

### (1) Denmark Grants...

"It's in Denmark's interest for us to continue working towards a peaceful Afghanistan, so we've now set aside extra funds for training and other costs associated with the police and military looking ahead to 2020," said the foreign minister, Anders Samuelsen.

"A more tranquil Afghanistan with more stability is a prerequisite to meeting the challenge of migration and the threat of terror against the West, Europe and Denmark."

NATO and Pakistan

The vast majority of the funds, some 80 million kroner per year, will be allocated to financing the Afghan police and developing the responsible authorities – an area that Samuelsen contends has improved significantly recently thanks to, among other things, Danish aid efforts.

Aside from supporting the Afghan police and officer academy, other projects in the country that are encompassed within the scope of NATO are also being funded.

Additionally, funds are also going towards a project aimed at bettering the understanding between the Afghan and Pakistani defence forces. (Agencies)

### (2) Gen. Votel Seeks...

against terrorism.

The high-rank US official hailed the progress of Afghan government in bringing reforms in security and defense sectors and anti-corruption and urged the efforts should be continued in this regard. According to the statement, Mohib appreciated US for continued cooperation in supporting and equipping Afghan security forces. He said the Afghan government was committed in bringing reforms in security sector.

On the other hand, Gen. Votel also met with President Ashraf Ghani and both sides discussed peace process, security situation, joint anti-terror efforts and US strategy for South Asia, a statement from Presidential Palace said.

Votel commended the Afghan government for holding successfully parliamentary polls and praised security forces for maintain security of the elections.

Referring to Kandahar attack, that claimed the life of Gen. Abdul Raziq, former police chief of the province, Votel reaffirmed his country's support for the Afghan government and people.

Ghani said the Afghan government welcomed any moves that could lead to peace, the statement added. (Pajhwok)

### (3) \$2.3bn Invested...

country was committed to providing standard information and telecommunication technology for its citizens.

Afghanistan is being connected with China, central Asia and Europe through a fiber optic network and progress has been made on the project, he said, adding his country was already to be connected with Iran, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan through the network.

The Afghan government has connected 25 out of 34 provinces of the country through the fiber optic network spread over 4,500 kilometers, therefore 90 percent of Afghans have access to the internet, he said.

The ITU event is held once in every four years. The union was created in 1865 and Afghanistan became its member in 1928.

The Afghan telecommunication and information technology minister also participated in the event. Khwazoon said Abdullah also met with a number of Afghan investors in Dubai and he assured them they were a priority of the Afghan government.

The Afghan traders provided information about their businesses to the CEO and then asked for solution to problems they faced.

They cited insecurity, high taxes, lack of support and cold storages

and lack of land for investors in Afghanistan as main problems.

The CEO said all problems traders faced would be reviewed and steps taken for their solution. (Pajhwok)

### (4) IEC Yet to Begin...

the IEC's headquarters in Kabul, said the IEC.

The use of biometric devices was the result of government's decision to hold a transparent election – following increased pressure by political parties.

Almost 22,000 biometric devices were purchased by government from a German company. The distribution to some provinces of the devices was delayed and election employees had problems using the new system on election day.

The government allocated \$20 million to purchase these biometric devices.

"All necessary measures are in place, servers have been checked, we are waiting to receive more devices to start the process of transferring data to the servers," said Sayed Ibrahim Sadat, head of the IT department of the IEC.

Meanwhile, a number of election candidates in Kabul reiterated their calls to the IEC to invalidate votes at the centers where voters were allowed to cast their ballots without going through the biometric identification process.

But the IEC on Monday overturned an earlier decision on this issue and said it will count the votes where voters' details were not entered into the biometric system, arguing that the voting process continued on the basis of the voters list at polling stations where biometric devices did not work. They said there was no reason to disqualify these votes.

But election watchdogs have expressed doubt over the IEC's capacity to separate fraudulent votes from valid votes.

Previously the IEC pledged to not include votes of people whose details had not been included in the biometric system.

The IEC also said that telecommunication companies did not show a willingness to connect the biometric devices to internet services on the days of elections therefore the devices were used offline.

"If the issue of biometrics is not considered and it is not recognized, this would mean that the government has spent all the money for fraud," said one parliamentary election candidate Obaidullah.

"They should stop the fraudsters to avoid a tragedy," election candidate Azizah Afzali said.

"If they do not meet our demands, in the north, we will block Baghlan-North highway and will cut off transmission lines from north to the south," a parliamentary candidate from Baghlan Hamed Poya said. (Tolo news)

### (5) Finest Afghan...

through the Afghanistan-Kazakhstan air corridor. Kazakhstan imported \$2.1 million in agricultural goods from Afghanistan in 2017.

