

(1) More Cabinet

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(2) 8 Cabinet Ministers

Minister of Interior Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah introduced Minister of Interior Noor-ul-Haq Ulumi to employees of ministry at a ceremony. The CEO hoped Ulumi would be able to improve the security situation in the country. He assured the minister of full support.

Ulumi said he would preserve the achievements of the last 13 years. Steps would be taken to build police into a professional force and curb corruption within the ministry. He promised strengthening coordination between security and judicial institutions and controlling incidents of violence that mainly claimed the lives of police officials.

He said strict measure would be taken to stop drug trafficking and its production. According to Ulumi country-wide law and order situation would be improved in order to attract foreign direct investment.

He said the financial affairs of the ministry would be made more transparent, adding that relations of police and masses would be improved during his tenure.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah introduced Salahuddin Rabbani to the employees of the ministry at a ceremony.

For his part, the minister promised a proactive foreign policy would be framed based on discussions with intellectuals, members of parliament, political parties and technocrats.

He would be trying to place a balanced foreign policy, supported by the people of Afghanistan, before public representatives for approval. Rabbani vowed to serve all Afghans, not a specific group, and that he would never compromise the national interest or religious values during his tenure as foreign minister.

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Minister of Rural Rehabilitation Naseer Ahmad Durrani was introduced by Deputy CEO Haji Mohammad Mohaqiq to ministry workers. Mohaqiq said despite significant development in recent years, people of rural areas still faced problems.

He said Durrani was a qualified and experienced man who would strive for the development of rural areas. Durrani vowed: "I will implement all promises made during the oath-taking ceremony." He would bring drastic reforms to the ministry and work for the betterment of rural areas through the development of the handicraft industry.

He said MRRD contracts would be awarded to the companies that enjoyed good reputation and had the capability of completing the project. Minister of Mines and Petroleum Daud Shah Saba was introduced to ministry employees by President's Special Envoy for Reforms and Good Governance Ahmad Zia Masood. He said natural wealth was the main source of economic prosperity.

He hoped the minister would develop the mining sector to make it a source of income for the country. Saba said he would strive hard to attract foreign investment for exploitation and development of the vital sector. "The creation of an advisory council on petroleum and mineral products would be my first step," he said.

Minister of Refugees Syed Hussain Alami Balkhi was introduced to ministry staff by Deputy CEO Eng. Mohammad Khan, who underlined the need for addressing refugees' problems in foreign countries.

Balkhi said his first priority would be paving the ground for the repatriation of refugees from foreign countries. The repatriation of refugees was not simple, he noted, seeking cooperation from the international community.

Minister of Public Health Dr. Firozuddin Firoz was introduced to ministry employees by 2nd Vice President Mohammad Sarwar Danish. Danish asked the minister to ensure all citizens had access to free medical services.

Firozuddin said he would implement his promises and under his leadership health services would be expanded and government hospitals improved.

The minister, who would ensure health facilities in the country, would pursue a determined campaign against expired and low-quality drugs.

Finance Minister Ekil Ahmad Hakimi was introduced to ministry staff by First Vice President Abdul Rashid Dostam. Dostam asked the minister to focus on eradicating corruption.

He said the government was investigating the Kabul Bank scandal and the accused would be brought to justice soon.

Hakimi said he would implement laws and the custom departments would be reformed. No one would be allowed to use their powers for personal benefits.

Minister of Hajj and Religious Affairs Faiz Mohammad Usmani was introduced by Second Vice President Mohammad Sarwar Danish to ministry staff. They started working at a time when several portfolios are still run by acting ministers.

Rahmatullah Nabil, the National Directorate of Security (NDS) head, was introduced to his office staff by First Vice President Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostam and National Security Advisor Hanif Atmar.

NDS said Nabil's appointment letter was read out by Faridoo Elham, the director of public relations. Previously, Nabil has been acting head of the intelligence service. (Pajhwok)

(3) Faryab Clashes

put at nearly 1,000 the number of families fleeing homes from Nahrain area of Qaisar. He said the displaced families were in dire need of assistance.

"We left behind all our belongings to save our lives," one of the displaced persons, Abdul Qudus, said. He moved to the center of Qaisar district along with his eight-member family and currently lived in a house having no roof. Qudus asked the government to help them.

Deputy Governor Abdul Sattar Barez said a joint commission of security organs, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other relevant organizations had been created to assess the condition of the affected families.

He said they had enough aid, which would be distributed to the displaced families after a short survey. ANA officials had previously claimed killing 20 insurgents, including two foreigners, during the ongoing operation in Qaisar. (Pajhwok)

(4) Australia Warns

isn't a great deal of evidence that ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, ISIS) has a presence in Afghanistan," she said, reports AFP.

