

### (1) Kabul's Security...

with security forces so that focused steps were taken to resolve the issue.

He added the capital had been divided into four security zones and there was a department responsible for the protection of the western part.

Ghani directed the acting minister of education to work on amending private school regulations in consultation with their heads. The private schools should have legitimate licences end unnecessary documentation should be eliminated, he said.

Ghani ordered the Finance Ministry, Office of Administrative Affairs at the Presidential Palace and the power utility to minimise the taxes and electricity tariff for private schools. (Pajhwok)

### (2) Free, Fair Polls...

Addressing reporters in Kabul on Sunday, IEC head Abdul Badai Sayyad said closing IEC offices was a wrong culture and was unacceptable.

He said the closure of IEC offices meant the perpetrators wanted the elections to be delayed.

He said the induction of the biometric system was not possible in the time available till the election date, adding change in the election system was a shared responsibility of the government and Parliament.

The top electoral official, however, said the election commission was interested in political parties' participation in the election process.

Referring to the closure of IEC offices, he said: "The government leadership has directed governors and district chiefs to stop powerful individuals from meddling in the election process."

Meanwhile, some lawmakers demanded transparency in the election process and asked the government to stop possible rigging and fraud.

Lotfullah Baba, a lawmaker from Nangarhar province, said the government should stop individuals and groups operating under different names from sabotaging the election process.

Senate Chairman Fazal Hadi Muslimyar said the conduct of free and fair election was responsibility of the government. He asked the government to satisfy protesters if introduction of the biometric system was not possible in the stipulated time. (Pajhwok)

### (3) UAE Participates...

and his suggestion to start peace talks, and lauding his ongoing initiatives to promote political solutions and dialogue between Afghans and reject violence, Al Hameli continued.

He also confirmed the UAE's unequivocal condemnation of all forms of terrorism, while adding that the UAE is deeply concerned about the deteriorating security conditions in Afghanistan, as well as the increasing presence of Al Qaeda and Daesh, and the activities of armed criminal groups.

Al Hameli noted that the UAE was a target of these terrorist groups while it performed its duties to achieve peace and stability in Afghanistan, recalling that six Emirati diplomats were killed in a terrorist attack that targeted the Governor of Qandahar Hospitality House on 10th January 2017.

He went on to highlight the UAE's ongoing development aid efforts in Afghanistan while noting the launch of the Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Residential

City in Kabul at the end of April, which included 3,330 residential units at the cost of AED708 million. (WAM)

### (4) Ghani, Abdullah...

process with the Taliban group. Sayaf is among the prominent Mujahideen leaders and former lawmaker representing Kabul in the Lower House of the parliament.

He has previously criticized the Taliban group as well as the government in some stances for its policies.

But the latest meeting takes place days after Ustad Sayaf said some prominent figures and the Grand National Coalition has decided to appoint a delegation for the talks with the Taliban group. (KP)

### (5) Mohib Inaugurates...

that training and joining the battle. He asked them to share their problems through the Afghan embassy in the US with the NSC. Qader Shah said the first batch of AC-2008 aircraft was expected to be handed over to Afghanistan this year. (Pajhwok)

### (6) Aminzai, Baheer...

3. The remaining one third of members shall be appointed by the president for a five-year term from amongst experts and experienced personalities, including two members from amongst the impaired and handicapped, as well as two from nomads.

The president shall appoint 50 percent of these individuals from amongst women. The individual selected as a member shall lose membership of the council, and another individual shall be appointed in accordance with the provisions of the law.

Senate Chairman Fazal Hadi Muslimyar commended the performance of the outgoing senators with flowers and appreciation certificates. (Pajhwok)

### (7) Ban on Iranian Imports...

wrong decisions.

He criticized the government's decision and said: "Corruption is not limited to Abu Nasr Farahi Port only, other ports such as Islam Qala Port, Torghandi Por, Nimroz Port and other ports are rife with corruption,"

Anwar asked the government to lift the ban on the imports from Iran and arrest corrupt customs officials instead.

He warned to close the Farah-Herat-Kabul highway in protest if the government did not remove the ban on imports.

