

(1) Trump to...

McMaster told reporters at a White House news conference.

In addition to Ghani, Trump is also scheduled to meet leaders of Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, the United Kingdom and Egypt. He will meet leaders of France and Israel, and host a working dinner for Latin American leaders.

Ghani arrives in New York next week to address the UN General Assembly. He will also hold bilateral meetings with a number of world leaders and interact with the think-tank community including the Council on Foreign Relations and the Asia Society. (Pajhwok)

(2) Proposed 'Militia' ...

training and potentially less oversight risks being yet another abusive militia operating outside the military's chain of command, Human Rights Watch said. If approved, the Afghan government is expected to determine the location of a pilot project by September 20, 2017.

"The Afghan government's expansion of irregular forces could have enormously dangerous consequences for civilians," said Patricia Gossman, senior researcher at Human Rights Watch. "Instead of creating additional local forces, which are hard to control and prone to abuses, the Afghan government with US and NATO support should be strengthening training and oversight to ensure that all forces respect the law."

While the territorial army would operate under a regular army corps commander, diplomatic sources told Human Rights Watch that Afghan officials involved in the discussions have expressed concern about the force becoming used by powerful strongmen, or becoming dependent on local patronage networks. There is also concern that the new force could replicate the criminality that many Afghan Local Police units exhibited, and clash with other government forces and militias over control of territory and smuggling routes.

In addition to the proposed Afghan Territorial Army, the Afghan government is considering creating a new 15,000-strong tribal militia, under the Ministry of Tribal and Border Affairs, currently headed by former governor Gul Agha Sherzai. The model for such a militia appears to be those established along ethnic lines by the late President Mohammad Najibullah in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Members of those militia forces were responsible for serious human rights abuses.

"There is a long, unsavory history of using tribal and irregular militias in Afghanistan, and it has led to egregious crimes without accountability," Gossman said. "Too often they have inflamed conflict rather than provide security." (Tolonevs)

(3) Muslims in Asia Call ...

Muslims are concerned about it. If I get the chance I am ready to go for Jihad (Holy War) against those who carried out such brutal acts against Muslims over there," Mohammad Feroz, a resident of Kabul, said.

"I urge the international community, Islamic countries and United Nations to take action and prevent the current inhuman act against Muslims over there (In Myanmar)," said Sayed Osman, a resident of Kabul.

The mostly stateless Rohingya Muslims are fleeing from a Myanmar military offensive in the western state that began after a series of guerrilla attacks on Aug. 25 in which about a dozen people were killed.

"Muslims are being tyrannized in the world. They are being killed, they are being mutilated. O, Allah, send a divine help to them," said Bahasa, an Indonesian, reported Reuters.

Nearly 400,000 Muslims have now fled to Bangladesh, with concern growing that the numbers could keep rising unless Myanmar ends what critics denounce as "ethnic cleansing."

The protesters on Friday demanded perpetrators of rights abuses be held accountable, as was recommended by former U.N. chief Kofi Annan's commission appointed last year by Myanmar's de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi to come up with long-term solutions for the violence-riven, ethnically and religiously divided Rakhine. (Tolonevs)

(4) MPs to Summon..

Independent Election Commission was suspended over allegations relating to corruption.

"Not only does the process (election) need to be reviewed, but countless challenges exist," MP Chaman Shah Etemani said.

"An election commission commissioner has asked for money from someone in a voice recording," MP Abdul Qadir Qalatalwal said. Some other MPs meanwhile said they are worried about the lack of cooperation between IEC officials and government and are also worried about secret talks being held between a number of government officials and IEC members.

"There are discrepancies between the electoral commissions' comments. The second vice president says that we cannot hold the district council elections, but the commission says that we will hold parliamentary and district council elections," Abdul Sabor Khedmat, an MP said.

"Continued meetings are being held during the days and nights with parts of the gov-

ernment body and they discuss who should come to parliament as peoples' representatives in the future," Sadiqi Zada Nili, another MP said.

