

(1) IMF Hails...

assignment of technical working team comprised of representatives from Afghanistan and Pakistan to amend the agreement of trade and transit between the countries (APTTA), regional projects including CASA-1000 and TAPI.

Ethel Sennhauser, Vice President of World Bank for South Asia Region and Mr. Hamdullah Mohib, Afghan Ambassador to United State were present.

Additionally, both sides also talked about power transmission line from Turkmenistan to Pakistan via Afghanistan, Afghanistan's exports and imports through Waga Port, Turkham- Jalal Abad Road and other relevant issues.

Finally, Minister of Finance invited his Pakistani counterpart to Kabul to fully discuss APTTA and then a technical team from Afghan side will visit Islamabad to negotiate on the matter.

The Vice President of World Bank for South Asia Region reiterated the bank's support to economic and trade ties between the two countries. (Pajhwok)

(2) Afghanistan-Turkey...

power generation in Afghanistan; in all sectors to produce clean energy, and we support them," said Metin.

Meanwhile, officials from Afghanistan's Ministry of Energy and Water said it is important to attract foreign investment in the energy sector in the country. Officials said there are major opportunities in this sector in Afghanistan.

"We have to use our resources and a very good move has been made; while there is a problem with the reduction of water among these resources, we need to use the water that we have," said Sultan Mahmood Mahmoodi General Director of Water Management.

Based on information provided by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the volume of trade between Afghanistan and Turkey has dropped from about \$300 million USD to just over \$100 million USD in the past few years - despite the development of cooperation between Afghanistan and Turkey in recent years.

The officials in the chamber say that, considering the current trade and transit relations between Afghanistan and Turkey, the volume of trade between the two countries is likely to increase several times in the coming years. (Tolo news)

(3) Afghan, Pakistani...

Aynak scheme. He asked China to send a technical team to Afghanistan to work with relevant organs on finding a solution.

The two sides also conferred on continuation of trilateral meetings among Afghanistan, China and Pakistan. They agreed on holding the next foreign ministerial-level meeting in Kabul. (Pajhwok)

(4) Disabled Swimmer...

also won gold at a disabled swimming championships in Turkey in 2013.

Karimi become a national team member five years ago but has been training in the US for the past six months.

The World Para Swimming season continued this weekend in Indianapolis, the second event of this season's world series.

This year's world series started last month in Copenhagen, Denmark, and the Indianapolis leg will see 198 swimmers from 17 countries compete over 30 medal events. (Tolo news)

(5) MPs Divided...

the NDS chief.

"Fifty MPs have signed (the petition) here (in the house) and have

sent it to the chiefs committee," Ibrahim said.

This comes after MPs said this month that a surge in attacks in the country in recent months, particularly in Kabul, was due to Stanekzai's "incompetence" - a claim Stanekzai himself has rejected.

On April 7, the Wolesi Jirga summoned Stanekzai to answer questions over security concerns. However, the session was held behind closed doors.

Before heading to the session, Stanekzai said due to the current situation in the country, he could not discuss matters publicly as "I will explain issues in one way which will be misinterpreted the next day".

The NDS chief was expected to be asked about the airstrike in Dasht-e-Archi district in Kunduz, the Taliban attack on the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul, and other recent insurgent attacks. But the MPs did not raise such questions, according to an MP who talked to TOLONews after the session on April 7.

However, one MP said Stanekzai had presented convincing statements during their closed session. (Tolo news)

(6) Help form...

forces in the war against terrorism and added Afghan forces were fighting against terrorists of all hue and color without any differentiation between them. He showed China's readiness to equip the Afghan Armed forces. (Pajhwok)

(7) CEO Stresses...

increase public awareness around elections.

Abdullah said elections were "extremely important" for the country and that Afghanistan's political situation will be challenged if the process does not happen.

Meanwhile, he thanked the media for their role in helping to drive public awareness around the voter registration process and elections.

Abdullah's remarks come a day after a senior Independent Election Commission (IEC) official said the institution was worried about the safety of voter registration centers in some parts of the country.

