

(1) Ghani Demands ...

expect Pakistan to bring the Taliban to the peace talks," Ghani said, attracting a huge applause from the lawmakers.

The Afghan leader made the speech a week after a Taliban bomb and gun assault in Kabul killed nearly 70 people and wounded about 350 others.

The insurgent group claimed responsibility, saying it was part of its spring offensive.

The deadly raid outraged Afghans and prompted demands for Ghani to abandon the policy of engaging in peace talks with the Taliban and instead step up military operations against the insurgents.

Afghan officials alleged the militant Haqqani network, based in Pakistan, plotted last week's assault in Kabul with the help of the neighboring country's intelligence agency.

Speech to legislators

In Monday's speech, Ghani did not completely rule out talks with those Taliban groups who denounce violence and cut ties to terrorist groups.

"The (Taliban) faction involved in death and destruction in Afghanistan is being guided by its slave-like leadership in Peshawar and Quetta who enjoy inflicting bloodshed and destruction on the people of Afghanistan. They do not possess welfare and prosperity plans for Afghans nor do they worry about respecting their wishes and needs," he said.

U.S. officials have previously criticized Pakistan for allowing the Taliban to operate inside their borders. "We have consistently expressed our concerns at the highest level of the government of Pakistan about their continued tolerance for Afghan Taliban groups such as the Haqqani network operating from Pakistani soil," U.S. State Department spokeswoman Elizabeth Trudeau told reporters Friday.

Trudeau said Washington again pressed Islamabad after the Kabul attack to follow up on its expressed commitment not to discriminate between terror groups regardless of their agenda or affiliation by undertaking concrete action against the Haqqanis.

The Taliban has not yet responded to Ghani's speech and there has been no immediate reaction from officials in Pakistan to the allegations and assertions the Afghan president made in his speech. (VoA)

(2) Peace Negotiations...

party, which was seeking suggestions from the government. He hoped the talks would succeed.

"The peace negotiations with HIA are aimed to ensure trust as we have also reached agreements on major issues. We believe some hurdles are still there. But the differences will be removed in the near future," he remarked.

Recognition of the constitution and other laws of the country had been the government's main demand that HIA had already accepted, he said, adding most of the 25 points, as outlined in the agreement, had been agreed between the two sides.

"The agreement has been in the works for the past one and a half month; we hope it will protect our national interests, meet constitutional requirements and yield positive results. There are differences over five or six points, but we hope they will also be resolved," he believed.

Although he did not go into the details of the contentious points, transparent elections, release of HIA prisoners and arrangements for the dignified return of Afghan refugees are said to be among the divisive issues.

About the release of HIA detainees, Salim said: "Differences do exist on the issue but we are ready to form a commission to identify them." He added the HPC supported the government's stance on fighting against violent groups. He opined counterterrorism operations would not damage the peace process.

"The government has raised its voice for peace, but the militants think they can achieve their goals by fighting and conducting suicide bombs. The government is responsible for preventing them..." Salim added.

The militants should join the peace process and accept an intra-Afghan understanding instead of rubbing salts into Afghans' wounds.

About the quadrilateral meetings, Salim said the Afghan government hoped the process would help pave the ground for direct talks, but Pakistan had failed to keep its prom-

ise of bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table. (Pajhwok)

(3) TAPI Partners...

According to Afghan Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, Afghanistan would purchase 500 million cubic metre of gas in the first decade, and 1 billion cubic metre of gas in the second decade and 1.5 billion cubic metre in the third decade. According to Afghan officials, the total investment on the scheme is estimated to be between 8 billion to 11 billion American dollars.

Herat Governor Mohammad Asif Rahimi said they supported the TAPI project because Afghan industrialists were in urgent need of electricity and Afghanistan needed more Turkmen cooperation.

Hajjive said they were ready to meet demands of the local administration because Afghanistan was one of the best partners of Turkmenistan on regional and global level.

He said they would try to increase the voltage of electricity imported to Afghanistan from his country and pledged the construction of a school in one of Herat's bordering districts. (Pajhwok)

(4) Russia Rejects ...

agreement. We hope that the talks will be finalized soon and that the two countries sign the agreement," he added.

The Russian envoy called on the Afghan government to increase intelligence exchange between the two countries in order to prevent Daesh activities in Afghanistan.

Also Alexander Mantytskiy said negotiations are underway for the delivery of Mi-17 helicopters to Afghanistan.

He said Moscow has agreed to deliver helicopters to the Afghan army following the recent meeting between President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and the Russian President Vladimir Putin.

According to Mantytskiy, the recent delivery of Mi-25 gunships by India to the Afghan army concluded with the agreement of Russia, insisting that the equipment can only be transferred once the country of origin agrees with it.

