

(1) Ghani Urges...

entirely and abandon its struggle with militant extremism was one that captured a worried sentiment shared by many Afghans.

"We feel the threats, but it is important to remember that because of the threats that Libya and Syria are facing, Afghanistan must not be forgotten," Ghani told fellow statesman on Sunday.

Over the past few months, the U.S. and a coalition of European and Arab nations have launched air strikes against ISIS, the president of Yemen was deposed and Islamists in Libya continued to gain ground. All around the Arab world, a rapid deterioration of political and social conditions appears compelled by an expanding brand of militant extremism. Recent attacks in France, Canada and Australia have fed the resurgent frenzy around the threat of international terrorism.

But many in Afghanistan cannot help but be more self-concerned, with the threat posed by the Taliban and other terrorist groups inside the country still a very real and present danger. In Munich, President Ghani promised that relations between Afghanistan and Europe nationals would strengthen, and that the sacrifices made by their soldiers over the past 13 years would not be forgotten.

"In the region, we have experience with countries who provide safe haven to terrorists and support them," Ghani said. "Also, there are non-governmental actors who threaten our security and it must be made clear that the era of interference is long gone."

The Munich Security Conference is not an event intended to facilitate the formation of specific policies or agreements, though analysts say the meetings between world leaders will allow for discussions regarding plans for supporting the global struggle against terrorism. (Tolnews)

(2) Ghani Underlines...

According to Jianchao Afghanistan had a strategic importance and was a meeting point of regional economic and security cooperation. President Ghani also called for enhanced track-two diplomacy among parliamentarians, civil society activists and youth of the two countries. "We are in fight against elements posing threat to security and killing innocent people. We need international community's cooperation in this regard," he added.

The Chinese assistant foreign minister was in Kabul to take part in the third round of trilateral dialogue among Afghanistan-Pakistan-China held on Monday.

After Ghani's visit to China last October, Beijing has intensified efforts for peace talks and had even hosted a Taliban delegation. (Pajhwok)

(3) Lack of Political...

despite the approval of the census law two months ago by the president, the destiny of the cards is still unknown.

"The National Unity Government does not have the required political will to distribute the electronic ID cards," Arif Rahmani, member of the central audit and constitution implementation commission, said. Rahmani goes on to add that the delay is an excuse that will harm the nation in future elections if the matter is not solved soon.

"When the president has time to visit hospitals, call police commanders and direct them, how does he not have the time to receive an ID card? This is an excuse. This is called being irresponsible. Any further delay in the issuance of the cards is injustice to the people of Afghanistan."

"After signing the census law, followed by criticism, a number of people forced the president to send a letter to the acting Minister of Interior to stop the issuance of the ID cards," Mangoori said.

The chief executive's office said the issuance of the cards of the duty of the Ministry of Interior.

"We hope that the ministry will include the distribution of the electronic ID cards among their important security maintaining tasks," deputy spokesman to the CEO Asif Ashna said. As talks of the parliamentary elections surface, many on the political and public level stress the importance of transparency that can be brought by the electronic ID cards. (Tolnews)

(4) UN Chief...

He stressed that people need not only prosperity but also transparency and the enforcement of law.

Improving governance should not only address the efficiency of public services but also the stability and

justice and this can serve regional and global peace, he said.

The three-day event is attended by over 3,800 officials, speakers, delegates and media professionals. (Xinhua)

(5) 23 More Rebels...

last 23 years.

He said the rebels joined the peace programme as a result of National Directorate of Security (NDS) efforts and mediation by local elders.

The rebels vowed to shun violence and live in peace and the government would pave way to provide them with jobs, Jalala pledged.

He asked the rebels to influence other militants to shun insurgency and support the government instead. So far, 360 militants have been joined peace process in Kunar province, the governor added.

Abdul Baqi, the group leader, said that they had been fighting for the past six years against foreign forces but now they joined the peace program because foreign troops had pulled out of Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(6) Poppy Cultivation...

comes to Russia, Europe, China, South Africa, and through African countries to the EU," Ivanov said.

Through a militarized transit way, this destabilizes the situation in a number of regions in the world, he said.

According to the United Nations data, in 2013 Afghan farmers grew 209,000 hectares of opium poppy, compared with 193,000 hectares in 2007. (TASS)

(7) Trilateral Meeting ...

years discussing political, economic, cultural and peace developments in the region.

This time, he said, the meeting took place on the deputy ministerial level while earlier those meetings were held on directors' level.

Siraj did not share details of the meeting but said the outcome would be made public soon.

After President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani's visit to China last October, Beijing has intensified efforts for peace talks and had even hosted a Taliban delegation. (Pajhwok)

(8) No Stability...

of his supporters in western Herat province of Afghanistan Ismail Khan said the Jihadi leaders should be given seats in the government of national unity.

