

(1) Terrorist Attack ...

a Mazda, had occurred not far from the embassy. The Russian Foreign Ministry and the Embassy in Kabul haven't yet confirmed the information. Kabul has been increasingly rocked by terrorist attacks over the recent months. In late January, militants staged a blast in the Afghan capital's diplomatic quarter, killing 103 people, and injuring 235 others. The Taliban terrorist group has claimed the responsibility for the attack. Afghanistan is suffering from an unstable political, social and security situation due to the activity of the Taliban movement and Daesh terrorist group. The Afghan National Defense and Security Forces have been currently conducting joint offensive operations to combat terrorism across the country. (Sputnik)

(2) Islamic State ...

the clash, the Guards said. Days earlier, Iran's intelligence ministry found a weapons cache in the town of Marivan on the Iranian side of the border that included TNT, C4, electronic detonators, grenades, ammunition clips for AK-47 machine guns and rocket propelled grenades.

The clash and discovery indicate that Islamic State still has the ability to penetrate the tightly controlled security net of the Islamic Republic, which has largely managed to avoid the devastation wrought by the group in neighboring countries. "Today (Islamic State) does not control a country ... in order to assert that they exist, they may carry out an attack any day," Hossein Dehghan, a former defense minister and now an adviser to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said in a recent interview with the semi-official Tasnim news agency. Halabja, the largest town on the Iraqi side, is most often remembered for a chemical attack ordered by then-President Saddam Hussein in 1988 which left thousands dead.

The presence of religious militants in the area around the town is not new: at the city's entrance hang portraits of Iraqi Kurdish security forces, known as Peshmerga, killed in the battle against Islamic State. Prior to the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the jihadist largely blamed for stoking a civil war between Iraq's Sunnis and Shi'ites, led a group in the area called Ansar al-Islam, which merged with Islamic State in 2014.

Many of the Iranian and Iraqi Kurds now fighting with Islamic State are part of a second generation of militants largely influenced by Zarqawi's deadly legacy, Iraqi security officials and Peshmerga commanders familiar with the matter say. Sunni IS militants see Shi'ites, who make up the majority of Iran's population, as apostates and have repeatedly threatened to carry out attacks in the Islamic Republic. Kurds make up about ten percent of Iranians and are predominantly Sunni.

Hamai Hama Seid, a senior Peshmerga commander and member of the Iraqi Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) party, said Kurdish IS militants take advantage of their knowledge of the language and region as well as strong cross-border ties.

"There are definitely ties between the Iranian and Iraqi extremists on the two sides of the border," Seid told Reuters in the Iraqi border village of Tawila, only a few hundred meters from "The militants exploited this area because it's mountainous, difficult and wooded."

Many of the young men are poorly educated and have few economic opportunities, allowing extremist recruiters to flourish, Iraqi security officials and Peshmerga commanders say. (Reuters)

(3) Govt Rejects ...

The CEO's deputy spokesman Jawed Faisal said on Monday government respects the po-

litical activities of all politicians and Nabil is free to travel anywhere and without any restrictions.

Meanwhile, officials from Mehwar-e Mardom-e Afghanistan political group, where Nabil serves as a key member, said government backtracked on its decision following pressure from the US embassy.

Sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, from the Attorney General's Office (AGO), said that the travel ban on Nabil was initially ordered on 6 January, but the order was then cancelled 11 days later.

"Afghan government strongly values the activities of politicians. A travel ban had not been imposed on Mr. Nabil. He is free to move anywhere and without any legal restrictions," said Faisal.

But, Mehwar-e Mardom-e Afghanistan argues that government is plotting to trump up cases against politicians.

"The Afghan government is trying to forge cases against the politicians, cases are also made against certain people inside and outside the system," said Moeen Moeen, chairman of the secretariat of Mehwar-e-Mardom Afghanistan.

The order was issued while Nabil was out of the country. He has not yet returned to Afghanistan.

There are reports however that a government probe team was investigating Nabil's financial situation and assets.

"If someone comes and says something against the national interests of the country, he should be warned to stop making such comments, but political cases should not be made against them," said former military Abdul Ghafar Gardezi.

According to Nabil's political group, the government put pressure on Nabil after the former NDS chief 'spilled the beans' on the 2014 presidential elections during TOLONews' Black and White program, which was broadcast in November last year.

In the program, Nabil claimed that printing equipment for fake ballot papers were found in houses around Wazir Akbar Khan, in Kabul city, during the run up to the 2014 elections. He claimed the machines were found in the houses of high-ranking officials who are today part of the National Unity Government (NUG).

