

**(1) McMaster...**

So it is their choice now," he said. Commenting on the U.S bombing on Daesh militants in Nangarhar, he said his country would not tolerate the existence of such groups. "Well it is not just the bomb (Thursday's MOAB), but it is really what our soldiers are doing every day alongside courageous Afghan soldiers, fighting Daesh, ensuring that these people who victimized women, who shoot people in hospital beds, we cannot tolerate the existence of that kind of an organization. They are a threat to all civilized people, so we have come together in a long struggle against these groups who must be defeated," he added.

In response to a question about Pakistan's interference in Afghanistan, McMaster said Pakistan should seek its interests in Afghanistan or any other country through political channels and not through violence. "As all of us have hoped for many many years, we have hoped that Pakistani leaders will understand that it is in their interest to go after these groups less selectively than they have in the past and the best way to pursue their interest in Afghanistan and elsewhere is through diplomacy not through the use of proxies that engage in violence," he stated.

This is the first visit of Donald Trump's national security advisor to Kabul. He will visit Pakistan and India following his visit to Kabul where he will assess the situation in the country and then report back to the White House. (Tolonews)

**(2) US Backs ...**

It quoted McMaster as voicing support for the Afghan government policy towards strengthening the combat ability of the Afghan Air Force.

He said the US was ready to extend every possible support to Afghanistan in equipping and strengthening the Afghan Air Force.

The visiting US delegation also supported the proposed four-year security plan for Afghanistan and said President Trump's administration believed the plan would help eradicate all terrorist threats in Afghanistan.

A government official told Pajhwok Afghan News the security plan was not confined to Afghanistan only but it would deal with terror threats in the entire country. He said the plan also mentioned giving respect to the sacrifices of the Afghans in the international war against terrorism.

McMaster also said besides military cooperation the United States would continue to help Afghanistan make development in other sectors.

He also assured of continued US assistance in advancing the Afghanistan national reconciliation program.

Hanif Atmar said the increasing terrorist threats had arisen the need for more effective American military and political presence in Afghanistan.

Interpreting Afghanistan's security situation, Atmar said the Afghan defence and security forces had achieved considerable gains in the international fight against terrorism.

And to protect those gains and build on, Atmar said the Afghan security forces needed increased US and NATO support.

He said the Afghan government would not hold peace talks with the insurgents from a weak position and would force them into entering negotiations with international support. (Pajhwok)

**(3) Review of ...**

sites would be announced after the review of an e-voting system is complete. However he said the commission is concerned about its budget.

"They the international community) promised government and us but they have not given details ... on whether they will fund [the election process] or not. We expect they will pay the costs," he added. Meanwhile, former IEC chief, Fazl Ahmad Manawi, said the international community's lack of trust in the National Unity Government has affected the interest of donor countries to fund the elections.

"They [the international community] do not have the expected trust in the commission [IEC]. There are many promises but all of them are empty," he added. The cost of the upcoming parliamentary and district council elections, with the e-voting system,

will cost an estimated \$220 million USD while an election without the system would cost about \$70 million USD.

Last month, the CEO's office announced that government is committed to holding the upcoming parliamentary and district council elections by the end of this solar year (21 March 2018). (Tolonews)

**(4) 'Operation ...**

faced with many challenges, but the Afghan forces bravely defended their country with their sacrifices," Murad said.

To a question, Murad said challenges were expected this year too because the Afghanistan enemies backed by some foreign countries were out to kill the Afghans.

Gen. Murad also said the United States' National Security Advisor HR McMaster arrived in Kabul on Saturday night and he would meet with MoD officials on Monday.

The general hoped the US delegation would sense the real image about current situation in Afghanistan.

After his arrival, McMaster met his Afghan counterpart Hanif Atmar in the Presidential Palace on Thursday. The two sides began talks on a four-year security plan for Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

**(5) Karzai's ...**

Nangarhar against ISIS terrorists involving the non-nuclear GBU-43 bomb.

He slammed the government for allowing the US forces to carry out the strike and insisted that the move would be a national treason if the government had approved the use of the massive bomb. The remarks by Karzai followed despite the Afghan government said it was in the loop when the airstrike was carried out.

The Afghan government has not formally reacted to the harsh criticism of Karzai but the Presidential Palace in a Twitter post said "Every Afghan has the right to speak their mind. This is a country of free speech."

The local tribal elders in eastern Nangarhar province said they welcome any operations that result into the elimination of ISIS terrorists from the region. (KP)

**(6) CEO Dismisses...**

condemned the U.S's actions, saying foreign forces should target insurgent strongholds outside Afghanistan.