"Security forces should ensure the safety of voter registration centers, the people and the safety of election employees in a better way," the IEC's financial and administrative deputy Maazullah Dawlati told TOLONews.

Some voter registration centers have already come under threat and at least three have been attacked.

On Tuesday, unknown armed men attacked a voter registration center in Ghor province and kidnapped three IEC employees and two policemen. Ghor police spokesman said the attackers were Taliban.

On Thursday, unknown armed men attacked two police force members in Jalalabad City who were guarding a voter registration center. The two policemen were killed in the ensuing gunfight.

On Friday, unknown armed men attacked a voter registration center in Qala-e-Naw, the center of Badghis province, where a police officer assigned to maintain security was killed. (Tolo news)

(8) Peace Tent...

to welcome the recent peace offer from President Ashraf Ghani.

A number of other participants also stressed the need for reconciliation. They argued that wars brought miseries and offered no solution to problems. (Pajhwok)

(9) Australia Warned...

She said the success of the international military effort had direct repercussions on Australia's security. "If they know they have a win in the Middle East, it will affect Australia it will come here in a big way." (Pajhwok)

(10) Kandaharis Say...

a resident of 2nd police district, told Pajhwok Afghan News a large number of people had started coming to registration centers after Gen. Razeq directed people to register as voters.

He said the problem was that people's turnout to register had increased and a few officials could not handle them.

Hashim Durrani, Independent Election Commission (IEC) head for Kandahar, told Pajhwok Afghan News that registration of a person took three minutes and confirmed rush on registration offices.

He said in current circumstances the commission could not increase staff at registration centers.

Durrani, however, said people could go to registration centres where there was no rush. He said police had been contacted regarding the issue and they would resolve the problem. He said so far 27,000 people had registered as voters which included 2,000 women. (Pajhwok)

(11) Badakhshan Activists...

Abdul Alim Khadam, a resident of Badakhshan.

The provincial office of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) said turnout at voter registration centers in Badakhshan has increased in recent days.

"The IEC has started an awareness campaign through the media across the country. We are in contact with Badakhshan local representatives, tribal elders and activists and they have vowed to support the process. People's interest is increasing in the process," said Hamidullah Baloch, head of the IEC office in Badakhshan.

According to the IEC office in the province, about 500 people have registered at 20 centers in Badakhshan in the last five days. (Tolo news)

(12) Naseema Works...

shop for work and told the mechanic to give him money," said Naseema, adding her son wanted to go to school but his father put him at a mechanic shop.

"Me and my son remain out of home from morning to evening to earn money for his [husband] drugs," she said.

Naseema gets up early in the morning and works in a private hospital as cook and cleaner and gets 7,000 afghanis per month.

She said more than half of her salary was used for purchasing drugs for her spouse and a small amount was put aside for children cloths and other expenses.

"If I don't work, I have to face torture and death threats," she said. Naseema said she was unaware her husband had sold their daughter for 90,000 rupees. Her husband spent the money on drugs and had promised the person who gave him money that his daughter would wed his son on reaching puberty.

To get out of the situation, Naseema often prays to God and demands death for her husband because according to her he has kept hostage the entire family.

According to the Human Trafficking and Migrants Trafficking Law's article third, clause first, getting an unfair benefit of an individual's compulsion is human trafficking.

Kandahar Women's Affairs Director Ruqiya Achakzai said there

were more cases similar to Naseema's in which drug addicted husbands forced their wives into work.

She said that many such cases were yet to be reported or exposed. Even some men, addicted to drugs, had pushed their wives into the menace to keep them from complaining or seeking divorce, she added.

Many women are trying to separate from their husbands addicted to drugs, Achakzai maintained. Many addicted men took money from their wives by force or sold household items, she claimed.

She explained many of the women, having small children who needed to be fed and cared for, could not lead good lives even after getting divorce.

