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Abdullah, Zarif hold meeting in Tehran

Afghanistan's top peace negotiator has arrived in neighboring Iran as intra-Afghan peace negotiations are under way in the Gulf state of Qatar. Negotiators from the Afghan government and the Taliban have been locked in talks since September 12 but have been unable to agree on a framework for the negotiations aimed at ending the 19-year war.

Abdullah Abdullah, the head of Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation, a body that oversees the peace talks with the Taliban, arrived in Tehran on October 18 for a three-day visit.

Iran is a key regional power broker with sway over the Taliban and Afghan political factions.

In a tweet, Abdullah said he would "meet the Iranian ...

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Taliban Threatens Renewed Fighting in Afghanistan, Blaming U.S. for Breaking Ceasefire

The Taliban has accused the U.S military of repeatedly violating the peace deal signed between the two sides in Doha in February, and warned that Washington, D.C., must shoulder the blame for subsequent violence.

Taliban spokesperson Qari Muhammad Yousuf Ahmadi issued a statement Sunday condemning recent American airstrikes on militants in Afghanistan's Helmand province and threatening retaliation.

Violence in Afghanistan has continued despite the February peace deal between the U.S. and the Taliban. Talks are ongoing between the Afghan government and the Taliban, though President Donald Trump has nonetheless pushed ahead with a planned withdrawal from the country. The U.S. conducted several airstrikes against Taliban targets in Helmand last week in support of Afghan government forces. Colonel Sonny Leggett, ...

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12 Civilians Killed, More than 100 Wounded in Ghor Blast



At least 12 civilians were killed and more than 100 were wounded in a car bomb close to police HQ in Firozkoh, capital of Ghor, said the Ministry of Interior in a statement. The incident happened around 11am local time after a Toyota

Corolla-brand vehicle "loaded with explosives" was detonated close to the police headquarters and government offices for women, martyrs and disabled affairs, the statement said.

Wahidullah Nezami, provincial police

chief, said the effect of the blast on security force members was slight. He said more details will follow.

Eyewitnesses said that a number of nearby buildings were damaged in the car bomb.

"The situation...is not acceptable in

Islam," said an eyewitness.

Earlier, local health officials said that the bodies of "seven people and more than 70 wounded had been brought to the hospitals."

The local officials said that the number of the casualties will increase.

No group including the Taliban has claimed responsibility for the blast. However, At least eight local police and public uprising forces members were killed in a Taliban attack in northern Kunduz province on Saturday night, a source said on Sunday.

Around 9pm local time in Imam Sahib district a group of Taliban attacked a security checkpoint and six public uprising forces and two local policemen were killed, the source said.

"The Taliban have stolen all the equipment of the security forces after the attack," the source said, adding that "the Taliban escaped from the area before the reinforcements arrived."

Local security officials have not yet commented on the attack.

The Taliban has claimed responsibility.

Germany hopeful about Afghan peace parleys

Germany's special envoy for Afghanistan has voiced optimism about the ongoing peace talks between Kabul and Taliban representatives in Doha. .

Markus Potzel met representatives of the insurgent group in Qatar, Taliban's political office spokesman Dr. Naeem Wardak tweeted on Sunday.

At the meeting, the Taliban delegation was headed by Mullah Abdul Haq Wasiq. The two sides discussed the peace process in Afghanistan.

The German diplomat commended the Taliban decision for choosing the path of peace instead of war, Wardak wrote.



MPs ask world to put pressure on Pakistan

Some Meshrano Jirga members on Sunday said peace in Afghanistan would not be achieved unless more pressure was put on Pakistan.

Senator Gulalai Akbari from Badakhshan province told on Sunday session that wounded Taliban fighters were being treated in Pakistani hospitals.

"Peace will continue to elude Afghanistan unless Pakistan stops supporting the Taliban," she added.

She called on the international community, especially the United States, to put pressure on Pakistan to bring peace to Afghanistan.

"Evidence shows that Pakistan was involved in the Helmand war," said another lawmaker Anarkali Hunaryar.



She said as the war escalated after the start of peace talks in Doha, more pressure should be put on Pakistan by the international community to stop interfering in Afghanistan.

First deputy chairman Mohammad Alam Izedyar said if the United States sincerely

wanted, it had the ability to end the war. "But the US speaks of a reduction in violence which means the war will continue and this has concerned all people."

