

(1) Lawmakers ...

Khan Karimi, Interior Minister Noorul Haq Ulumi and the spymaster, Rahmatullah Nabil, appeared before a joint sitting of the Wolesi Jirga's interior security and defence commissions.

Gen. Karimi told the lawmakers that ANA troops and officers had no problem in performing their duty, some commanders had problems. He said the attack on ANA troops came when the battalion commander was absent from duty. The commander was being debriefed, said the army chief, who added that efforts were being made to prevent such incidents.

Karimi said 250 attackers dressed in black were involved in the assault. They first attacked one post and then others, he said, claiming some local residents had assisted the attackers.

He said the main issue for the troops was the lack of necessary air support. He said two helicopter gunships operated in southern zone, two in central zone and one in Kunduz and Badakhshan provinces. He said a transport aircraft had also been used in the conflict.

Gen. Karimi continued that it had been planned that operations would be first launched in Frayab province's Qaiser district and then in Juram because operations required enough resources and two operations could not be conducted simultaneously in two areas.

The army chief said a major operation against militants was being planned in Juram district.

For his part, Ulumi said the attackers had taken advantage from the troops' weak points. He also confirmed the government was planning to launch operations in Juram district, but the insurgents preempted the move. He said the insurgents would be vanquished during the upcoming offensive in Juram.

After their statements, the session called for the doors to be closed, but soon the gagging order was lifted and lawmakers started questioning the summoned officials.

Some MPs held responsible the 209th Shaheen Military Corps commander and the Ministry of Defence leadership for failing to beat back the attack in six hours.

They claimed the spy service had received reports about a possible attack in the district two days in advance.

MP Iqbal Safi from central Kapisa province said negligence had been committed in Badakhshan and no excuses were acceptable in this regard. He said the attacks were a plot to threaten central Asian countries.

Safi asked the president and the chief executive officer to resign and no longer cut deals on the heads of sons of the soil.

"Army and police commanders have become billionaires through selling oil (purchased for the forces)," the lawmaker alleged.

A lower house member from Badakhshan, Zalmai Mujaddedi, said if the security forces had enough fuel, they would have escaped from the battlefield. He said the battalion commander in Juram district was complicit in stealing oil.

He said current Badakhshan's Warduj, Yaman and Raghistan districts were under threat from insurgents and an army regiment be deployed there.

Another MP, Zakria Soda, said the president and the CEO should resign because they had no political will to strengthen security in the country.

Lower house member from Farah province, Fatahullah Qaisari, said the insurgents were in control of 80 percent areas of the province, where 14 towns were on the verge of falling to the rebels.

He said the provincial police chief had been giving "wrong information" to the Ministry of Interior about the situation in Faryab. He said the police chief's home was in Canada and he had no concerns for the residents.

Qaisari said he could prove his claims and if did not prove them, he was ready to resign as lawmaker.

He said if funds being spent on security forces were spent on people's wellbeing, the security situation would automatically improve.

Female lawmaker from Faryab, Fauzia Kofi, said the Taliban had infiltrated in each home in Faryab under the leadership of three Pakistani generals, 12 Chechens and some Uzbek fighters.

She warned if the situation in Faryab was not brought under control, it could not be controlled from spreading to Mazar-i-Sharif, the capital of northern Balkh province.

Kofi said the president and the CEO should resign because they could not heal the nation's wounds.

Lawmaker from Ghor province, Karamuddin Raza Zada, said if the

situation in insecure provinces was improved, it would help rescue other provinces from being affected.

Wolesi Jirga speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahim said the attack and the subsequent casualties in the Juram district exposed the government's weakness.

He called the country's security situation as worrisome and said if proper attention was not paid, the situation in the north would further deteriorate over the next 20 days and the fighting would start in Kunduz province in a week.

The speaker asked the security bosses to accept realities and give the president and the masses accurate information.

After lawmakers asked their questions, the session proceeded behind closed doors. (Pajhwok)

(2) APTTA Becomes ...

Chababar port, complete elimination of all customs duty on Afghan exports to India, recent offer to allow direct unloading of Afghan trucks at Attari Integrated Check Post inside India on Wagah/Attari land route, and offer of a bilateral Motor Vehicle Agreement (MVA) to Afghanistan pending signing of the SAARC agreement, are indicative of this intent and way forward."

