

(1) Efforts Underway...

advising of Afghan security forces. Brig. Gen. Aminullah Patyani, commander of the KMTC, said Afghan security forces were trained professionally and had the ability to defend the motherland without the help of foreigners. (Pajhwok)

(2) Protesters Want ...

travelling by a bus on the Kabul-Kandahar highway in the Shajoy district of southern Zabul province. The men were seized in Pash Kandi area on the road between western Herat province and central capital Kabul, Mohammad Ullah Ahmadi, the district police chief had said.

But, Haji Mohammad Muhaqiq, 2nd deputy to Chief Executive Officer (CEO), had claimed two former Taliban commanders Mullah Mansur Dadullah and Mullah Abdullah Kakar known as Haqmal had hands in the kidnapping of the passengers. The two commanders were now allied with Islamic State (IS).

Interior Ministry said the latest kidnapping incident happened to mount pressure on unity government and sabotage peace and stability of the country. (Pajhwok)

(3) Gen. Todd ...

General Semonite indicated he was honored to deliver the news to the people of Afghanistan that rates of corruption had decreased in the past three months, a stark contrast from the news more frequently heard in the past, that the country's leaders were exploiting their positions of power at ever-growing rates.

General Semonite added that his weekly meetings with the national unity government leaders had proven fruitful.

"Since President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah have created the unity government, the level of corruption is unknown and as a result I can't give you a number to somehow quantify that," General Semonite acknowledged. "I will tell you that, from over 400 inspectors and advisers that we have, the president and Dr. Abdullah have put additional control at all levels to be able to limit any potential corruption." The senior American general also assured that despite the decrease in the number of foreign troops in Afghanistan, the financial commitments of NATO alliance countries are still strong, and with effective cooperation, the Afghan government and its allies will be able to bring peace to the country.

"I think the Taliban has to realize that there are very, very strong offensive forces in this country to be able to continue to defeat the insurgency, not just the Taliban, but there are also other elements that could be out there," Gen. Semonite said.

Touching on an important subject of discourse around the capabilities of the Afghan forces, the general praised the Afghan Air Force, which he said would soon be given new helicopter technology to enhance their operational effectiveness.

According to Gen. Semonite, approximately 5.3 billion USD is given to the Ministry of Interior and Defense annually. (Tolonews)

(4) President Attends...

members of Farkhunda were present on the occasion.

The Ministry of Interior had arrested at least 46 suspects, including 19 police officials, in connection of the brutal act.

Separately, over one hundred people staged protest in Brussels, the capital of Belgium, demanding those involved in her killing should be arrested and given exemplary punishment. (Pajhwok)

(5) CEO Stresses...

and stern actions taken against the culprits involved in the gruesome act.

An angry mob beat 27-year-old Farkhanda to death on March 18 before setting her body on fire. She was accused of burning a copy of the holy Quran, a charge rejected by the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs.

At least 48 people, including police officials, were arrested following their involvement and failure to prevent the brutal killing of Farkhanda.

The case was being investigated by the Attorney General Office (AGO). Farkhanda's killing spread anger among civil society and human rights activists on national and international level. (Pajhwok)

(6) Khost Observes ...

wounded. Zarif Zarif, deputy head of Khost

traders union, told Pajhwok Afghan News black flags would be hoisted on shops and main markets market for three days to express solidarity with the bereaved families.

"A bank account has been opened to support the families of the martyred and injured persons where people can donate from within Afghanistan and abroad", he informed.

Inam Rahmani, a businessman in Khost City, the provincial capital, said they would collect donation from people in districts which would be distributed among bereaved families.

Adam Khan, a local resident who lost his brother in the attack said: "We demand serious actions against the perpetrators to ensure that such dastardly acts should not happen in future."

A delegation from the central government has reached Khost to probe the incident after consultations with officials, tribal elders and eyewitnesses.

Twenty persons were killed and another 64 wounded when a suicide bomber blew himself up at the centre of a protest camp outside the governor's office. (Pajhwok)

(7) Parliament Blasts ...

Hussain Nasiri said, pointing to the unsolved problems of six million Afghans overseas.

Criticizing the sidelining of Parliament on foreign issues, the House Speaker Abdul Raouf Ibrahim emphasized that once the outline was approved by the Parliament, the government would be no longer be allowed to make foreign decisions without consultation with the lawmakers.

"Today we once again ask the government to send its outline of foreign policy to the National Assembly for approval," Ibrahim said, stressing to stop "irresponsible decisions" by the government.

The reaction from the MPs came a day after the second deputy chief executive Mohammad Muhaqiq said in an exclusive interview with TOLONews that the government's support for Saudi Arabia's intervention in Yemen was "in contradiction to the decision they made in the National Security Council (NSC's) meeting."