He called on all neighboring countries to help the Afghans achieve peace and stop interfering in internal... P2

Abdullah, Zarif...

leadership” and “exchange views on Afghanistan Peace and all other relevant bilateral issues to promote long-term cooperation & friendship.”

His visit comes after a recent trip to neighboring Pakistan, another regional power and the Taliban’s main sponsor. The relationship between Shi’ite-majority Iran and the Taliban, a fundamentalist Sunni group, is complex. Iran officially opposes the Taliban, but experts said it provides some military support to the mainstream Taliban and even rival breakaway factions. Abdullah’s visit to Tehran comes after the U.S. special envoy for Afghan reconciliation, Zalmay Khalilzad, said last week that Iran “wants to keep the U.S. in an unwinnable and costly war in Afghanistan.” Under a landmark deal signed between the United States and the Taliban in February, foreign forces will leave Afghanistan by May 2021 in exchange for counterterrorism guarantees from the Taliban, which agreed to negotiate a permanent cease-fire and a power-sharing formula with the Afghan government.

MPs ask world...

affairs of Afghanistan. Meshrano Jirga chairman Fazl Hadi Muslimyar said nothing about the lawmakers’ remarks about Pakistan, but called on the Afghan government to take care of security of people as well as the peace process.

By LUKE COFFEY

Another setback on the road to Afghan peace

The Taliban has launched a major attack on Lashkar Gah, the capital of Helmand province, calling into question the progress being made on peace talks between the militants and the Afghan government.

Across Helmand and the neighboring region, communications networks are down. Thousands of people are without electricity after an attack on a power station. An estimated 35,000 people have been forced out of their homes by the fighting.

Thanks to the help of US air strikes, and the gallantry of the Afghan security forces, the attack has so far been repelled. However, it remains to be seen how this attack will impact the intra-Afghan talks currently taking place.

One thing that is clear is that after the recent attack in Helmand something has to change if progress on the peace talks is going to be made. Recognizing this, the US special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad said: “Following several meetings Gen. Miller and I had with the Taliban, we agreed to re-set actions by strictly adhering to implementation of all elements of the US-Taliban Agreement and all commitments made.” If progress is not shown with this “reset” then US patience might run out.

Of course, all of this is taking place against the backdrop of US domestic politics. President Donald Trump has promised to end America’s “forever wars” but has had little success in doing so. Consequently, mixed messages are coming from Washington, which allows the Afghan government, the Taliban and America’s allies and adversaries in the region to hear that they want to hear. On one hand, Trump suggested in a recent tweet that US forces would be completely out of Afghanistan by Christmas. This led to what was seemingly an endorsement by the Taliban for President Trump’s re-election bid. However, other senior US officials have suggested that troops will not be out of Afghanistan by Christmas. This current situation is reminiscent of US policy in Syria one year ago, when Trump tweeted out that US troops were leaving the country. One year later, they are still there.

The current situation in Helmand raises two important points. First, it is indicative of the long-term problems Afghanistan will face even if a peace agreement is made with the Taliban. Located in Afghanistan’s south and sharing a border with Pakistan, Helmand province has



long been a hotbed of Taliban activity and Pashtun nationalism. It has also been the location of some of the fiercest fighting in the country over the years. At the height of the fighting in 2010-11, the US and the British together had more than 30,000 troops based there. Even though the province itself accounts for only 3 percent of Afghanistan’s total population, these 30,000 troops accounted for almost a quarter of coalition forces in the country at the time. It is hard to believe that any peace deal in faraway Doha will trickle down to the remote villages of a place like Helmand province. Consequently, mixed messages are coming from Washington, which allows the Afghan government, the Taliban and America’s allies and adversaries in the region to hear that they want to hear

Luke Coffey

In many ways the situation in Helmand is a sober reminder that for the foreseeable future — at least for a generation — there will be some level of insurgency in some parts of the country, no matter what the two sides agree in Doha. After all, India, the world’s largest democracy, still fights multiple insurgent groups inside its borders today. There is no reason to expect that all the fighting will end in Afghanistan just because there may someday be an agreement. This is not necessarily a sign of failure, but more an indication of the complex reality on the ground in Afghanistan. Public opinion needs to be prepared for this eventuality.