He also added that Russia completed the delivery of 10,000 Ak-47 rifles to Afghanistan in a bid to support the Afghan national security forces, besides 49 army cadets were sent to Moscow for trainings in February.

The Russian Ambassador also hoped that an agreement is concluded between Moscow and Kabul in a bid to further help strengthen the Afghan armed forces.

Mantytskiy said at least 75 army cadets were sent in total to Russia for military trainings last year. (Tolonews)

(5) Czech Republic ...

in near future discuss security issues and cooperation with Afghan officials, the prime minister said.

At the end of their meeting, the premier invited President Ghani to visit Czech Republic and his invitation was accepted, the statement said. (Pajhwok)

(6) 400,000 People...

thousands of troops have been here and this coupled with other things have created a bubble economy," Mr Sultanzyov told Sputnik.

Both Mr Davy and Mr Sultanzyov believe the withdrawal of troops from the country is one of the factors that has led to its failure to recover.

However, both experts also think that this is not the only reason.

"The corruption by local, national and international community is important as well. The black economy related to drugs, the government before this current one, left chaos in various regions of the country..."

The people who made money were merchants not businesses, so they did not reinvest their money back into country.

"The Afghan military had a big part to play as well - it's rather traditional... Also look at the number of unemployed people. Failure to provide jobs leads to more people joining the Taliban. Also lack of hope, failure to build a justice system and structures has led to the further collapse of the country," said Mr Davy. However there is hope, Afghanistan is not irreparable.

"No it is repairable, it's supportable. If we could clarify the situation and bring people around the same table and its possible to create change," Davy said.

"The Taliban requires support. If we could get corruption under control it would be less attractive to support them. It will take international efforts, British support is

growing. If we don't do something to help the community and government it will all be for nothing.

"The international government has ADHD - distracted by Libya, Syria etc. We should be able to pay attention to all the issues. Afghanistan is not a small problem; it can be fixed but requires determination and cohesion.

"The people in this country need to bring confidence back to the nation and instill hope back into the lives of people. The government is for them, not for anyone else. Not just by words but by actions. The international community need to finish the half-done job they left behind." (Sputnik)

(7) Ghani Promises ...

but the Afghan people, considering the current security situation.

Masoom Stanikzai was the last nominee for the Ministry of Defense who was rejected by the Afghan lawmakers following his introduction to the parliament house.

The National Directorate of Security, the key intelligence agency of the country got an acting chief following the resignation of Rahmatullah Nabil last year.

Meanwhile, the Afghan lawmakers unanimously approved General Taj Mohammad Jahid as the new Minister of Interior during a confidence voting process earlier this month. (KP)

(8) More Than ...

dropped out due to non-payment of fees.

He added a large number of the Afghan students were studying in schools in Tehran, Khorasan Raza-avi, Isfahan, Qom, Fars, Alborz, and Kerman provinces. (Pajhwok)

(9) Afghanistan ...

"But before they pull out altogether, I do think they should think twice about that."

The Red Cross has urged peace talks in Afghanistan, but the Taliban have said that they will come to the negotiating table only after western forces leave the country. (Agencies)

(10) Ghani's Speech...

stance to be taken by the government while explaining the enemy, the government should not divide the enemy into two categories," MP Farhad Majidi said.

While the Afghan security forces continue their military campaigns against insurgent groups on multiple fronts, Ghani has called for the repression of these militant groups.

"Our security forces are determined to defend the nation and the country. They are backed by the religious scholars. They (ANSF) have outlined inclusive programs to repress Haqqani network and their associates such as Daesh, al-Qaeda and send the rebels to hell," Ghani added.

In addition, Ghani called for the mobilization of people against the Taliban and other terrorist groups.

"The Haqqani network and some parts of the Taliban group are the vanguard of other countries and have aligned [themselves] with international terrorists, regional terrorists and drug mafia. They have planned to send our people to a bygone era of history. Therefore we need to stand together with each other and combat them collectively," Ghani stated.

But critics and analysts have reiterated calls to Ghani to deliver on across-the-board promises.

"Taliban will respond, the president needs to practice what he has uttered," a member of parliament's internal security commission Iqbal Safai said. (Tolonews)

(11) Khost Residents ...

poor quality of service caused them serious problems.

"If the services of fiber-optic network don't begin, people will lose their trust in the government. The project, therefore, should be launched forthwith," the civil society member argued.

A local government official, who wished to go unnamed, confided to Pajhwok Afghan News, some private companies did not want the fiber-optic network to start working, something that would harm because their commercial interest. But Eng. Gul Habib Shah, communications and information technology director, rejected the allegations as groundless. He said they would take a decision on the launch of fiber-optic services in coordination with the ministry.