She continued, noting "there is the concern that should ISIL turn its attentions away from Iraq and Syria there is an element of the Taliban that would be receptive to its brutal ideology. We are aware of it."

The agenda focused on the Middle East, including responding to the growing threat of ISIS and its effective recruitment of foreign fighters largely conducted online.

ISIS terrorists announced Saturday they had beheaded Kenji Goto, the second Japanese hostage purportedly murdered in a week.

"We are certainly conscious of the need to contain, disrupt, and degrade and ultimately defeat ISIL, Daesh, wherever it exists," Bishop said. "That's why our focus is so much on Iraq...and the fact that there are tentacles reaching towards Afghanistan just doubles our resolve to defeat ISIL."

Bishop said Australia and Britain agreed that "we face an epic battle with this strain of terrorism, not only as open liberal western democracies but as nation states."

"And this threat of terrorism that we have seen in the form of ISIL or Daesh, Boko Haram and others have territorial ambitions yet respect no governments, no boundaries, no laws. They have no regard for humanity or civilized behavior," she said.

Hammond, who earlier visited the site of a fatal cafe siege in Sydney in December, said Monday's talks took place in the shadow of the murder of the two Japanese hostages and recent Islamist attacks in Paris and elsewhere.

"Although the focus at the moment is on Iraq and Syria we should be prepared to see manifestations of extremist Islamism, violent extremist

Islamism, popping up all over the place and we've got to be prepared to deal with them wherever they emerge, wherever they show their head," he said.

The ministers said in a statement they agreed to continue close cooperation on counter-terrorism, and had signed a memorandum of understanding on the use of each other's diplomatic facilities at times of crisis. (INN)

(5) Farah, Badghis

staged a protest rally in Farah City before noon.

A member of the provincial council from Farah City, Abdul Wakil, said parliamentarians took such decisions because they knew nothing about the situation in provinces, calling as critical the PC oversight role in preventing administrative corruption.

Another participant of the rally, civil society activist, Syed Ahmad, said the provincial councils should be given back their right to monitoring. He said depriving PCs from their oversight role was aimed at paving the ground for corruption to continue.

Elsewhere, dozens of people staged a protest demonstration against the Wolesi Jirga's decision in the capital of Badghis province, Qala-i-Naw.

Haji Bahauddin Qadsi, the provincial council head, told Pajhwok Afghan News provincial councils had always monitored development projects, administrative affairs and particularly welfare projects and consulted the authorities concerned in this regard.

He said barring provincial councils from monitoring such activities would increase corruption.

A Qala-i-Naw resident and participant of the rally, Mohammad Amin Jamshidi, said PC members were public representatives, who were answerable to the people. Therefore, he said, the public reps should not be deprived of their right to oversee all affairs in the province.

Acting in compliance with orders from President Ashraf Ghani, the Independent Directorate of Local Government (IDLG) has launched work two days ago on a policy outlining oversight role for provincial councils. (Pajhwok)

(6) AHRDO Calls

no control, the mosque imams persuade people toward extremism and violence against females," Executive Director of AHRDO Khudadad Besharat said. "The issue has increased violence against women."

Based on the report, the abuses and harassments of females in public or behind closed doors has increased in several provinces across the country, particularly in the capital.

"We want an end to the culture of impunity," Head of Parliament's women's affairs Nafisa Azimi said. "The cases of violence against women need to be investigated accurately."

Referring to the report produced by AHRDO, the Afghan Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs has rejected the report that the mosque imams were persuading people to resort to extremism, and violence against women.

"It is a fact that imams have their own style of preaching, but we have never heard of Imams persuading people toward the acts of violence against women, therefore we strongly reject the report," Deputy Minister of Hajj and Religious Affairs Dae-ul-Haq Abid said.

The report indicates that the marriage cultures in villages have taken the shape of business trade and in some cases families sell their underage daughters because of poverty.

AHRDO reports that 1,076 people in Kabul, 756 in Herat, 782 in Nangarhar, 606 in Balkh, and 682 in Bamiyan were interviewed for the report. (Tolonews)

(7) German Issues

University Bergakademie Freiberg in Germany and will return to their previous posts.

This assistance is part of German's "Academic Mining Education in Afghanistan" (AMEA) which is a new project from Germany in Afghanistan for capacity development.

At the farewell ceremony Christian Heusermann, Counsellor for Economic Affairs at the German Embassy in Kabul said "A lot of steps have already been taken by the Afghan Government in an effort to make mining a profitable sector; however, a lot of steps still need to be taken, in particular with regard to education.

