

(1) Abdullah Unsatisfied...

representative in Afghanistan Nicholas Haysam on Wednesday said at the same event that the NGU must not undermine human rights during the peace negotiation process and that it must consider women's rights in the talks.

"We believe our support of Afghan human rights institutions, notably the AIHRC, is as important as any other human rights advocacy work UNAMA (United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan) undertakes. The future of human rights protection rests ultimately with Afghans not with the international community," Haysam said.

The Afghanistan High Peace Council HPC has also given its assurance that it will not compromise on women's rights while conducting talks with the Taliban.

"Women will be part of the process, they will be engaged in talks from the beginning and the women's role will not just be symbolic," HPC secretary Masoom Stanikizai said.

Following the increase in security incidents post-2006, matters such as human rights were sidelined. In line with this, human rights organizations have continued to call on government to protect the achievements made in the country in the human rights arena. (Tolonews)

(2) 3 Cabinet ...

The nominees who presented their plans included Abdul Basir Anwar, minister-designate for justice, Syed Sadat Nadari for urban development and Gulab Mangal, cabinet pick for borders and tribal affairs portfolio. Mangal said terrorism, extremism, rampant corruption, widespread poverty and existence of illegal armed men were main challenges being faced by the government.

In case of getting trust vote, he would work hard to counter all challenges to bring prosperity to the country and people.

He pledged to resolve problems of tribal masses and safeguard borders of the country in a diligent manner.

"I will bring some tangible changes to the policy of this ministry in order to halt smuggling activities in border areas," the cabinet pick remarked.

He promised to reorganize local councils, protect historical relics and work for the establishment of an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process.

The minister-designate for urban development said life in Afghanistan has become tough especially in cities.

He viewed repatriation of refugees, surging population and urbanization, poverty, grabbing of land, non-existence of urban laws and absence of urban development plan as major challenges.

Under his administration, he would make sure strict provision of all services in cities. Syed Sadat Nadari said implementation of master plan, scrutiny of private sector involved in urban development, provision of drinking water, power and canalization system and hiring of competent individuals on key posts would among his top priorities if elected as Urban Development Minister.

The minister-designate said he would ensure the completion of on-going housing projects, encourage foreign investment for urban development and make sure transparency and gender equality in his ministry.

Abdul Basir Anwar, a cabinet pick for Justice Ministry, briefed the house about his plans. He said implementation of laws, vacation of grabbed properties from powerful individuals, reforms, capacity building, elimination of corruption and gender equality would be his priorities.

He pledged in case of getting trust vote from lower house he would implement all his plans and create law institute for graduates of Shaira Faculty students where they would complete their internship programme. (Pajhwok)

(3) Feldman ...

hankar among others, as part of bilateral high-level consultations on Afghanistan," the sources said.

Feldman and Indian officials also discussed how best to support a sustainable, inclusive, sovereign, and democratic political order in Afghanistan, the sources said. (Xinhua)

(4) AG Warns...

government and private sector. The Council of Ministers has reportedly revoked that authority, yet their spokesman was not ready to speak on the subject when contacted by TOLONews.

When asked about the hike in the sales tax and the controversy around corruption in the taxation of the private sector, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) was unavailable for comment. Independent economic experts say taxes on the private sector are critical

to economic growth and the provision of critical public services that allow businesses to flourish.

"All of the private institutions must pay taxes for the country's growth and so the government can provide the necessary facilities for people's wellbeing," economist Firoz Khan Masjidi said on Tuesday. "If the private institutions escape paying taxes it causes the country to go backwards so therefore the private sector should pay taxes." (Tolonews)

(5) MPs to Government...

security officials in the house to investigate the situation and reveal the fate of the hostages. They said that President Ashraf Ghani had told them in a meeting that he did not know the whereabouts of the hostages.

"This isn't a strategic silence, but a deadly silence," MP Syed Bahr said.

"Ignoring this issue could lead to the emergence of a new crisis in the country and by then it would be difficult to deal with," Bamian MP Safoora Elkhanai said.

