

(1) Order Suggests ...

included in the president's authority through the Office of Administrative Affairs.

The Office of Administrative Affairs is then directed to assess the received documents in accordance to the prevailing laws and regulations and refer the draft of the order and decrees issued by the president and his VPs and submit them to the president.

"If decisions are made separately without consulting the opposing side, in the first step, they come out of national unity government and the national unity government moves toward segregation and this would further weaken the government," university professor Tahir Hashimi said in response to the order.

Other commentators have expressed concerns that the consolidation of executive power could be a major turning point for the Afghan government. "The history reveals that authoritarianism never succeeds in Afghanistan, but rather it causes fights; therefore, authoritarianism isn't supposed to have place in Afghanistan's political history," Civil Society Association head Aziz Rafee said.

The Office of Administrative Affairs and the office of the Chief Executive have yet to comment on the order. (Tolonews)

(2) Ghani Holds ...

campaign targeting Shia rebels who control much of Yemen has pushed them out of contested air bases, the kingdom said, a day after Yemen's president said the aerial attacks will not stop until the rebels surrender. Saudi Brigadier-General Ahmed bin Hasan Asiri said on Sunday the airstrikes had destroyed any jet fighter remaining in the Arab world's poorest country.

The campaign, now entering its fourth day on Sunday, continued to target Scud missiles in Yemen, leaving most of their launching pads "devastated," according to remarks carried by the state-run Saudi Press Agency.

Dr. Faiz Mohammad Zaland, a political analyst, told Pajhwok Afghan News that Saudi Arabia and Iran were fighting a proxy war in Yemen. He said that Afghanistan should keep itself at distance from interfering in the Yemen issue. "We need to respect the decision of Yemeni people," he said, adding that Kabul should play a neutral role on Yemen issue.

Following Saudi Arabia demand, Pakistan had pledged to extend all out cooperation to Riyadh in the wake of Yemen conundrum. (Pajhwok)

(3) Afghan Govt...

Washington Examiner, has warned that Afghanistan would not be able to continue functioning without uninterrupted support of NATO contributions if it didn't address the contracting problems.

"Until it mitigates these challenges, [the government of Afghanistan] will continue to depend on coalition-provided capabilities," the report said. "Future direct assistance funds are vulnerable to fraud and abuse." Afghanistan and CSTC-A, however, have already signed a bilateral agreement to safeguard U.S. assistance against waste and abuse.

"Afghan Ministry of Defense overpaid more than \$180 million for fuel it purchased that was intended for fleets of vehicles that didn't even work," the source added.

The Pentagon, according to Examiner, has pumped \$3.3 billion into Afghanistan's security forces between 2010 and 2013 and plans to contribute another \$13 billion between 2015 and 2019.

The Afghan analysts, meanwhile, urge the government to bring all the corrupt Afghan defense ministry officials to justice.

"Those who are involved in this corruption should be brought to justice, and the future contracts should be monitored transparently," MP Sayed Ali Kazimi said.

Soon after taking the oath as the new president of Afghanistan, Ashraf Ghani promised to fight corruption which has caused that the country to be known globally as the most corrupt country in the world. (Tolonews)

(4) Backed by...

organisations funding project had stressed the need for giving it final shape.

After announcing financial support for the project in March 2014, WB had offered \$526 million as part of the \$17 billion cost of the scheme, the spokesman recalled.

He said candidates for Installation of Multi-Terminal HVDC Converter Stations in Pakistan, Afghanistan

and Tajikistan along with HVDC Line from Sangtuda to Peshawar via Kabul would be announced next month.

Financial and transitional aspects of the project were being given final touches and construction work on the project would begin soon, Mustaghni added.

The project is scheduled to be completed in 2018. Afghanistan will import 300 megawatts and Pakistan 1,000MWs from 1,300MWs of the power. (Pajhwok)

(5) Ghani Meets...

stolen money. They emphasized that since the court decision until now, six big debtors had pledged them to pay off their liabilities which, in total, reaches to \$72 million USD, according to the statement.