The Academic Mining Education project is a crucial step towards fostering the capacity of well prepared and well skilled Afghans working in the mining sector"

In the farewell ceremony organized in German Embassy in Kabul, Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum (MoMP), Mr. Shafiqullah Shahrani emphasized on the importance of mining sector for the development of the economy.

While thanking Germany for the assistance, he said "Keeping in mind the importance of this sector, by developing it we can achieve our goals and make a better economy for the people of Afghanistan" (KP)

(8) ISIS Flexing

Jundullah and the newly arrived ISIS insurgents operating in Kunduz, Takhar, Baghlan, Badakhshan and Faryab provinces, he said.

ISIS had been established in Syria and Iraq with Abu Bakar-al-Baghdadi was chosen as the leader of the terrorist declared outfit. Safi said nearly 4,000 militants from Takhar and Badakhshan provinces had intensified activities, which posed a serious threat to security forces

However, he said that efforts were on to flush out militants from the area. The governor said more than 7,000 armed men were active in Kunduz, creating problems for residents.

Locals complained more than 3,000 illegal gunmen existed in Khanabad district, harassing civilians. The residents asked security organs to disarm illegal armed groups and ensure law and order. (Pajhwok)

(9) Gen. Murad

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of distribution. "The electronic ID distribution process has major importance in national programs that will facilitate transparency in the election process and other national issues, therefore I will concentrate on the matter seriously," Ulumi said.

Meanwhile, acting Minister of Justice Syed Yousaf Haleem said that there is no particular issue that could delay the distribution of the electronic ID cards, calling on the ministry to complete the task soon.

"There is no obstruction in implementing the law regarding the distribution of the electronic ID cards," Haleem told TOLONews on Monday.

In addition, a number of election monitoring institutions have also called on the leaders of the National Unity Government to avoid dealing with the electronic ID distribution politically as it is a national process and not political.

The Free and Fair Election Forum of Afghanistan (FEFA) also stressed upon the government to ensure ID's are distributed as soon as possible.

"We have to put aside every political issue if we really want the process to begin," Executive Director of FEFA Yousaf Rashid said.

It is said that the electronic ID distribution will prevent electoral frauds as the voter will cast his/her ballot by placing his/her finger print on a biometric system. All arrangements have been taken for the distribution and the National Security Council has pledged that the process will start within a week. (Tolonews)

(11) IS Fighters Kill

He said the masked gunmen, wearing black clothes, gunned down Abdul Ghani and wounded his three bodyguards. The Taliban have not yet spoken about the incident.

Kamal said the armed men, who called themselves IS soldiers, entered into local houses and broke down television sets, antennas, tape-recorders and other household items.

The official warned IS rebels would gain ground in the district if the government did not take steps for their elimination.

Mohammad Hanif, a shopkeeper in the main Charkh Bazaar, said a group of masked men came opened fired on four Taliban. One of the fighters was killed on the spot and three others were wounded. (Pajhwok)

(12) Pakistan Moving

returning to Afghanistan after the given time expires. Pakistani authorities say that the decision was made in the presence of Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif.

Pakistan has issued Refugee Cards to most of Afghan Refugees legalizing their stay in Pakistan until the end of this year.

Pakistan took the issue of Afghan Refugees in Pakistan more serious after a deadly attack at a school in Peshawar on December 16 last year. Hundreds of Afghans have been arrested in Pakistan since then and currently behind the bars.

Responsibility of the attack was claimed by Pakistan's armed opponents Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

A TTP spokesman phoned media and said that the attack was carried out by their fighters to revenge the killing of their people killed in Pakistani military operations in North Waziristan.

TTP also sent pictures to media claiming to be their loved ones killed during the military operations. The attack took place in Warsak Road area of Peshawar by 6-7 insurgents who stormed a military-run school and carried out a massacre.

The attack left 141 people killed and more than 130 injured, with some of the injured ones later succumbed to injuries in the hospitals, bringing up the death toll to at least 150 people.

Including President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah, the attack was largely condemned by world leaders. (KP)

(13) Key Projects

168 important reconstruction projects were executed and put into service at a cost of 1.7 billion afghanis. The projects include big and small bridges, roads, buildings for schools and government offices, healthcare centres, a portion of the Khost-Gardez highway, retaining walls and other similar projects.

Naemi said the projects were implemented in the provincial capital, Khost City, and all districts. Besides the government, a number of various donor and charity organizations had funded the schemes, he said.

The major fund contributors included the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), US Corps of Engineers, the World Bank, Germany, India and others, the acting governor said.

"Thousands of youth were engaged on the projects that now benefit the masses," he said, adding implementation of the schemes helped narrow the gap between the government and the people. "People's trust in the government has increased with these projects that also contributed to bringing stability and ensuring good governance."

