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As we leave Afghanistan, don't abandon women and girls See Page 3

The biggest threat to Biden's hot economy could be his own policies See Page 4

Messi officially becomes a free agent as superstar's Barcelona contract expires See Page 5

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President Ghani meets Miller as US hands Bagram Airfield to Afghan forces after nearly 20 years

KABUL: President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani met with General Scott Miller, Commander of the Reserve Support Mission in Afghanistan, here at the presidential palace yesterday morning, soon after US handed over Bagram Airbase to Afghan forces.

During the meeting, both sides discussed the continuation of US assistance and cooperation with Afghanistan, especially in the field of supporting security and defense forces in the new chapter of relations between Afghanistan and the international community, presidential palace statement said yesterday.

The meeting came after nearly 20 years, the U.S. military left Bagram airfield, the operations of the 2004 preparation of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on America, the U.S. officials said Friday.

The airfield was handed over to the Afghan National Security and Defense Force in its entirety, they said, media on condition they not be identified because they were not authorized to release the information to the media.

One of the officials said the U.S. top commander in Afghanistan, Gen. James S. Miller, "will remain all the capabilities and authority to protect the forces."

The withdrawal from Bagram Airfield is the shrouded that the last of the 2,500-3,500

NSA Mohib meets his Russian counterpart

KABUL: During his visit to Moscow, Dr. Hamidullah Mohib, National Security Advisor of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, met his Russian counterpart, Nikolai Patrushev, yesterday, a state media said.

Both national security advisors discussed prospects for increased cooperation in the field of peace, security, counter-terrorism and counter-terrorism between the two governments, including increasing consultations between the two ministries, the statement from NSA press office said yesterday.

Both sides agreed that increasing cooperation between Afghanistan could pose a threat to the security, stability and territorial integrity of the country, the statement said.

The Afghan and Russian national security advisors also discussed the need for an immediate

Blinken meets top Tajik, Uzbek diplomats, with Afghanistans in Sharp focus

KABUL: U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with the top diplomats of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan on July 1, both of whom are high on the agenda as U.S. State secretary visited the western country and Washington seeks Central Asia cooperation.

The meeting in Washington came as the Taliban swept across the country, forcing the Afghan government to flee and disbanding the Afghan National Security Forces, a possible security threat to the two countries.

High officials are preparing for a possible outbreak of violence, which Uzbekistan last month introduced military drills along the border, the spokesman said.

"We have strong shared interests when it comes to security in the region," Blinken said in a tweet on his Twitter account.

U.S. State Secretary Blinken said he will discuss with Tajikistan's Foreign Minister Abdullatif Karimov and his counterparts in Uzbekistan, including the Uzbek Foreign Minister Abdullo Nuriyev, during his visit to the region.

Other officials are preparing for a possible outbreak of violence, which Uzbekistan last month introduced military drills along the border, the spokesman said.

Afghan, US defense ministers discuss bilateral relations

KABUL: Acting Defense Minister Gen. Bismillah Khan and U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin III spoke with the Minister of Defense of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Hamidullah Mohib, yesterday, a state media said.

Both ministers acknowledged the shared sacrifices of U.S. and Afghan forces, including the most recent attacks on the ANSDF by the Taliban, Secretary Austin made clear the United States' intent to maintain a new relationship with Afghanistan and with the Afghan forces, one that continues to help the Afghan government meet its responsibilities in its own country, according to Pentagon statement.

The July 1, Secretary of Defense

Canadian MPs assure continued support to Afghan women

KABUL: Following its inter-parliamentary meetings between Afghanistan and Canada, the Canadian House of Commons and the Canadian Parliament on Friday assured the Afghan government of their continued support and cooperation of Canada, and stressed the need to preserve and strengthen the Afghan women's rights and the role of women in the reconstruction of the country, the statement said.

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Friends of Afghanistan urge NATO, EU to continue support for Afghanistan

KABUL: In a letter signed by prominent leaders and individuals worldwide, friends and supporters of Afghanistan urged NATO and the European Union that as the Taliban sweeps across the country, "we must not withdraw our support for Afghanistan."

The letter, titled "Friends of Afghanistan Urge NATO, EU to Continue Support for Afghanistan," was signed by a group of prominent leaders and individuals from various countries, including the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the European Union.

Health Ministry reports 1,309 new COVID-19 cases, 59 deaths in Afghanistan

KABUL: The Ministry of Public Health on Friday reported 1,309 new positive cases of COVID-19 and 59 deaths in the last 24 hours.

The ministry also reported 59 deaths and 779 recoveries from COVID-19 in the same period. The figures indicate a slight decrease in daily COVID-19 cases, deaths and recoveries in the country, the ministry said.

The deaths were reported in Kabul (1), Kandahar (1), Herat (1), Nangarhar (1), Paktia (1), Paktiya (1), Faryab (1), Mazar-i-Sharif (1), and Herat (1).

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