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Ghani also wished good health for Ghani and...

Erdogan Extends 1-Day Congratulations to Ghani

KABUL - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has extended congratulations and best wishes to his Afghan counterpart Ashraf Ghani on his 58th Independence Day, the Presidential Palace said Tuesday.

The Turkish leader in a message congratulated President Ghani and hoped brotherly ties between the two countries would further expand, the Presidential Palace said in a statement.

"On the occasion of Afghanistan's independence day, I am confident that the Afghan people will make the Afghan nation and region from the core of my heart," Erdogan was quoted as saying in the statement.

The Turkish leader said his country and Afghanistan would be following the same path for the next year and believed the ties would further expand.

He said Turkey would continue to support efforts to bring peace and stability at the war-torn country, which he said was passing through a sensitive phase. Erdogan wished health and success to President Ghani in his message and hoped peace would come to the Afghans.

Putin Sends Ghani Afghanistan Independence Day Message

KABUL - Russian President Vladimir Putin has sent a congratulatory letter to President Ashraf Ghani marking Afghanistan's independence anniversary.

The message was delivered to Ghani by Russian Ambassador in Kabul Dmitry Alexandrovich Zhirnov.

In the message, Putin expressed satisfac-
tion over "friendly and fraternal relations between the two countries and said that he was confident that constructive bilateral ties would expand in various fields, Ghani's office said in a statement.

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bility in the region.

Putin sent his letter to Ghani on Twitter and used the opportunity to call for...

Reduced Electricity to Industrial Parks Raises Concerns

KABUL - The Afghanistan Industries Association (AIIA) on Monday said the dis-
tribution of electricity to Pul-i-Charkhi Industrial Park of Kabul has dropped by 50 percent in the last two months.

The members of this association warn that if this situation continues, around 120,000 workers in the industrial park will be unemployed.

The director further stated that due to the reduction of electricity, the produc-
tion of factories has decreased, hence workers currently are without work.

"AIIA and the park management are trying to do their best to..."
Pakistan’s FM Says ‘Our Collective Efforts Succeeded in Advancing Afghan Peace Process’

PLAMABAD - Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said the collective efforts have so far succeeded in advancing Afghan peace process.

“Our collective efforts have so far succeeded in advancing Afghan peace process to current unprecedented point,” he said in a Twitter post.

Qureshi further added “All stakeholders must ensure residual issues are resolved to commence full Afghan negotiations w/o delay.

The imp of seizing this historic opp can not be stressed enough.”

This comes as efforts are underway to launch intra-Afghan negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government in the US.

Afghanistan has been engulfed in the war for nearly two decades, with the US, the Taliban, and Afghan national security forces taking sides in the conflict.

MAIDAN SHahr - The government of Afghanistan has released 40 Taliban prisoners after the Grand Assembly of Tribal Elders (Loya Jirga) convened to release 50 Taliban prisoners after the Grand Assembly of Tribal Elders (Loya Jirga) convened to release 40 Taliban prisoners.

Afghanistan's independence day celebration is being held on August 19.

KABUL - The National Directorate of Security (NDS) in a statement said that Daesh's Khurasan branch in Afghanistan killed Imam Abdulrahman Orakzai while he was driving a vehicle.

The NDS said that during a joint security forces operation Kabul city, the Ministry of Defense said in a statement on Monday. The operation was launched in the wake of the Taliban’s attack on the Bagram Air Base.

Key Daesh Member Abdullah Orakzai Killed in Govt Forces Operation

Afghanistan's independence day celebration is being held on August 19.

KABUL - At least five Taliban were killed and two others wounded during a joint security forces operation Kabul city, the Ministry of Defense said in a statement on Monday. The operation was launched in the wake of the Taliban’s attack on the Bagram Air Base.

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The blast happened during a wedding hall in the west of Kabul.

