

(1) Russia to Host...

already confirmed their participation. Iran has not yet released a statement about possible participation in the conference.

Lavrov went on to highlight the need for the inclusion of the Taliban in the constructive dialogues in order to find a solution to resolve the security crisis in Afghanistan, prevent the spread of violence and the infiltration of ISIL terrorists in the country.

In a joint press conference with Lavrov in Moscow on Tuesday, Afghan Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani said "we discussed Russia's support for Kabul government for becoming a permanent member to Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and welcome Moscow's positive response in this regard."

Lavrov further stressed Russia's support for the Afghan government in fighting terrorism and drug trafficking, facilitating the Afghan-led peace process and the country's request for permanent membership to SCO. (MNA)

(2) Afghan Forces ...

had rendered huge sacrifices in the war.

The advisor informed his interlocutor about the steps the Afghan government had taken to curb corruption by establishing an anti-corruption court and taking other initiatives.

He also commended the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for lifting sanction against Gulbadin Hekmatyar and his party Hizb-i-Islami Afghanistan (HIA) in response to Kabul's request.

Atmar hoped support from the UN and NATO for the landmark peace deal between the Afghan government and HIA would encourage other militants groups to join the reconciliation process.

Gottemoeller said Afghan forces were committed in the fight against terrorism and the alliance would not allow the country to become a terrorist safe heaven again.

Rose stressed regional cooperation in the war on terrorism, calling regional cooperation key to eliminating the scourge. "There is no good or bad terrorist; all terrorists pose a threat and should be eliminated through mutual cooperation," (Pajhwok)

(3) Support to ...

carried out by a suicide bomber near the entrance gate of the Afghan Supreme Court as scores of people were leaving their offices.

Condemning the attack on strongest words, Mr. Flynn said the United States remains committed to support the Afghan security forces fight the terrorist groups which are staging attacks against the Afghan people, insisting that such support remains a strategic and military priority for Washington.

In his turn, Mr. Atmar thanked the US government and President Donald Trump for their support as Afghanistan is going through a critical moment.

Calling US a strategic partner of Afghanistan, Atmar said the two countries will continue to their joint efforts to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country. (KP)

(4) Tajikistan to...

April. This year, the country plans to increase the export of electricity by 20% and the price by 3% than in 2016. The country exported more than 1.3 billion KW/h of electricity abroad. Mainly, it was exported to Afghanistan. (AKIPRESS)

(5) British Military...

possibility that we might uplift because of what we are being asked to do. I have not been formally asked, but I might as well be honest with the committee. That's a possibility."

Pressed on the matter, Penning, who has recently returned from visiting coalition forces in Afghanistan, said: "It was an assumption I made on the conversations with the coalition."

Forces TV stated the minister then quipped he could get "shot" because of what he had said.

"One of the things I have always wanted to do is be as open as possible. "So, if I'm sitting here thinking I may have to do an uplift, there may be a possibility - I'm probably going to get shot when I get back." (Tolonews)

(6) Pakistan Extends ...

meeting. She said the cabinet decided to push back the deadline of March 31 for Afghan refugees to leave the country till the end of 2017.

She said the Ministry of Interior was directed to complete documentation of the Afghan nationals as soon as possible.

Under the policy, Afghans would be barred from entering Pakistan without valid visa and the Afghans cross-border movement would now

be regulated through the visa regime and their entry passes would be linked with it.

There are currently about 1.3 million registered Afghan refugees resident in Pakistan, according to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). There are also about a million unregistered Afghan refugees present in the country.

A recent crackdown by Pakistani authorities, citing security concerns, has seen a sharp rise in both deportations and voluntary repatriations of Afghan nationals from the country.

Last year, more than 600,000 Afghan refugees left Pakistan to return to their home countries, data from the UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) shows. (Pajhwok)

(7) UNHCR Hails ...

towards the Afghan refugees and those without documentation living in Pakistan.