Former president Hamid Karzai meanwhile slammed government over the move and said it had been nothing more than a weapons of mass destruction test and that it had been in violation of Afghanistan's national sovereignty. (Tolonews)

**(7) Troops under...**

last year, with the Afghan forces putting up a strong resistance in Meharabad and Khurma localities. Seventeen security men lost their lives to the battles.

However, dozens of security forces are still besieged by the Taliban in Meharabad area, according to residents.

A resident, who wished to go unnamed, said one ANA unit had been surrounded by the Taliban in the area.

He said the Taliban had asked elders to tell the military unit to surrender the military facility to them and in return the troops would be provided a safe passage.

The resident, however, said the ANA commander in the base had refused to surrender and chosen to resist.

Abdul Aziz, a resident of the locality, said both the sides used light and heavy weapons during the clashes, with some mortars hitting civilian homes.

Provincial Council head Amir Mohammad Barakzai warned if the soldiers besieged on their base on the outskirts of Tarinkot were not rescued, they would be killed. Army officials in the province, however, rejected the troops were not under Taliban siege.

Army officer Lt. Wahedullah Fazli told Pajhwok Afghan News the troops were not under Taliban siege in Meharabad area and there was no danger of an attack on any military installation.

Defence Ministry spokesman Dawlat Waziri said the issue had been conveyed to the army chief. (Pajhwok)

**(8) Drive to ...**

polio is still circulating. Most of Afghanistan remains polio-free, but wild poliovirus continues to circulate in localized geographical areas.

Three polio cases have been reported in 2017, one from Helmand, one from Kandahar and the most recent one from Kunduz. In 2016, 13 polio cases were reported, down from 20 in 2015. (Pajhwok)

**(9) Some Uruzgan ...**

Pajhwok Afghan News they had approached the authorities concerned several times seeking their salaries, but could not elicit a positive response.

Former deputy police chief Noorzai confirmed the issue. "I have 84 policemen right now, only 17 of them have received salaries," he added.

Uruzgan police chief, Brig. Gen. Ghulam Farooq Sangari, said they only paid salaries to police who were officially employed.

He told Pajhwok Afghan News police were paid salaries for duty and now on police would not receive their salaries through their commanders. Police salaries were paid last time in March, the police chief said. (Pajhwok)

**(10) Over 1,630 ...**

as among the country's main problems.

The most high-profile candidates that have registered so far are President Hassan Rouhani, former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and principalist cleric Ebrahim Raisi.

The Iranian Guardian Council of Constitution, a clerical body that oversees elections, will start to assess the qualification of the applicants from Sunday and will announce an approved list by April 27.

The candidate should basically be an Iranian national, prudent and capable of taking on leadership duties, and being religious and believing in the Islamic republic's principles and its official religion. According to Iran's Interior Ministry, the approved candidates will launch their presidential campaign on April 28. (Xinhua)

**(11) MoEW Activates ...**

stored in a centralized database. The data is then made available to all managers to access it, decide and plan in a form that suits their purpose.

Hamidi said the MIS enabled managers to work in an improved manner, deliver qualitative services and address issues on time.

Energy and Water Minister Ali Ahmad Usmani also spoke on the occasion, saying the MIS was part of the ministry's five-year plan.

He stated the system was installed aiming to prevent corruption, accelerate work through computers and electronic structures, and improve the quality of works. All sections of the ministry would be covered with MIS in the next eight months, he informed. (Pajhwok)

**(12) Czech Businessmen...**

Collecting and processing garbage, generating power from wind, solar energy and garbage, investment in production of cement and other construction materials are included in the draft plans sent to the government by Czech businessmen.

Meanwhile, Suhrah Bahman, spokesman for the Ministry of Economy, said the Czech businessmen are interested to take part in reconstruction of the projects which were executed by the Czech Republic ahead of domestic wars in Afghanistan.

"Afghan-Czech consortium which is made up of 15 companies has invested in different fields in past few years. We will assess the plans which have been submitted to the Afghan government by Czech companies," Bahman said.

The Afghan-Czech consortium, established by a joint Afghan and Czech company in 2002, is among those projects completed by Czech businessmen in the country. Electric buses, which were active before the internal wars in the country, as well as a factory of processing of semi-precious stones are among the most important projects implemented by Czech and Slovak republics in Afghanistan. (Tolonews)

**(13) Karzai Meets ..**

Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, China and India attended the Moscow meeting on Friday.

According to Mustaghni, a session about a regional consensus on peace in Afghanistan would be held in Kabul in the near future. (Tolonews)

**(14) MoPH Assures ...**

to get rid of America in Afghan-

istan. "Yesterday it was the third time that I decided to free Afghanistan (first time from Russia, second time from Pakistan and now) from America's incursion, operation and violation," said Karzai on Saturday.