"We did not have such a decision in the National Security Council. We decided that in respect to Afghanistan's issues nearly for four decades, war is not the solution. There should be peace, and the United Nations and the Islamic Conference [OIC] was asked [in the meeting] to take urgent steps for a peaceful solution," Muhaqiq said.

Muhaqiq called Saudi Arabia's strikes on Yemen a violation of international laws, and asked for immediate stop of these attacks. Former president Hamid Karzai's spokesman, Aimal Faizi, also criticized the government's stance on the issue, saying the Yemen crisis was a confrontation between the regional powers.

"Afghanistan's interests do not require [the country] to enter into the sectarian conflicts and the regional fight between Iran and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members," Faizi said.

Urging the government to maintain its neutrality, Faizi stated that the Afghan government came under Saudi Arabia's pressure to make the announcement. (Tolonews)

(8) Saudi ...

province had witnessed major development. The meeting took place at a time when Saudi Arabia-led coalition launched airstrikes against rebels in Yemen. (Pajhwok)

(9) Japan to Provide ...

and a serious threat to the national and regional security. UNODC, with generous contribution from the government of Japan through 2014 supplementary budget, continues to support the government of Afghanistan in conducting effective counternarcotics activities together with the relevant line ministries and authorities.

Japan has been assisting Afghanistan's nation-building efforts in various fields including security, education, health, culture, humanitarian assistance, agriculture, infrastructure and its capacity development. (Pajhwok)

(10) NUG Stance...

tatement showing support for Saudi Arabia's involvement in Yemen crises, something that has followed serious reactions from the Parliament and civil society groups.

Calling the government's stance on Yemen war against the national interests, the lawmakers on Saturday's session asked the govern-

ment to dispatch its foreign police outline to the Parliament for approval.

Moreover, the second deputy chief executive, Mohammad Muhaqiq, in an exclusive interview with TOLONews stated that the government's support for Saudi Arabia's involvement in Yemen crises was in contradiction to the decision they made in the National Security Council (NSC) meeting.

Muhaqiq called Saudi Arabia's strikes on Yemen a violation of international laws, and asked for immediate stop of these attacks.

The violence has been spreading across Yemen as the alleged Iran-backed Houthis fighters have seized control of parts of the country which caused the President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi to take shelter in Saudi Arabia.

A coalition of Arab countries led by Saudi Arabia has been targeting the Houthis fighters over the past week. According to the analysts, the crisis in Yemen is a proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia. (Tolonews)

(11) Bamyan University...

Officials said that the dormitory is not yet ready, promising that its work will be completed in one month and then five hundred students will be able to live in there. (KP)

(12) Afghanistan ...

The framework agreement, struck after intensive talks, aims to prevent Tehran making a nuclear weapon in exchange for phased sanction relief. Iran and the six world powers involved must now finalise the deal.

Iranians have been celebrating in the streets but Israel says the deal threatens its survival. (Pajhwok)

(13) 200 Apprentices ...

apprenticeship system took the entry test for admissions to five pilot institutes.

The event in Mazar-e Sharif marks a significant milestone in the Ostad-Shagerdi agreement, which was signed between the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Federation of Afghan Crafts and Trade (FACT) and Germany's TVET programme in November 2014.

The agreement is set to modernize Afghanistan's apprenticeship system by offering apprentices from four informal economic priority sectors an academic education together with their practical experience in the businesses or companies. The sectors or subjects include motor vehicle mechanics, carpentry, electronics and metal work.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony in Kabul last Sunday, Mohammad Sarwar Azizi, acting deputy for Deputy Ministry of TVET of Minister of Education, said: "We are witnessing that these apprentices have been given the opportunity of enter the gates of TVET institutes, so they can deepen their knowledge and understanding of their jobs."

After completion of the four years of training in the programme, the apprentices will be awarded a 9th grade certificate by the Ministry of Education, the statement added.

Germany's supports in the adoption of apprentices in the TVET institutes includes renovation work for workshops and classrooms, furniture, tools, equipment, apprenticeship training packages (consisting of a school bag, notebooks, pens, pencils, rulers etc.), and teaching and learning materials.

The TVET programme funded by the German government also offers teaching and assessment training for teachers and masters. A new curriculum has also been developed for the students based on high technical and vocational education standards.

In close cooperation with the Afghan Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Federation of Afghanistan Craft Persons and Traders (FACT), the TVET programme financed by the German Government promotes technical and vocational education and training in Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(14) Govt. Urged ...

"Peace is a pressing need for Afghanistan. Afghans are expecting that President and Chief Executive Officer will take actions in this regard based on their promises. The executive board of HPC is still functioning by its old formation. I hope that president will take necessary steps for improvements in HPC in his upcoming meetings the council after which HPC can take a step."

Wiqad said he is optimistic that Regional countries, international community and armed opponents will cooperate with peace talks.