He said people's trust in the government increased in areas where they were provided all basic facilities of life. The projects completed last year directly benefitted local populations, he said.

Naemi said they were able to provide many facilities to the people of Khost as a result of good relations with donor countries and local elders' cooperation.

He said work on another 499 big reconstruction and small development projects was underway and 90 percent of work on most of these projects had been completed.

These projects include reconstruction of the Khost-Ghulam Khan road, other roads, bridges, buildings for schools, health clinics, government departments, retaining walls, canals, playgrounds and others.

Naemi said the under-construction projects would cost four billion afghanis, with big donors including USAID, the US government, the World Bank, Germany and India.

"These projects are the most important part of our five-year strategic plan which is aimed to resolve Khost problems and develop the province. Tens of thousands of youth are engaged on these projects," he said.

He said people extended full cooperation to the government in executing uplift projects and not a single project had ever faced any security threat.

He said imported electricity, international airport and buildings for justice and judicial and other public departments in districts and some other important projects were part of the next year's plan.

He said if implemented, the new projects would further secure and stabilise Khost province by narrowing the gap between the government and the people.

The governor urged high-ranking government officials and the National Security Council that the implementation of projects in Khost should not face any delay or hurdle. He also asked construction companies to focus on quality work. (Pajhwok)

(14) Kandahar Exports

million from exporting 24,057 tonnes of dried fruit and \$3.3 million from exports of 17,142 tonnes of fresh fruit in the current solar year that ends on March 21.

Dried fruit exports included different types of raisins, figs, almond, pine nuts and pistachio. The fresh fruit exports included pomegranate, grapes, melon, apples and apricot.

"Afghanistan's embassies abroad are duty-bound to help traders find market for their products, but we have seen no cooperation in this regard."

Zaheer requested the newly-formed cabinet to solve their problems and find market for Afghan products. A fresh fruit trader, Haji Abdul Ahad, said currently they relied on Pakistan for exporting their products. Most of the benefits of Afghan products go to Pakistani traders, who use their own trademarks on Afghan fruits. (Pajhwok)

(15) Library,

said the Information and Culture Ministry had promised the establishment of a such a library, for which the municipality had devoted 600 square metres of land.

Minalpal said another public library would be established in the Spin Boldak border town. The library would also have a parking facility.

He said the Kandahar National Museum also needed a well-equipped building and the current governor's house and municipality buildings would be declared as heritage sites.

The museum would be shifted to one of the build-ings, he said. In this regard, the mayor seven and a half acres of land had been allotted for the construction of buildings for government departments, including the governor's house, in the Aino Meena township. (Pajhwok)

(16) 4 Police Killed

five and injuring four others. He also confirmed the death of one fighter. (Pajhwok)

(17) Assassination

mander Syeda Jan and the blast that ripped through his funeral prayers, the statement claimed. (Pajhwok)

(18) NDS Officer

and launched an investigation into the incident to identify the killers. A month ago, three policemen were killed in Dilaram district of Nimroz in a similar attack by militants.

Elsewhere, as many as 62 kilograms of drugs were seized in Shiberghan, the capital of Jawzjan province. Director counterterrorism Maj. Mohammad Afzal said the drugs were being smuggled in a Corolla car. He said two alleged smugglers including the car driver were detained in connection of drug traffic.

At least 300 kilograms of drug have been seized during the past three months in Jawzjan province. (Pajhwok)

(19) Officials Killed

per the official data around 250 insurgents were killed in the fighting with the security forces and 90 others wounded.

30 Afghan National Police were also martyred and 40 others injured in the clashes.

25 Afghan National Army soldiers also embraced martyrdom or sustained injuries in the fighting. (KP)

(20) Insurgents

Zakharchenko as saying. Meanwhile, Zakharchenko confirmed plans to resume prisoners of war exchange, but stressed that only military men, not political activists, should be handed over by Kiev to the militia.

The latest round of battles between Ukraine's eastern insurgents and government forces has brought the death toll to more than 5,000, according to the United Nations. (Xinhua)

(21) Greece

possible. "We are in substantial negotiations with our partners in Europe and those that have lent to us. We have obligations towards them," Tsipras said at a news conference in Cyprus during his first foreign visit as prime minister.

Tsipras repeated calls already made by his finance minister Varoufakis for the mechanism of inspectors from the "troika" overseeing Greek finances to be dismantled and replaced by direct negotiations between Athens and its EU and IMF partners. (Reuters)

(22) Kurdish Fighters

mortar shells nearby as Islamic State fighters targeted a headquarters of the Kurdish Democratic Party. Such attacks underscore the sense that disparate Kurdish militias drawn from Iraq, Syria and Turkey have yet to consolidate their gains despite strong coalition air support. (AP)