In the past, Afghan officials from the Ministry of Commerce and Industries have persistently said that India wasn't willing to join APTTA. However, Sinha dispelled these claims and reiterated that his country was eager to join APTTA and enhance trade and economic ties with Afghanistan.

According to a statement of Indian embassy in Kabul, "the visionary idea of a great Afghan general who built the Grand Trunk Road 400 years ago connecting Kabul to Kolkata can once again become a reality if transit issues are resolved. Both India and Afghanistan leadership are committed to this."

In his TOLONews interview, Sinha said: "Unfortunately, it (the APTTA) has become a hostage to political issues. Our desire and our request always has been that we should keep these issues separate. We should allow the people and the businesses to prosper. Ultimately that will create prosperity and solve economic development problems in Afghanistan and will solve many of the problems that you see today. But (APTTA) has become a hostage."

Meanwhile, Syed Yahya Akhlaqi from the Afghan Ministry of Commerce and Industries and Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI) said: "We have clarified it before that if India is not part of the agreement, we believe that the agreement wasn't proper, therefore we want India to be included into the agreement."

"Pakistan tries to include Tajikistan in the agreement in order to put pressure on Afghanistan," head of the financial department of ACCI Tawfiq Dawari said.

He said that according to the APTTA agreement, Pakistan has committed to allowing Afghan trade convoys to reach the Wagah border - between Pakistan and India. But once there, the trade convoys are not allowed to load the Indian goods. So for this reason the Afghan trade convoys don't go to Wagah border.

Sinha also urged Pakistan to work with the relevant parties to resolve the issue. He said this would be in Pakistan's best interests.

He went on to say that India had always strived to reduce tariffs on trade and transit goods from Afghanistan and facilitate Afghan businessmen in order for them to foster better ties with New Delhi.

In a press release issued by the Embassy of India in Kabul on Monday the statement read that India believes that integrating Afghanistan into an existing bus and train network between India and Pakistan would be the next logical step. This will be essential for sustainable economic prosperity of Afghanistan, since India is one of the largest and fastest growing markets in the world, besides being an attractive destination for manufacturing.

India is deeply interested in all initiatives for regional integration and increased trade and transit within South Asia and beyond. (Tolonews)

(3) Slow-Paced...

assumed charge after they were granted the trust vote, a process underway for another 16 cabinet picks.

Of the 16 ministers-designate, Abdul Bari Jahani, a nominee for Information and Cultural Affairs Ministry, maintained dual citizenship and the lower house would allow him to explain his future plan once he gives up his foreign citizenship, the Wolesi Jirga administrative commission had said. Anarkali Hunaryar, a lawmaker from Khost province, raised the issue

of the delay in cabinet formation, saying security and economic conditions of the country have been on downward trend due to the acting officials. She urged Wolesi Jirga to award vote of confidence to the ministers-designate without further delay. She noted ministers with poor performance should be disqualified in future.

Another lawmaker Gulali Akbari expressed similar views by saying that acting officials were contributing to bad law and order.

Nabya Mustafazada, a lawmaker from Jawzjan province, urged Wolesi Jirga to expedite the trust vote's process. She noted international community would not extend financial assistance to Afghanistan in the presence of acting officials.

Chairman Senate Fazal Hadi Muslimyar said with the completion of cabinet, economic and security situation of the country would improve considerably. He urged the lower house not to delay the trust vote process and let the cabinet to be formed soon. (Pajhwok)

(4) Afghan Opiate ...

Afghanistan has grown fortyfold during the US Operation Enduring Freedom in the country, head of the Russian Security Council Nikolai Patrushev said.

Extremists in the country benefit from lax law enforcement and use their foothold in northern Afghanistan to enter neighboring countries in Central Asia, the official said during a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization security council heads. NATO mission fails to cripple opium trade in Afghanistan: expert

"Unfortunately, the failed policy of Washington did not solve, but exacerbated the existing problems. The main purposes of introducing foreign military to Afghanistan, namely the destruction of al-Qaeda and Taliban, were not accomplished," Patrushev said.