"Printing machines were placed in Wazir Akbar Khan area (at the homes) of people who are currently high-ranking officials in government," Nabil said.

When Black and White host Sami Mahdi asked why he had not arrested these individuals, Nabil said: "We reported everything to the president at the time and to the national security adviser (Dr. Rangin Dadfar Spanta), to the members of the National Security Council, and Mr. (Omar) Daoudzai was the interior minister at that time, to the IEC chief (Ahmad Yousuf Nuristani) and we as the authority had to report to them but we did not have the right to interfere nor were we the decision-makers," Nabil added. (Tolo news)

(4) Ghani Pays...

for his unwavering support of security forces.

Ehsas also gave Ghani a brief report of the police's activities.

Ghani in turn said he appreciated the sacrifices the security forces were making in the fight against terrorism, organized crime, powerful figures, drugs and kidnappings but said police action needs to be stepped up.

According to the statement Ghani directed officials to increase cooperation with other security institutions in order to improve security for the people and also to consider ways to involve the public in improving security.

This comes after Ghani last year paid a surprise visit to PD9 headquarters and suspended senior security officials who were found to be negligent in car-

rying out their duties. Among those suspended was the district police chief.

This came after Ghani found a number of policemen who were meant to be on duty, absent from their posts. (Tolo news)

(5) Etisalat UAE ...

ability in its DNA to provide its customers with the best, Etisalat Afghanistan will continue to be the number one based on quality, innovation and competitive pricing. (PR)

(6) With Appointment...

been provided job opportunities in Nimroz over the last two years.

Public works, counternarcotics, transport, energy and water, municipality, women affairs, communications and information technology, labour and social affairs, human resource, rural rehabilitation and other departments are led by young faces.

Youths were also working in judicial organs and district offices, the governor added.

Youth Affairs Director Hamidullah Baloch confirmed to Pajhwok youth were being employed on the basis of tests and interviews conducted in transparent manner.

"We are in contact with several charities, trying to sustain our focus on creating job opportunities for youth. Some of these organisations have promised us help," he said.

Transport Director Sibghatullah Seddiqi, a young man who took charge two years ago, also claimed boosting the department's annual revenue from 165 million afghanis to 240 million afghanis.

He said prevention of extortions by irresponsible strongmen at some car stations on the Zaranj-Dilaram highway and depositing transport revenue directly to the government's treasury were his main goals.

Ahmad is one of the youth working at the governor's house. Calling the presence of youths in offices effective, he said: "In the present-day world, modern technology plays a key role in the development of a country. Youths of our times are also familiar with technology."

However, dozens of Nimroz youth still leave the country on a daily basis due to joblessness. An official of the refugees' department, who wished to go unnamed, said 2,500 to 3,000 people from Nimroz -- mostly youth -- travelled to Iran and Pakistan through illegal routes.

The source said the same number of Afghans was deported through the port on a daily basis. Only five percent of off-Nimroz inhabitants left the country through the port, with the rest coming from other provinces. But Zalmai, one of a jobless youth from Nimroz, said no fundamental work had been done to support them as many people were still jobless.

He alleged many youth had been appointed to government jobs based on favoritism and bribery. Hamidullah, a civil society activist, explained although a number of youth had been given jobs in government departments over the last two years, unemployment remains a big problem for youth.

A large number of university graduates cannot find jobs and are forced to travel to other countries, he said. Those travelling to Iran for work return home addicted to drugs. Officials say more than 10,000 people are addicted to drugs in the province.

Mohammad, one of the addicts, said there were no job opportunities in the province. Therefore, he was obligated to go to Iran for work but slipped into addiction there due to workload. Subsequently, he was then deported.

"Our job was difficult. My friends also used drugs. Initially, I consumed opium and then crystal. I have been addicted to drugs for many years and my fate is uncertain," he remarked. The junkie asked the govern-

ment to create job opportunities for youth so they would not be forced to travel abroad for work. (Pajhwok)

(7) MAIL to Construct...

\$36 million USD.

"The announcement phase of these 12 cold rooms has been finished and I can say that practical work will start in the next fiscal year," said Rustami.

Rustami also said construction on another eight cold storage facilities, that was put on hold last year due to contractor problems, will be resumed this year.

"Based on MAIL's plan, the design of these eight cold rooms has been completed and the practical work will start soon. These cold rooms will cost \$28 million USD which will be paid for by the World Bank. These cold rooms will be completed by the end of the year," Rustami said.

Meanwhile a number of experts in the agricultural sector said cold storage facilities play a vital role in preserving fresh produce for the market. They said government should consider the establishment of cold rooms as a priority.