Mubarez Mohammad Zadran, the governor's spokesman, promised the provincial administration would discuss the issue with MoC-IT soon.

A 480 kilometres cable of fiber optic has been extended to the southeastern provinces to improve Internet services at a cost of \$12 million, provided by the World Bank (WB).

Logar, Paktia and Paktika provinces have been receiving fiber-optic services for the past two years but the services could not be launched in Khost so far due to the negligence of some government officials. (Pajhwok)

(12) ISIL Plans...

in Afghanistan.

"Only one year ago, their number barely exceeded 100 people, but to unfortunately, today they display a significant growth in this region", he added

"ISIL' branch in Afghanistan has been training its member for possible attacks in the Central Asia and Russia and often the spoken language among the militants is Russian," concluded Kabulov. (FNA)

(13) Afghan, Turkmen ...

for enhancing bilateral cooperation and Turkmenistan was interested and ready to increase mutual cooperation with Afghanistan in the fields of politics, diplomacy, trade, economy, culture and education.

For his part, Rabbani referred to mutual bonds like religious, geographical, economical and political between the two countries and said increased cooperation with Turkmenistan was a key pillar of Afghanistan's foreign policy.

Rabbani said the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project would pave the way for peace, stability, security and trade in the region.

He said mutual trade between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan especially exports from Afghanistan like marble stones and others needed to be improved.

Rabbani thanked Turkmenistan for awarding Afghan students educational scholarships in fields of railroad, petroleum and electrical engineering. (Pajhwok)

(14) 7 Kandahar...

long been ignored in the district.

Nabi asked the government construct buildings for government departments and residential houses for officials in order they avoid spending weekends and other holidays outside of the district.

In Maroof district, the town's administrative chief and police chief use rental houses for official work, said Abdullah Afghan, an influential figure in the district.

He said a majority of government departments such as education, health, court and others were without buildings.

He said besides the district chief and the police chief offices, residents needed government services in other spheres of life as well.

The governor's spokesman, Samim Khapalwak, told Pajhwok Afghan News of 17 Kandahar districts, seven including Maroof, Arghistan, Shorabak, Reg, Nesh and Mianshin needed administrative buildings.

He said written and verbal requests about construction of buildings in these districts had been many times rejected by the central government on the account of lack of funds. (Pajhwok)

(15) 150 Militants...

workers and people living along the highway as a result of the nationwide 'Operation Shafaq' in the Khogyani district. As a result of the successful operation, Brig. Gen. Sangin said 40 displaced families had returned to their homes in Mumli area of the Khogyani district.

The military official said four security posts and a large base had been established along the Kabul-Jalalabad second lane to provide security to road workers and local residents. Besides national police, a strong 130-member youth had been stationed in the newly-established base after passing through a legal process.

Khogyani praised the security operations that began about two weeks ago, saying the ground and air forces had killed and wounded some 150 militants during the period in Nangarhar.

He said the insurgents suffered most of the casualties during ground operations that showed the increasing combat ability of the Afghan forces.

Khogyani said the governor had consulted tribal elders and religious scholars ahead of the operation to secure the Kabul-Jalalabad second lane and the operation had produced good results.

He said the morale of security forces had heightened after they were

extended support by tribal elders, religious scholars and civil society activists and operations against militants had seen an unprecedented increase.

The two officials said security forces and civilians had so far suffered no casualties during the ongoing operations.

The Islamic State or Daesh militants have so far said nothing about these operations, but the Taliban claimed inflicting heavy casualties on security forces in various areas of Nangarhar. (Pajhwok)

(16) Key Figure...

when apprehended.

Ghafari said the detainees during initial investigation had confessed to having links with Qari Hafizullah, Taliban's shadow district chief for Aqcha district.

In Faizabad district, security forces detained Maulvi Numan, Taliban's military council head for Jawzjan. Security forces also recovered three motorcycles from the detainee.

But Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid claimed seven security men were killed and five others wounded during a clash in Mangajak district.

He accused Abdul Rashid Dostum-led militia of detaining and torturing civilians in the province in the name of Taliban.

Jawzjan police chief Brig. Gen. Rahmatullah Turkistani said the Taliban suffered casualties in the overnight clash in Mangajak district. (Pajhwok)

(17) Construction ...

wrongdoing. "Our efforts will continue until corruption in the airport project is investigated and the findings are made public. We also want people identified who delayed the scheme," he said.

Former Khost governor Abdul Jabbar Naeemi said the airport project had fallen into the hands of some mafia groups and contracts of the project had been compromised.

President Ashraf Ghani, during his trip to the province, had instructed the incumbent local administration to carefully investigate the allegations and submit its findings to him.

However, Governor Habibi said the project was delayed due to some technical problems, which had been resolved now.