Farid Bakhtawar, the provincial council head, backed the protest and said millions of US dollars had been embezzled at Farah customs and he had enough evidence to prove his claims. Pajhwok tried to contact the governor's house for comment about the issue, but failed. (Pajhwok)

closed the offices of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) in three provinces.

Sources privy of the development in the Grand National Coalition have said the step was taken after the government and the election commission failed to positively respond to their demands.

The sources further added that the election offices in Helmand, Balkh, and Kandahar have been closed.

They also warned that the election offices in other provinces will also be closed if the government and election commission did not respond positively to their demands.

The Grand National Coalition demand the registration of the

voters using biometrics system while monitoring of the elections process is also among the key demands of the political parties. (KP)

### (9) Afghan War won't...

missed opportunities if Pakistan has its sole focus on perpetuating the status quo."

During last week's visit by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defence Secretary Jim Mattis, the Indian government had raised the issue of US sanctions on Iran and its possible negative impact on the Chabahar port, he confirmed.

"We are processing and evaluating how best to reimpose sanctions on Iran... My government is still thinking through how Chabahar factors in the reimposition of the toughest sanctions..." (Pajhwok)

### (10) Many Paktia Students...

Mohammad Amin, principal of the Qala Niazi High School, said several students failed in the four-and-a half month exams due to lack of textbooks. "Textbooks reach us very late every year."

The provincial Education Department acknowledged the issue and said the students would receive new printed copies of textbooks in the earliest possible. Kuchi Zazai, Paktia's education director, said the shortage of textbooks for students of class three to ninth was a nationwide issue, not confined only to the southeastern zone. He said they would distribute books once received from the ministry.

Paktia education sector is struggling with several problems and 75 percent of the schools have no buildings. (Pajhwok)

### (11) ANA Battalion...

the government forces.

Meanwhile, Ghazni police chief Farid Ahmad Mashal said 11 suspects had been arrested in connection with various crimes during the past few days.

He said the detainees included two policemen accused of harassing people on highways. (Pajhwok)

### (12) Taliban Seeks...

figure in the insurgency without major concessions from the other side, experts said.

In Washington, the State Department said no talks were scheduled and declined to comment on whether a potential prisoner swap was on the table, NBC reported. On Tuesday, State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert told reporters, "We're ready to work with the people of Afghanistan, the government of Afghanistan, and to talk to the Taliban all together to bring an end to the conflict."

In recent months, the US has stepped up attempts to broker peace talks between the Afghan government and the Afghan Taliban, the militant group ousted after sheltering Osama bin Laden as he plotted the 9/11 attacks. Since the 2001 US-led invasion, more than 2,400 American personnel and tens of thousands of Afghans have died.

President Donald Trump's impatience with the 17-year-old war has prompted US diplomats and commanders to gamble on a bid to kick-start peace negotiations, including holding direct talks with the Taliban, current and former US officials have told NBC News.

A former US official with extensive experience in Afghanistan said that the administration sees a potential window of opportunity to advance peace talks, but

the effort was still at an early stage.

"There are serious indications that there are internal discussions inside the Taliban," he said of their response to the offer for reconciliation, despite the group's position that the Afghan government is illegitimate. The former official spoke on the condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the discussions.

NBC reported Anas Haqqani, son of Jalaluddin Haqqani who founded the militant group under his name in the 1970s, tops the list of those the Taliban is saying must be released, according to the Taliban officials.

Anas Haqqani has been in Afghan custody since October 2014 when US security forces nabbed him while en route to Qatar from Bahrain. (Tolo news)

## Typhoon Wreaks Havoc on Philippines, South China

HONG KONG — Typhoon Mangkhut wreaked havoc on the northern Philippines and southern China, leaving dozens of people dead and forcing millions to evacuate.

The massive storm made landfall on Saturday on the northeastern tip of Luzon island in the Philippines with sustained winds of 205 kilometers (127 miles) per hour and gusts of 255 kph (158 mph).