"During the harvest season, the products are sold at a lower price on the market but when harvest time is over, prices increase by five to six times. Therefore, standard cold rooms should be established to store produce for a long time," agricultural expert Yasin Farahmand said.

According to a number of agricultural experts, if government establishes more cold rooms, the revenue in this sector will increase significantly and Afghanistan will eventually become self-sufficient in terms of supplying the public with fresh produce. (Tolo news)

(8) Pakistan Called ...

Line with impunity, he added. The legislator explained: "Whatever's happening in Afghanistan has ramifications in Pakistan." The US, he said, had made done whatever it could to vanquish the Taliban but did not succeed. He called for the US withdrawal from country and cooperation among Pakistan, Afghanistan and India. The senator also warned against confrontation, stressing transparent elections in Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(9) Khost Welfare ..

elders had decided to reduce the amount of dowry but no one implemented it.

He asked the Ulema to spread awareness regarding the handicaps of high dowry in villages and country-side. (Pajhwok)

(10) Takhar Victim ...

the officials had been negligent and should be held accountable. The head of the women's rights department at AIHRC, Latifa Sultani, said the lack of awareness about religion, human rights values, and officials not adhering to human rights laws were the main reason for the increase in violence against women in the country.

"The lack of political will to prosecute people who violate the law and perpetrators who commit acts of violence against women has provided a situation where a number of people, who see themselves as representatives of Allah on earth, allow themselves to commit such things," said Sultani.

Meanwhile a number of senators said government is not aware of many such cases in some parts of the country.

"There are cases where women are killed and buried, but government does not ask about it," Paktia senator Fawzia Sadaat Samkanai said.

Although AIHRC said local officials failed to prevent the Soraya incident, the interior ministry says they have now arrested seven people in connection with the case. The MoI also stated that officials found to be negligent will also be prosecuted.

"All those who neglected to do their jobs will be punished based on the law," interior ministry's deputy spokesman Nus-

rat Rahimi said.

The public flogging of the woman reportedly took place almost two months ago but a video of the incident was only leaked on social media last week.

The incident caused an outcry and a task team was immediately sent to the province to investigate the matter. Soraya has also since been taken to a place of safety.

Sources said the woman was beaten in November but that some people wanted to keep it secret.

Although such kangaroo courts are not unusual in insecure areas in Afghanistan, the public lashing of a woman in one of Takhar's secure districts has been sharply criticized by people and analysts.

Critics said local officials should be held accountable for not having prevented the incident and for not having taken action against those responsible for the incident.

"Those people who do not believe in human rights issues and do not respect human rights values, they should be pulled out of the security forces," said Naeem Nazari, the head of the Afghan Civil Society Human Rights Network. A number of religious scholars meanwhile said the incident is against Islam and that Islam does not allow such action.

"What they have done is prohibited in Islam," the head of Kabul's Ulema Council Mawlawi Abdul Basir Haqqani said. (Tolo news)

(11) Explosives-Laden... after

being shifted by their comrades, the governor's spokesman had said.

Separately, the provincial spy chief said a policeman was killed after militants attacked the Khas Urzgan district.

But another security official who wished to go unnamed claimed five other police personnel have been injured in the attack. (Pajhwok)

(12) Government ...

and prevent the Afghan government and the United States from the execution of the prisoners.

The Afghan government officials have not formally commented regarding the execution plans and the Taliban claims so far.

However, the leaders of the government of national unity had earlier said that there will be no mercy on terrorists after the recent atrocities committed in Kabul and other parts of the country.

Hundreds of people were killed or wounded in a series of deadly attacks in the capital and other provinces.

The Taliban group claimed responsibility for the majority of the attacks sparking furor and anger in Afghanistan as well as on international level. (KP)

(13) 2 Taliban Killed, ...

notorious commander Ghulam Qadar remained on the battle ground. Two weapons of the insurgents were also seized by security forces.

He further added the security forces and the mentioned engineers suffered no casualties in the incident.

However, Mohammad Ismail, the district chief, confirming the incident, added the two individuals were not engineers but ordinary people.

He said the clash did not take place to protect engineers from being kidnapped but there have been always clashes between Taliban and security forces in the area.

Taliban have not yet commented about the incident. (Pajhwok)

(14) Exposed to cold ...

families so they don't face the shortage of food and clothes in winter," he said.

Many families have been displaced as a result of clashes between Afghan forces and insurgents and infighting between Taliban and Daesh militants in Sar-i-Pul, Jawzjan and Faryab provinces this year. (Pajhwok)