

(1) Attack at Kabul...

of the enemies of democracy and peace in Afghanistan," US ambassador John Bass wrote on Twitter. NATO also condemned the bombing.

The last major attack in Kabul was on March 21 when an IS suicide bomber blew himself up in a crowd celebrating the Persian New Year holiday and killed at least 33 people.

- Voter security -

Ariana TV showed angry crowds shouting "Death to the government!" and "Death to the Taliban!"

A wounded man in a hospital bed wept as he told the network: "I don't know where my daughters are. God damn the attackers!" A witness to the attack named Akbar told Tolo TV: "Now we know the government cannot provide us security: we have to get armed and protect ourselves."

Elsewhere, a roadside explosion in the northern province of Baghlan on Sunday killed six people, including three women and two children.

President Ashraf Ghani condemned both attacks as "heinous".

Afghanistan began registering voters on April 14 for the long-delayed legislative elections.

Officials have acknowledged that security is a major concern because the Taliban and other militant groups control or contest large swathes of the country.

Afghan police and troops have been tasked with protecting polling centres, even as they struggle to get the upper hand against insurgents on the battlefield.

Militants on Friday launched rockets at a voter registration centre in the northwestern province of Badghis.

At least one police officer was killed and another person was wounded, officials said, blaming the Taliban.

On Tuesday gunmen attacked a voter registration centre in the central province of Ghor, kidnapping three election workers and two policemen.

Taliban militants released the five on Thursday.

Over the next two months, authorities hope to register up to 14 million adults at more than 7,000 polling centres for the parliamentary and district council elections. Officials have been pushing people to register amid fears a low turnout will undermine the credibility of the polls.

Since the Persian New Year attack a tense calm has permeated the Afghan capital as people brace for the Taliban's launch of its customary spring offensive.

The Taliban are under pressure to take up Ghani's peace offer made in February but so far the group has given only a muted response. (AFP)

(2) Kabul Suicide...

National Security Advisor Mohammad Hanif Atmar Strongly condemned today's brutal and inhuman terrorist attack on NIC (Tazkeera) registration centre.

"center in KBL Dasht-e Barchi & in Baghlan. Condolences to their families & pray for the quickest recovery of the injured. PPL & govt of AFG are strongly determined to decide our future ourselves.

US Ambassador John Bass also denounced the suicide bombing and tweeted: "I strongly condemn this morning's suicide attack on a voter registration center in #Kabul and offer my condolences to the victims and their families. This senseless violence shows the cowardice and inhumanity of the enemies of democracy and peace in #Afghanistan."

"I strongly condemn the attack on a voter registration centre in Kabul. #NATO stands with #Afghanistan in the fight against terrorism and for democracy," said NATO Secretary General Jens

Stoltenberg in a tweet.

The NATO Special Civilian Representative Ambassador Zimmermann, condemns in the strongest possible terms the attack on a voter registration center in Kabul. "Our thoughts are with the people who lost a loved one, and with the injured. We wish a fast and complete recovery to the wounded." Saudi Arabia also issued condemnation for the suicide attack at the voter registration centre in Kabul which claimed the lives of innocent people.

An official source at the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs has expressed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's strong condemnation of the suicide attack west of Afghan Capital Kabul killing and wounding a number of people.

The source reaffirmed the Kingdom's solidarity and stand with the sisterly Islamic Republic of Afghanistan against terrorism and extremism, expressing condolences to the families of the victims and to the government and the Afghan people, wishing the injured a speedy recovery.

India strongly condemned the cowardly and barbaric terrorist attack in Kabul and Baghlan today, according to a statement. "What makes this attack particularly reprehensible is the fact that the terrorists and their backers chose to attack a voters' registration centre for the upcoming parliamentary and district council elections."

The attack has resulted in the death of Afghans who firmly support and believe in the democratic process to empower themselves and make their voice heard.

"This is not only an attack on innocent civilians but also an attack on the democratic rights of the Afghan people. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family members of the victims, and we wish quick and complete recovery to the injured," the statement added. "India stands ready to extend all possible assistance, including for treatment of those injured." (Pajhwok)

(3) IEC Promises...

campaign for parliamentary elections will begin on September 28 and end on October 17, while that for district councils elections will be between October 3 and October 17.

The final results of parliamentary elections will be announced on December 20 while the final results of district council elections will be on January 24.

According to the timeline, the final list of voting centers will be announced on June 23.