Afghanistan is home to the largest opium poppy production and distribution network in the world, supplying more than 90 percent of the world's crop. The United Nations estimated that in 2014 Afghanistan produced 6,400 tons of opiates, 900 tons more than total documented 2013 production.

The US Operation Enduring Freedom took place in Afghanistan from October 2001 until December 31, 2014. As many as 10,000 NATO troops remain in the country as part of the Resolute Support non-combat mission. (Sputnik)

(5) War Moving ...

Security Committee about the security situation of the country, Ulumi said that currently out of 34 provinces, nine are under medium and eleven are under high security threat. Noorulhaq Ulumi the Minister of Interior, General Sher Mohammad Karimi the Chief of Army Staff and Rahmatullah Nabil the head of the National Directorate of Security (NDS) - Afghanistan's intelligence agency - were called on Tuesday by parliament's Internal Security Committee at the time the security situation in the country is deteriorating.

Dozens of soldiers were martyred, wounded or went missing in a single clash in Badakhshan province on Friday. (KP)

(6) Kidnapped ...

protests have been held for swift recovery of the abducted passengers. Tens of civil society activists, relatives of the abducted individuals and some lawmakers gathered in Kabul today demanding the government to rescue the passengers.

The protesters asked the kidnappers to release the passengers and let them join their families.

Wolesi Jirga secretary Abdul Rauf Inaami participated in the protest and said: "Negotiations with kidnappers are underway with the help of local elders. We hope the passengers will be released in the next 10 days."

The government was employing all channels to ensure early release of the captives and a good news would soon be shared with their families, he informed. (Pajhwok)

(7) Iran Says Open ...

along the volatile border with Pakistan and Afghanistan.

On April 7, the Jaish al-Adl militant group killed eight border guards near the border with Pakistan in Iran's southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchistan.

Iranian-backed Shi'ite militias have helped Iraqi forces fight Islamic State (IS) militants in Iraq, and Iran is one of several countries that have expressed concern about a growing IS presence in Afghanistan. (RFERL)

(8) IS Presence...

these newly rebranded ISIL militants will have a significant impact on the situation in Afghanistan, but so far

the Pentagon sees only sporadic reports on ISIL recruitment.

The Taliban is a radical Islamist insurgent group operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan, known to be behind numerous attacks on authorities and civilians. In 2014, the militants intensified their activity in Afghanistan amid the withdrawal of international troops from the country.

The ISIL is a jihadist militant group widely known for its brutal human-rights atrocities. The militants have seized large areas of Iraq and Syria, and attracted thousands of foreign fighters. Armed groups in several other countries have allied themselves with ISIL. (Sputnik)

(9) Ismail Khan ...

growth, reduce poverty and create jobs. Khan, like many Afghans, attribute the failures to differences between Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, who was his opponent in the bitterly contested presidential election and became his partner in a national unity government under an arrangement brokered by the United States.

"The differences that exist in the national unity government .are helping to boost the enemies' morale, the morale of Daesh and the Taliban," Khan told the AP, using an acronym for the Islamic State group. "This has made people really very worried."

Khan has emerged as an outspoken opponent of Ghani, in part because the president has sought to squeeze out Khan's generation of warlords, who for decades held sway over portions of Afghanistan, running their own armies. Khan was one of the leaders of the "mujahedeen," the forces that fought the military of the then-Soviet Union during its 1979-1989 occupation of Afghanistan, then battled the Taliban after they came to power in 1996.

Herat, which borders Iran, was virtually his fiefdom. After the Taliban fall in the 2001 U.S.-led invasion, Khan became Herat's governor. Ghani's predecessor, Hamid Karzai, made Khan minister of water and energy in 2005 in an attempt to clip his wings, fearing he'd become too autonomous. Though he no longer holds an official position, he remains an influential figure in Herat and across northern Afghanistan with a core of fighters still loyal to him.

Warlords such as Khan - and other former mujahedeen leaders like Atta Mohammad Noor, who is governor of Balkh province and controls much of the country's north, and Uzbek leader Abdul Rashid Dostum, who is Ghani's vice president, represent the old way of doing things in Afghanistan, powerful men who command wide loyalty in their regions.

