

China's Boulevard to Nowhere: The Battle for Influence in APEC's Pacific Host

SYDNEY - Workers are putting the finishing touches on a Beijing-funded boulevard designed to showcase Papua New Guinea's (PNG) capital to visiting world leaders at this month's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum.

Critics say the six-lane road - complete with wide, illuminated footpaths - is emblematic of a regional power play whereby donor countries vie for influence with show-stopper gifts, even as deeper problems plague the Pacific nation.

Australia, PNG's traditional partner and a close Washington ally, is lifting aid and has plowed more than A\$120 million (\$86.5 million) into APEC, seeking to keep its sway over its neighbor.

Allan Bird, a parliamentarian and governor of PNG's second largest province, said the boulevard outside parliament house had little practical benefit.



"Whatever the Chinese government spent on it, it could have been better spent somewhere else, buying medicine or building a school," Bird told Reuters.

Bird said such gifts put pressure on traditional partners such as Australia to place less restrictions around donated funds and refrain from criticizing PNG's own spending, which controversially includes buying 40 Maseratis and three Bentleys for APEC. (Reuters)

El Chapo in Dock for Biggest US Drugs Trial

NEW YORK - Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman goes on trial in New York on Monday, accused of running the world's biggest drug cartel and spending a quarter of a century smuggling more than 155 tons of cocaine into the United States.

The mammoth trial in a Brooklyn federal court, which will cost millions of dollars and is expected to last more than four months, will see one of the world's most notorious criminals face the US justice system. Prosecutors spent years piecing together a sweeping case against Guzman, who was extradited in 2017 after twice escaping prison in Mexico -- first hidden in a laundry cart, then slipping down a tunnel that reached his prison shower.

Guzman has been branded the world's biggest drug lord since Colombia's Pablo Escobar, who was dubbed "The King of Cocaine" and was one of the wealthiest men in the



world until police shot him dead in 1993.

Experts say the government has a near water-tight case likely to send Guzman, 61, to a maximum security US prison for the rest of his life. But at what price?

"Is it going to stop even one additional pound of cocaine from coming into the United States? Probably

not. The machine keeps rolling," says Rob Heroy, a North Carolina lawyer who has defended other Mexican drug barons.

The Sinaloa cartel that Guzman founded in 1989 is still hugely powerful. His co-defendant Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada remains at large, and violent drug trafficking continues unabated in Mexico. (AFP)

(1) Ghani Dispatches...

displaced, following the Taliban attack on the district.

Days earlier, Second Vice President Sarwar Danish criticized security institutions for being unaware of the Taliban attack in Khas Uruzgan district. He said the security forces should provide urgent support to the residents of the district. (ATN)

(2) Stanikzai Briefs...

was also killed in the attack which was carried out 17 days ago.

A parliamentary candidate Abdul Jabar Qahraman was killed a day earlier in an explosion inside his electoral office in Lashkargah city. (KP)

(3) Mayor of Utah...

on his Facebook page that Taylor, 39, has been killed.

"Devastating news. North Ogden Mayor Brent Taylor was killed today while serving in Afghanistan," Cox said. "I hate this. I'm struggling for words. I love Mayor Taylor, his amazing wife Jennie and his seven sweet kids. Utah weeps for them today. This war has once again cost us the best blood of a generation. We must rally around his family."

U.S. Sen. Orrin Hatch issued a statement Saturday about Taylor's death on Twitter. "Brent was a hero, a patriot, a wonderful father, and a dear friend. News of his death in Afghanistan is devastating. My prayers and love are with Jennie and his 7 young children. His service will always be remembered," Hatch said.

Utah Gov. Gary Herbert plans to hold a news conference Sunday to discuss the death.

Three earlier deployments

Taylor was deployed to Afghanistan in January with the Utah National Guard for what was expected to be a 12-month tour of duty. Taylor, an officer in the National Guard, previously served two tours in Iraq and one tour in Afghanistan.

At the time of his deployment in January, Taylor told local media that, as an intelligence officer, he will be assigned to serve on an advisory team training the staff of an Afghan commando battalion.

"Right now there is a need for my experience and skills to serve in our nation's long-lasting war in Afghanistan," he said. "President Trump has ordered an increase in troops, and part of the new strategy focuses on expanding the capabilities of the Afghan commando units."

Taylor became mayor of North Ogden, a city of about 17,000 people 46 miles north of Salt Lake City, in 2013. (VoA)

(4) Mohib Assures...

promised any kind of cooperation especially in security sector that suggested by the governor Hayat.

Earlier, the governors of Laghman and Nangarhar met the director of the power utility for finding an argent solution to connect power supply to the eastern provinces. (Pajhwok)

(5) Indonesia Pledges...

"We are ready to provide our suggestions and advice regarding the preparation of upcoming three-nation and neighbouring countries conference on Afghan peace and reconciliation process."

HPC Deputy Head Abdul Khabir Ochqon thanked the visiting delegation for their continued efforts for peace and stability in Afghanistan and added efforts undertaken by Indonesia proved to be helpful in Afghan peace process.

Indonesia hosted a three-nation meeting of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Indonesian ulemas on Afghan peace process few months back. (Pajhwok)

(6) 32 Ballot Boxes...

institution and the IEC reserved the right to take decision," said Amiri.

He said 160 complaints had been registered about elections in the province and all would be addressed.

In Bamyán, 168,000 people had registered as voter and 129,000 casted their votes, including 51 percent (Pajhwok)

(7) IEC Begins...

Jirga candidate Samiullah Zhoori said during his observation he found the number of votes of some candidates written more than what was the actual figures. (Pajhwok)

(8) Samangan...