According to the IEC, over the past eight days, 230,122 people have registered to vote, of which about 50,000 are women, 3,115 are Kuchis and two are Hindus.

The IEC chief said the commission will all its available resources to rebuild public confidence in the elections.

"No institution will be allowed to meddle in the elections, we also call on government, political institutions and the powerful to not interfere in affairs related to elections," said Sayad.

"The commission has also worked on a number of other alternatives to promote awareness about elections to the people," said the IEC's deputy operational chief Wasema Badghisi.

The IEC hopes that between 12 and 15 million Afghans will register to vote.

Election monitoring groups meanwhile said that the lack of confidence in the election process is concerning.

"If the commission registers two million voters, then questions will be raised over the credibility of the elections; the commission should share its future plans with the public; if the public turnout remains low, then what will the commission do," said Naeem Asghari, a member of Free and Fair

Election Forum of Afghanistan (FEFA).

"This is right that the previous elections badly damaged the trust in the commission, but we will do our best to revive the public's trust in the elections," added Sayad. Based on the electoral calendar, the list of polling stations will be finalized on June 23.

The IEC has scheduled October 20 as Election Day. (Tolo news)

(4) Archaeological...

in the area date back 5,000 years.

"We can introduce a different image of Afghanistan to the world through cultural and archaeological activities," Massoud said.

Logar Governor Mohammad Omar Ishaqzai said some recovered relics will be put on display at a local museum in Mohammad Agha district - where the Mes Aynak copper mine is located.

"These relics and findings show that many civilizations have lived here," the governor said.

According to the Ministry of Information and Culture, work on the extraction of copper from the Mes Aynak mine will start after the archaeological excavations end. (Tolo news)

(5) US Human Rights...

and use of 14 boys by security forces from January to June. The government continued to work towards the expansion of Child Protection Units to all 34 provinces. As of August there were 21 active units, the report read.

The report stated however that under a government action plan, the ANP took steps that included training staff on age-assessment procedures, launching an awareness campaign on underage recruitment, investigating alleged cases of underage recruitment, and establishing centers in some provincial recruitment centers to document cases of attempted child enlistment.

"Recruits underwent an identity check, including an affidavit from at least two community elders that the recruit was at least 18 years old and eligible to join the ANDSF. The Ministries of Interior and Defense also issued directives meant to prevent the recruitment and sexual abuse of children by the ANDSF. Media reported in some cases ANDSF units used children as personal servants, support staff, or for sexual purposes."

The report stated that government forces have also been charged with extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary detention and sexual abuse of children and adolescents. It stated the most significant human rights issues included extrajudicial killings by security forces; disappearances, torture; arbitrary arrest; detention, including of women accused of so-called moral crimes; and sexual abuse of children by security force members. Additional problems included violence against journalists, criminalization of defamation; pervasive government corruption; and lack of accountability and investigation in cases of violence against women.

Discrimination against persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities and discrimination based on race, religion, gender, and sexual orientation persisted with little accountability, the report read. Widespread disregard for the rule of law and official impunity for those who committed human rights abuses were serious problems and the government did not consistently or effectively prosecute abuses by officials, including security forces, the report added.

"There were major attacks on civilians by armed insurgent groups and targeted assassinations by armed insurgent groups of persons affiliated with the government.

"The Taliban and other insurgents continued to kill security force personnel and civilians us-

ing indiscriminate tactics such as improvised explosive devices (IEDs), suicide attacks, and rocket attacks, and to commit disappearances and torture.

"The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) attributed 67 percent of civilian casualties (1,141 deaths and 3,574 injured) to nonstate actors. The Taliban used children as suicide bombers, soldiers, and weapons carriers. Other antigovernment elements threatened, robbed, kidnapped, and attacked government workers, foreigners, medical and nongovernmental organization (NGO) workers, and other civilians," the report read.

In reaction to the report on overcrowded and unsanitary prisons, the ministry of interior's spokesman, Najib Danish said: "We are committed to implementing all laws on human rights in Afghanistan prisons. We urge the national and international institutions to come and see our prisons to make sure that human rights have been respected here."

Afghan Integrity Watch meanwhile said the National Unity Government (NUG) so far has not made any big achievement in fighting corruption and bringing reforms.

"After three and a half years of the NUG, still government has not met the expectations that the civil societies had in terms of bringing reforms and eradicating corruption," Integrity Watch Afghanistan researcher Nasir Timori said. Another major area of concern, meanwhile was that of child labor. "Child labor remained a pervasive problem. The Ministry of Labor declined to estimate the number of working children, citing a lack of data and deficiencies in birth registrations.