"The introduction of a visa regime has a potentially transformative impact on people's daily lives." He said in a statement after the cabinet meeting. He appreciated Pakistan's support to Afghan refugees for nearly four decades, saying UNHCR would continue to seek robust international support for voluntary repatriation. (Pajhwok)

(8) WH Reaffirm ...

strongest words, the US National Advisor Michael Flynn earlier said the United States remains committed to support the Afghan security forces fight the terrorist groups which are staging attacks against the Afghan people, insisting that such support remains a strategic and military priority for Washington. (KP)

(9) Suicide Bombing ...

the bilateral strategic partnership.

"We have our eyes on Kabul today, following the tragic suicide bombing that killed at least 19 Afghan civilians," White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer told reporters at his daily news conference.

This morning, he said, General (R) Michael Flynn spoke with the Afghan national security adviser to reaffirm America's continued support for Afghanistan and for their strategic partnership.

"We condemn this cowardly attack in the strongest possible terms, and we commend the Afghan security forces for their rapid response," he remarked.

"We also reaffirmed our support for the Afghan government as they work to defend their people and against enemies of peace," Spicer said.

In a statement, the Security Council also condemned the "heinous and cowardly terrorist attack" in Kabul. UNSC members expressed concern over the threat posed by Taliban, Al Qaeda and ISIS.

"The 15-member body reiterates its serious concern at the threats posed by the Taliban, Al-Qaida, ISIL/Daesh and illegal and armed groups to the local population, security forces and the international presence in Afghanistan."

Underlining the need to bring perpetrators, organisers, financiers and sponsors of the reprehensible acts of terrorism to justice, the Security Council urged all states to cooperate actively with the Afghan authorities.

It urged all countries to combat by all means, in accordance with the UN Charter and other obligations under international law, in particular international human rights and refugee laws, threats to peace and security.

"The members of the Security Council reiterate that no violent or terrorist acts can reverse the Afghan-led process along the path towards peace, democracy and stability," the statement said.

Pakistan also strongly condemned the suicide attack outside Supreme Court of Afghanistan on 7 February 2017 that has led to loss of twenty precious human lives and left more than 40 injured, a statement from the foreign office said on Wednesday.

The people and the Government of Pakistan extend their heartfelt sympathies and deepest condolences to the Government and people of Afghanistan and to the bereaved families, the statement said.

"We pray for early recovery of injured. We firmly stand with our Afghan brothers in this hour of grief and anguish."

The European Union (EU) condemned yesterday's attack on Afghanistan's SC staff

Employees of the Afghan Supreme Court have again been a target of a despicable attack, which has claimed the lives of at least 20 innocent people and many others injured. Our thoughts are with the families of those who have been killed, and we wish those who have been injured a speedy recovery, the EU statement said.

A functioning justice system will guarantee the respect of the Afghan

constitution and is of utmost importance for a democratic and peaceful Afghanistan. The EU stood by the Afghan authorities and calls on all Afghans to stay united in support of our combined efforts to fight the global threat of terrorism.

The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) condemned Tuesday's suicide attack in Kabul which killed at least 20 civilians and injured more than 40 others. Many of those killed and wounded were women, most of them female Supreme Court employees, according to a statement from the UN mission.

"This attack appears to have deliberately targeted civilian judicial staff as they were leaving the office for the day," said Tadamichi Yamamoto, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan and head of UNAMA. "This attack is nothing short of an atrocity. Those responsible for planning and carrying out this horrendous act must be brought to justice."

UNAMA noted with concern a pattern of attacks against judicial authorities in recent years. Since the beginning of 2015 alone, UNAMA has documented 74 attacks targeting judges, prosecutors and judicial staff, which have resulted in 89 dead and 214 injured. It reminded all parties that judges and staff of civilian courts - including the Supreme Court - are civilians. Attacks intentionally targeting civilians are tantamount to war crimes.

UNAMA expressed deep condolences to the families of those killed and wishes a swift recovery to the injured. (Pajhwok)

(10) Government ...

are misleading the public.

Critics have blasted government for having taken a year to make the decision, that should have been made by the Ministry of Education.

According to critics, tension between NUG leaders is quite high and they want to portray their small issues as big gains to the public.