MPs have warned that if the government does not crackdown on kidnappings, new issues will emerge in the country and the outcome could be catastrophic.

"Two days ago, a group of 16 trusted MPs held a meeting with the president. In the meeting the president confirmed that he did not know the whereabouts of the hostages," MP Fakoor Behishti said.

"It is very unfortunate that so far the government hasn't been able to trace the exact place where the hostages are being kept," Speaker of the House of Representatives Abdul Rauf Ibrahim said.

"I recommend that the honorable MPs use parliamentary resources and abstain from voting for ministerial nominees until the fate of the 31 hostages is known," MP Abdul Qayoum Sajjadi said.

Almost 50 days have passed since armed men kidnapped the 31 passengers who were traveling by bus along the Kabul-Kandahar highway. Following that incident, gunmen kidnapped a further 13 passengers in Balkh and Sar-e-Pul provinces. (Tolonews)

(6) High Level Saudi ...

addressed the technical issues in visa process for Afghan workers in Saudi Arabia, the statement said.

They promised to convey the technical problems existing in the visa process for Afghan workers. (Pajhwok)

(7) NUG Stongly ...

drinking water to Kabul citizens. (BNA)

(8) Ghani Orders...

and provided them with necessary assistance in compliance with his directives, a statement from the palace said.

The elders had met relatives of the victims of the suicide attack that killed 22 people and injured 62 others about a week ago in Khost City, the provincial capital. The bomber struck in the middle of a protest demonstration against administrative corruption.

The delegation from Khost told the president that they had held talks with local tribal elders, influential figures and religious scholars on bringing the situation to normalcy.

As a result of their talks, they said the situation in Khost had returned to normalcy after the protest was called off and government offices and marketplaces were reopened.

The statement said President Ghani, considering demands from the elders, ordered the creation of two separate commissions to permanently resolve the existing problems in Khost.

One of the commissions would investigate the suicide attack and the second administrative corruption in Khost and would report back to the presidency.

The president said a decision about the leadership in Khost province would be taken after consultations with elders and influential figures of the province.

Two lawmakers Humayun and Kamal Nasir Osoli had been leading the protests against Khost Governor Abdul Jabbar Naemi who they had accused of corruption.

On Thursday last, a suicide bomber blew himself up in the middle of the demonstration, killing 22 people and injuring 62 others, including Humayun.

The protests lasted more than 10 days and were called off a day earlier after a delegation from Kabul intervened. Governor Naemi had rejected the allegations against him as baseless and accused the two lawmakers of promoting their own interests. (Pajhwok)

(9) Zulfikar Military ...

civilians were killed during the op-

eration.

The Zulfikar military operation was launched two months ago in a bid to rid local villages of insurgents. It has been a key operation carried out by ANA members.

The Taliban is yet to comment about the casualties. (Tolonews)

(10) District Chief ...

aved Joshan, had taken a disputed land from one party and given it to another without any legal process.

In order to get rid of the problem, the district chief retook the land from the person and returned it to his rival again, sparking a gun-battle between the two sides.

"One person was injured in the clash, but his condition is stable. Clear and valid evidence showing the detained district chief has misused his authority is available with the court," Sabit told reporters in Khost City, the provincial capital.

The district chief is sent to the central jail in Khost City and he will be produced before the court on Thursday, according to the attorney.

Pajhwok tried to seek comment from the district chief or those involved in the conflict over the land, but to no avail.

Joshan is the sixth high-ranking official to be detained and prosecuted by the appellant court over the past one year in Khost.

However, the court is yet to share information about the progress in their cases with media representatives. (Pajhwok)

(11) Qadir unde...

would be awarded the trust vote. But Qadir and others spurned his allegations.

Another lawmaker Shekiba Hashimi said President Ashraf Ghani had asked Qadir to ensure that his 16 cabinet nominees obtained the vote of confidence from the Wolesi Jirga this time.

She disassociated herself from the Karwan-i-Solha block and told the cabinet nominees not to make payment in her name because she had parted ways with the group for accepting bribes.