Second, the fighting in Helmand, occurring in the midst of ongoing talks, also makes one wonder how much

authority the Taliban negotiating in Doha has over the movement on the ground. What was once a very centralized and top-down organization in the 1990s has over the years transformed into a more decentralized and in some cases localized insurgent movement. One of the biggest questions surrounding the peace initiative is if the Taliban negotiating from the comfort of luxurious hotels in Doha have the authority, or at least the influence, over the foot soldier living poorly in a place like Musa Qala.

Admittedly, even before this attack in Helmand little progress had been made. While getting the warring parties around the same table to talk is in itself an achievement, the intensity of the fighting has not reduced across much of Afghanistan in any meaningful way. Thousands of Afghan security forces have been killed by the Taliban this year. There remains a general lack of trust and confidence between all sides. Until this changes, any enduring and meaningful prospects for peace will remain elusive.

Even with all of these challenges the international community should not give up. Strategic patience is required in the face of tactical setbacks. There will be ups and downs throughout the talks. The talks themselves will last months and maybe years. Sadly, many more Afghans will die, and many more will suffer. But an enduring and genuine peace between the Afghan government, Afghan civil society, and the Taliban is the only thing that can bring stability to a country that has suffered from four decades of fighting.

By Manish Rai

Taliban says won’t allow any foreign group to interfere in Afghanistan

Dr Muhammad Naeem Wardak is the Spokesperson for Taliban political office in Doha. Political talks are undergoing between Afghan government and Taliban at Doha but on the other hand intense fighting is also continuing at the battlefield. In an exclusive interview to Manish Rai. Dr Wardak speaks on various aspects of ongoing talks including Taliban commitment of not letting any foreign group interfere in internal affairs of Afghanistan. Following is the detailed interview.

Q: While talks are going on but, on the ground, still, intense fighting is taking place. How do you see this?

Wardak: Talks are underway to end the war. This is nothing new. It is common in conversation to be at both war and talk at the same time.

Q: Can you please give a brief idea about any future power sharing formula?

Wardak: The war in Afghanistan has been going on for the last

40 years, which has greatly increased the suffering for the people of Afghanistan. We believe that more and more people should breathe a sigh of relief under the shadow of the system of their choice. We want an independent Afghan inclusive of Islamic system, not a monopoly of power in which the people of Afghanistan see their aspirations subdued.

Q: Taliban has stated it won’t allow foreign groups to operate from Afghan soil. Will Taliban use force against these groups to get them out if required?

Wardak: In the agreement signed with the United States, the Islamic Emirate has promised that the land of Afghanistan will not be used against the United States and its allies. It has been the policy of the Islamic Emirate since the beginning that it will not harm anyone from Afghanistan and will not allow any foreign party to interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan. The new Islamic system in Afghanistan will be

responsible for the security of the people and the protection of the country. It is hoped that there will be no problems in this regard.

Q: Is there any possibility of immediate ceasefire between Afghan government and Taliban?

Wardak: Like I said, we want to solve problems through dialogue. War ends when the causes of the war end. Now we have to talk about the causes of the war.

Q: Its being alleged that recently freed Taliban prisoners have returned to the battlefield which is a violation of deal with US. What’s your opinion on this?

Wardak: The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and its Mujahideen are fully committed to the agreement reached with the United States. Mujahideen which are not forced never break their promise. Our released prisoners are not allowed to return to their normal lives. ...

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Increase in Figs Production in Herat, Kandahar & Faryab



The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) announced fig production has increased in Kandahar, Herat and Faryab provinces this year.

Herat agriculture department has noticed a 30 percent increase in the production of figs. Bashir Ahmad, head of agricultural affairs at Herat agriculture department, said: “There are 370 hectares of figs garden in Herat, and nearly 8 thousand metric tons of figs have been harvested so far this year.” Meanwhile, Faryab province has produced 378 tons of figs this year, which shows a 5% increase from last year’s production.

According to provincial head of agriculture

in Faryab, Abdul Kabir Farzam, nearly 5.36 hectares of figs garden are located in Faryab. He added that commercial gardens of figs are not currently available in the province. Gardeners in the province nurture about 20 to 30 fig trees in their gardens.

Kandahar agriculture department has witnessed a 10 percent increase in figs production this year.

About 30 thousand tons of figs have been harvested from 3 thousand fig gardens in Kandahar, according to Sayed Hafez Sayedi, head of Kandahar agriculture and livestock department.

