

(1) Senators Blast ...

a trend and we are extremely worried about these incidents. If the issue is not addressed, we will witness more serious kidnapping incidents," female legislator Anarkali Honaryar complained.

But some other senators argued that the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) signed between Kabul and Washington had not worked in the country's favor.

"Insecurity is increasing. If the Bilateral Security Agreement [BSA] does not work for us, then what is it for?" senator Gulalai Akbari argued.

However, first deputy chairman of Senate, Mohammad Alam Izadyar, expressed that the House members would meet with President Ashraf Ghani Sunday evening to share their concerns about insecurity.

"We know that local officials in the northern zone have warned that if the government does not pay serious attention to the issue, the insecurity will further spread in the country," Izadyar told the session.

Another senator, Ghulam Muhiuddin Monsef, strongly criticized what he called government's failure to ensure the BSA agreement was implemented.

"The security pact is not working for us. Therefore, we need to strengthen our own forces because as long as we are not able to ensure our security, foreigners can not ensure us our security," Monsef urged.

However, the security forces are currently busy conducting 14 major anti-insurgency operations throughout the country. (Tolonews)

(2) Afghanistan Still...

at the ministry have said that last year, 295,000 cases of malaria were registered in the country - which shows an 8% decrease compared to 2013.

"Control and eradication of malaria is among our priority programs at the Ministry of Public Health. Distribution of nets for free, implementation of malaria management strategies, educating employees at the health centers, capacity building of employees in Kabul and other provinces are among other priorities of the ministry for ending malaria.

"We want the international community to continue their cooperation with the Ministry of Public Health in fight against malaria," says Ahmad Jan Naem, Deputy Minister of Public Health.

World Health Organization is pleased with the decrease of disease in northeastern, northern and western provinces of the country.

"Afghanistan has the fourth highest number of Malaria cases in the region, 1 in 5 Afghans still live in high risk areas and more than 75% of people live in malaria endemic areas. However, there are again some good news in regard to malaria, the malaria burden is decreasing in Afghanistan", Richard Pearcard, WHO representative.

It has been said that close to half of the world population in 97 countries of the world are at risk from the disease. In 2013 the global death toll was almost 600,000.

World Malaria Day was held under the title of "Fight Against Malaria, Investment for Future". (Tolonews)

(3) Afghanistan Faces...

Army (ANA) officers, Col. Wahidi said that the KMTC as the country's largest academy had the capacity to train more than 13,000 soldiers per batch.

He said the academy had been training soldiers and developing their capacities over the past 13 years for the country's defence and the recruitment process was ongoing.

Besides recruiting and training new and junior military officers, Afghan instructors had been striving hard to further improve the capacity of senior officers so that they become more proficient.

To a question about a Taliban attack that caused many casualties to ANA troops in northeastern Badakhshan province, Wahidi said more soldiers could be dis-

patched to the province if finances and other equipment were made available.

The commander said Afghanistan faced no shortage of forces. Currently, around 8,000 soldiers were being trained at the KMA and hundreds more at other academies across the country.

He informed the on-service ANA lieutenants had undergone a four-month professional training after the completion of physical military exercises. Today's graduates would join different brigades across the country for service, he added.

Quadratullah, a graduate soldier, told Pajhwok Afghan News: "We are ready to fight the enemy, thwart their nefarious designs and eliminate elements who are against peace and stability in Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(4) Ghani Hails...

Afghanistan was different 13 years ago but the Afghan people have gone through a long journey with the support of the international community.

He said the enemies of Afghanistan were looking to take control of certain provinces recently but the Afghan security forces proved that they are able to defend their soil and people.

President Ghani also reiterated to continue fight against terrorism and extremism and insisted that the Afghan forces are now able to conduct assaults and are no more in a situation to defend against the enemy aggressions.

He also added that the enemies are looking to spark terror among the people by killing the innocent women and children.

nato resolute support mission In the meantime, the US and EU ambassadors to NATO reaffirmed the alliance's long term support to Afghanistan.

The NATO-led coalition security forces formally concluded the alliance's combat mission in Afghanistan with the launch of Resolute Support mission which is mainly focused on building Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) sustainability.

ISAF's original mandate was to assist the newly-established Afghan Transitional Authority in and around Kabul. The scope and scale of ISAF's mission grew as the Coalition added Provincial Reconstruction Teams and took on the responsibility to provide security while Afghan security forces were growing in strength.