Qadir rejected allegations against him and said they had discussed other issues at his meeting with the ministers-designate.

He said relatives of some lawmakers had been arrested in Farkhunda's murder case and the meeting discussed how to mount pressure on the Wolesi Jirga commission investigating the case to release their relatives.

He said some lawmakers had earlier come up with similar allegations against him but they failed to produce evidence in support of their claims. He promised to resign if found guilty. (Pajhwok)

(12) Campaign to...

"Right now, the habit of reading is nose-diving in Afghanistan and majority of people are not interested in reading at all," he added.

Sayed Ibrahim, an official at the ministry of agriculture while reading a newspaper, told Pajhwok Afghan News: "The culture of reading is extremely low in our country. Majority of our children and youth instead of reading are busy watching different television channels."

He urged families to persuade their children to read more since reading would make children more intelligent.

Over the last decade, majority of Afghan channels broadcast Turkish, Indian, and American shows that have attracted children and youths' attention.

According to psychologists, these shows filled with violent or tragic scenes that have negative impact on children. (Pajhwok)

(13) Defense Minister...

received by Pajhwok Afghan News said Gen. Ludin in a statement decided to pull out today (Wednesday). The president viewed Gen. Ludin as an expert in military affairs and admired his decision, it said.

The statement released by Gen. Ludin's office said: "It is a moment of pride for me that Afghans have reposed trust on me after serving 34 years in the country's armed forces." He said he recently came to know that his nomination for the position might possibly create divisions among people. "I never want to be the reason of division among my people, therefore I want to withdraw my nomination," he added.

During Babrak Karmal's era, Ludin was deputy defense minister while in Dr. Najibullah's administration he has worked on many positions including Nangarhar's governor and National Security Council (NSC) advisor. (Pajhwok)

(14) 600 Criminal ...

cases stood at 178 last year, when mostly motorbikes and cars were

stolen, he said, adding 155 criminals had been detained in connection with theft incidents. Another 23 such cases were still being investigated.

The official linked increasing robberies to the presence of vehicles lacking registration number plates and licenses.

Muhammad Naser, a resident, told Pajhwok Afghan News people were concerned about increasing incident of car-lifting in Kandahar City, the provincial capital.

He said besides vehicles and motorbikes, valuable household items were being stolen due to widespread unemployment. (Pajhwok)

(15) High Mother...

in the district's vicinity.

People complain about lack of doctors and that they have no choice but to shift their patients to the provincial hospital where lack of transport system and bad roads cause patients to die on their way.

Sayodli, 40, a resident of Sangan locality, told Pajhwok Afghan News sometimes they wouldn't even see a single doctor in the health clinic in their district. The nurses and other officials who were not professionals check the patients that sometimes prove fatal.

"When my child was ill, I took him to a clinic 10 kilometres away from my village. There was no doctor and no medicine. We went to the district centre. There also we couldn't find a doctor. I had no choice but to come to Ferozkoh but my child stopped breathing on the way. We returned back home," he said.

Sayodli added there were a lot of people in his village who did not have resources to evacuate their patients to Ferozkoh. Some even shifted their patients on animals.

Niaz Mohammad, a resident of Pasaband district, said one of his relatives took his aging father on a donkey's back to the centre of the district. There were no doctors and he could not take him to the provincial capital. After two days, his father lost his life at home.

There is no transport system between Pasaband and Ferozkoh. People would have no choice but to rent a car for minimum 10,000 afghanis which some cannot afford.

Shah Mir, a resident of Tulmistan locality, who had come to Ferozkoh for treatment, complained roads were long and bumpy and the transport expensive. He said coming to provincial capital cost him 20,000 afghanis.

"I had a stomach problem a week back. For the first 20 kilometres, I had to come on horseback to the district's capital. There were no doctors. Then I had to come to the provincial hospital where I recovered," he added.

Mohammad, 35, said: "When my wife got ill, I brought her to the district clinic. There were no doctors and they told us the only doctor was on holiday."