The revenue could meet their family needs for a year, the growers said.

Zar Gul, a farmer from Shalkatoi village of Aibak, said he collected 35 tonnes of pistachio and earned 44,000 afghanis this year. Samangan pistachio is exported to India, Pakistan and European countries. (Pajhwok)

(9) Six Afghans...

out of the country, being in a safe and peaceful environment - that totally changed his perceptions," Mirwais Ramaki told the Austra-

lian broadcaster SBS.

"They never actually had the intention to stay, they planned to go back, but these 10 days actually changed them, Ramaki said. According to Australia's News.com they had been present at last Saturday's Invictus Games closing ceremony, after a week of events.

Australian media stated however that those who stayed behind - who have not yet been identified publicly - have valid visas to remain in the country until the end of November so no breach has yet occurred.

Ramaki said the six Afghan out of the hotel where the Afghan team was staying but doesn't know where they are.

News.com quoted Ramaki as saying they speak limited English and most have disabilities. Ramaki said he was "extremely concerned" for their welfare as they also don't have much money.

A spokesperson for the Department of Home Affairs said the individuals' visas had not yet expired.

"The Invictus Games competitors and officials may remain lawfully in Australia until the expiry of their visas," the spokesperson said. (Tolo news)

(10) MoFA Says High...

Moscow peace meeting, key and influential politicians from Afghanistan are also invited to the meeting, but until now we do not have the official position of the Afghan government - on whether it will participate in this meeting or not, the ministry of foreign affairs said we are engaging in consultations with the Russians about the prospects and nature of the meeting, there is also a possibility that a delegation from the peace council will attend the meeting, but the important issue is that someone in a strong position from Afghanistan should participate in the meeting," said one senator Mohammad Hassan Hotak.

There are reports however that Russia has also invited some of Afghanistan's mainstream politicians to the summit.

According to Reuters, former Afghan president Hamid Karzai and CEO of Jamiat-e-Islami party of Afghanistan, Attar Mohammad Noor, have already accepted the invitation by the Russian government to attend the meeting.

A number of political figures invited to the Moscow peace meeting on Afghanistan last week said that differences between

Washington and Moscow are apparently delaying the planned meeting.

Politicians said that further delays were not in the interests of Afghanistan.

"We should not be shaky when it comes to peace, wherever a voice is heard about peace in Afghanistan, we should take part in it," said former governor of Herat Sayed Fazlullah Wahidi.

According to sources, the key challenges around such talks are questions on the role and status the Taliban will play at such a meeting, the participation of countries, the role of Pakistan and on whether Afghanistan will take the lead in such talks.

Originally the meeting was scheduled for September 4 in Moscow, but Afghanistan refused to attend citing that any such discussions should be Afghan-led.

In August, the Afghan government announced that Afghanistan and Russia will co-chair proposed future talks in Moscow on Afghanistan's peace. (Tolo news)

(11) Ghazni Residents in...

said telephone services were suspended by the insurgent group in Ghazni.

"We did this in order prevent civilian casualties during airstrikes," he said, adding the telephone services would be banned for a short term but people should adapt to the situation. Besides Ghazni, Taliban shut telephone services during the night in other parts of the country too. (Pajhwok)

(12) Kabul Blaze...

with the fire and demanded compensation to traders who suffered losses in the incident.

Abdullah Qarlaq, a senator from Kunduz province, said that the fire eruption on Nader Pashton Road needed precise investigation.

He also demanded loan services to traders who he said suffered huge losses. "It is the government's job to assist the traders who are affected in this incident, if we do not provide facilities for them it would lead to capital flight from the country," he added.

Mohammad Asif Seddiqi, second Meshrano Jirga chairman, asked for investigation about the cause of the fire and said the government must help the affected.

He said the fire department should be equipped with advanced tools so they would be able to deal with blazes on the

shortest time possible. (Pajhwok)

(13) Taliban Capture...

refused to provide information about the incident with the media.

An official of the Ministry of Defense (MoD) also confirmed the fall of the security base in Nawa area of Terinkot. The source said that a number of security personnel were also killed or missed.

However, the official did not provide the exact figures.

Taliban in a statement to media also said that they captured a military base in Terinkot city, named Tabai Kotla, last night and killed 10 soldiers and took hostage 13 others. (Pajhwok)

(14) Jawzjan Clash...

the clash, he added.

Abdul Qader, a resident of locality said, Mullah Haqyar, conducted anti-government activities in the district of Darzab and Qoshtapa in Jawzjan province and Dawlatabad district of Faryab Province,

He added Mullah Omari another Taliban leader was also killed in the battle, where his body was buried today in the areas of Khatya Sai Dasht Liliy.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid denied the conflict in Jarqoq village and said two Taliban had been killed by own mine explosion in the Qoshtapa district. (Pajhwok)

(15) Inspection...

allegations regarding rigging had been proved in these polling stations which proved which forced the commission to conduct inspection and recount of ballot boxes in some polling stations in Badakhshan, he said.

Sadaat said: "Any fraud or rigging unearthed during the inspection the votes of that ballot box would be declared invalidated in line with the law."

Syed Rohullah Musavi, head of the Independent election commission (IEC) for Badakhshan said, they welcomed every step which ensured transparency in the conduct of elections.

"The IECC sent us the list of 60 polling stations where alleged rigging took place and we are conducting inspection and recount of the ballot boxes of these polling stations today," he said. Salahuddin Ayubi, election observer of Wolesi Jirga candidate Samiullah Zhoori said during his observation he found the number of votes of some candidates written more than what was the actual figures. (Pajhwok)