"WorldFood Kazakhstan" comes after two USAID-funded events in India in July and September, generating \$163 million in agreements for Afghan agricultural products. Afghan fresh fruits, figs, saffron, almonds, figs, raisins, pistachios, and walnuts were among some of the products contracted during the events.

USAID Mission Director Herbie Smith said, "We are working with international buyers and investors to link them with Afghan private sector partners such as processors and traders to ensure that more Afghan farmers can sell their products for good prices, feed their families, and educate their children."

Agriculture is at the heart of Afghanistan's economy and provided over \$700 million in annual exports in 2017. USAID's agriculture programs are focused on increasing exports. Since October 1, 2018, USAID agriculture programs facilitated over \$270 million in export deals for Afghan sellers.

All of USAID's agriculture programs cooperate and coordinate closely with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock to ensure program activities align with the Government of Afghanistan's National Comprehensive Agriculture Development Priority Program. USAID agricultural assistance is designed to address the growing problem of unemployment, to create sustainable jobs, alleviate poverty, and drive agriculture-led economic growth. (PR)

### (6) First-Ever Girls...

out of school.

Accurate and timely information, as well as adequate facilities, are essential to enable girls better manage their menstruation in a hygienic and dignified manner. The involvement of teachers and mothers in raising awareness and enhancing education about menstrual hygiene is therefore key to improving retention and reducing school dropout rates amongst girls.

"Attention to personal hygiene and proper nutrition during adolescence are important for girls for better growth and can help avoid health complications and disability. With good hygiene, they can have better control over their bodies, increase their self-confidence, and improve their attendance in school. Most importantly, healthy girls of today are the future mothers who will safeguard the process of motherhood and decrease mortality rate amongst young mothers," said Rula (Bibi Gul) Ghani, First Lady of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Recent evidence and key findings indicate that; 70 per cent of girls do not take bath or shower during menstruation for fear of infertility; 29 per cent of to miss some school days when they were having their menses, some 80% girls were not allowed to attend social events such as weddings, or funerals, or going to shrines during menstruation and that 50 per cent girls were not aware of menstruation until first period started.

Speaking at the event Dr. Mohammad Mirwais Balkhi, the Minister of Education said, "Girls have an irrevocable right to education, which is lost if they feel unable to attend lessons because of a lack of sanitary products or clean, private toilets at school. Governments simply need to ensure that every school has clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene." Better facilities in schools will not only help towards the global promise of universal access to clean water, but are also essential for achieving other Sustainable Development Goals on quality education, gender equality and good health and well-being." Mr. Balkhi added. (Pajhwok)

### (7) 13th Iran-Afghanistan...

priority is cooperation with Islamic states, neighbors in particular. Specialized exhibitions serve as bridges between the businessmen and economic activists, he said, noting that they forge a communication between producers and customers.

The two countries' economic and political relations are positive, Afkhami said, calling for removal of obstacles in the way of banking transactions.

Herat deputy governor general also told the same gathering that private sector plays a crucial role in increasing national revenues and job generation.

Mouneseh Hassanzadeh called on Iran's private sector to invest in Afghanistan's industry.

Located in northwestern Afghanistan, Herat is one of the economic hubs of the country that has common border with Khorasan Razavi Province. (IRNA)

### (8) Will Not Allow...

The lower house elections were still an opportunity for competition besides the entire shortcoming, fraud, rigging and other issues, he said.

Hekmatyar reiterated his party's preparedness for the upcoming presidential polls and added would not allow anyone to delay the presidential polls.

The Presidential Elections are scheduled for spring 2019. (Pajhwok)

### (9) Release of...

seen as a major development by the three key stakeholders -- the U.S, Pakistan and Afghanistan. But analysts do not view the development as a major breakthrough towards ending the war.

Mullah Baradar, once considered the second most influential figure after Taliban founder and supreme leader Mullah Omar, was arrested by Pakistani security agencies in the southern port city of Karachi reportedly on a U.S. tipoff in 2010. In 2013, Pakistan had announced the release of Baradar along with three other Taliban leaders on the request of the Afghan government, but he practically remained in confinement due to U.S. opposition.

Washington had previously voiced concern that the commanders would rejoin the Taliban ranks.

"Mullah Baradar and Mullah Sani's release is a mere confidence-building measure -- not less not more," Rahimullah Yusufzai, a Peshawar-based expert on Afghan affairs, told Anadolu Agency.

"If someone believes he can play a role to broker a deal between the U.S. and the Taliban, it will just be wishful thinking," he said.