Meanwhile, Ghani asked the auditors to recuperate the money from the debtors through a specific procedure approved by the cabinet.

Ghani stressed that the law enforcement authorities were also obliged to pursue the case as

He emphasized that all the court verdicts regarding the Kabul Bank case must be implemented seriously. Kabul Bank, once the country's largest financial institution, was badly shaken and collapsed in 2010 as one of the largest banking schemes in history.

The bank's former chairman Sher Khan Farnood and former CEO Khalilullah Ferozi were sentenced each to 15 years in jail last year in November.

Based on the court verdict, the properties of Mahmood Karzai, brother of former President Hamid Karzai, and Hasin Fahim, brother of late Marshal Qasim Fahim, were also frozen. (Tolonews)

(6) China's aid ...

The ambassador urged both sides to maintain the momentum of exchanges at local levels, and strengthen strategic communication on major issues.

"I would like to emphasize that China's aid to Afghanistan is sincere and without any political conditions," the Chinese diplomat said. He also stressed that China will continue to support Afghanistan's peace and reconstruction process for a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan.

"China is willing to play a greater constructive role in Afghanistan, continue to support the effective administration of the Afghan National Unity Government, support the reconciliation between the Afghan Government and various political factions, including the Taliban, support the economic and social reconstruction of Afghanistan, support Afghanistan's integration in regional cooperation, and work with the international community to make unremitting efforts to realize the successful transition of Afghanistan," Deng noted.

Sayed Makhdom Raheen, chairman of Afghanistan-China Friendship Association, described China as a great and friendly neighbor of Afghanistan and hoped to further cement ties between the two countries. Raheen, former minister of information of culture, called for more scholarship to Afghan students at Chinese universities in addition to emphasizing promotion of people-to-people exchange and Chinese investment in the country's development projects.

"China will invite the Afghan delegations of political parties, youth, media and think-tanks to visit China within this year ... China will fulfill its commitment on offering Afghanistan 500 scholarships in the next 5 years, so as to encourage and support more Afghan youth to study in China," Ambassador Deng said. Former Afghan National Security Advisor, Rangin Dadfar Spanta, called Sino-Afghan relations very cordial, saying their bilateral relations will develop further in the years ahead.

"There are great opportunities for enhancing economic cooperation between Afghanistan and China. The economic relations must be maintained and strengthened," he said.

Baryalai Sabir Barya, director general of the parliamentary affairs department of Foreign Ministry of Afghanistan and Daud Moradian, director of the Afghanistan Institute for Strategic Studies were among other participants at the seminar. (Xinhua)

(7) Afghans ...

a mayor who buys his position?" he asked.

However, Abdul Moqim Afghan, head of the information and culture department in Zabul province, said it was too hard to hold municipal

elections.

"The major problems are the lack of census information and the undefined borders between cities and districts, as well as poor public awareness of these issues," he said, noting that some areas were too unsafe to hold elections.

"This lack of security is the most challenging problem for municipal elections," Afghan said. "Many towns are under direct threat, and a municipality can't work or address people's problems when there is constant conflict."

In Khost in the southeast of Afghanistan, Naqibullah Siyal of the Qalam NGO said the lack of accountability had far-reaching consequences.

"The majority of civil society organisations in Khost are mere puppets of [local] government, members of parliament and the provincial council," Siyal said. "All previous mayors and the current one were selected because of their connections to powerful people. The municipality is an income source."

Hajji Alif Shah Mangal, the head of the Khost Shopkeepers' Union, said that it was important for mayors to be elected, not appointed through "money and connections".

"Such mayors did not value us, nor did we cooperate with them," he said. But Mangal said the current mayor of Khost city, Keramat Khan Khpalwak, was doing a good job.

"Traders in Khost traders recommended that the current mayor... be appointed. We cooperate with him a great deal. We have hired 63 municipal workers out of our own money to help him clean up the city," he said.

Khpalwak himself during the debate and stressed how much he had done for the city.