"They want to mislead public opinion from their internal disputes, therefore they reflect their minor gains as major attainments," said journalist Farid Azhand.

Government leaders want to redirect the public's attention away from their internal disputes and differences, therefore they portray petty things as major achievements, said critics.

Following months of discussions, NUG leaders finally agreed to change the school uniforms from black to blue and brown.

"Changing the color of the uniform of school girls was proposed by the ministry of education which was sent to the council of ministers. On the basis of the proposal, uniforms of primary schools will be blue and secondary schools brown," said the CEO's deputy spokesman Jawed Faisal.

One university lecturer, Tahir Hashimi said: "They agree on smaller issues because they don't have any gains, they want to portray it as a gain because of their compulsions."

"They have not done anything positive for the people, I don't think that they can overcome their disputes during their term of government," a Kabul shopkeeper, Mohammad Sadiq, said.

"None of these leaders delivered on their promises, they pledged to create jobs, but nothing has happened," said a resident of Kabul Ghulam Jilani.

Experts say that the ongoing rift between NUG leaders could have serious repercussions for the country in future. (Tolonews)

(11) Gunmen in ...

Turkistani, the chief of the provincial police, confirmed the attack, saying it took place 35 kilometers (22 miles) west of the provincial capital, Shibirghan.

No one immediately claimed the attack, but Turkistani said militants loyal to the Islamic State group have a presence in the area. The Taliban denied involvement.

Elsewhere in Afghanistan, a suicide bomber detonated his payload after being stopped outside a district headquarters in the eastern Paktia province, killing two civilians and wounding a policeman, said Abdullah Asrat, the spokesman for the provincial governor.

No one claimed responsibility, but the Taliban frequently attack government targets.

On Tuesday, a suicide bomber struck at the entrance to the Afghan Supreme Court in the capital, Kabul, killing at least 20 people and wounding more than 40. (AP)

(12) Pakistan Hands...

Michini check-post, Assistant Political Agent Niaz Mohammad identified the men were identified as Javed Khan, Safiullah, Talmeen Khan and Niamatullah.

He said police handed over the Daesh

members to the political administration after interrogations. "Now we are handing them over to the Afghan government as a gesture of goodwill." (Pajhwok)

(13) Who are ...

others handed down the death penalty, PIJC said.

Forty-eight inmates are serving 16 to 20 years terms, 17 others from 11 to 15 years, 41 from six to 10 years and 23 from one to five years. However, the fates of 20 other HIA inmates on the list remain unclear.

The cases of 17 others are currently being heard by courts. Most of the prisoners belong to Kandahar, Helmand, Farah, Herat and Maidan Wardak provinces.

After HIA leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's removal from the UN sanctions list, another condition the party has set for the government is the release of its inmates.

HIA spokesman Dr. Hamid Azizi, when approached for comments on the PIJC list, refused to say anything. All HIA inmates were political prisoners some of whom might have been awarded severe punishments, he said.

The party has shared a list of 700 prisoners with the government, seeking their release. "We have sent lists of HIA prisoners to the government in three phases," the spokesman said.

"In the first, we share with authorities a list of 270 individuals, in the second 208 and in the third - an addendum to the first - 179. The cases of nearly 150 prisoners have been finalised and they will be freed in the next few days."

However, he complained some institutions, financed by foreigners and Afghanistan's enemies, were trying to impede the peace process - a proof of continued international meddling in the country's internal affairs.

The landmark peace agreement between the government and HIA was inked on September 29, 2016 by President Ashraf Ghani and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

Eng. Mohammad Amin Karim, the HIA delegation head, told a news conference on Tuesday his party and the government were seriously preparing for the arrival of Hekmatyar in Kabul.

To a question posed regarding an HIA apology for its past activities, he said nowhere in the world an accused had sought pardon before being found guilty.

A bout the HIA activities, he said: "We are fighting for freedom for more than 48 years; we have sacrificed the most and are proud of our nation. We consider ourselves as fallible, we don't claim to be angels." (Pajhwok)

(14) Economy ...

ministry of economy.