To address the MPs concerns, parliament speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahimy tasked parliament's judicial and legal commission to share the concerns with IEC officials and summon them to parliament to respond to MPs questions.

"The central audit commission should invite the IEC and speak with them in detail in this regard," said Ibrahimy.

Meanwhile, some other MPs voiced their concerns over the possible amendment to the retirement act regarding security institutions' officers.

Based on the officers retirement law that was approved on 2009, security officers will retire at the age of 65, but now government says they want to amend the law and decrease the retirement age to rejuvenate the security forces.

The MPs however said government, by implementing the new outline, wants to remove the officers from security forces who had gained ranks during the Mujahadeen government.

"Based on the current situation, I think the outline (proposed amendment) is not appropriate and your (MPs) concerns are understandable," Ibrahimy said.

"You (president) by age of 80 can handle the presidency, but why should a general at the age of 50 and with good experience stay at home," MP Saleh Mohammad Saleh said.

Defense ministry spokesman Dawlat Waziri commented on the proposed amendment and said after the plan has been completed, to change the law, it will be shared with the people.

"This (new outline) is being worked on and after that it will be shared with the National Security Council, the president, the Council of Ministers and parliament and if they accept it, it will be shared with all in detail," defense ministry spokesman Dawlat Waziri said. (Tolonevs)

(5) Afghanistan-India ...

provincial financial and administrative affairs secretary, told Pajhwok Afghan News the cargo plane was loaded with 40 metric tons of dry and fresh fruits.

He said the first cargo flight on June 24 had also exported 40 tons of dry and fresh fruits to India.

The cargo flights between Afghanistan and India had to be delayed due to some technical problems, but the process started again, he said.

The flights process would be accelerated and traders would be provided with all needed facilities for making the business through Afghanistan-India air corridor successful, said Munib, he, However, stressed on standard packaging of fruits.

Kandahar International Airport chief, Ahmadullah Faizi, told Pajhwok that he provided many facilities in the airport for Afghanistan-India air corridor.

"We have provided all needed facilities and personnel for protection, check and transportation of fruits in the airport and they are available 24 hours a day," he said.

He also stressed on standard packaging of fruits and said substandard packaging consumed their time on checking.

Kandahar traders are happy over resumption of cargo flights, but they have some concerns as well.

A fresh fruit trader, Jalal Rahman Sharar, said: "Unfortunately the first cargo flights began when it was not the time of fruits harvests, and the second series of flights is also being started when grapes collection season is almost over."

Traders purchased huge amount of apricots from gardeners when cargo flights first started to India, but later they were obliged to dry fruits they had purchased and wanted to export, he added.

Sharar said traders were still worried they would again face delay in cargo flights and would suffer losses.

He asked Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) officials to closely watch resumption of cargo flights to India and address problems if occurred during that process.

A number of other traders in Kandahar said they wanted the development of the Afghanistan-India Air Corridor, which they called painless and cost effective.

Land export of fruits take six days to reach India and a kilogram costs 60 cents while air export of fruits take only few hours and a kilogram costs 20 cents.

ACCI deputy head, Khan Jan Alokzay said six flights carrying 360 tonnes of fresh fruits (apricots, melons and grapes) and 100 tonnes of dried fruits and medicinal herbs were flown to India from Kabul and Kandahar province since the opening of the air corridor.

He said the flights were delayed due to some technical problems which has been resolved.

On June 19, President Ashraf Ghani formally inaugurated the Afghanistan-India Air Corridor in capital Kabul.

The aim of the air corridor is to develop commerce and economy and remove transit barriers between Afghanistan and India. (Pajhwok)

(6) IW Urges MoPH...

and the anti-IWA social media campaign, the Minister told H.E. President Ghani at a

High Council of Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (HCAC) meeting (dated August 31, 2017) that the IW report is very useful for improving health service delivery. Later, in another meeting of the HCAC (dated September 13, 2017) the Minister again criticised the report and did not respond with a clear plan and commitment to address the problems identified in the report. Afghan people deserve a clear and a responsible answer from the MoPH.