"He is respectable [to the Taliban] but no longer influential because things have completely changed in the last few years".

Yusufzai was referring to the death of Mullah Omar, to whom Mullah Baradar served as a deputy, and his successor Mullah Mansur, which led to a major reshuffle in the militia's ranks.

Baradar, in his early 50s according to Yusufzai, is also suffering from some health problems and would not be able to play an active role in the proposed peace talks.

Afghan analysts believe that Baradar could have proven valuable for peace efforts had he been released years back when he had significant clout with the "rebels". Former Afghan intelligence chief Rahmatullah Nabil dubbed his release a move by Islamabad to evade growing U.S. pressure.

"The release of Mullah Baradar won't have any impact on the peace process," he said as part of a series of posts on Twitter.

In 2014, he went on to say, five key members of the Taliban -- Sadr Ibrahim, the current military chief, Mullah Salam, Fazal Haq Mujahid, Daoud Jalali (Surkha) and Mir Ahmad Gul -- were also released under the cover of peace. But peace did not come.

If Pakistan is honest about peace, he added, then Baradar should be handed over to Afghanistan or be allowed to join the Doha office of the Taliban.

Pakistan had brokered the landmark first round of direct talks between the fragile Afghan government and the Taliban in Islamabad in July 2015, but the process broke down after the Taliban announced the death of Mullah Omar, triggering a bitter power struggle within the militia.

Chances for the resumption of the stalled process dimmed further following the death of Mullah Omar's successor, Mullah Akhtar Mansur, in a U.S. drone strike on Pakistani soil last year.

Since then, several attempts to revive the peace process have been made by a four-nation group comprised of Pakistan, Afghanistan, the U.S. and China.

Islamabad and Kabul have long accused each other of providing safe haven to militants.

A series of terrorist attacks in both countries, for which the two sides blame each other, has further strained already tense relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan in recent years.

Talks to continue

The Taliban welcomed the release of Baradar, a founding member of their group. In a statement, spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid noted there has been 'no deals or references/contacts used' for his release.

Analysts believe that ongoing talks between the U.S. and the Taliban -- a rare instance of direct contact between the two sides -- will continue despite the latest flareups in war-ravaged Afghanistan, most notably the deadly Kandahar attack earlier this month that killed several senior Afghan government officials and injured a U.S. general.

"The release of prisoners, including Mullah Baradar, was the Taliban's longtime demand because he is very respectable to them as a former deputy leader. They [Taliban] are cashing in on Mullah Baradar's release as a big success to satisfy their fighters in the context of talks with the U.S.," Yusufzai said.

"However, how will the Taliban reciprocate the U.S. move? We have to wait a while to see that," he said.

"At this point, we can only say safely that talks between the two sides will continue despite ongoing attacks and counter-attacks."

The High Peace Council, the top government body tasked with reaching a peace deal with the Taliban, cautiously welcomed his release.

Qazi Mohammad Ameen Waqad, a member of the council, told Anadolu Agency that the release of Mullah Baradar can help revive the peace process, considering his background and the latest developments on the peace front.

"He was regarded as someone who always wanted a peaceful settlement of the conflict." (AA)

### (10) Retired Police...

Around 1,000 retirees were to attend the protest but security concerns kept them away and they would join the protest if needed, he informed.

Another protester, Col. Janat Mir Zazai, grumbled they were retired before reaching the retirement age and now the MoF was not paying them their monthly salaries.

The protesters warned to resort to every move if their demands were not addressed until November 6.

Pajhwok tried to contact the MoF for comment, but failed. MoI spokesman Najib Danish said the protesters would receive their stipends until the end of this year. (Pajhwok)

### (11) Airstrikes Kill 31...

all shopkeepers they should shut their businesses," he said.

Abdul Hadi, another resident of the district, said the Taliban were stationed in Layagh area on the outskirts of the district center and they could attack the district center anytime they wanted.

"Taliban have closed the district bazaar because they want to attack the Afghan forces there and capture the district," he said.

A number of other residents of the district held similar views.

Ghazni governor's spokesman, Mohammad Arif Noori, also said the Taliban had closed the district center.

However, he said 31 rebels were killed in airstrikes around the district center on Monday night. He said the operation would continue. He said a massive operation would be launched for improving security in Qarabagh district in near future.

On the other hand, the Taliban rejected official claims. The group's spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, said the district center had not been closed by Taliban but by people.

"There were frequent clashes in the district center, therefore people preferred to close their businesses for their safety," he said.

The Taliban have been in full control of eight districts of the province while the government controls only centers of five other districts. (Pajhwok)