Syrian fighters were set to head to Turkey to join the operation, CNN Turkey reported. It broadcast video of them performing Muslim prayers in military fatigues, their rifles laid down in front of them, before departing for Turkey. (Reuters)

(12) Iran: Oil...

the Persian Gulf, something denied by Tehran.

Friday's incident could push tensions between Iran and the U.S. even higher, more than a year after President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from the nuclear deal and imposed sanctions now crushing Iran's economy.

The mysterious attacks on oil tankers near the Strait of Hormuz, Iran shooting down a U.S. military surveillance drone and other incidents across the wider Middle East followed Trump's decision. The latest assault saw Saudi Arabia's vital oil industry come under a drone-and-cruise-missile attack, halving the kingdom's output. The U.S. has blamed Iran for the attack, something denied by Tehran. Yemen's Houthi rebels, whom the kingdom is fighting in a yearslong war, claimed that assault, though analysts say the missiles used in the attack wouldn't have the range to reach the sites from Yemen. (VOA News)

(13) Ethiopian PM...

after widespread protests pressured the longtime ruling coalition and hurt one of the world's fastest growing economies. Africa's youngest leader quickly announced dramatic reforms and "Abiymania" began.

On taking office, Abiy surprised people by fully accepting a peace deal ending a 20-year border war between the two East African nations that saw tens of thousands of people killed. Ethiopia and Eritrea had not had diplomatic ties since the war began in 1998, with Abiy himself once fighting in a town that remained contested at the time of his announcement last year.

Within weeks, the visibly moved Eritrean president, Isaias Afwerki, visited Addis Ababa and communications and transport links were restored. For the first time in two decades, long-divided families made tearful reunions. (AP News)

(14) Turkey is a Great...

A few years ago, they controlled significant territory in Iraq and in Syria. Working together in the Global Coalition, we have liberated all this territory and millions of people. These gains must not be jeopardized."

"Turkey is a great power in this great region", the Secretary General stressed, "and with great power comes great responsibility". Mr. Stoltenberg urged Turkey to avoid any unilateral actions that may further destabilize the region and escalate tensions.

During today's visit, the Secretary General is meeting with President Erdoğan, Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu, and Defence Minister Akar. (Nato)

(15) EU, UK Find...

Barnier before they started almost two hours of talks around breakfast.

"If there is a will, there is, of course, a way. Otherwise people would not be working on this," said EU Commission spokeswoman Mina Andreeva.

Originally, Tusk said he was planning to pull the plug Friday on the Brexit talks, but because of the breakthrough he can now see talks going through the weekend, ahead of the EU's two-day summit, which starts next Thursday.

Tusk said "there is no guarantee of success and the time is practically up" but insisted both sides should use every opportunity available ahead of Britain's scheduled Oct. 31 departure date.

"A no-deal Brexit will never be the choice of the EU," Tusk said.

Johnson said late Thursday there was a "pathway" to a belated agreement to stave off a chaotic, costly no-deal Brexit on Oct. 31, while Varadkar said the meeting was "very positive."

After meeting with Barclay, Barnier said it was essential to keep focus.

"Brexit is like climbing a mountain. We

need vigilance, determination and patience," said the man who once organized the 1992 Winter Olympics in his Savoie region of France.

The main stumbling block remains how to handle the U.K.'s only land border with the EU, which is on the border between Northern Ireland and Ireland. (AP News)

(16) Turkey-Syria ...

director of the Heritage Foundation's Margaret Thatcher Center, told Fox News. "Turkey is being put on notice over its military actions and will be held to account."

Other experts anticipated that more schisms in the once-tight NATO alliance might follow.

Turkey may be a NATO ally, but they have consistently not acted like it — and there have to be consequences for that," said Brad Bowman, the senior director for the Center on Military and Political Power at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. "It is time to align policy toward Turkey with [President Recep Tayyip] Erdogan's actual actions."

Moreover, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters Thursday he "counts on Turkey to show restraint and to ensure that their actions in northern Syria are measured and proportionate and avoid even more human suffering."

"We have to remember that we need to continue to stand together in our common fight against the common enemy, which is ISIS," he stressed. "We must preserve those gains." (Fox News)

(17) Marc Thiessen...

of troops in the Middle East are long gone. Today, we have 14,000 troops in Afghanistan, about 5,000 in Iraq and just 1,000 in Syria. That is a grand total of about 20,000 troops in all three countries. By contrast, we have about 37,950 U.S. troops in Germany, 12,750 in Italy, 53,900 in Japan, and 28,500 in South Korea — a total of over 133,000. In fact, we now have three times more troops deployed in Spain (3,200) than we do in Syria.

Moreover, the vast majority of these U.S. forces are engaged in a noncombat mission known as "train, advise and assist." U.S. allies do most of the fighting, while American troops provide intelligence, operational planning, fire support and airstrike coordination from behind the front lines. We have helped train and equip about 174,000 Afghan troops, 64,000 Iraqi troops and 60,000 Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) troops, made up predominantly of Kurdish fighters. They are the ones engaged in ground combat with America's enemies.

Trump likes to say he "defeated" the Islamic State. Actually, the bulk of the fighting was done by our Kurdish allies, trained and supported by U.S. Special Operations forces. As Gen. Joseph Votel, who served as commander of U.S. forces in the Middle East, explains, "Over four years, the SDF freed tens of thousands of square miles and millions of people from the grip of ISIS. Throughout the fight, it sustained nearly 11,000 casualties. By comparison, six U.S. service members, as well as two civilians, have been killed in the anti-ISIS campaign." (Fox News)

(18) Nigerian Police ...

urging parents not to be deterred by the recent attacks.

The state of Kaduna, as well as other states in Nigeria's northwest region, had witnessed a series of attacks by armed groups in recent months. (Xinhua)

(19) U.S. Migrant...

guidelines, but children can be sent back with their parents.

Trump administration officials have said they are doing everything possible to discourage migrant families from making dangerous journeys to the United States, often in the hands of human smugglers, which they say needlessly put children at risk.

NUMBERS GROWING AS FLU SEASON LOOMS

About one third of the nearly 40,000 migrants in the MPP program as of September 1 were children under 18, according to the latest data available from the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR), which oversees U.S. immigration courts. Of those, Reuters found more than 3,400 under 5 years old and 418 under 1 year old. The numbers have grown in recent weeks. There are now more than 51,000 people in the MPP program, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Blanca Aguilar, a 27-year-old mother from Guatemala, is living in a makeshift encampment of around 40 small tents cramped together in the back rooms of a church outside Tijuana, across the border from San Diego. Children can be heard coughing and crying throughout the night, she and other mothers told Reuters during a recent visit. (Reuters)