

(1) Pence, Ghani...

reaffirmed the US and international commitment to partner with and support the Afghan government and security forces, according to the readout.

The two sides also discussed the upcoming parliamentary elections that are scheduled for October this year. They also agreed on the need for political inclusion to enable the long-term stability and effectiveness of the Afghan government. (Pajhwok)

(2) Taliban Blamed...

expressed concern over the incident and asked local officials to fix the problem at the earliest possible.

Habibullah, a resident of Herat, said: "Our electricity supply has been disconnected in the hot weather. Many people are in trouble as their businesses are reliant on electricity."

Aziz Ahmad, another resident of the province said they had been without water and were suffering from extreme hot weather.

Turkmenistan exports 70 megawatts of electricity to Herat and half of the province's residents consume the power imported from Iran. (Pajhwok)

(3) Candidates Hit the...

voters and display of pictures in cities amounted to election campaigns and violations of the relevant law.

He said the candidates violating the rules would be advised before being warned and fined. If they did not respect the law, the IEC spokesman said, their names would be removed from the list of candidates.

Investigations had been launched by the commission's media committee and violations cases would be referred to the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC), he informed.

Abdul Badee Sayyad, chairman of IEC, had also referred to the issue at a meeting of the commission. He had said that campaigning ahead of the stipulated time was a violation of the law. (Pajhwok)

(4) Privatizing Afghanistan...

"We are fully supporting Afghan-led and Afghan-owned reconciliation efforts, and hard fighting is going on to convince the Taliban they must negotiate," the US defense secretary said.

"A recent statement by a Taliban leader made specific mention of negotiations as a way to bring, and I quote here, "an end to the war," unquote. This one of the most forward-leaning statements made yet by a Taliban supreme leader, even as they conduct attacks designed to garner press attention, costing lives, and they are now stripped, however, of any religious guise for an inhumane campaign against the Afghan people," Mattis said in his chat with reporters.

Earlier this month, John Bolton, the US president's national security adviser, was asked whether private contractors could replace US forces in Afghanistan. NBC News reported that Trump had shown interest in the idea, which had been proposed by Blackwater founder Erik Prince. The report said that in an interview with ABC News' Martha Raddatz Aug. 19, Bolton wouldn't say whether Trump was still considering it.

"There's always a lot of discussions," Bolton said. "I'm always open to new ideas, but I'm not going to comment on what the thinking is. That will ultimately be the president's decision."

Prince, who now heads Hong Kong-based security firm Frontier Services Group, is the brother of Trump's education secretary, Betsy DeVos.

While Prince has advocated for the use of private contractors in Afghanistan before, his renewed efforts to gain traction for the proposal are tied to the one-year anniversary of the Trump administration's new

strategy for America's longest war. At a press release following the NBC News report Aug. 20, Prince called the Pentagon's plan for Afghanistan "a total failure."

In the same press release, Prince outlined a plan involving a blend of private contractors and US special forces who would mentor Afghan battalions in much the same way the US is currently training, advising, and assisting Afghan troops. Prince denied he was proposing a privatization of the war.

Prince said in the same statement that the operation would be "fully accountable" under the Uniformed Code of Military Justice and the Afghan government's rules of engagement. He also estimates the need for only 6,000 contractors and 2,000 US troops, compared to the approximately 14,000 Americans who are currently deployed.

There are more than 26,000 private contractors already serving in Afghanistan, according to the latest estimate from the offices of the inspector general at the Department of Defense, the State Department, and USAID. (Tolo news)

(5) Afghanistan to Import...

Pul-e Khomri to Kabul after surveying in October," Wahidullah Tawhidi, spokesman of DABS asserted. DABS officials noted that with the connection of the line the imported electricity will reach to 2000 MW which will go through Kabul to East, South and Southwest and to central provinces.

Currently, Afghanistan imports 300 MW electricity from Uzbekistan which the contract is not permanent, but the import of 1000 MW electricity will have a permanent contract. According to information of DABS, Afghanistan currently needs 7000 MW electricity. (ATN)

(6) 525th MI Brigade...

Afghanistan to lead intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance operations in support of coalition and Afghan forces. Benick said the mission continues the unit's proud history in support of U.S. military operations. The most recent chapter of that history came last year, when the 525th Military Intelligence Brigade deployed for nine months to Afghanistan before returning to Fort Bragg in October.

Benick took command of the brigade during the deployment, assuming his position during a July ceremony at Bagram Airfield.

