VOA NEWS

September 12, 2020

This is VOA news. Reporting by remote, I'm David Byrd.

Representatives of Afghanistan's warring factions have gathered in Qatar for historic U.S.-brokered peace negotiations starting Saturday aimed at finding a political settlement to the South Asian country's longest war.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo arrived Friday in Doha to attend along with other foreign dignitaries.

The dialogue will bring to the negotiating table Doha-based negotiators of the Taliban insurgency and the Afghan government-appointed delegation.

Zalmay Khalilzad, the U.S. envoy to Afghanistan reconciliation, told reporters on the eve of the talks that after Saturday's ceremonies, Afghans would be negotiating with each other without a mediator or a facilitator.

Khalilzad negotiated and sealed a historic deal with the Taliban earlier this year to close the nearly two decades of Afghan war, America's longest, and set the stage for the intra-Afghan negotiations.

The 9/11 anniversary has brought the two presidential candidates the closest they've been in months and showed off their dramatically different styles. AP Washington correspondent Sagar Meghani has more.

At the Flight 93 Memorial in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, where 40 passengers brought down the hijacked plane, President Trump proclaimed America's might.

"... no matter the odds, America will always rise up, stand tall and fight back."

Hours later, "It's a pleasure to meet you." "With honor, me too."

Democratic challenger Joe Biden greeted families of those killed on the plane.

The two candidates did not meet but Biden did share a moment earlier with his vice presidential successor in elbow bump with Mike Pence at New York's Ground Zero - a rare moment of detente in a nasty campaign. Sagar Meghani, Washington.

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Bahrain has become the latest Arab nation to agree to normalize ties with Israel as part of a broader diplomatic push by President Donald Trump and his administration to fully integrate the Jewish state into the Middle East.

Trump announced the agreement on Friday, following a three-way phone call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

President Trump said that peace is quickly coming to the Middle East after so much violence.

"The sand was loaded up with blood, and now you're gonna see a lot of that sand is gonna be loaded up with peace."

The announcement on the 19th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks came less than a week before Trump hosts a White House ceremony to mark the establishment of full relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates.

China and India said Friday they had agreed to de-escalate renewed tensions on their contested Himalayan border and to take steps to restore "peace and tranquility" following a high-level meeting in Moscow. Reuters Emer McCarthy has more.

Top diplomats from India and China met in Moscow on Friday, and said that they'd agreed to disengage their forces in the Himalayas and de-escalate.

Twenty Indian troops were killed in a clash in June there and the most recent incident came this week when both countries accused each other of firing into the air, violating a long-held protocol - not to use firearms in the area.

China's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that its State Councilor Wang Yi told India's Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar (quote) "the imperative is to immediately stop provocations such as firing and other dangerous actions that violate the commitments made by the two sides."

He also said all personnel and equipment that have trespassed at the border must be moved to de-escalate the situation.

That's Reuters Emer McCarthy.

Some European countries are dealing with a resurgence of COVID-19. AP correspondent Jennifer King reports.

The Dutch public health institute says that 1,270 people tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 24 hours. That's the highest number since mid-April.

It's the second time this week that Dutch daily infections have topped 1,000 and are the sign the virus is making a resurgence in the Netherlands.

In Birmingham, England's second largest city, households were being urged to stop socializing. The latest government data for Birmingham, England, shows the infection rate has doubled in the past week and the number of confirmed cases in the UK has spiked at over 3,500, the highest daily total since May 17.

In Eastern Europe, Hungary and the Czech Republic registered all-time daily highs on Friday.

I'm Jennifer King.

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