It then moved on to Hong Kong and elsewhere in southern China. Chinese state media cited the Guangdong provincial meteorological station as saying that by Sunday evening, more than 2.4 million people had been relocated and nearly 50,000 fishing boats called back to port.

The gambling enclave of Macau closed casinos for the first time and the Hong Kong Observatory warned people to stay away from the Victoria Harbour landmark, where storm surges battered the sandbag-reinforced waterfront. (AP)

## UN's Yemen Envoy in Sanaa, as 32 Rebels Killed

ADEN - Fresh clashes and air strikes around the Yemeni city of Hodeida have killed 32 rebels, hospital and medical sources said Sunday, as the UN envoy kept up peace efforts in Sanaa.

A military source told AFP the Saudi-led coalition fighting alongside the Yemeni government against Shiite Huthi rebels carried out an air raid on a radio station tower in the port city of Hodeida.

Three people died in Sunday's raid, he said, while Huthi-run Al-Masirah television said four people were killed, three security guards and a station employee.

According to medical sources in Hodeida province, which is controlled by the Huthis, at least 32 insurgents have been killed and 14 others wounded in clashes and air strikes since Saturday.

The coalition accuses the Tehran-aligned Huthis of smuggling arms from Iran through Hodeida and has imposed a partial blockade on the port, which the rebels seized in 2014.

In June, pro-government forces launched a major operation to retake both the city and its port, the entry point of most of the impoverished country's imports and aid.

The troops, backed by coalition air strikes, have retaken a number of towns across Hodeida province but have not yet

breached the city.

The coalition in July announced a temporary ceasefire in Hodeida to give a chance to UN-brokered peace talks.

The UN's Yemen envoy, Martin Griffiths, arrived Sunday in the rebel-held capital Sanaa, without making any statement to the media.

Griffiths is pushing for new peace talks after a failed attempt to bring the two sides together in Geneva earlier this month.

The rebels kept away from the talks, accusing the UN of failing to guarantee the return of their delegation from Switzerland to Sanaa and to secure the evacuation of wounded rebels to Oman. The Huthis' foreign minister, Hisham Sharaf Abdallah, said his side supported the UN's peace efforts and urged it to pressure the coalition to stop "targeting civilians", the rebel-run news agency Saba reported.

He called for confidence-building measures such as the reopening of Sanaa airport to commercial flights and the payment of civil servants' salaries in all areas of Yemen.

Saudi Arabia and its allies intervened in 2015 in the conflict between embattled Yemeni President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi, whose government is recognised by the United Nations, and the Huthis.

Nearly 10,000 people have since been killed and the country now stands on the brink of famine. (AFP)

## Hamilton Wins Singapore Grand Prix to Increase Title Lead

SINGAPORE - Lewis Hamilton won the Singapore Grand Prix on Sunday in dominant fashion to increase his Formula One championship lead over Sebastian Vettel to 40 points with just six races remaining.

The Mercedes driver led from pole to chequered flag, with Red Bull's Max Verstappen more than eight seconds behind and Ferrari's Vettel a distant third.

"Great job everyone, what a weekend," said Hamilton on team radio immediately after winning at the Marina Bay Street Circuit for the second year running. "Keep pushing -- we've got this guys."

A unique set of challenges makes the steamy track in the heat and humidity of Singapore's tropical climate the toughest physical test of the season.

The duration of the race, with each of the 61 laps of the 5.063 kilometre track having 23 bends and 80 gear changes -- more than any other on the Formula One calendar -- means that drivers and machinery are worked to breaking point.

"I'm spent. It felt like the longest race of my life so I'm glad it's over," said Hamilton when interviewed on track after hugging his crew in celebration. "Max put up a great fight as well -- but what a day, what a weekend."

Hamilton got the perfect start from pole position as Verstappen was slower away from second on the dirty side of the grid and saw his Red Bull come immediately under pressure from Vettel.

The German four-time world champion used his superior Ferrari power to outdrag Verstappen down Raffles Boulevard and just managed to nip past the Dutchman before the safety car brought a temporary halt to hostilities on the first lap for the third year in succession in Singapore. (AFP)