The International Security Assistance Force - ISAF's lasting legacy, accomplished with Afghan partners, was the establishment of a 350,000-strong security force, which today is fully responsible for security in Afghanistan.

During the course of the 2014 fighting season, the ANSF prevented the Taliban from disrupting national elections allowing more than seven million Afghans to exercise their right to vote. This led to the establishment of the Afghan National Unity Government, which marked the first peaceful democratic transition of power in Afghan history. (KP)

(5) No Timetable ...

At present, some Afghan people live both in Afghanistan and Iran for business purposes, he noted. Earlier Brigadier General Hossein Zolfaqari, the Islamic Republic's Deputy Interior Minister for Security Affairs said that over three million Afghani refugees live in Iran.

Iran hosts over 1.5 million registered Afghan refugees, he said, adding an equal amount of illegal Afghani refugees also live in the country. (TNA)

(6) Senators Ask...

uprisings began against the communist party.

Gulalai Akbari, a lawmaker from Badakhshan, on Sunday said today's miseries and bloodshed in Afghanistan were the legacy of the 1978 coup.

She said the Afghans defeated the occupation forces and emerged victorious after decades of enormous sacrifices.

Akbari asked the government not to confine April 28 celebrations to the Presidential Palace only, but the event should be observed across the country with zeal and enthusiasm.

Lawmaker Abdul Latif Nuhzat

said the PDPA coup brought along countless miseries, including huge losses of precious human lives, foreign invasion, large-scale immigration, bloodshed and economic and social downfall.

Senate deputy chairman Mohammad Alam Ezedyar, who chaired the session, said the government must celebrate the Mujahideen's Victory Day.

He also condemned the 1978 coup and termed it a black day in Afghanistan's history as it offered nothing but sorrows, grief and misfortunes.

The Presidential Palace could not be reached for comments. (Pajhwok)

(7) Afghan Politicians...

Around 20 lawmakers and senate members gathered in the Karte Char region to show their opposition to any kind of pressure on Turkey.

"We, as Afghan Muslims, rallied to show our support for the Turkish people and are asking for the assessment of Armenian claims according to international principles," Nazir Ahmad Ahmadzai, the second deputy speaker of the lower house of parliament, said. Sayeed Sadat, an Afghan lawmaker, said the Armenian claims were just a lie used as a means of pressure against Turkey.

"We condemn and do not confirm these claims," said Sadat. Anarkeli Hunerya, a member of the senate, said that Turkey provided "key" assistance to Afghanistan in the fields of education, health and the military.

"The Afghan people will always take Turkey's side," Hunerya said.

Earlier on Friday, scores of Afghans rallied in various parts of Kabul and protested the Armenian claims.

The 1915 events took place during World War I when a portion of the Armenian population living in the Ottoman Empire sided with the invading Russians and revolted.

The relocation of Armenians by the Ottomans in eastern Anatolia following the revolts resulted in numerous casualties. Turkey does not dispute that there were casualties on both sides, but rejects calling the events "genocide."

Turkey has called for the establishment of a joint commission of historians and the opening of archives to study and uncover what happened between the Ottoman Empire and its Armenian citizens. (Anadolu Agency)

(8) Govt. Lacks ...

Behroz said the anti-corruption drive was not transparent in the government departments and some did not share information with MEC. "In some cases high-ranking officials' names are involved. These cases need to be thoroughly investigated."

He also alleged that judicial organs were not cooperative with MEC in providing reports about the overall state of corruption in the country.

Behroz blamed procrastination in introducing the government officials as a reason for the slow-paced anti-corruption efforts.

Sayed Hamidullah, an advisor at MEC, said interference by top officials was a major impediment on the way of judicial organs.

He welcomed the unity government's will to fighting corruption.

MEC officials also expressed deep concerns about the government-run New Kabul Bank's performance, saying the institution had registered a loss of \$7.5 million in the past one year.

The findings by MEC showed that the bank had a loss of \$47 million in the last four years. The government has been compensating the bank's loss from its own budget. (Pajhwok)

(9) Public Trust ...

will be appointed soon, though still no timeframe has been shared.

For now, most provinces around the country are stuck in a state of uncertainty. While provincial governments remain stagnant, conditions on the ground throughout local communities deteriorate, with crime and insecurity on the rise.