"Child laborers worked as domestic servants, street vendors, peddlers, and shopkeepers. There was child labor in the carpet industry, brick kilns, coalmines, and poppy fields. Children were also heavily engaged in the worst forms of child labor in mining (especially family-owned gem mines), commercial sexual exploitation, transnational drug smuggling, and organized begging rings.

"Some forms of child labor exposed children to land mines. Children faced numerous health and safety risks at work, and there were reports of sexual abuse of children by adult workers. There were reports of recruitment of juveniles by the ANDSF during the year. Taliban forces pressed children to take part in hostile acts," read the report. (Tolo news)

(6) Afghanistan Observes...

Hashmat Khan wetlands as a protected area, making it the sixth protected site in the country after Band-e-Amir National Park and Shah Foladi in Bamiyan, Big Pamir Wildlife Reserve, Teggermansu Wildlife Reserve and Wakhan Conservation in Badakhshan. (Tolo news)

(7) Afghan Government...

role in expanding commercial and economic relations between central and southern Asia, he added. He added Afghanistan was a rich country in having natural resources, saying minerals and gas were better sources for the self-reliance of this country.

The World Bank would support Afghanistan in the mentioned areas through its ARTF program, Chaudhuri said.

Representatives of the USAID, European Union, World Bank, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Denmark, Australia, Canada and other countries attended the huddle. (Pajhwok)

(8) Elections Impossible...

Lashkargah, the provincial capital, has been a battleground while the fourth police district is fully controlled by the insurgents. Governor Hayatullah Hayat also

acknowledged that voter registration and holding elections in the five districts would not be possible.

He said that they had suggested voting on the basis of electoral districts so that rights of those who were unable to cast ballots were not violated.

Attaullah Afghan, the Helmand provincial council head, warned the elections would be symbolic in the province if a pre-poll clearing operation was not conducted.

He said six districts including Sangin were under Taliban control. The government had sway over office complexes in Marja, Garmser, Kajaki and Washir districts.

Naad Ali district is also not ready for elections. Polls could be conducted only in Nawa and Greshk districts, Afghan said, adding elections in Helmand should be based on electoral district.

In the last one week, 6,000 people in Helmand have registered as voters. (Pajhwok)

(9) Afghan, KP...

on Saturday.

Abid Majeed, inaugurating the special inactivated polio vaccination (IPV) drive at the Lady Reading Hospital here, hoped such campaigns would also address the issue of virus transmission in the region.

He said over two million children aged four to 23-month would be vaccinated during the IPV drive, which begins in Peshawar on Monday, tomorrow. (Pajhwok)

(10) Taliban Allowed...

a peace campaign in urban areas. He said efforts were underway to hold a mammoth gathering against the current war in the country.

A participant of the event, who lived in an area under Taliban control, said he was happiness over allowing Taliban militants to treat their patients in hospitals as the move would leave a positive impact on their thinking. (Pajhwok)

(11) Iran Armed

termed the move a positive sign for the security and stability of the districts where the group was earlier active.

Deputy Governor Muhaiuddin Noori said co-existence and acceptance of one another was the only way to resolve the ongoing crisis. He called on other groups to get full advantage of the opportunity available and join the reconciliation process. (Pajhwok)

Swiss Researchers Develop Cancer Diagnosis Implant

GENEVA - Swiss scientists have developed an early warning system for four most common types of cancer, so that a visible mole will appear on the skin should a tumor develop, according to a press release from Zurich Federal Institute of Technology (ETHZ) on Sunday.

In the research, which has been published in U.S. medical journal Science Translational Medicine, an ETHZ team has developed a prototype implant which can be inserted under the skin. It contains a network of cells which constantly monitor calcium levels in the body. As cancer can cause calcium levels to rise in the body, the implant detects when a threshold is exceeded and triggers the production of melanin, causing a small dark mole to form.

The implant can recognize four most common types of cancer: prostate, lung, colon and breast cancer, at a very early stage. Cancer is the main cause of death alongside cardiovascular disease in industrialized countries. However, many of those affected are only diagnosed after a tumor has developed extensively.

"Early detection increases the chance of survival significantly," said Martin Fussenegger, professor at the Department of Biosystems Science and Engineering at ETHZ in Basel. (Xinhua)