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Independence and its Barriers in Afghanistan

By: Mohammad Zahir Akbari

Afganistan has undergone political upheaval within the last decades. Afghan King Amanullah Khan (1919-1929) rebelled against his colonial overlords. To protest the forced conversion of Afghan women, a number of religious figures and tribal elders showed back against Amanullah’s modernization. Amanullah Khan sought to reform Afghanistan’s political, legal, and cultural structures. He pushed for women’s rights to education and employment. He even coined a term for girls’ education both in the country and outside as a number of girls went to Turkey to get education. He also convened a Loya Jirga to approve constitution, which was widely based on democratic principles. For instance, in the preamble of the new constitution during the regime, social and colonial discrimination was eliminated, which was a remarkable achievement and a huge leap forward. Many other aspects of religion and polygamy were also banned. Hence, all citizens, regardless of their race and sex, were supposed to be treated equally.

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There are six to seven individuals associated with the Afghan government's intelligence units who have been involved in this process. These individuals have raised their voices for six individuals and the decision (join the prisoner release) is delayed. They also go up to the government to ask the question: "Can we have a vote on the issue?" Because they don't have a say, they are not those who can conduct operations, they cannot conduct operations, they can never achieve success," said Atifullah Am-ulkah, a military affairs analyst. But the Interior Ministry's spokesman has clarified that security forces are ready to pursue Daesh and other groups, including Taliban, in Afghanistan. (TOLO News)

South Korea

confirmed cases in South Korea with COVID-19. Although South Korea has served as a model for many countries, viral clusters continued to reign despite measures. Vice Minister Health Kim Gang-told South Korean lawmakers said that the infections have been linked to the Province of Dajeon, a city near the capital Seoul. Kim noted that around 500 other mem-

South Korea, Pompeo said: "We've made it clear to the Taliban that weapons fire only caused casualties to civilians. Taliban's roots anywhere," the NDS said. The US and Russia have warned that the peace process but expect that justice and the Taliban are not going to be the Taliban. All of these arguments have been expressed in light of the Taliban." (TOLO News)

(14) Heavy Rains Threaten Yangtze River and Gorges Dam

The Yangtze River Water Resources Commission announced that the river, the world’s largest hydro electric river, was at a high level due to the flow of its water in its 14,300-year history. Flood damage and residential losses in the region of Hubei were three times higher than the urban area. The Flood Service was suspended starting Tuesday evening between Zhanjiang city and Hong Kong. South of the river and Haikou, a city announcement said. Floodwaters in two provinces have killed more than 20 people and missing more than 20,000 people in China this year due to the strike of Typhoon Maysak. (Fox News)

(16) Gaza’s Lone Power Plant: US Not to Reimpose Tighter Sanctions on Hamas

The Gaza power plant, which was operated by the Palestinian Authority, has been severely damaged by Israeli attacks since the start of the civil war. The plant and its neighboring areas have been under Israeli occupation since 2007. Hamas has been using the plant as its main source of energy. The plant has been repeatedly attacked by Israeli airstrikes and has been out of service for weeks. (Aljazeera)

(17) South Korea—3,162 New Cases of Coronavirus

South Korea reported 3,162 new cases of COVID-19, bringing the total number of cases to 27,082. The country has been reporting a steady decline in new cases in recent days, but the number of deaths has remained relatively stable at 281. (Handa)

(18) Tsunami Advisory

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center (PTWC) issued a tsunami advisory for the coast of Japan, Russia, and the Aleutian Islands. The tsunami was generated by a magnitude 7.1 earthquake that struck off the coast of Hokkaido, Japan. The tsunami was estimated to be about 1.5 meters high at the nearest point of land. The PTWC advised people in the affected areas to move to higher ground and to stay away from coastal areas. (Reuters)

(19) China—Largest Flood in 1,000 Years

China’s Yangtze River, the world’s third-longest river, has reached its highest level in 1,000 years due to heavy rainfall. The river is currently flowing at a rate of 10,300 cubic meters per second, which is higher than the level recorded in 1998, when the river flooded and caused widespread destruction. The Chinese government has activated its highest alert level, and residents in the affected areas have been advised to evacuate. (The Guardian)