Ghani has sought a more modern, technocratic style of governing. During his early months in the presidency, he sacked governors and police chiefs across the country. The president has also been sharply criticized by some for centering power in a close circle of associates.

Khan, who is 69 or 70, frequently leads rallies in Herat denouncing lack of action on the economy and calling for the inclusion of former mujahideen leaders like himself in the decision-making process, especially on security. He complains that mujahedeen leaders have been sidelined in favor of some who backed the communist government that the Russians invaded to support, such as newly-appointed Interior Minister Nur ul-Haq Ulumi.

He argues that the mujahedeen warlords are the most effective way of keeping the Taliban - and Islamic State group - at bay.

"For people such as us, who led the fight for 21 years against the Russians and the Taliban, it is not acceptable to stay quiet while our enemies are at our doorstep," he said. He said the former mujahideen were "a force with an anti-Taliban and Daesh vision."

The presence of Islamic State group in Afghanistan is widely acknowledged though it is still relatively small. Until recently, it was largely seen in the eastern provinces bordering Pakistan, including Helmand, where the government claims to have killed two former Taliban commanders who switched allegiance and set up a recruiting network.

Afghanistan's senior Shiite leader Mohammad Mohaqiq said IS loyalists in southern Zabol province were behind the abduction of 31 ethnic Hazara Shiites in late February. Khan said the group now has a presence in Farah province, neighboring Herat, and in Herat province itself, including the Shindand area, where Khan was born.

He warned that IS, along with Taliban already in the area, can cause insecurity in Herat

"If the national unity government does not (settle its differences and)

bring stability, it will be very difficult for us. We are worried that a third, unwanted war with Daesh would be imposed on Afghanistan. We hope that does not happen."

He said the Taliban remain the main threat. But he said the lack of coordination in the unity government "will make it difficult for the police and army to control the fight."

Since taking office in September, Ghani has sought to keep a strong control over the Afghan security forces, ordering top to bottom reforms and replacing many senior leaders.

Khan criticized Ghani's removal of local governors and police chiefs, saying some local figures have still not been officially replaced and that the president acted without consulting local leadership. He said Ghani's moves were distancing him from the people and focusing power in his own ethnic Pashtun community, neglecting other ethnicities.

The authorities, he said, "should respect the elders of this country because they are the ones who can bring people closer to the government." (AP)

(10) 3 ANA Captive...

MoD had sent a delegation to assess the situation in Jurm district. The ministry announced that some officials had already been detained and were being questioned. (Pajhwok)

(11) Insurgents ...

district of northeastern Badakhshan. Meanwhile, the Interior Minister Noor-ul-Haq Ulumi told Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of Parliament) Tuesday that 11 provinces across the country are facing high security threats.

In addition, the Afghan Army Chief Gen. Sher Mohammad Karimi told the security commission of Wolesi Jirga that efforts were underway to launch a massive anti-insurgent operation in Northern Afghanistan. (Tolonews)

(12) Massoud Pledges...

of new townships, contractors, and concerned government departments failed to keep in view smooth passage to water flow during rains and snowfalls while constructing new buildings.

The Kart-i-Aryana road is 3.5 kilometers long and 15 meters width and its completion would help reduce traffic pressure in the city.

Abdul Ahad Wahidi, acting mayor of Kabul city, said the asphaltting of the road would be completed in 18 months at a cost of \$3.8 million.

He informed the road connected north and west of the capital city would ensure smooth traffic flow.

The capital city, Massoud said had now become more congested and polluted because of absence of proper sewerage system. He warned that the city would become more congested if proper strategy was not devised to keep things on track.

A committee had been tasked to meet owner of housing schemes and buildings for constructing of an inclusive sewerage system, he noted. (Pajhwok)

(13) Baghlan ...

problems such as accommodation. Ziauddin, a student of journalism faculty stated: "There is no vacant place in the hostel. I am living in a hotel which costs me too much."

Hundreds of students have been living in hotels or with relatives due to lack of hostel. (Pajhwok)

(14) Customers to ...

their bills directly on their phones. Additionally, the statement said that with the recent upgrades to M-Paisa's system that enable the integration of an M-Paisa account with bank accounts, customers are able to transfer the money directly from their bank accounts to Breshna through M-Paisa on their phones.