Wiqad's concern comes at time Afghan government seems closer to begin peace talks with Taliban to end its insurgency that has lasted for over 13 years.

Afghan government says that pretty soon the nation will witness peace talks with Taliban. (KP)

(15) Kochis Warn to ...

tribe was grazing their animals there for years.

He made it clear no one would be allowed to grab "our land. If the government wants to develop a township for university staff then Kochis should be given alternate for their land," he added. (Pajhwok)

(16) Kandahar Varsity ...

institution, he said had both morning and evening shifts while the number of students exceeded 8,000 including 400 female students from around the country.

However, he expressed concerns over lack of infrastructure and budget as main hurdles in the way of flow of education.

He demanded the Ministry of Higher Education should take notice of the university budget. He praised most of faculty members were young and well-educated and they need to get scholarships for higher education.

Of 200 faculty members, three or four teaching staff have doctorate degrees while another two or three were doing their PhD. Another 60 teachers, he said had completed their masters abroad and 42 more were doing their master degrees abroad.

As the university, he said was facing with pressing problems but it still stood at top among all 61 state-run and private universities of the country.

Tota Khail said the varsity had affiliation with 17 countries including United States, Canada, South Korea, Germany, Malaysia, Thailand, India and Iran. He said he was in contact with three other international universities in the United Kingdom, Bangladesh and India to have affiliation which would be a great achievement.

The university has branches in Uruzgan and Helmand provinces and has agriculture and technology department which offers master and PhD degrees. (Pajhwok)

(17) Students Blast...

economics, journalism, law, computer science, and geology.

Some of these students criticized the procrastination in their studies, saying it was because of months of delay in teachers' salaries.

Manijha Mursal, a psychology student, told Pajhwok Afghan News authorities concerned should resolve the issue as soon as possible. "Nobody cares about our fate. This will negatively impact our academic year."

Hasibullah Elham, a final year philosophy student, said: "We have informed high-up about the issue." The lecturers pointed out that the problem was in the accounting system. Earlier, the night shift lecturers' salary was part of the general budget but this time they have placed it as part of the development budget.

Sayed Ahmad Shah Sharifi, psychology lecturer, said the delay had happened despite assurances that they received from the Second Vice-President Sarwar Danish.

"We come out of home from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm. We don't even see our children the whole day," he said, warning they wouldn't attend the night shifts lectures until they received their salaries.

Ahmad Zia Nekbin, another lecturer, said he was teaching morning as well as evening shifts. "It is not easy to teach three shifts from morning till evening. It requires a lot of energy." (Pajhwok)

(18) Afghan Taliban...

speculation that he had died. Despite being "regularly tracked by the enemy, no major change and disruption has been observed in the routine works of (Omar) in... Organising the jihadi activities as the leader of the Islamic Emirate," it said.

Keenly follows and inspects the... Activities against the brutal infidel foreign invaders."

Lionising the "charismatic personality", the biography also contained several anecdotes of battlefield valour and described the RPG-7 grenade launcher as Omar's "preferred weapon of choice".

The withdrawn, remote figure has not made a public appearance since the 2001 invasion, and has hardly ever been photographed. The US State Department -- which

has a USD 10 million bounty on his head -- only describes him as a tall male with a shrapnel wound to the right eye.

The Taliban's surprise move to release his richly-detailed biography, even describing his personal and family life, took security analysts by surprise.

"The Taliban have posted Omar's biography for several strategic reasons -- the most important of which is to counter Daesh influence in their ranks," said Ahmad Sayedi, an expert on the Taliban, alluding to the Arabic abbreviation for the Islamic State group.

"This announcement is also meant to show that Omar is alive and well and still in control as the supreme leader of the Taliban."

In the past 13 years, Omar has stayed completely out of the public eye amid growing power struggles within the Taliban and fears of the IS group's influence in their ranks as an ideological rival. The Afghan government has also raised the ominous prospect of the IS making inroads into the country, though the group that has taken over swathes of territory in Iraq and Syria has never formally acknowledged having a presence in Afghanistan.

In February a US-led NATO drone strike killed a former Taliban commander and a Guantanamo detainee suspected of links to IS in the volatile southern province of Helmand.

Mullah Abdul Rauf Khadim, who led around 300 men, had reportedly defected from the Taliban to join IS.

The whereabouts of Omar remain a mystery but he is believed to be leading the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan from a hiding place somewhere in Pakistan. (AFP)

(19) Yemen Crisis...

defend Ghani's stance on Yemen issue."

Kunar provincial council and religious scholars also expressed their support for Ghani's on the issue. (Pajhwok)

(20) 3 Smugglers ...

Separately, two soldiers lost their lives in a bomb explosion in South Waziristan, Pakistan's Dawn.com reported. Although the military did not say anything about casualties, intelligence officials claimed five suspects affiliated with the banned Lashkar-i-Islam were killed.