(20) South Korea—New Coronavirus Cases

South Korea reported 316 new cases of COVID-19, bringing the total number of cases to 3,162. The country has been reporting a steady decline in new cases in recent days, but the number of deaths has remained relatively stable at 281. (Handa)

(21) U.N. Security Council

established that Mr. Ayyad had bullied Ms. Azzahra, said Judge Madlen Bradd, reading a summary of the verdict, which was in the 2nd chamber of the Israeli Supreme Court. The three other defendants are also alleged to have been involved in the incidents. (Haaretz)
**Gaza’s Lone Power Plant Shuts Down Amid Tensions with Israel**

Gaza’s lone power plant has shut down, less than a week after fuel shipments to the Palestinian territory from Turkey were initially being supplied to the Gaza Electricity Generation and Distribution Company. The suspension came after a high-level meeting between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas in the Egyptian capital, Cairo. The power cut is the latest in a series of measures taken by Hamas to increase pressure on Israel over the ongoing conflict in the region. 

**More State-Controlled Firms Join Strike Against Belarus President**

In a move that could further escalate tension between Belarus and the international community, the Belarusian Railway, the state-owned rail company, has announced that it will join the strike launched by railway workers and other state firms, led by the Belarusian Railway Workers’ Trade Union. The strike began on Monday and continues despite the government’s attempts to crack down on the protests. The government has so far not taken any concrete action against the strike leaders, but the move has added to the pressure on the government to reach a peaceful resolution.

**Strong Spike in Filipinos in Thailand**

The number of Filipinos in Thailand has surged significantly in recent months, with a strong spike in the past few weeks. The Department of Foreign Affairs has reported that as of last week, there were 182,289 Filipinos in Thailand, an increase of 133,802 from the previous week. The spike is believed to be driven by factors such as the easing of border restrictions and the return of work opportunities in the country.

**Turkmenistan Extends Suspension of Trains Operation**

Turkmenistan has extended the suspension of train operations until September 1, 2020. The government made the announcement on Tuesday, stating that the decision was made due to measures being taken to fight infectious diseases. The suspension of train operations has been in place since mid-March to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

**Kryvyi Rih to Hold Border Talks with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan**

President Volodymyr Zelensky on Tuesday said that he plans to hold border talks with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The talks are expected to focus on issues such as border security, economic cooperation, and the development of the Bakhmut region. The President also plans to discuss the ongoing situation in the Donbas region with the leaders of the two neighboring countries.

**South Korea Bolsters Social Distancing Restrictions Amid Coronavirus Case Increase**

South Korea has tightened social distancing restrictions amid a rise in coronavirus cases. The government has ordered schools to halt in-person classes for two days, and has urged citizens to avoid large gatherings and other activities that could lead to infections. The measures are aimed at containing the spread of the virus ahead of the upcoming Chuseok holiday, which is a major family gathering period in South Korea.

**U.N. Tribunal: Main Defendant in Hariri Killing Was Hezbollah Member**

The United Nations International Tribunal has found that the main defendant in the assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri was a member of Hezbollah. The tribunal’s ruling is a significant victory for the Lebanese government, which has long been seeking accountability for the attack. The trial, which lasted for nearly two years, was widely seen as a test for Lebanon’s ability to hold a fair and transparent investigation of the event.

**German Sentences Leader of Kurdish PKK Group to Prison**

A court in western Germany has sentenced the leader of the PKK group to 14 years in prison. The ruling is a significant blow to the Kurdish militant group, which has been active in Turkey and Iraq for decades. The trial, which lasted for nearly three years, was a major victory for the German government, which has sought to curb the group’s activities in Europe.

**Turkish Defense Ministry Seizes F-16s Replied to Israel’s ‘Arab Unification’ Move**

The Turkish Defense Ministry has seized two F-16 fighter jets that were repatriated to Israel after the latter’s announcement regarding the formation of an “Arab Unification” group. The move is seen as a reprisal for Israel’s attempt to strengthen ties with Arab states in the region.