"I have been mayor for the last six months," he said. "I have stopped 90 per cent of corruption in the municipality. Municipal revenues have increased by 40 per cent, and 4,000 square metres of green space and 12,000 square metres of pavement have been regenerated."

Abdul Ghani Abbasi, the mayor of Asadabad, the administrative centre of the eastern Kunar province, appeared to favour elections.

"If the election is really based on principle, the mayor who wins will enjoy the public's confidence," he said. (IWPR)

(8) Relations with...

ment from the palace said the president also shared with the ambassador details of his address to Congress and productive talks with President Barack Obama and other US officials on outstanding issues between the two countries.

Koch praised Ghani government's efforts for a comprehensive peace process and prosperity in Afghanistan, hailing the increasing Kabul-Islamabad cooperation in this regard. In case of need, he promised, Germany would also play its role.

According to the statement, Ghani appreciated Germany's consistent generous assistance to his country over the past 13 years. He hoped for continued cooperation from Berlin, especially on technical issue.

The high-ranking Afghan delegation's visit to America had created a new spirit of cooperation between Kabul and Washington, the president said. Obama has agreed to extend the US military presence and grant Afghanistan more aid.

"I have clearly explained to Pakistan that it has been involved in undeclared hostilities in Afghanistan. I have emphasised our relations should return to normal to pave the ground for cooperation," the president added.

However, Ghani explained, ties between the two countries had improved and growing cooperation was in the interest of both – as indeed the entire region. On peace talks, he promised nothing would be kept secret from the people.

The ambassador invited the president to visit Germany at a date of his convenience. Ghani responded with gratitude, saying the Foreign Ministry officials from the two countries would work on firming his itinerary. Separately, Koch also met Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah on a range of issues, including efforts for reconciliation talks, electoral reforms, regional cooperation for economic development and security.

Abdullah said: "Fundamental reforms in the electoral system is the foundation of the national unity government. Without cleaning up the system, the people will not trust the electoral process and will not vote in the next election..." (Pajhwok)

(9) Industrial Festival...

production and growth of national products to the people and under-

take the necessary steps to introduce these products to the people," AISA Deputy Ibrahim Shams said on Tuesday.

The products at the trade show represented a variety of different sectors and sub-sectors of the economy, presenting a wide spectrum of Afghan-made alternatives to the foreign products that currently dominate the market. The products being showcased at the event include, but are not limited to, construction materials, food items, home appliances, home decorations, medical equipment, carpets and detergents.

"We have reached self-reliance with 17 products and those products have been displayed in today's exhibition," a factory owner named Mohsin Amiri told TOLONews.

Members of the business community, independent economic analysts and government officials all agree that boosting domestic production and industrial growth is key to sustainable economic development in Afghanistan. (Tolonews)

(10) Journalist ...

the head of ZIMC, adding that he might have been beaten mistakenly. Sediqullah Tawhidi, head of NAI that supports open media in Afghanistan told Khaama Press that he is in contact with the Ministry of Interior regarding the incident. This is the first incident of violence against journalists in Afghanistan so far this year. (KP)

(11) Daikundi ...

to our plight." Allah Dad, another protester, said: "In the last 12 years we have shared our grievances many times with the governor, police chief and other officials but to no avail."

He explained Baqir Mubaligh had been a provincial council candidate last year but he could not win and his other brother Hamid Mubaligh was a high peace council member. The protesters, numbering 150, urged the authorities to prosecute the brothers.

Fatima Akbari, lawmaker from Daikundi, told Pajhwok Afghan News she would share this problem

"This has become a serious issue in Daikundi because these brothers have caused instability and displacement of many families," she added. But Baqir Mubaligh rejected the allegation, saying he has been in Kabul since last five months. "These are political games against us." (Pajhwok)

(12) Doubts Cast...

making eight percent of the total participants.

But some people wondered how 70 percent students from a single province could obtain the highest marks. Eng. Faridon Alokzai, a teacher at Kabul University's engineering department, said: "I have come to know about cheating on a massive scale in the exam."