"We have identified technical failures and presented them to the National Procurement Commission and we will be able to implement the project with high quality," he said.

The airport could play a vital role in bringing improvement to people's lives, a resident of the province, Spin Rawan Noorzai, said. He asked the government to pay urgent attention to the project's completion. (Pajhwok)

(18) Taliban ...

report so far. Takhar is among the relatively volatile provinces in northeastern Afghanistan where anti-government armed militant groups are actively operating and frequently carry out insurgency activities.

The volatile Kunduz is bordering Takhar province in the west where the Taliban militants recently launched a major offensive which was repulsed by the security forces. (KP)

(19) Hundreds ...

would be obliged to keep their own security.

Another tribal elder, Mohamamd Zahir Oryakhel, said security in the province was deteriorating with each passing day, with mysterious killings and abductions occurring. He said the officials concerned had been unable to prevent the incidents.

He wondered how a tribal elders was attacked inside the city and the killers managed to flee. "If the government doesn't respond to our demands positively, we will continue our protests."

The governor's spokesman, Naqib Ahmad Atal, acknowledged security incidents had recently increased and said "we are seriously pursuing the murder of the tribal elder and have appointed a commission to investigate it."

If proved during the investigation that security officials had committed negligence in arresting the perpetrators, they would be referred to judiciary departments, he said.

The slain tribal elder was a member of the provincial peace committee and leader of the Shia sect in Gardez City. (Pajhwok)

(20) Gun Man ...

Hafizullah Fitrat, condemned the murder and asked security and de-

fective officials to urgently arrest the perpetrator and bring him to justice. (Pajhwok)

(21) Security...

warned the Taliban to renounce violence or face destruction by the security forces.

This comes after security forces cleared insurgents from Aqcha district of Jawzjan in a military operation which is being led by First Vice President Gen. Abadul Rashid Dostum, local officials said Monday.

But residents in Aqcha expressed their concerns over the return of insurgents once Dostum leaves the area. They also called on government to create a military outpost for the security of the district.

President Ashraf Ghani on Monday said at a joint session in the National Assembly that security forces have launched 15 military operations in seven provinces to eliminate terrorists.

Ghani also said that the forces were able to launch 16,000 serious military operations in the past 13 months in different parts of the country. (Tolonews)

(22) Obama Defends...

agreement have dropped sharply in both Germany and the United States in recent years. Concerns of the opponents include declines in consumer and labor protection, environment standards as well as the secrecy of the negotiations. (Xinhua)

(23) Turkey...

citing unnamed military sources, said close to 900 alleged IS militants have been killed since January in Turkish artillery and air strikes against the group in Syria. The agency said 492 of the militants were killed in air raids while another 370 were killed by artillery fire. The agency didn't specify how the figures were obtained and it wasn't possible to verify them independently. (AP)

(24) CSTO Military...

fictitious state to whose aid the CSTO was coming was "Turan," clearly standing in for Tajikistan. While Turan is an old Iranian word for Central Asia, it's most commonly used today in pan-Turkic contexts. In one phase of the exercise, field commanders from "Afghanistan, Pakia, and Sogdia" reportedly held a shura to discuss the seizure of power in "Turan." The stand-in for Kyrgyzstan is "Kyzylstan," far from the first time the name for that country has been mangled, EurasiaNet.org says. (Asia-Plus)

(25) Romanian FM...

summit in Warsaw. The NATO official is on a visit to Romania from April 24 to 26, to participate in the reunion of the political directors with the defense ministries of NATO members, this meeting being the last of its kind before the Warsaw Summit takes place on July 8 and 9. (Xinhua)

(26) US to Send ...

deployment will bring to 300 the number of U.S. forces in non-combat roles in Syria. About 50 U.S. troops were sent to Syria last year, which are reportedly responsible for providing local forces advisory and training services in their fight against the IS.

Obama also called for more efforts from European countries and NATO members, adding that he would discuss the fight against the IS later on the day in Hanover while meeting leaders of Germany, France, Britain and Italy. (Xinhua)

(27) Syrian ...

or Daesh: "President Obama's decision to deploy 250 more troops to fight the Daesh in Syria is a good step. We must rid our country of this scourge. But Syria will not be free of terrorism until we see the end of the Assad regime's reign of terror. We need help in freeing our country from Assad as well as from the Daesh." (Reuters)

(28) Saudi-Led...

government to extend its influence and control over the Yemeni cities that fell under the control of al-Qaida the most important of which is the city of Al Mukalla which is considered the stronghold of the group. The operation will allow intensifying humanitarian relief efforts in those cities and alleviate suffering of Yemenis, command said. The coalition was formed in March last year to fight Houthi rebels and bring stability back in Yemen. The coalition announced early this year that the war in Yemen is almost over. (Xinhua)