On Tuesday, he said the brigade learned important lessons during its last deployment and could count on experienced soldiers to help guide those troops who are deploying for the first time.

A small number of soldiers from the brigade are already in Afghanistan, officials said. They are laying the groundwork for the eventual transition between the 525th Military Intelligence Brigade and the 504th Military Intelligence Brigade from Fort Hood, Texas, which replaced the 525th in Afghanistan less than a year ago.

Like last year, the 525th Military Intelligence Brigade will work to defeat terror networks, combat the illegal drug trade and protect coalition troops.

The brigade focused on the fundamentals in its buildup to deployment, Benick said. He also stressed that soldiers who are not deploying will also have important jobs.

"It is less a rear detachment and more so an operational task force," he said.

Heyse, the senior enlisted leader of the brigade, said the soldiers who do not deploy will have their own missions in support of national defense. "We will still have requirements back here at Fort Bragg," Heyse said. He said those requirements did not exist during previous deployments

of the brigade.

Benick said the brigade was ready to deploy, fight and win no matter the location.

"We have trained hard, and I'm extremely proud of what this team has done to get ready," he said. "We are ready now and I am confident in their ability to take care of each other, get the job done and come home with honor and pride." (Tribune News Service)

(7) Political Parties...

supporters of seven political parties and the grand national alliance launched the protest after the government failed to implement their demands.

He explained their major demand was switching to transferrable vote system from to SNTV and giving political parties an effective role in monitoring the voting process.

Fazal Rahman Orya, a member of the Grand National Alliance, said the government was not committed to conducting free and fair elections. "The government is wasting time. Instead of holding free elections, the government has begun selections," he said.

Umar Khan Shewa, cultural affairs representative of Hizb-i-Islami Afghanistan (HIA), said the elections should be held under strict monitoring of political parties.

"We again ask the government to accept demands raised by political parties otherwise we would continue to protest," he said.

President Ashraf Ghani after meeting heads of political parties has suggested the creation of a joint committee to consider the demands of political parties. (Pajhwok)

(8) Pakistan's...

Mohammad Radmanish, deputy spokesman for the ministry of defense.

Prior to the attack, Afghan security officials visited Ghazni and pledged to the people that their city would be protected against Taliban attacks.

However, video footage seen by TOLONews shows the moment Taliban fired a missile on a gathering of security forces in Ghazni. Dozens of security force members were wounded while other can be seen fleeing the scene.

This attack happened on July 8 during a security meeting presided over by the Minister of Defense Tariq Shah Bahrami.

"During this fighting season, the enemies of Afghanistan planned to take over some districts and even some provinces in the east, south and southwest of the country," said Tariq Shah Bahrami during the meeting in Ghazni on July 8.

Security officials have frequently said that the Afghan security forces had been put on high alert to repel any attack by the Taliban on Ghazni city.

At another high level meeting, which was held on 30 November 2017, Nizamuddin Khanjar, the commander of 203 Thunder Army Corps made promises to the people of Ghazni that the city will be secured.

"I assure you that the cowardly and ignorant enemy will not be able to plot any conspiracy against the country, especially against Ghazni city," said Khanjar last year.

However, these statements rang hollow after the four day siege of Ghazni and three weeks later, the signs of war are still clearly visible in the city.

"The government came after four days of war when all things were torched and destroyed," said Abdul Ghafar, one Ghazni shopkeeper said.

"There are 75 shops in each story (of this building), 225 shops were torched on three stories of the building," said Fared Ahmad, the owner of a shopping mall in Ghazni. The Taliban made significant ad-

vances on parts of Ghazni after launching a major offensive on the city. But the Afghan security forces pushed back the Taliban following four days of deadly battles.

Security officials argue that the Taliban planned the attack six months earlier and during this period, they deployed their fighters in Ghazni from neighboring provinces in a move that added to the strength of the militant group. (Tolo news)

(9) MoU Signed...

of the general and green areas and establishment of a perspective for economic development through professional training in handicraft and other industries in Jangalak training center. (KP)

(10) Poverty Drives...

poverty will not allow me to think much about education and school. We are obligated to make bricks to survive," Zakia added disappointedly.

Asadullah, father of Zakia, said: "We are an eight-member family. Conflicts and drought displaced us from Sayad district to Shiberghan. We have no way but to work hard to survive."

He said 30 other families affected by conflicts lived with them in the area and all lived in extremely bad situation.