He criticized the formation of the new cabinet and claimed that almost half of the cabinet ministers are holding dual nationality.

Ismail Khan also claimed that the cabinet is comprised of communist leaders and insisted that such a cabinet would remain unable to implement peace and stability.

The Government of national unity last month introduced the cabinet ministers after almost three and half months delay where majority of the nominees are new faces and have not worked in the previous government.

However, only eight cabinet ministers and the nominee for the National Directorate of Security (NDS) were given vote of confidence.

In the meantime, Ismail Khan expressed concerns regarding the incomplete cabinet despite several months have passed from the formation of the new government.

He called on the government of national unity to provide opportunities for honest individuals who could serve the Afghan nation. (KP)

(9) Law, Order ...

in security there led to better security in the neighboring province, including the capital Kabul.

Lal Pacha, a resident of Nijrab district, the clearing operations by security forces had bolstered law and order. (Pajhwok)

(10) FEFA and...

holding the parliamentary election with the same structure and methods of the presidential election would be an oppression of the people who cast votes irrespective of security threats.

They called on the NUG leaders to fulfill their campaign promises to establish a special election reform commission; however they stressed the presence of the current election officials in this commission was unacceptable to them.

"The government needs to begin bringing reforms as soon as possible," said Naeem Asghari, program manager of FEFA. "This is a technical process that must not be politicized."

In addition, they demanded the government to finalize the date of the parliamentary elections, which they believe would likely threaten the country's stability if held with

the same foundation of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) whose officials were accused of massive fraud in last year's presidential election.

"Holding of the parliamentary election with the same system is the oppression of people," TEFA head Mohammad Naeem Ayubzada said, criticizing the government for delaying the reform process.

One of the points agreed by President Ashraf Ghani and CEO Abdullah Abdullah to form the NUG was to bring broad reforms in the election law and system.

Almost four months have passed since the formation of the NUG and the government has yet to establish the special electoral reform commission in order to avoid further crises in future elections. (Tolnews)

(11) No Final Decision...

the Wolesi Jirga for a vote of confidence, but only nine of them won the trust vote.

The lower house had risen for winter recess. The speaker had announced the house was ready to shun winter vacations and begin confirmation proceedings for the remaining cabinet picks if the president issued a special decree in order to complete the long-awaited cabinet.

Lawmakers refused to grant the trust vote to some nominees who held dual nationality or had problems in their documents.

CEO's spokesman Asif Ashna told Pajhwok Afghan News negotiations on introducing replacements for the rejected nominees and completing the cabinet were underway between the Presidential Palace and the CEO office.

He also rejected as baseless reports circulated on social media that said the rejected ministers-designate would be reintroduced to head some other ministries.

Ashna said serious and formal discussion on the cabinet nominees would start on Abdullah's return from Munich.

Ghani took three months to hammer out a cabinet list with Abdullah, who shares control over appointments under a deal following last year's bitterly disputed election. (Pajhwok)

(12) Experts Warn

on electoral reforms in line with the unity government deal, calling the delay in the panel's formation as questionable.

The Constitution binds the government to hold the elections to parliament's lower house in May-April.

Political science teacher at Kabul University, Wadir Safi, told Pajhwok Afghan News electoral reforms should be carried out, but the parliamentary elections should not be postponed.

He said if the voting was delayed from its original date then the sitting parliament would lose its credibility and its decisions would be unacceptable.

The teacher urged government officials not to prolong the tenure of the incumbent Wolesi Jirga under any circumstances in order to keep people's trust intact in the legislature.

"My suggestion is that the elections should be held on schedule and clean people should be appointed in the electoral bodies to prevent fraud, which always originates from candidates. If candidates avoid fraud, there will be no fraud."

However, election officials are appointed for a term of six years and the incumbent election officials have been appointed about a year ago.

The sitting electoral officials could be removed if the relevant law is amended.

Amendments to the election law are currently being debated in the lower house.

Under the constitution, parliament cannot amend any law in its last legislative year, but the Wolesi Jirga's administrative board insists the amendments had been approved before.

Another political expert, Faiz Mohammad Zaland, also said the parliamentary elections should be held in line with the Constitution. He said a delay under the pretext of electoral reforms would be illegal.

He warned if the elections were delayed, the government would lose its credibility. He saw no need to defer the ballot, saying the government could easily place elective mechanisms in a short span of time with the experience from past elections. Zaland said the delay could bring misfortunes to the already oppressed and war-weary Afghans.

Besides electoral reforms, the government should introduce reforms to other key sectors in order to pave the ground for economic development, peace and stability, he said. (Pajhwok)

(13) Sightings of IS...

said. "Whoever they are, either IS or al-Qaeda, they cannot divert Afghanistan from its original route."