The attacks were part of the ongoing Khyber-II operation aimed at flushing out militants. The official said helicopters attacked LI positions in Nangroza, Spin Drand and Thor Khel areas of Sipah where militants had some of their important hideouts and bunkers on adjoining hilltops which posed a hazard to ground offensives by security forces.

LI spokesman Salahuddin Ayubi conceded the destruction of hideouts on Saturday but insisted that no activist of the group had been killed. He also claimed that militants had captured two soldiers but the claims could not be verified.

A local spokesman for the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan, Azam Tariq Mahsud, claimed responsibility for the attack, it concluded. (Pajhwok)

(21) Russia Urges...

evacuate people, to make sure it's secure and safe."

Aided by the strikes and arms drops, Hadi loyalists have managed to drive the rebels back from some parts of central Aden.

At least 185 dead and 1,282 wounded have been counted in hospitals in Aden since March 26, the city's health department director Al-Kheder Lassour said.

The toll does not include casualties among the rebels and their allies, who do not take their people to public hospitals, or victims of air raids, he said.

The coalition says it has no plans for now to deploy ground forces in Yemen.

But Saudi Arabia's army and naval special forces have carried out specific operations, a Saudi adviser said, without revealing if they had actually set foot on the ground.

Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, whose country is participating in the coalition, said securing the Bab al-Mandab access to the Red Sea off Yemen's coast is a top priority.

And the Saudi adviser said special forces were also involved in operations against Houthi units on Myun Island in the strait, through which much of the world's maritime trade passes.

Medics called on international organisations and Arab states participating in the coalition to provide emergency medical assistance to hospitals in Aden.

"Medicine stocks are exhausted and hospitals can no longer cope with the increasing number of victims," Lassour said.

Yemen, an impoverished state on the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, is the scene of the latest proxy struggle playing out between Middle East powers, after Syria and Iraq.

Iran has accused Sunni-ruled Saudi Arabia of sowing instability in the region.

But it has rejected as "utter lies" accusations that it armed the rebels, who have allied with army units loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh.

The Red Cross said hospitals in Aden were overwhelmed by the casualties and fighting was making it nearly impossible for aid workers to move around.

Two brothers working for the Yemen Red Crescent Society were shot dead Friday in the southern city while evacuating the wounded, it said.

"In Yemen, we are seeing Red Crescent volunteers being deliberately killed as they strive to save others. This is the third senseless death in a single week. This is a very worrying trend and a tragic loss," said Robert Mardini of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Meanwhile on Saturday Algeria evacuated 160 of its citizens along with 40 Tunisians, 15 Mauritians, eight Libyans, three Moroccans and a Palestinian from Sanaa on a flight to Cairo, Algerian national news agency APS reported.

The military coalition said China, Djibouti, Egypt and Sudan, along with two aid groups, were also scheduled to carry out evacuations from Sunday while requests from others including Canada, Germany and Iraq were being processed.

The turmoil has allowed Al-Qaeda to expand its foothold in the southeast of the deeply tribal country, which had been a key US ally in the war on the extremist network.

On Friday, Al-Qaeda fighters captured the regional army headquarters in Mukalla, capital of the southeastern province of Hadramawt.

They now control nearly all of the city, where they stormed a jail and freed 300 inmates on Thursday. (AFP)

(22) Iran-P5+1 ...

resolutions of the UN Security Council against the country would be rescinded, he said.

The Iranian president emphasized that during the recent negotiations with the six global powers in Lausanne, Switzerland, Tehran insisted on the termination of all economic, banking and financial sanctions.

He criticized claims by certain countries about Iran's intention to dominate the Middle East region if it achieves success in the nuclear negotiations, saying, "The Islamic Republic of Iran has never sought to invade any country...but we will defend ourselves against anybody who intends to encroach upon the people's rights."

Described the Lausanne talks as complicated, tough and unprecedented, Rouhani said the negotiating sides still face an uphill task despite good steps taken so far.

Iran and the P5+1 states -- the US, France, Britain, Russia and China plus Germany -- issued a joint statement at the end of eight days of sensitive nuclear negotiations in the Swiss city of Lausanne on April

According to the statement, no Iranian nuclear facility will be shut down or suspended while all sanctions against the Islamic Republic will be terminated.

Iran and the six global powers will work to draw up a final accord by the end of the self-designated June 30 deadline. According to the joint statement, Iran's Fordow nuclear facility will be turned into a research center for nuclear science and physics. It also said the heavy water reactor in the Iranian city of Arak will remain in place, but will be redesigned and updated. Iran will implement the Additional Protocol temporarily and voluntarily in line with its confidence-building measures and after that the protocol will be ratified within a time frame by the Iranian government and Parliament (Majlis). (Press TV)