"People voice their problems to government through district governors and governors, because they cannot reach ministers, so, when the system is paralyzed, meaning there is no district governor or governor, people will face problems, their trust in government will decrease and the government will not be then able to address their problems," former Minister of Commerce Amin Farhang told TOLONews on Saturday.

Parliament has seen perhaps the most vocal criticism of the National Unity Government's handling of appointments, including its continued delay in nominating a new head for the Ministry of Defense.

"I am calling on the president and CEO to appoint a Minister of Defense, Attorney General, Independent Directorates Directors and members of the High Court as soon as possible, so that we can end this acting heads system," House of Representatives Chairman Abdul Rauf Ibrahim said on Saturday. "The governors are the main pillars of the government and services cannot be provided to the people with acting governors; these officials must be appointed, and as soon as possible."

Meanwhile, Presidential Palace has artfully chosen to avoid discussion of the consequences of the delay in appointments, instead electing to concentrate rhetoric around the importance of care in the process of choosing nominees.

"The appointment of the governors is a process [...] those who will be appointed as governors must have specific plans, and at the same time, must be aware of their province and the conditions," presidential spokesman Ajmal Abedi said. "Now, with the completion of the cabinet, more focus will be on governance and economic issues and the governors will also be appointed soon as well." (Tolonews)

(10) 64 Infrastructure ...

the NSP has disbursed AFN 2,676,970,279 for implementation of more than 2,790 development projects in different sectors including transport, water and sanitation, irrigation, power, livelihoods, education, etc. Thousands of residents of Kunduz province have benefited from these projects so far. (PR)

(11) Muslim Yar...

He also spoke about the recent political transition and the finalization of the Cabinet of the NUG, pointing out the inclusion of 4 women as Cabinet Ministers. He also visited the Embassy of Afghanistan and the Canadian War Museum.

Muslim Yar's second part of the trip was a meeting with Ontario Legislative members, Afghan-Canadian Organizations/Afghan Diaspora. Muslim Yar discussed Afghanistan is need of its Afghans that are living outside of Afghanistan, talked about the security situation and the families who were kidnapped near Zabul. Muslim Yar and his delegates' next stop is the Niagara Falls, Ontario. (KP)

(12) 40 Taliban ...

Imam Sahib.

"The clash started yesterday and it is continuing. Afghan security forces have also suffered casualties but no details as yet," Samim said, adding that special forces reinforcement from several provinces have arrived in the area to fight the insurgents. So far there are also civilian casualties, he added.

The six foreign militants who were killed in the attack came from the northwestern Faryab province, four of them were from Tajikistan and two were Chechens, according to officials.

The insurgents have taken control of a number of police posts in Imam Sahib after the attack and the police force has been moved back, the officials said, adding that more troops have arrived in the city and the situation is expected to be brought under control soon.

Qala-e-Zal is one of the most insecure districts of the province. The clash comes after the Taliban on Friday announced the start to

their spring offensive.

This year's fighting season is expected to be intense as foreign troops ended their 13-year combat mission at the end of last year after handing over full security responsibility to the Afghan security forces.

However, the foreign troops continue to train and support the Afghan forces. (Tolonews)

(13) Hajigak Pass...

been started two years back by an Afghan and an Iranian construction company.

According to Anwari, more than 75 per cent of the highway had been asphalted.

Khalifa Qayum, a driver, welcomed reopening of the pass, saying it took him four hours reaching Kabul through the route. (Pajhwok)

(14) 13 Militants ...

He said the insurgents suffered many casualties at the start of their offensive.

He also said security forces had a number of weapons and explosives during an operation in the Bak district. (Pajhwok)

(15) No Military...

Renzi Ban and Mogherini are due to travel Monday to the Mediterranean to show their solidarity with the victims' families. (AFP)

(16) More than...

of the base camp packed with foreign climbers preparing to make their summit attempts. At least 17 people died there and 61 were injured.

The earthquake centered outside Kathmandu, the capital, was the worst to hit the South Asian nation in over 80 years. It destroyed swaths of the oldest neighborhoods of Kathmandu, and was strong enough to be felt all across parts of India, Bangladesh, China's region of Tibet and Pakistan. By Sunday afternoon, authorities said at least 2,169 people had died in Nepal alone, with 61 more deaths in India and a few in other neighboring countries. At least 721 of them died in Kathmandu alone, and the number of injured nationwide was upward of 5,000. With search and rescue efforts far from over, it was unclear how much the death toll would rise.