While Integrity Watch stood firm by its findings, it calls on the MoPH and NUG leadership to address issues of management and governance and potentials of corruption in the health sector - a demand that the Afghan people have expressed over the years. Response to MoPH review

The Integrity Watch study was designed to assess capacities of public health clinics and hospitals to deliver quality (not necessarily "high" quality) basic health care. The capacity of the health care delivery centers was assessed with 5 simple indicators: (1) Physical condition and maintenance of the facilities from where health services are delivered; (2) Hygiene and sanitation conditions at the health care facilities; (3) On-site availability of equipment and medications; (4) Presence of trained medical and health profession related workers, including female professionals; (5) Accessibility to health care facilities.

The study assessed the capacities of facilities by applying these indicators using tools of limited inspection, interviews with on-site staff members (service providers) and community members or the clientele (service users). This is a perfectly valid and acceptable formula for research in social sciences. The Lessons Learned discusses the findings (which are not positive), followed up with recommendations. The findings are not flowing from opinions or any type of judgment as stated by the MoPH in their review of the report. The findings flow from an observational study, well-accepted in the world of social sciences.

The comments made in the MoPH review of the IWA report clearly display that either the Integrity Watch report was not reviewed carefully or that its findings showing weaknesses in service delivery and management were conveniently set aside, tactfully distracting attention to scientific theory issues.

Integrity Watch does not claim that there was no gap in its study- rarely any study can claim this. Even the study on which Einstein's Theory of Relativity was based had gaps. For years, the tobacco lobbyists have been flagging the gaps in the study of cancer caused by tobacco, without much success.

Lobbyists have not won. The MoPH reviewer has desperately attempted to deny any problems in the health delivery system by nitpicking on any simple gap as an excuse to dump the entire study and its findings, without providing any evidence contrary to the findings of the Integrity Watch study.

All countries in the world, including countries with highly socialized and people oriented health delivery agendas- UK, Canada, the Nordic countries- recognize problems in their health delivery services and attempt to meet accountability requirements to the people on a continuing basis with no fool proof "scientific" studies undertaken. Integrity Watch would like to ask the MoPH if it can cite any study that the ministry has undertaken, addressing global standards, with perfect precision? (Pajhwok)

(7) Afghan Medical ...

to address the issue. They were in touch with senior Pakistani officials, including the university authorities, he added.

The students complained they could not complete their house jobs, post-graduation studies, practice their profession and verify their degrees in the absence of PM&DC registration.

They said the issue had been shared with the Higher Education Commission, the Consulate and Embassy of Afghanistan. But the problem is yet to be unresolved. (Pajhwok)

(8) Pakistan Reopen...

on September 16, hundreds of people, including some needed medical treatment, were stuck at the closed border while security officials from both countries met to discuss the attack and ways to improve security on both sides of the crossing.

Security officials reviewed security-camera footage of the incident during the September 16 meeting.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attack.

"Security is under control on both sides of the border," a Pakistani official told RFE/RL. He added that border guards were waiting for permission to reopen the crossing from Islamabad. (RFE/RL)

(9) Massoud Slams...

nearly five months ago by issuing a presidential decree. He was a close ally of Ghani during the second round of the presidential elections and after he sidelined himself from the elections after the first round of voting concluded. (KP)

(10) NATO Commander ...

by the alliance, two other Romanian soldiers were wounded in the attack when the vehicle-borne improvised explosive device targeted their patrol.

"Once again, the Taliban have proven that they are not interested in peace," Nicholson added.

He also added "This loss only continues to strengthen our resolve and support to the Afghan government and its citizens as we work toward a secure and stable Afghanistan."

The Taliban insurgents group claimed responsibility behind the attack amid increasing pressures on the group, specifically after the announcement of the new US strategy for Afghanistan.