**Israel: No Policy Change on US Arms Sales to United Arab Emirates**

President Donald Trump has announced a policy change regarding arms sales to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The UAE, which is a member of the anti-Iranian coalition led by the United States, has been a key recipient of U.S. military equipment. The announcement follows a series of high-level meetings between the two countries, including the visit of a high-level U.S. delegation to the UAE this week.
KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani on Monday warned that a possible deal made by the international community on the fate of Afghans will be rejected by Kabul, and he pledged that the republic and the government forces will not be compromised in the peace process with the Taliban.

"We are not ready for compromise. If the world compromised on us, we will stand and will say no to the world," Ghani said.

On Monday evening, the AP quoted Presidential spokesman Seddig Seddiqi explaining the new position of the Afghan government, which is that the release of the remaining Taliban prisoners will be halted until the Taliban releases government troops.

"We are going to release them. That’s not an issue. But it has to be two-way," government spokesman Sedid Seddiqi told The Associated Press. "If we take this bold step, releasing all these guys, all these bad people, why are the Taliban not releasing our captives, which is a very small number?"

Sources within the government said that the Taliban has not released more than 20 Afghan commandos, and sources within the Taliban said the group will not release them until the release of their 400 prisoners. The Taliban has also said that they will not attend the intra-Afghan talks until the release of 400 prisoners is completed, said the sources.

Suhail...(More on P4)...(6)

KANDAHAR - Thirty youth from 25 provinces went to Kandahar to encourage national unity. During their stay, the activists held meetings with people from different walks of life to promote national cohesion and visited historic places. Hikmatullah Sulhi, head of the Civil Society Coordination centre in Kandahar, told Pajhwok Afghan News that the youth from 25 provinces went to Kandahar to encourage support for the peace process and promote national unity.

Representing all Afghanistan, the youth men wanted to bring violence and the war to an end, remove hurdles to the peace process and urge early start of the intra-Afghan talks, he said.

Azizullah Faramarz, one of the youth from Bamyan province, said all Afghans were long wanted to bring violence and the war to an end, remove hurdles to the peace process and urge early start of the intra-Afghan talks, he said.

He said their aim was an end to the war in order the coming generations live in peace, get education and work for the country’s development. He was thankful to the hospitality of the people of Kandahar.

Another visiting activist from northern Sari Pul province, Haji Ali Shor Javezjani urged the warning...(More on P4)...(6)

Ghani Will ‘Not Compromise’ Afghans’ Fate Despite Intl Pressure

KABUL - The Taliban prisoners’ release process has been halted, the Presidential Palace announced on Monday. Seddig Seddiqi, the spokesperson to the Presidential Palace appeared in a press conference on Monday, announcing the Taliban prisoners’ release process has been halted as they have not yet released the prisoners from the government side.

Seddig Seddiqi clarified that if the Taliban completed the release of captured government prisoners, there would not be an obstacle to the intra-Afghan talks.

On the other hand, several other NATO members have expressed concerns over the release of those Taliban militants who were engaged in killing their citizens in Afghanistan. France and Australia have so far shared their concerns with the Afghan government stating that those under detention has killed some of their nationals, must not be released.

According to Afghan government, 80 out of 400 remaining Taliban prisoners have been released so far. This comes as, following the Loya Jirga’s decision, President Ashraf Ghani signed a decree to release the dreaded 400 Taliban prisoners.

43 New Covid-19 Cases Surfed in Afghanistan

KABUL - The Ministry of Public Health announced that 43 new coronavirus cases were reported in the last 24 hours in the country. The Ministry voiced Tuesday that the total number of Covid-19 cases soared to 27,316 across Afghanistan. According to the Ministry, 4 patients died in the past 24 hours, bringing the total number of deaths to 1,381 so far.

At the same time, 4 patients have been recovered. The total number of recoveries has reached 27,316 across Afghanistan.

The Ministry’s statistics indicate a prominent decrease in the number of infectious cases in the country. This comes as according to observers, most of the infected people do not have access to health facilities and many victims are not officially registered.

Youth from 25 Provinces in Kandahar to Push for Peace