"We are delighted to collaborate with Breshna to offer Afghans a superior system for bill payment through Roshan's M-Paisa," said Karim Khoja, Chief Executive Officer of Roshan. With over 1.3 million registered users and over \$6 million transactions transferred each month, M-Paisa is the largest m-commerce provider in Afghanistan and plays a vital role in the country's financial infrastructure, the statement added. (Pajhwok)

(15) Air Pollution ...

CNG and LPG and reconstruction of roads were among the programs which were underway in cooperation with other relevant organs, saying that the programs need long time to be implemented.

According to Malikyar, destroyed roads, existence of vehicles producing smokes, lack of water streams in Kabul city and unawareness of people from environmental values are the main causes of the air pollution in Kabul city.

Air pollution in the country particularly in Kabul city has been the biggest challenge of Kabul city residents in the past few years. (BNA)

(16) Karzai Satisfied...

Pakistan were kind and they helped Afghans during their immigration period. arzai satisfied with Kandahar security, education. (Pajhwok)

(17) Kidnapped ...

the Balkhab residents not to cooperate with the government."

Mohammad Haidar, one of the released passengers, said they were kidnapped without any reason. (Pajhwok)

(18) Two Policemen ...

province in which a total of 28 Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers were killed, according to local officials said.

With the coming of the summer, the insurgents have increased their attacks on the Afghan security forces across the country. (Tolonews)

(19) ACJTF Detains...

investigative department of ACJTF for further probe.

Afghanistan is the country which produces 90 percent of world drugs. (Pajhwok)

(20) Jalalabad Insider ...

After the incident, Nangarhar security officials said they had launched investigations into the attack and the investigation seems to be still underway.

Officials from the NATO's Resolute Support Mission headquarters in Kabul on Tuesday held a meeting with ANA's 201 Selab Military Corps officials in Jalalabad.

Gen. Mohammad Zaman Waziri, the corps commander in Nangarhar, and NATO Resolute Support Mission deputy commander Lt. Gen. Paolo Ruggero and Gen Bereir attended the meeting, according to the spokesman for the 201 Selab Military Corps, Col. Noman Hatafi.

He said the military officials discussed besides other issues of mutual interest the insider's attack in Jalalabad.

"Gen. Waziri assured the Pentagon and the people of America that the attack was an isolated act not a targeted one and the NATO officials expressed their satisfaction with his comments."

To a question, the spokesman said the investigation so far showed the attack was the shooter's personal act. He said the killer had been with American Special Forces for 18 months as part of ANA service member. He showed no negative indicators during his two years of service, Hatafi said of the attacker.

He said the meeting discussed the security situation, coordination among Afghan security forces during their ongoing search operations and other issues relating operations.

Meanwhile, the Selab Military Corps in a statement said its troops were ready to carry out the spring offensive.

It quoted Lt. Gen. Paolo Ruggero as saying at the meeting with Gen. Waziri that the security situation in areas where the Selab Corps were in control had improved following the security transition from NATO forces to their Afghan counterparts. (Pajhwok)

(21) 20 Insurgents...

commander Hayat.

On Monday, five suspected militants, including two commanders of the regional branch of Al Qaeda, were killed during an encounter in the port city of Karachi. Counter-Terrorism Department (CID) personnel raided the terrorist hideout in the Khairabad area of Orangi Town. CID official Raja Omar Khattab said the raid was followed by a gunfight.

He added the fighters detonated hand grenades and used other sophisticated weapons during the firefight, damaging to an armored personnel carrier. The hideout was used as a bomb factory. Khattab said: "We have recovered a huge cache of explosives, chemicals, detonators, as well as three suicide jackets, laptops and literature for making bombs." (Pajhwok)

(22) Wardak Violence...

According to another report, two ANA soldiers were wounded in a roadside bombing in Jawzjan province. The incident took place when a ranger pick-up hit by a bomb in Chopli village of Khamab district on Tuesday morning, district chief Ahmad Javed said. Separately, 43 kilograms of heroin were seized from a vehicle in Jawzjan.

Provincial police chief Brig. Gen. Faqir Mohammad Jawzjani said that the contraband was seized at the entrance gate of Shiberghan City, the provincial capital. (Pajhwok)