The US forces have stepped up operations against the group and other insurgents as NATO continues to provide key support to the Afghan forces to increase their capabilities in the fight against terrorism. (KP)

(11) US Considering ...

Pakistan Hussain Haqqani has said "No US president has come out on American national television and said such things about Pakistan."

Haqqani further added "US policymakers are at the end of their tethers about what they see as Pakistan not helping them while promising to help them."

"Thinking of Pakistan as an ally will continue to create problems for the next administration as it did for the last one," Lisa Curtis, former CIA analyst who now leads South Asia policy in the National Security Council, wrote in a joint report with Mr. Haqqani earlier this year.

Ms Curtis, who works closely with the state department, believes the Obama administration "erred" by relying on personal ties and aid packages to try to change Pakistan's behaviour.

In the meantime, Zalmay Khalilzad, a former US ambassador to Afghanistan, applauds the tougher line. "Pakistan has reacted publicly harshly but I believe we have got their attention and this is now serious and they are making noises privately to the Afghan government about getting together to talk," he said.

The Afghan and US officials have long been criticizing Islamabad for remaining reckless to act against the Taliban and Haqqani terrorist network sanctuaries as they claim that the leadership councils of the two groups are based in the key cities of Pakistan from where they plan and coordinate attacks in Afghanistan, including some of the deadly attacks on US forces.

While announcing the new US strategy for Afghanistan and South Asia last month, the US President Donald Trump strongly criticized Pakistan regarding the terror sanctuaries, saying "For its part, Pakistan often gives safe haven to agents of chaos, violence, and terror. The threat is worse because Pakistan and India are two nuclear-armed states whose tense relations threaten to spiral into conflict. And that could happen." (KP)

(12) Millions of Hectares ...

lack of access to land due to insecurity, lack of irrigation canals, and other issues which have remained from the past and have affected our activities in this respect," said Lotfullah Rashid, spokesman for the Ministry of Agriculture.

Meanwhile, a number of analysts said government lacks clear and effective plans to use the large water resources in the country. They suggest that medium-sized and small dams and irrigation canals should be built if government is not able to implement big projects.

"We completely leave our water to flow into other countries freely such as the water in the Amu River which flows into Turkmenistan and other Central Asian countries," said Sayed Massoud, lecturer at Kabul University.

Yasin Farahmand, a member of the Academy of Sciences of Afghanistan, said the lack of fertilized seed and a firm irrigation system are other big challenges for the agriculture sector.

"We should learn from the experiences of our neighboring countries like Iran and Pakistan; these countries have gotten the private sector to help in producing fertilized seed and through this they have considerably increased their products," he said.

Afghanistan has an annual estimate of seven billion cubic meters of flowing water and according to statistics, 80 percent of the water flows to neighboring countries and in return a big part of the land remains uncultivated. (Tolonevs)

(13) Besieged Soldiers in ...

Meanwhile, a number of Faryab residents also expressed concern over the siege of Afghan forces in Ghormach and criticised leaders of the national unity government for their negligence.

Syed Habibullah, a resident of Maimana, the capital of Faryab, blamed soldier fatalities and losses on negligence by government leaders and security officials. He claimed security forces did not receive food and ammunition in time. "Ghormach district was temporarily added as an organisational unit to Faryab province about 10 years ago. We have since lost hundreds of soldiers and tanks," he remarked.

But Gen. Adam Khan Mutmaen, commander of the 209th Shahin Military Corps, said they had prepared a huge plan to eliminate the insurgents in the province.

"We would soon launch a ground-and-air operation to defeat militants and equip our forces. People will witness a major change in the near future," the commander said.

The Ghormach district centre fell to the militants about a month ago when hundreds of security forces were surrounded. But no action has been taken yet to break the siege. (Pajhwok)

(14) Aryana Sings...

will attend the event. There are 550 athletes and 12 sporting codes at the (Invictus) Games," said Saeed Mirzaee, an army officer at the training centre.