"Our assessment from the GDP shows that every eighteen to twenty billion Afs investment contributes one percent increase to the economic growth," said Suhrah Bahman, spokesman for the ministry of economy.

Economic commentators have raised concerns over the issues facing national budget spend every year, suggesting President Ashraf Ghani should implement reward and punishment programs in order to achieve better outcomes.

According to the ministry, it is better for government to spend the national budget through government's financial units as this would help boost economic progress in the country.

But economists say that their evaluations indicate that the implementation of transitional projects and allocation of new funds within the national budget system have contributed nothing significant to the national economic growth. (Tolonews)

(15) Fear Cited ...

Information Law a big hurdle to investigative journalism.

But government officials, however, said they were ready to help journalists if they faced with any problem in discharging their duty.

Jawad Nabizada, a journalist in Mazar-i-Shaif, the provincial capital, identified two major reasons - insecurity and lack of financial resources - discouraging investigative journalism.

Nabizada said he would not work on a story after which he or his family could be threatened or their lives put in danger. He accused government institutions of not sharing information with journalists in time.

Qayyum Babak, known as investigative journalist in the northern zone, said journalists produced fewer investigative reports in the north and especially in Balkh because of increased threats.

"I am one of the journalists who are threatened for writing investigative reports, and there has been a conspiracy ongoing against us," said Babak, admitting it was fear for life that dis-

heartened journalists to work on investigative reports.

A reporter in Kunduz province, Gul Rahim Niaz, also called as problematic working on investigative reports.

He said there were several reasons journalists should fear about their safety while writing investigative reports. He saw fear behind self-censorship.

Giving an example, Niaz said: "A few years ago, I made an investigative report on usurpation of commercial lands. A powerful man entered a dispute with me over the report. He was supported by the governor of a northern province."

"We cannot dare write a piece on drug smuggling between Tajikistan and Afghanistan and on administrative corruption in which strongmen and government officials are involved," he sighed.

Investigative journalist in Mazar-i-Sharif, Nasim Ronaq, said whenever she had attempted writing an investigative report she had either been put in trouble by a powerful man or a government official.

She told Pajhwok she had stopped working on investigative reports because she feared for her own and her family's safety.

She said she was working for improvement in the society and if her reports put her life in danger, she would not do that.

A journalist from Baghlan province, Samiullah, said government officials and Taliban militants both created hurdles to journalists in working on investigative reports.

He said there were many subjects in Baghlan that needed investigation, but he could not research on them due to threats.

He said people's had doubts about insecurity on the Baghlan-Kunduz and Baghlan-Mazar-i-Shari highways and the issue needed to be investigated and the reasons revealed.

Samiullah said he would be threatened with elimination if he started investigating such issues.

However, Journalist Association representatives said the absence of law enforcement was the mother of all problems. (Pajhwok)

(16) Honour Martyrs...

Security (NDS). Social media users have many times asked government leaders to execute him in the interest of justice.

The former NDS chief asked the government and the judiciary to ensure the implementation of the verdict in the Anas Haqqani case to honour the martyrs' blood; otherwise the Afghan people would continue to suffer.

Meanwhile, President Ashraf Ghani strongly denounced the bomb attack as a savage act a crime against humanity. "The enemies of Afghanistan have again shown their hostility toward the people by carrying out yet another suicide blast."

A similar attack on June 11, 2013 in front of the Supreme Court had resulted in the killing of 17 people and injuries to another 39. (Pajhwok)

(17) 20 Years Old...

Takhar Civil Hospital.

Public Health Director Hafizullah Safi confirmed the young woman had been gang-raped. He said the victim was drugged by her rapists. (Pajhwok)

(18) Asfandyar...

disputed region without consulting it?" the outspoken ANP head asked. He believed the Afghan conundrum would linger on if Kabul was excluded from talks on ending the conflict in the war-torn country. "Both countries should avoid being used by external forces," he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(19) Corpses of 2 ...

the Taliban carried out the murders. There has been no claim of responsibility for the killing as yet. (Pajhwok)

(20) Women Among...

had been signed with a number of private companies to keep roads clear of snow between districts and the provincial capital, he said.