But outside of the oldest neighborhoods, many in Kathmandu were surprised by how few modern structures - the city is largely a collection of small, poorly constructed brick apartment buildings - collapsed in the quake. While aid workers cautioned that many buildings could have sustained serious structural damage, it was also clear that the death toll would have been far higher had more buildings caved in. (AP)

(17) Sudan's Pyramids...

Pharaonic Egypt, Greece and Rome, according to UNESCO, making them priceless relics. However, overeager archaeologists in the 19th century tore off the golden tips of some pyramids and reduced some to rubble, said Abdel-Rahman Omar, the head of the National Museum of Sudan in Khartoum.

On a recent day, a few tourists and white camels roamed the site, watched by a handful of security guards. Sudan's tourism industry has been devastated by economic sanctions imposed over the conflicts in Darfur and other regions. Al-Bashir's government, which came to power following a bloodless Islamist coup in 1989, has struggled to care for its antiquities. (AP)

Obama Turns 2016 Hopefuls into Comic Fodder for Media Dinner

WASHINGTON - A presidential election just getting into gear provided President Barack Obama plenty of new material to work with on the night he describes as Washington celebrating itself.

"It's amazing how time flies," Obama told those attending the annual dinner of the White House Correspondents' Association on Saturday night. "Soon, the first presidential contest will take place, and I for one cannot wait to see who the Koch brothers

pick. It's exciting."

Obama added: "Marco Rubio, Rand Paul, Ted Cruz, Jeb Bush, Scott Walker ... who will finally get that red rose?"

On the Democratic side, Obama observed that Hillary Rodham Clinton kicked things off by going unrecognized to Chipotle. Meanwhile, he said, former Maryland Gov.

Martin O'Malley went completely unrecognized at an O'Malley campaign event.

Taking a playful poke at himself and at Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, who is considering a bid, Obama said: "Apparently, some folks want to see a pot-smoking socialist in the White House. We could get a third Obama term after all."

The dinner also gave the president an opportunity to rib some of his loudest critics.

"Just this week Michele Bachmann actually predicted that I would bring about the biblical end of days. Now, that's a legacy," he said. "That's big. I mean, Lincoln, Washington, they didn't do that."

The correspondents' dinner brings in some big names from Hollywood. Some of the cast members from the TV series "Black-ish" attended, and Obama said he had to give ABC fair warning about the show.

"Being black-ish only makes you popular for so long," he said. "Trust me, there's a shelf life to that thing."

Of course, he had to give a shout-out to his health care law.

"Today, thanks to Obamacare, you no longer have to worry about losing your insurance, if you lose your job," he said. "You're welcome, Senate Democrats."

The featured entertainer of the night, Cecily Strong from "Saturday Night Live," got some big laughs with some tough subjects. For example, she observed that the Secret Service is the one law enforcement agency that could get in trouble if a black man gets shot.

"Your hair is so white now," she told the president, "it can talk back to police."

And she had the journalists repeat after her and solemnly swear they will not talk about Hillary Rodham Clinton's appearance "because that is not journalism."

Few of the politicians who may want to succeed Obama showed up for the dinner. One on hand was Donald Trump, who again has been teasing Republicans about running for national office. Most of the prospective and declared Republican candidates stayed away. Many chose to meet potential supporters and donors at conservative gatherings in Las Vegas and Des Moines, Iowa.

The dinner helps fund scholarships and awards that recognize journalists. This year's award winners include:

—Josh Lederman of The Associated Press and Jim Avila of ABC News, the Merriman Smith Award for presidential coverage under deadline pressure.

—Peter Baker of The New York Times, the Aldo Beckman Award for repeated excellence in White House coverage.

—The Edgar A. Poe Award, recognizing coverage of news of national or regional significance, to The Washington Post's Carol A. Leonnig and The Wall Street Journal team of Gary Fields, John R. Emshwiller, Rob Barry and Coulter Jones.

Scott Horsley of National Public Radio received a special mention in the Beckman Award category for his coverage of White House policies and politics. (AP)

Saudi Military Plane Crashes During Training

CAIRO - A Saudi pilot and a trainee were killed on Sunday when their military plane crashed during training, the official Saudi Press Agency said.

The agency said the plane belonged to the King Faisal Air Academy, a military flight school in Riyadh, did not say where the crash occurred.

A Saudi-led alliance has been conducting air strikes against Iranian-allied Houthi rebels in Yemen since the end of March. (Reuters)