About Nasima, she said no one by this name had approached her office yet. Achakzai stressed opium cultivation, drug smuggling and addiction must be curbed otherwise the crisis would deteriorate with time.

Fakhrudin Faiz, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) deputy head for Kandahar, acknowledged the women whose husbands were addicted to drugs led difficult lives. In most instances, male addicts forced their wives into prostitution to earn money for them, he alleged, saying most of such women could not raise their voice for security due to fear and other reasons.

Faiz said he had organized meetings with different organisations to promote public awareness on the social issue.

Gul Mohammad Shukran, Kandahar's counternarcotics director, said a public health department survey showed more than 100,000 people, 10 percent of them women, were addicted to drugs in the province.

Most of the women addicts had been forced by their husbands into drug consumption, he said.

Nek Mohammad Ahmadi, head of the Commission on Combating Human and Migrant Trafficking (CCHMT) for the province, said no case had been registered yet with them. However, he said many such cases remained unreported.

Article 3 of the Combating Human and Migrant Trafficking law says recruiting (bringing under control) someone, transferring, threatening or using force against someone for benefit, kidnapping and deception are types of human trafficking in people. (Pajhwok)

Uzbekistan to Take Part in Joint CIS Air Defense Military Drills In 2018

TASHKENT - The CIS countries will hold joint military drills within the framework of the integrated air defense system in 2018, Sputnik Uzbekistan reported.

The corresponding statement was made by Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Russia, First Deputy Minister of Defense, Army General Valery Gerasimov at the meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee.

Representatives of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan attended the meeting of the Committee of the Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Kazan.

The parties analyzed the implementation of the 2020 military cooperation concept, agreed on joint activities for 2019, approved the "Regional Security - 2018" joint computer command and staff exercise of the joint air defense system.

The exercise was proposed by the General Staff of the Belarusian Armed Forces.

The Chiefs of Staff exchanged views on the military-political situation, analyzed the challenges and threats to the CIS countries during the meeting. (Trend)

General Staffs of CIS States Seek To Cooperate In Operating, Countering UAVS

DUSHANBE - The General Staffs of the CIS countries intend to cooperate in the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), as well as in countering them, Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, First Deputy Defense Minister Valery Gerasimov said, Ria Novosti reported.

He made the remarks at a regular meeting of the Committee of Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in Kazan, Russian Federation on April 20.

"The meeting participants supported establishing the cooperation in the field of using unmanned aircraft and counteraction against UAVs," Gerasimov said.

In addition, the meeting participants were informed about the experience in using UAVs in anti-terrorist operations in Syria.

Furthermore, the aviation safety of the Armed Forces of the CIS countries in 2017 was analyzed.

"Today's meeting once again confirmed that the military cooperation in the CIS format has good prospects and allows to successfully cooperate in a wide range of areas," Gerasimov concluded.

Representatives of Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan along with the Russian side took part in the meeting. A delegation led by Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan, Major-General Ayaz Hasanov participated in the Kazan meeting.

The heads of delegations discussed the issues of cooperation in the field of defense. (Trend)

Rouhani Slams Officials' 'Vow of Silence' In Face Of Protests

TEHRAN - Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said Saturday that officials were failing to respond effectively to mounting popular protests, in part because they are being threatened by unnamed behind-the-scenes forces.

Recent weeks have seen social media filled with videos and reports of protests, but since they are barely covered by domestic media and access is restricted for foreign journalists, they have been hard to verify.

They include protests by farmers over water shortages in Isfahan; by ethnic Arabs over the treatment of minorities in the southern province of Khuzestan; and over administrative reforms in the southwestern city of Kazeroon.

The videos appear to show these localised protests taking on broader slogans against the Islamic establishment, such as: "Our enemy is right here and falsely they say America is our enemy".

But in a wide-ranging speech carried on state television, Rouhani said officials were failing to respond and appeared to have taken "a vow of silence".

"As people haven't got enough information... as people don't see plans for the future, as people see the current problems, they may get upset and angry, come to the streets and cry out," he told senior officials in Tehran. (AFP)