Dr. Ghulam Nabi Yagana, director public health department, acknowledged there were no doctors in Pasaband district. He said they had sent one doctor there, but on pretext of holidays, he never returned.

Despite giving 50,000 salaries to the doctors, they were still not ready to go to Pasaband due to insecurity and impassable ways, he informed.

He said he was working with many NGOs to address the problem. Pasaband borders with the restive Bagheran district of Helmand province. Security situation in the district is deteriorated which also leaves impact on other sectors, including health.

Dr. Yagana said the problem of inadequate doctors was so dire that even in the provincial hospital they lacked 20 doctors.

Earlier, the residents had complained that one bed in the hospital was occupied by over four patients. Yagana, however, said that a new three-storey building was being built at a cost of \$7 million with the help of Japan in order to replace the current building. (Pajhwok)

(16) Solar-Powered...

He added this experimental project would be conducted in order to evaluate feasibility, time and cost prior to launching a full-scale solar-based energy system.

According to energy and water ministry officials, Afghanistan has great capacity to produce solar-based energy. In one year at least 300 days are sunny in Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(17) 2 Soldiers Dead...

troops when the former opened fire on foreign soldiers.

The incident took place when foreign troops were leaving the Governor's House, he said. No one suffered injuries in the incident, he added.

Sherzad added a senior US Embassy

official had a meeting with Nangarhar's local officials today noon.

The ANA soldier who opened fire on foreign soldiers accompanied the embassy official to the Governor's House, he said.

An official wishing to go unnamed said that another ANA soldier was wounded in the firefight. The motive behind the incident is still unclear.

But some foreign media reported at least three American soldiers were wounded in the attack.

Zubair Sediqi, who claims to be a spokesperson of Hezb-i-Islami, said the attacker was a member of his party.

He added the attacker was named Azim and was their insider in the Afghan army ranks. (Pajhwok)

(18) Deployment ...

frigate Taylor, cruiser Vella Gulf, and destroyers Truxtun, Donald Cook, Ross, and Cole are among the other ships participating in the drills.

Last month, US Army Europe said in a statement that the forces would remain deployed for about nine months to reassure the Baltic states of its commitment in the face of Russia's "aggressive moves" in Ukraine. Ukraine has been witnessing a deadly months-long conflict in its eastern parts with pro-Russians having declared self-proclaimed independent regions.

More than 6,000 people have died in the Ukrainian conflict, the UN says. Around 1.5 million people have also been forced to flee their homes over the past months of the turmoil. (Press TV)

(19) EU Re-Imposes...

three weeks, "will help us respond flexibly to the full scope of challenges we face, both in the Asia-Pacific and around the globe," he said.

Japanese Defense Minister Gen Nakatani said he and Carter agreed that relocating a U.S. Marine base in Okinawa to another part of the southern Japanese island is the "only solution" to closing Futenma base, which lies in an urban area.

Many in Okinawa, including the current governor, oppose the construction of the replacement base in a less populated area, arguing that the facility should be moved off the island entirely.

The new defense guidelines are expected to lay out the framework for Japan to play a bigger role in regional security, as the government loosens constitutional restrictions on the use of its military.

They will also outline cooperation in new areas such as space and cyberspace. Nakatani said the two defense agencies have agreed to study the establishment of a new working group on space. (AP)

(21) Netanyahu Wants...

Middle East, and the strongest country in the Middle East should not be saying every day that it is in danger of destruction," he said.

"Israel cannot be destroyed and it is about time that the citizens of Israel understand that, internalise it and behave appropriately," he said. (AFP)

(21) Iranian FM ...

opments, and boosting Iran-Pakistan border security," Iranian foreign ministry spokesperson Marzieh Afkham said.

Mr Zarif has also requested a meeting with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, according to a Pakistani official involved in preparations for the trip. His visit has been on the cards for a few weeks, but got delayed because of negotiations with P5+1 over the nuclear programme. Taking place against the backdrop of Yemen conflict and Pakistan's much speculated participation in the Saudi-led military coalition, the Iranian officials say that Yemen would dominate the agenda. Iran has been expressing its interest in working with Pakistan on ending the Yemen dispute.