Afghan Pine Nut Exports to China Help Nuristan Farmers

Xinhua news Agency reports that the pine nut business has changed the lives of the Nuristan farmers since Afghanistan started exporting it to China via the air corridor.

Khost, Paktika and Paktika provinces are known for their quality pine nuts production, but since the opening of the air corridor with China in 2018, plantations have also developed in Nuristan, Laghman, Kapisa and other provinces.

Nuristan businessman Marouf Khan told Xinhua, "Pine nut exports to China over the past couple of years have increased the country's income and also changed living conditions of those involved in the business."

Presently many local farmers are working to collect and process pine



nuts. "If the people of Nuristan with the support of government protect and develop the pine nut forests and properly process it with modern machines, definitely they will earn

enough livelihood much more than expected to change their living conditions," Khan told Xinhua. Since Nuristani farmers started exporting pine nuts, local

investments have increased as have job opportunities and incomes. The provincial agriculture department expected produce to be over 200 tons this year.

Azerbaijan: Armenia...

and Fizuli-Hadrut had been "relatively stable."

On Saturday, the Azerbaijani Armed Forces destroyed or disabled many pieces of Armenian military equipment, including two missile guiding stations of an S-300 anti-aircraft missile system, five T-72 tanks, three BM-21 Grad multiple launch rocket systems, two Smerch multiple launch rocket systems, one D-20 gun-howitzer, one KS-19 anti-aircraft gun, and six vehicles along the front, it said.

Cease-fires, attacks, occupation

A fresh humanitarian cease-fire was reached between Baku and Yerevan after the previous Oct. 10 humanitarian cease-fire – meant to allow an exchange of prisoners and the recovery of dead bodies – was breached hours later by Armenian missile attacks on Azerbaijan's city of Ganja, killing 10 people and injuring 35.

The new cease-fire was taken in line with previous statements of the presidents of France, Russia, and the US – the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group meant to resolve the conflict – Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry said in a written statement on Saturday.

Last Thursday, the Armenian Armed Forces targeted civilians visiting a cemetery in the western city of Terter, killing four and also injuring four.

Early Saturday, at least 13 civilians were killed, including four women and three minors, and nearly 50 others injured, when Armenian missiles once again struck Ganja, a city with a population of half a million.

As of midday Saturday, Armenia has killed at least 60 Azerbaijani civilians and injured 270 more, according to Azerbaijani officials.

The number of houses damaged in Armenian attacks has reached over 1,700, along with 90 residential buildings and 327 civil facilities, according to Azerbaijani officials. Since clashes erupted between the two countries on Sept. 27 over Upper Karabakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) – Azerbaijani territory occupied by Armenia for nearly 30 years – Armenia has continued its attacks on civilians and Azerbaijani forces, even violating a humanitarian cease-fire that came into force last week.

Taliban...

the spokesperson for U.S. forces in Afghanistan, said the missions were to defend under-attack Afghan troops and did not violate the Doha agreement. But Ahmadi said Sunday the action was unacceptable. "American forces have violated the Doha agreement in various forms by carrying out excessive airstrikes following the new developments in Helmand province," he said in the Taliban statement.

"According to the Doha agreement, the American forces are prohibited from carrying out airstrikes or targeting anyone in areas other than combat zones or during active fighting," he added, noting U.S. strikes in multiple locations.

"All contents of the U.S.-Islamic Emirate agreement are unambiguous, but the opposite side has violated its commitments on numerous occasions, are engaging in provocative actions and bombing non-combat zones,"

Ahmadi added, using the former name of the country when it was under Taliban rule—the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

"All responsibility and consequences from continuation of such actions shall fall squarely on the shoulders of the American side," Ahmadi said. General Scott Miller—commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan—meanwhile urged the Taliban to stop offensive operations against government troops. Despite the February peace deal and ongoing inter-Afghan talks, the Taliban have launched multiple operations around the country in recent months.

"The Taliban need to immediately stop their offensive actions in Helmand Province and reduce their violence around the country," Miller said in a statement tweeted out by Leggett. "It is not consistent with the US-Taliban agreement and undermines the ongoing Afghan Peace Talks."

Despite the violence, Trump

prompted confusion when he tweeted last week: "We should have the small remaining number of our BRAVE Men and Women serving in Afghanistan home by Christmas."

National security adviser Robert O'Brien later said Trump's message was a wish rather than a commitment. "I think what the president was doing is, he was expressing the same desire I think every president since the Revolutionary War has said," O'Brien said.