"At least 40 children of these families do not go to school instead work with parents in brick kilns," he said. He criticized the government and said no government official had visited them to see their situation.

"Only during Eid holydays, a Pajhwok reporter brought some meat and cash donated by others to us," he added.

Hajira, aunt of Zakia, said: "I don't know what future these children would have. They probably face more problems in future if their current situation continues."

"We need food, doctor and medicines to continue our life, but we hardly have access to these and we are deprived of most of basic services," she said.

She asked the government and aid organizations to help them find access to at least basic life facilities.

Amanullah Zargar, owner of a brick kiln in Khaton area, said at least 30 families belonging to Sar-i-Pul province worked in his factory.

"These families always come to me after the snow melts every year for work, I also lend them money during winter season and they pay me back by working with us in summer," he said.

He said all families affected by war and drought worked in kilns and earned from 1,000 to 2,000 afghanis as wages.

"Children also work alongside their families making bricks, I pay them 400 afghanis for making 400 bricks," he said.

Dr Ahmad Shah Qarar, UNICEF in charge in Shiberghan said: "We have prepared some programs for children engaged in hard labor in the city and some parts of this province."

He said the programs included educating and awareness creating about children's rights to people.

Families suffering from economic hardships were provided vocational trainings, he added.

Meanwhile, Mualvi Lotfullah Azizi, Jawzjan governor, said he was aware of the bad situation of displaced families in Khaton area and they would soon be assisted. (Pajhwok)

(11) IEC Office...

boycott elections in Badakhshan if our demands were not met," said Friba, a protester.

The IEC officials in Badakhshan welcomed the move by security forces but said their activities have postponed due to the closure of their office over the last 20 days.

This comes after IEC offices were reopened after government forces removed protestors' tents outside the election commission's offices in the city.

The IEC chief Abdulbadi Sayyad said they have resumed their activities after their offices reopened in Kabul. (Tolo news)

(12) 8 Suspects...

the completion of interrogations. A well-placed source in Kabul said Wolesi Jirga candidate and head of the office Idrees Ghaljai, who is the son of Ghanikhel district chief Ghalib Mujahid, was among the detainees. However, he was freed after two days.

Mujahid said one of his sons, a student, lived in Jurat's office. He, however, explained at the time of the operation his son was not present at the office. He was in Kabul.

"An NDS official telephoned me and asked to hand over my son for investigations and I followed the order," he said. (Pajhwok)

(13) NDS Forces...

and other provinces. They were also reportedly involved in recruitment of new Daesh members.

The group had been hiding out in Qargha, in Kabul. According to the NDS, their forces seized weapons, a suicide vest and a vehicle at the location.

No information was given regarding the operation. (Tolo news)

(14) 4.44m Afghans...

replaced with RCM. He said 4.44 million refugees had been repatriated between 2002 and 2018.

Pakistan was still hosting 1.4 million registered Afghan refugees in addition to 850,000 Afghan citizen card holders besides undocumented Afghans. (Pajhwok)

(15) 'Badakhshan's...

district might fall into the hands of rebels.

He said weapons with the militants were advanced as compared to those with the security forces.

Meanwhile, Nek Mohammad Nazari, the governor's spokesman, said that public order police would be airlifted to the district via helicopters as soon as possible. (Pajhwok)

Uzmetkombinat Launches Production of Ferroalloys for \$60M

TASHKENT - On August 29, the Uzbek Metallurgical Combine has launched a workshop for the production of ferroalloys, the correspondent of Podrobno.uz agency reported. The launch ceremony was attended by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, employees of the enterprise, representatives of the government of Uzbekistan and foreign investors.

The cost of the implemented project is \$60 million, the workshop is equipped with up-to-date energy-saving technologies and the advanced equipment.

The new facilities were built with the participation of the South Korean Posco Daewoo company and are able to produce 25,000 tons of ferrosilicon and ferrosilicon manganese per year. This will allow to not only meet the needs of the steel industry, but also to export an average of 8,000 tons of ferroalloys per year, to ensure the inflow of foreign currency in the amount of \$12 million, as well as to reduce imports. Some 330 young men and women will be employed in the new workshop.

Shavkat Mirziyoyev got acquainted with the technological processes in the new workshop, talked with South Korean partners. The projects within the investment program of "Uzmetkombinat" JSC were presented to the head of state. The president gave instructions to the combine's management and responsible persons to increase the number of such facilities through the implementation of new investment projects, to create additional jobs and to increase the level of employment of the population. (Trend)