"We are willing to have necessary cooperation with Pakistan in the settlement of regional issues, particularly the issue of Yemen," Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli said at a ceremony at Pakistan Embassy in Tehran on Sunday night.

Talking to Iranian official news agency IRNA, Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran Noor Mohammad Jademani expressed the hope for a peaceful settlement of the Yemen crisis and said that peace in Yemen was in the interest of the entire Muslim world.

Iranian border guards fire mortar shells Iranian border guards reportedly fired three mortar shells in Pakistani territory close to the porous border between the two neighbours. A security official requesting anonymity told DawnNews that three mortar shells fired by Iranian border

guards on Wednesday afternoon landed in Zaamran area of district Kech. A sense of panic prevailed in the area following the attack. Fortunately, no human loss was reported. Frontier Crops and Levies personnel reached the area and started investigation into the incident. Security was tightened at the border following the attack.

Meanwhile, Pakistani and Iranian officials met at the border to discuss ways and means to avoid occurrence of any untoward incident in future. Senior officers of both countries decided to increase security at the porous border to ensure legal movement and peace at the border.

Deputy Commissioner Kech and senior officers of law enforcement agencies participated in the meeting with their Iranian counterparts. (Monitoring Desk)

(22) Iran, Turkey

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif reacted by accusing Ankara of fuelling instability in the Middle East.

Iranian newspapers and conservatives for their part denounced Erdogan's "insult" and called for his visit to be cancelled.

State news agency IRNA said Zarif is to travel to Oman on Wednesday and then Pakistan for talks on the Yemen conflict.

Turkey and Iran are also opposed on Syria, with Tehran the main regional ally of President Bashar al-Assad and Ankara supporting the rebellion.

Several ministers accompanied Erdogan, who also met Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei during his one-day visit.

Despite the tensions, the neighbouring countries want to strengthen trade to 30 billion dollars (28 billion euros) in 2015.

Erdogan pointed out that the balance of trade was unfavourable to Turkey, since "Iran exports \$10 billion and imports only \$4 billion in Turkish products."

And he asked for a reduction in the price of gas purchased from Iran.

"The gas we buy from Iran is the most expensive. If the price drops we can buy more."

He also called for expanding air links to medium-sized cities in Iran, and for an increase in electricity imports, as is already the case for several Turkish provinces.

During the visit, eight documents, particularly in the areas of transport, customs, industry and health were signed. (AFP)

(23) U.N. Warns...

the ground so that we can get into the camp."

Gunness said since the fighting escalated a week ago, UNRWA aid convoys have not been able to enter the camp and the already dire situation has become more desperate with people left without water, food or medicine and the growing risk of disease.

Gunness said a few Palestinian charities had managed to get some supplies to the camp but otherwise people were cut off with the risk of disease rising daily.

"When you have public health system completely shot to pieces, when you have such terrible levels of food insecurity ... disease is going to soar," said Gunness.

"We have tragic pictures of children and others scooping up water out of holes in the streets."

Gunness said UNRWA had not been a regular presence in the camp for at least two years so it was impossible to estimate the number of people now ill or the death toll.

The war in Syria has killed 220,000 people and displaced millions of Syrians. The United Nations has said it is extremely concerned about the safety and protection of Syrian and Palestinian civilians at the Yarmouk camp.

Gunness said an estimated 94 civilians, including 43 women and 20 children, managed to leave the camp on Sunday and were provided with humanitarian support so there was no reason why more could not be helped to safety. "For me it is unacceptable that the so-called civilised world can stand and watch what is going on in Yarmouk," he said. "We are facing a potential slaughter of the innocents and the world cannot stand by and watch that happen."

(Reuters)

(24) China to Eliminate...

Intermediary services for profit-making purposes such as conditional guild membership or forced sponsorship will also be eliminated.

The government will announce a list of legal fees to the public after the campaign and no unmentioned fees should be charged. The government also called for the public to report illegal fee charging behaviors. (Xinhua)