But, in the past Karzai backed the US in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan.

"The American people have a feeling for Afghanistan and we are grateful of that. The U.S government has supported Afghanistan. If someone calls me a puppet for my appreciation, then let them call me the puppet. The reality is that if there was no support from the United States, Afghanistan would have been invaded by neighboring (countries) and Al-Qaeda network," Karzai said a while back. Meanwhile a number of Afghans hit back at Karzai over his comments.

"These contradictory remarks are not for the people; these remarks are made for reaching power and for personal motives," said a resident of Kabul, Mir Ahmad Qane. At the same time, some residents in the southern province of Helmand also questioned Karzai's stance toward the U.S, and asked why Karzai has not taken a stance against the Taliban, who are taking the lives of Afghans on a daily basis.

"Why has he (Karzai) not taken such a position over the past thirteen years and why is he not talking about the people killed in Helmand and other places?" asked a resident of Helmand, Amanullah. Meanwhile a member of the Hambastagi party, Maryam said: "Our people are killed on a daily basis because of the crimes of the Americans."

Achin is said to be one of the main hubs for Daesh in Afghanistan. According to media reports, over 90 Daesh operatives were killed during Thursday's bombing. (Tolonews)

**(15) Iran's Shamkhani...**

hampered political solutions to crises.

Shamkhani further pointed to the numerous commonalities between Iran and Azerbaijan in defense, political, regional, and cultural spheres, and called for closer bilateral ties on "strategic issues." The visiting Azeri defense minister, for his part, said Baku is eager to boost cooperation and interaction with Tehran.

Hailing Iran's "precious experiences" in the fight against terrorism, Hasanov called for close dialogue between the two neighbors to counter the threats posed by Takfiri terrorist groups. Heading a high-ranking military delegation, Hasanov arrived in Tehran on Saturday at the invitation of his Iranian counterpart. (Tasnim)

**(16) The Way ...**

stabilization and sustainable development with negative security and economic implications for the whole region and the rest of the world.

In order for Afghanistan to further institutionalize its hard-earned gains of the past 16 years, the Afghan delegation noted the importance of consistent efforts by the Government of Afghanistan to achieve peace through a political dialogue with all Afghan armed groups, including the Taliban, provided that they accept Afghanistan's basic conditions for reaching a genuine, sustainable peace, said the foreign ministry spokesman Ahmad Shakib Mustaghni. Afghan delegation underlined the some key principles to help guide ongoing regional efforts in support of Afghanistan, he added.

First, there is no substitute for state-to-state cooperation, which must underpin all regional efforts to help the Government of Afghanistan reach peace with those Afghan armed groups, including the Taliban, who are genuinely willing to enter an irreversible political settlement.

Second, sincere regional cooperation is essential for ensuring that joint peace efforts will bear the results of Afghanistan and the region ultimately seek. And that means an end to the suffering of the Afghan people that would enable them to further consolidate our hard-earned gains of the past 16 years, in continued partnership with the international community.

Third, regional consensus on the long-term stabilization of Afghanistan as a common good is emerging. This must continue to evolve and translate into concrete steps to be taken by each of the re-

gional and global stakeholders, in support of an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process.

Fourth, Afghanistan rejects duplicity and selectivity in defining terrorism. This means that regional counter-terrorism efforts must mirror those of national counter-terrorism action plans adopted for implementation by Afghanistan's neighbors, including Pakistan.

A majority of the country-participants agreed with the Afghan position: That the region should reach to a concrete consensus on Afghanistan and send a strong message to the Taliban that the way forward is dialogue and not violence.

Afghanistan offered to host the next round of regional consultations in Kabul, which most of the country-participants welcomed and agreed to participate. The dates of the Kabul meeting would be announced and communicated to all invitees.

Mr. M. Ashraf Haidari, Director-General of Policy & Strategy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, lead the Afghan delegation. (Pajhwok)

**(17) Corruption ...**

civil service employees are introduced, that robust oversight mechanisms were in place and that there was transparency into the work of the public administration.

"Prevention is also more education and about giving Afghans - also in the rural areas - better tools to report corruption without having to fear repercussions. Good things are happening, but more is needed to empower the fight against corruption. A strong implementation of the Access to Information Law must be given priority" states Ambassador Mellbin. (Pajhwok)

**(18) Paktia Traders ...**

in return of the taxed they paid.

"If they (both government and Taliban) do not provide us facilities in return for the taxes, they should not at least create problems for us."