"Whenever we're at war, whether it was the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, World War I or World War II, all presidents... want the troops home by Christmas." O'Brien said the U.S. would aim to cut its Afghan deployment to 2,500 by early in 2021.

This was at odds with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley, who said recently that the Pentagon will cut its Afghan footprint to 4,500 troops in November, but that any talk of further cuts would be "speculation."

Taliban says...

They are being persecuted both at the central and provincial levels. Not just left to live. There are prisoners who have been martyred inside Kabul city after being released, there are prisoners who have been raided at their homes, or have been martyred themselves or their family members have been martyred and imprisoned. Many prisoners have been forced to migrate from the center to the districts and from the districts to the villages and finally to the territories of the Islamic Emirate.

Also, some prisoners after

their release were visited by the security officials of Kabul, provincial and district administration and even the families of the prisoners were threatened. It was stated by security officials to the families that your kin were released by the government but they will not live here peacefully and soon will be killed. There are detainees who have been recaptured from madrassas and mosques and many have been dropped off on the road from one province to other and killed on the spot and then were falsely accused of being killed on the battlefield. So, this claim

is baseless. The Mujahideen of the Islamic Emirate, in spite of all these violations as agreed, still stand by their promise and insist on all parties to keep their commitments and not to harass the released prisoners.

Q: How important is the role of Pakistan in these ongoing talks?

Wardak: The role of not only Pakistan but all neighbouring countries, including Pakistan, is important in the ongoing talks. We expect all to cooperate in this regard because the security and safety of Afghanistan depends on the security and safety of all its neighbours.

Israel says...

telephone code. The Israeli airliner will overfly Saudi Arabia, an accommodation by the Gulf powerhouse that has so far resisted U.S. appeals to normalize ties with Israel.

Mnuchin and another senior Trump aide, Middle East envoy Avi Berkowitz, will continue on Monday to UAE, whose accord with Israel has

uncorked bilateral commerce. On Tuesday, the U.S. dignitaries will accompany the UAE's first delegation to Israel.

Though less oil-rich than UAE, Bahrain – host to the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet – has geo-strategic significance.

The Israel deal drew anger among Bahrainis at home and abroad. Manama has said the deal protects its interests from

Iran.

A September 13 report by Israel's Intelligence Ministry saw potential for defense cooperation with Bahrain, describing it as threatened by "Shiite political sedition, directed by Iran and its proxies."

Israel could also help Bahrain with renewable energy, food security and banking and finance technologies, it said.

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UN arms embargo ends against Iran

An arms embargo imposed since 2007 by the UN Security Council (UNSC) ended Sunday, according to Iran's foreign ministry. All restrictions on the transfer of arms, related activities and financial services to and from Iran, and all prohibitions regarding the entry into or transit through territories of the UN member states previously imposed on a number of Iranian citizens and military officials, are automatically terminated, the ministry said on its website. "As of today, the Islamic Republic of Iran may procure any necessary arms and equipment from any source without any legal restrictions and solely based on its defensive needs, and may also export defensive armaments based on its own policies," it said. "Today is a momentous day for the international

community, which in defiance of the U.S. regime's efforts, has protected UN Security Council Resolution 2231 and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)," it added, referring to the landmark nuclear deal Tehran signed with world powers. The US upped the ante against Iran since withdrawing from the 2015 nuclear agreement in 2018, by reinstalling sanctions. However, since the beginning of 2020, tensions have escalated alarmingly with the Trump administration announcing a "maximum pressure" campaign to choke Iran's financial channels. Last month, after a demand for an extension of the arms embargo was rejected by the Security Council, the US announced the reinstatement of all UN sanctions against Iran.



A look at the world

Israel says formal diplomatic ties with Bahrain to begin Sunday

Israel and Bahrain will officially establish diplomatic relations on Sunday at a ceremony in Manama after the two states reached a U.S.-brokered normalization deal last month.

Israel is due to send delegates to Bahrain on Sunday to formalize nascent relations and broaden Gulf cooperation that Washington has promoted as an anti-Iran bulwark and potential economic bonanza. Bahrain followed the United Arab Emirates in agreeing last month to normalize ties with Israel, stunning Palestinians who had demanded statehood before any such regional rapprochement.