He said he had analysed the test results that showed 80 percent of students from Balkh had obtained the highest marks.

He said most Balkh students had gotten similar marks with little differences. "Such incidents happen when students find access to the answers before the exam."

Alokzai said investigators and other staff in Balkh had been threatened of grave consequences if tried to impose rules of the exam.

He said teachers could not register their complaints with provincial officials due the warning they received during the exam process in Balkh.

Khalil Ahmad Shaheedzada, the deputy head of the Wolesi Jirga's commission on religious and cultural affairs, said he had no information about Balkh students getting the highest marks.

The lawmaker, however, said irregularities took place in every Kankor test and that happened this year as well.

He said some complaints had been lodged with the lower house's commission and that Higher Education Ministry officials had acknowledged irregularities during the exam.

Earlier, officials have said around 8,000 students caught cheating during the exam had been declared as failed.

Mohammad Siddique Patman, a former higher education minister, confirmed irregularities during the recent Kankor test, which he said badly affected the results.

He said the quality of education was better in Kabul than Balkh and it was unbelievable that highest percentage went to Balkh students. He recalled Daikundi students were among highest marks scorers in the exam two years ago.

Patman said powerful individuals were often able to find answers key or offer bribes to obtain high marks for their children.

He added the current Kankor system was 50 years old and should be overhauled to prevent cheating. But Kankor committee member Dr. Lutfullah Haqqarast told Pajhwok Afghan News the exam process had been transparent throughout the country.

He said it showed talent that one thousand students of Balkh had obtained above 79 percent marks.

He insisted the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) kept answer sheets at secure places this year to prevent them from being leaked like previous years. (Pajhwok)

(13) Weesa Orders...

training, discipline and more polite behaviour with the public. "Today's situation is markedly different from six years ago."

While appreciating enhanced coordination among security forces, he suggested more training opportunities for police both at home and abroad.

Pointing to a surge in poppy cultivation and smuggling, he said the current eradication of the contraband efforts would not work; stringent measures were needed to discourage the illicit business.

"Drugs can be easily found in Kandahar City. Women and children are selling hashish and other drugs in the garb of beggars. Similarly, some police officials are in connivance with them. The illegal activity should be tackled with an iron hand," he maintained.

Deputy Governor Abdul Ali Shamsi directed security officials to extend all-out cooperation to journalists and allow them to visit areas where incidents were taking place.

Col. Rehmatullah Atrafi, the provincial police chief, informed participants of the meeting a security strategy had been devised for Kandahar City and would be implemented in letter and spirit. (Pajhwok)

(14) Kunduz Governor...

the governor claimed. According to Safi, more than 7,000 illegal gunmen were active in Kunduz besides 2,400 insurgents.

"If I don't receive a positive answer from the central government, I will not continue as governor, but resign."

"The government has also promised sacking of more than 100 officials in the police department and suspending another 100 in other departments. If this does not happen, I will resign," he warned. (Pajhwok)

(15) Senate Oks Law ...

men cannot wear women's dress or dance at wedding parties. It will also outlaw the use of alcoholic beverages, tobacco products and smoking. A majority of 64 Meshrano Jirga members present voted in favour of the legislative measure. Chairman Abdul Hadi Muslimyar urged the relevant organs to enforce the law immediately after it was signed by the president. (Pajhwok)

(16) ANA Brigade ...

targetted civilian houses in compliance with orders from Nekpi. The ANA was hitting positions where there were no militants, he claimed. But acting Governor Musa Khan Akbarzada said the operations were planned and directed by the central government. He assured the elders their grievances would be conveyed to the central government. (Pajhwok)

(17) Poppy Eradication...

he recalled. He added poppy had been planted in 13 remote districts of the province, where they were planning to eradicate them.

He said: "We have implemented welfare projects in the areas cleared of poppy. We will implement projects worth \$220,000 in those areas under poppy crop after eradicating the crop."