"We can pay taxes to only one side, not to both or more, we ask the government to take serious measures for our security and prevent illegal extortions," he said. Gardez Mayor Esmatullah Khalid said the municipality could collect its revenue on its own or through a contractor in line with the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) rules.

"Taking tax at entry gates by a contractor is to avoid engaging municipality workers multiple activities," he said. About the beating of a businessman at the entry gate, Khalid said the perpetrators of the incident had been arrested and brought to justice. He said his office prevented any kind of illegal money extortion.

The governor's spokesman, Abdullah Hasrat, said taxes were taken from traders under the law. About militants forcing traders into paying money, he said: "We are in contact with governors of neighboring provinces to resolve the problem jointly."

A Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, said they had shifted their customs office from Spin Boldak border town of Kandahar province to Deh Yak district of Ghazni province due to security problems.

He said the Taliban only took money from a limited number of companies which imported fuel to the country.

He said robbers disguised as Taliban were involved in extortion and that the Taliban would investigate the issue. (Pajhwok)

**(19) 10 Rockets...**

suicide attack rocked Kabul city last week leaving at least six people dead and around five others wounded.

The incident took place in the vicinity of the second police district of the city close to the ministry of defense compound after a suicide bomber detonated his explosives near a vehicle carrying the government workers.

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group's offshoot operating under the name of ISIS-Khurasan in Afghanistan claimed responsibility for the attack. (KP)

**(20) 2 Militants ...**

casualties were incurred through attacks by the anti-government elements which includes a total of 6,994 civilian casualties (2,131 deaths and 4,863 injured). (KP)

**(21) Afghan...**

there is no consulate of that country in Kunduz, they also insult Afghans."

He said the border gate would be closed until their problems were resolved. He said they had several times shared their problems with Tajik officials, but they did nothing as yet. Mujib said 250 Tajikistani drivers possessed Afghanistan visas.

Shams, a driver on the Afghanistan and Tajikistan route, said his visa expired two months ago, but Tajikistan refused to extend it.

"If Tajikistan is really a friend of Afghanistan, it should open a consulate in Kunduz province", he said.

Local officials confirmed problems traders and drivers faced. Sayed Mahmud Danish, the governor's spokesman, said: "Tajikistani authorities have been several times requested to open a consulate in Kunduz, but to no avail."

He said the reason Tajikistan was denying to open a consulate in Kunduz was the absence of proper security in the province.

Danish said Tajikistan had been assured by local officials of the consulate security by Afghan forces. (Pajhwok)

**(22) ISIS Suicide ...**

during the recent years.

This comes as the Afghan forces conducted counter-terrorism operations in the restive districts of Nangarhar under the Hamza operations launched nearly two weeks ago.

The United States on Thursday launched a major airstrike against the terror group using the Mother of All Bombs, GBU-43 bomb to destroy the tunnels network and other hideouts of the terror group in Achin district.

The provincial government said Saturday that 94 ISIS militants including four leaders of the terror group were killed in the airstrike and no casualties were incurred to the local residents. (KP)

**(23)North Korean...**

will see what happens!" Trump said on Twitter. Trump has backed away from a campaign promise to label China in that way. (Reuters)

**(24)Senior Chinese...**

basis of mutual respect and promote greater development of bilateral ties, so as to better serve the two peoples and peoples of the world, he added. (Xinhua)

**(25)Protesters ...**

that the president release his returns, as he has repeatedly promised, but failed, to do," the Tax March website reads. "We march because it is in the best interest of the American people to know what financial entanglements and conflicts of interest our leaders have."

Trump has repeatedly said he can not release his tax returns because they are under audit, though many tax experts have said he is not barred from releasing the information during the audit. (Xinhua)

**(26)Turkey's Coup...**

U.S. Treasury and Henri Barkey, director of the Middle East Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington D.C. Anadolu said the 17 suspects have been accused of attempting to overthrow the Turkish government and the country's constitution and being members of a terror organization. Speeches and social media messages related to the Gulen movement made by the suspects are included in the probe, the agency noted, adding Turkey may apply to Interpol for a red notice against suspects living abroad. (Xinhua)

**(27)S.Korean ...**

The presidential election campaign camp of Moon Jae-in, a frontrunner in recent opinion polls and a former chief of the biggest Minjoo Party, described the attempted missile test as reckless provocations. The Moon camp said in a statement that it was not understandable for the DPRK to conduct any provocative acts when the U.S. Carl Vinson strike group is approaching the Korean Peninsula. The camp with Ahn Cheol-soo, a runner-up to Moon in opinion polls and a former head of the centrist People's Party, condemned the acts by the DPRK, asking key political parties to call in the meetings of committees for defense and foreign affairs to prevent any possible military conflicts. (Xinhua)