"From tomorrow, there will be full diplomatic relations between Israel and Bahrain after the joint declaration," an Israeli official told the Jerusalem Post. The United Arab Emirates and Bahrain became the third and fourth Arab states to agree to normalize ties with Israel, following Egypt's peace deal with Israel in 1979 and a 1994 pact with Jordan. The breakthrough, overseen by U.S. President Donald Trump, is a foreign policy flourish ahead of his reelection bid next month. For the U.S. allies, it is a chance to close ranks more overtly on Iran. Sunday's delegation, led by Israeli National Security Adviser Meir Ben-Shabbat, will be accompanied by U.S. Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin, whose office said the mission seeks "expanded economic cooperation" among Israel, Bahrain and the UAE.

An official involved in the visit said Israel and Bahrain would sign a communique upgrading their relationship: from the declaration of intent delivered at a White House ceremony on September 15 to a formal establishment of ties.

The delegates travel to Manama on El Al flight 973, a nod to Bahrain's ... **P3**

Azerbaijan: Armenia already violated new cease-fire



Armenian forces have already "grossly violated" a new humanitarian cease-fire only hours old, Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry said Sunday.

"During the night, the enemy fired at the vicinity of the city of Jabrayil, as well as the villages of this region liberated from occupation and located along the Araz River, using mortars and artillery," the ministry said in a written statement.

The cease-fire -- the second since hostilities around Upper Karabakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) began on Sept. 27 -- only went into effect at 12 midnight Saturday (2000GMT),

Saying that there were no losses among military personnel, the ministry said that the Azerbaijan army units took "adequate retaliatory measures."

"The Troops of the Azerbaijan Army are taking relevant actions at advantageous frontiers, important high grounds, and positions along the entire front," it added.

The Armenian forces continued to make the situation tense during the night with mortars and artillery, the statement said.

"The enemy attempted to attack in the Aghdere, Fizuli, Hadrut, and Jabrayil directions on Oct. 18 at 07.00 am.," it said, adding: "Units of the Azerbaijan Army are suppressing enemy attempts to attack."

Cease-fire violation on state border The ministry stressed that Armenia also attempted to "aggravate the situation" on the border with Azerbaijan.

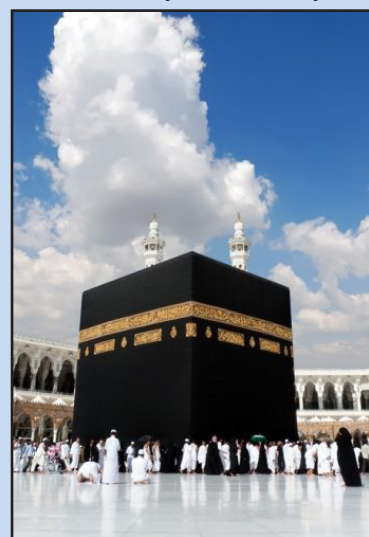
"On Oct. 18, from 00:05 am [2005GMT Saturday] to 04:00 am [0000GMT Sunday] Armenian armed forces units stationed in the Chambarak and Berd regions of Armenia using large-caliber weapons fired at the positions of the Azerbaijan Army in Gadabay and Tovuz regions," it said.

In a separate statement, the ministry said that until the announcement of the new humanitarian cease-fire, the operational situation on the frontline at Aghdere ... **P3**

Saudi Arabia resumes prayers at Mecca's Grand Mosque

Saudi Arabia is allowing its citizens and residents inside the kingdom to perform daily prayers at the Grand Mosque in Mecca, the holiest site in Islam, for the first time in seven months.

Sunday also marked the start of the second phase of the gradual return of citizens and residents to performing the Umrah -- an Islamic pilgrimage to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina undertaken any time of the year --



expanding the capacity to 75 percent. Earlier this month, Saudi Arabia resumed allowing citizens and residents to perform the Umrah at Islam's holiest sites, Mecca and Medina, after a seven-month pause due to coronavirus concerns.

With the start of phase one on October 4, Saudi Arabia had allowed 6,000 citizens and residents of the kingdom to perform Umrah daily, representing 30 percent of a revised maximum capacity of 20,000 pilgrims allowed into the Grand Mosque every day under new precautionary health measures.

Starting November 1, the kingdom will allow visitors from specific countries deemed safe to perform Umrah at 100 percent of the revised capacity, which would remain in place until the danger posed by the coronavirus had passed, Saudi news agency SPA reported last month.



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