Ahmad Zia Abdulzai, the governor's spokesman, said that local administration had been tasked to launch campaign against poppy eradication. (Pajhwok)

(18) 15 Taliban...

the Kabul-Ghazni highway. And we have arrested some of them," Andarabi said.

He asked the residents of Sayed Abad to not allow the insurgents take shelter in their district.

Mullah Sher is a Taliban commander who was involved in the shooting of 13 civilians last week along the Kabul-Ghazni highway. However, he is not arrested yet but his son is under the custody of security forces. (Tolonews)

(19) 33 Insurgents.../.

the statement said, adding eight mines were also defused. This year, the Afghan forces will

independently fight against the insurgents in the summer offensive as the entire security responsibility of the country has been handed over to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). (Tolonews)

(20) Orchards Set ...

had been cultivated on 3,000 acres of land in Samangan with financial support from WB, the director concluded. (Pajhwok)

(21) Senior Taliban ...

sent by Taliban group for targeting foreigners in Kabul.

NDS statement further adds Hamidullah was involved in several terrorist activities in Kabul, Hamidullah has confessed to his crimes, the statement states. (KP)

(22) Britain Election...

simply the wrong direction for our country," he warned.

"If you care about strong foundations, if you care about long-term stability, if you care about prosperity, then Britain must be a committed member of a reformed European Union," he told voters.

"Not threatening to leave. Not locked out of the room. The job of the next prime minister is to open new markets for business, not close them off," the Labor Party leader affirmed.

Cameron has pledged to hold an "in or out" referendum on whether Britain should withdraw from the EU by 2017, if his Conservative Party wins the 2015 general election.

Britain is to hold its next general election on May 7. A party needs to win at least 326 of all 650 seats in the House of Commons, the parliament's lower house, to form a majority government.

Recent opinion polls show that the Conservatives and the Labor Party have been neck and neck in support. The Scottish National Party (SNP) and the Eurosceptic UK Independence Party (UKIP) are also expected to win more seats in the Parliament, making the general election the most unpredictable one in a generation. (Xinhua)

(23) Qatar Ambassador..

ouster. The military-backed government that succeeded Morsi withdrew Egypt's envoy from Doha in January 2014, accusing Qatar of meddling, and of using the Qatar-based Al-Jazeera satellite TV network to stir chaos. Al-Jazeera has denied the allegations.

On Tuesday, the Egyptian Foreign Ministry said any decision to return its ambassador to Qatar will be made "according to national interest consideration," referring to earlier comments made by the minister.

Saudi Arabia has been attempting to reconcile Egypt and Qatar. (AP)

(24) Heavy Clashes ...

remaining major stronghold of the absent president's forces.

At least 36 people were killed when Houthis forces shelled Hadi loyalists in Aden. Jets from the Saudi-led coalition bombed Houthi positions near the airport.

Hadi's rump government, now based in Saudi Arabia, is calling for Riyadh to escalate the air war into an invasion.

Asked by an interviewer on pan-Arab television channel al-Arabiya Hadath whether he sought an Arab ground intervention, Yemeni foreign minister Riyadh Yasseen responded: "Yes, we are asking for that, and as soon as possible, in order to save our infrastructure and save Yemenis under siege in many cities."

Saudi authorities say they have gathered troops along the border in preparation for any possible ground offensive, but have given no timetable to send them in. Pakistan has also said it is sending troops to support Saudi Arabia.

In the southern city of Dhalea, residents reported heavy fighting, with southern secessionist fighters trading artillery fire with Houthis backed up by army units loyal to Saleh. (Agencies)

(25) Greece Disagrees ...

during a visit to Berlin. German Chancellor Angela Merkel echoed his sentiment.

"I will just say that we were already in Moscow and are members of the EU nonetheless," she said.

Asked about possible Russian financial assistance to Greece, the EU envoy to Moscow, Vygaudas Usackas, said that "we will welcome it, if this financial aid is transparent and open, if it helps the economic and financial stabilization of Greece, something that the EU has been doing." (AP)