Abdul Hannan, who lost both his legs in an explosion during an operation to re-take the Kunduz city in 2015, said he is excited about having the chance to attend the competition.

"We have 17 sports and those who have confidence in their talent, they can take part in the competition," he said.

The Invictus Games is an international Paralympic-style multi-sport event for armed services personnel which will be held in Canada.

The Afghan National Army soldiers have attended the Invictus Games two times before this. (Tolonevs)

(15) Afghan Taliban ...

The Taliban factions have said they would fight for Pakistan like they had rendered sacrifices for their own country [Afghanistan].

The militant group has asked Pakistani political and religious parties to put aside their differences and forge unity among their ranks.

Maulana Samiul Haq, who has for decades been known to wield influence over the Taliban, but has lost some influence in recent years.

He has asked Pakistan's Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal to appreciate the Afghan Taliban's announcement. (Tolonevs)

(16) Kabul Residents..

increased from 55afs to 60afs in his area compare to 50afs a month ago.

However, none of the sellers had information about the reason of hike in gas price but said the importing companies were selling the commodity on high rates on shopkeepers.

Mohammad Sharif, head of Khurasan Gas Company and a member of Gas Importers Association, said the price of the commodity was increased in Turkmenistan where its reservoirs were under cleaning process.

He said a ton of gas in Turkmenistan increased from \$410 to \$516 and the total charge on one ton amounted to \$720 when reaching to Kabul.

Sharif said the cleaning process of gas reservoirs in Turkmenistan may take about a month.

Mohammad Nasim Qaderi, gas and petroleum control manager at the Ministry of Commerce and Industries (MoCI) agreed with Sharif and said the price of gas was increased due to its limited imports to Kabul.

He also said that Turkmenistan was cleaning its gas reservoirs.

Some residents of Kabul residents said the MoCI was responsible to control liquefied gas prices.

Mohammad Iqbal, a political science student of Kabul University and resident of Qala-I-Fatullah area, asked the government to take action for controlling the gas prices.

"The weather in the winter would get colder and people would consume huge amount of gas to heat their homes, so the prices probably rise by double, so we ask the government to take immediate action on the regard," he said.

A number of other residents of Kabul had the same complaints.

Mohammad Nasim Qaderi said that if the price of the commodity was increased by its importers then the government should take action on the matter.

However, the price of fuel decreased. Abdul Hadi, a worker at the Wazirabad Fuel Station, said that the price of one liter of diesel dipped from 46afs to 45afs and the same quantity of petrol from 46afs to 45afs. Gold prices also dipped. The price of one gram of Arabian gold decreased from 2,400afs to 2,300afs and the same quantity of Russian variety from 1,950afs to 1,850afs. However, food items' rates remain steady. Food Traders Union head, Fazal Rahman, said 24kg of Pakistani rice cost 1,850afs, 50kg of Kazakhstani flour 1,160afs, 16 liters of Khurshid ghee 1,120afs and 49kg of Pakistani sugar 1,920afs.

Noor Ahmad Khairkwa, a tea seller in Kabul Mandavi, said a kilogram of Indonesian green tea cost 280afs and the same amount of African black tea 300afs - same as last week's.

Ahmad Wali Panjsheri, who owns a grocery shop in Dahn-i-Bagh area, sold a 50-kg bag of Kazakhstani flour for 1,220afs and a 49-kg sack of Pakistani sugar for 2,000afs.

He sold a 16-litre tin of Khurshid ghee for 1,200afs, a 24-kg sack of Pakistani rice for 2,100afs, a kilogram of Indonesian green tea for 300afs and the same quantity of African black tea for 350afs, higher than wholesale rates. According to Sara-I-Shahzada moneychangers, one US dollar accounted for 68.70 Afghani and 1,000 Pakistani rupees 641 Afghani this week against last week's rates of 68.60afs and 640afs respectively. (Pajhwok)