However, provincial Natural Disasters Management Authority head, Hafizullah Gulistani, said five people had died in snow-related incident based on reports they had received.

Meanwhile, the Provincial Council secretary, Hassan Reza Yousufi, confirmed life and financial losses in recent snowstorms and asked the government to pay distribute aid to affected families.

A day earlier, President Ashraf Ghani said about 160 people died and around 400 houses destroyed as a result of recent snowstorms and avalanches across the country. (Pajhwok)

(21) 152 War...

some families pretending to be poor took food and other items more than once, depriving other people in serious economic condition of the aid.

"Two such families were identified and prevented from receiving the aid items," he said, but did not say to which province the families belonged to.

One of the displaced persons, Mohammad Yousuf from Balcheragh district of Faryab province, said: "We were forced by the conflict to leave our homes and come here."

He said government forces, Taliban and Daesh militants used to clash with each other on a daily basis in their area. (Pajhwok)

(22) 2 Daesh...

spokesman, Col. Hazrat Hussain Mashriqwal, told Pajhwok Afghan News the kidnapped men hailed from Haska Mena and Nazyan districts.

One of them Abdul Baseer had been kidnapped by Daesh and his release was secure with local people's support.

Mashriqwal another person named Haji Pakhtun who had been kidnapped by unknown people was freed in Ghanikhel district. (Pajhwok)

(23) Trump, Erdogan...

to eliminate the IS, the White House said in a separate statement.

Trump reiterated the U.S. commitment to NATO and emphasized the importance of all NATO allies sharing the burden of defense spending. (Xinhua)

(24) UK's House...

wanted" but are "chipping away" at the government's position.

The government didn't want to let Parliament debate this bill at all. It was forced to introduce the legislation after a Supreme Court ruling torpedoed Prime Minister Theresa May's effort to start the process of leaving the 28-nation bloc without a parliamentary vote. (AP)

(25) Assad Says...

former President Barack Obama.

For his part, Assad pointed out "two components" for peace, the first is fighting terrorism and halting all support to it, and the second is the intra-Syrian talks to determine the future of the country. (Xinhua)

(26) UN Chef...

outposts in the occupied West Bank that were built on privately-owned Palestinian land."

"The secretary-general insists on the need to avoid any actions that would derail the two-state solution," which is widely backed by the international community to bring lasting peace between the Israelis and Palestinians, the spokesman said while reading a prepared statement. (Xinhua)

(27) France's Fillon...

jobs scandal erupted, is unlikely to reach a second round run-off, in which centrist Emmanuel Macron is seen beating far-right party leader Marine Le Pen.

But Fillon was not far from Macron in an Opinionway poll published on Wednesday, with the outcome within the margin of error. (Reuters)

(28) Turkey Coordinating...

one another, on opposite sides of al-Bab.

Erdogan's spokesman, Ibrahim Kalin, spoke to Turkey's private NTV television in an interview aired Wednesday.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights meanwhile reported fighting between Turkish forces and IS militants on the outskirts of al-Bab. (AP)

(29) US Appeals ...

a specific religious belief. Then he was asked by the judges to substantiate his claim with evidence other than the president's public statements.

The hearing was streamed online and the record was posted on the court's website. (Xinhua)

(30) UK, ADB ...

E Liepach joined Minister of Planning, Development and Reform Ahsan Iqbal to underscore the importance of an effective transport policy that will facilitate more local and regional trade, create jobs and boost economic growth. (Monitoring Desk)

(31) Iran Says...

market's supply and demand situation will balance out and crude oil inventories will drop," he pointed out.

"However, the market still needs to further cut production for the year's second six months. This issue requires further negotiations," Zanganeh added. (Xinhua)

(32) US Launches ...

longer wish to farm. The Feed the Future Tajikistan Land Market Development Activity seeks to create a land market where farmers are able to buy, sell, and lease their agricultural land. (AKI)