However, rumors have grown in the past months that the armed opposition groups will likely increase their attacks under the IS brand in the coming spring, something Sediqqi said would be neutralized.

"My prediction is that militants will launch their attack in spring in two ways: first from Badakhshan and second from Helmand that will likely lead to Badghis, Faryab, and then to Central Asia," former Deputy Interior Minister Mirza Mohammad Yarmand said.

Although, Sediqqi refutes Yarmand's statement, saying that the security forces are fully prepared to foil all types of insurgency.

"I can assure you that we are much prepared compared to past years," he said. (Tolnews)

(14) Mullah Khadim ...

detainee, was travelling in a car in his stronghold Azan area of the Kajaki town when the drone hit the vehicle, killing him and some others, Deputy Governor Mohammad Jan Rassoul Yar told Pajhwok Afghan News.

"The missile targeted a car, killing three onboard, including Commander Khadim and some others have been wounded," he said.

A Taliban source, wishing anonymity, said Khadim and four others had been killed in the attack. The dead included his brother in law and four Pakistani fighters.

A tribal elder Haji Shah Wali confirmed the airstrike but he had no information about casualties. Taliban have not yet commented on the incident.

Khadim had served as a military commander in Herat and Kabul during the Taliban regime. He was a close ally of Taliban's supreme leader Mullah Omar.

Some months ago, he defected from the Taliban and joined the Islamic State, a militant group that controls large swaths of territory in Iraq and Syria. (Pajhwok)

(15) Red Cross Sees ...

fighters in the 12-month period, up from 620 the year before.

Despite the formal end to foreign participation in the war, Afghan troops remain locked in a fierce fight with Taliban militants trying to gain territory. Last year was the most violent since the war began, as NATO troops began to withdraw and Taliban insurgents tried to disrupt a presidential election.

The Red Cross only retrieves casualties when called on by combatants to do so, usually when the injured or dead are behind enemy lines.

More than 10,000 foreign soldiers remain in Afghanistan and continue to engage in combat when needed. On Monday a U.S. drone strike killed at least six alleged militants, including a senior commander suspected of having started to work for Islamic State.

The Red Cross said civilians were frequently caught up in the fighting but that the past year had seen an 18 percent decline in patients accessing medical services due to the worsening security situation.

The United Nations has said at least 3,188 Afghan civilians were killed in the intensifying war with the Taliban in 2014, making it the deadliest year on record for non-combatants. (Reuters)

(16) Visa Regime for ...

provinces had been complaining that Iran not easily issued visas to them, but the issue had been resolved.

He said currently Afghans obtained visas from the consulate in a short span of time without facing any hardship.

He said they issued visas to Afghans this year double than previous year and the process would continue.

Karimi, who met with officials of several provincial departments, said Afghan traders and farmers could benefit from Iran's advanced agriculture machinery to boost their production.

Governor Weesa thanked the Kandahar-based Iranian consulate general for relaxing visa requirements for residents of the southern zone.

He said Afghan traders had been complaining about problems they faced in obtaining Iranian visas. He said the visa problem had negative impact on bilateral trade.

The governor called Iran as a good neighbour of Afghanistan and thanked Tehran for its assistance to Afghanistan.

Weesa urged Iran to provide agriculture machinery in aid to the Afghanistan National University of Agriculture Sciences and Technology in Kandahar.

The university was last year inaugurated by former president Hamid Karzai and Indian foreign minister Salman Khurshed.

Weesa said if Iran gifted agriculture machinery to the university, it would be an unforgettable favour on Afghan students.

The newly-established university needs many facilities for its various faculties. The Iranian consulate general promised to convey Weesa's request to his country's leaders and would make every effort to fulfill the demand. (Pajhwok)

(17) Canadian...

that the over \$513,000 loss be written off the government's books.

The request was approved, the documents show.

What happened to the ammunition remains as much a mystery as when they were first discovered missing. "Although theft is a possibility, given physical size and weight of the ammunition and the tight ammunition security measures that were in place in theatre, theft is highly unlikely," said a July 18, 2014 briefing to the country's joint operations commander.

A spokeswoman for Defence Minister Rob Nicholson said thorough investigations are conducted whenever there is a loss of public property in order to ensure there are no future incidents.

The documents show the master warrant officer in charge of the supply depot at Kandahar Airfield when he was approached by Americans who indicated they were getting set up in a new position, had spoken with Canadian commanders "and it was all right to give them three of those projectiles." (Agencies)

(18) Militants ...

said the fire was controlled with the help of locals.

No one claimed responsibility for the incident. Two weeks back, militants blew up a school in Haska Mina district of the province. (Pajhwok)

(19) Drug Smuggler...

from a jail. Asif was arrested along with 58 kilograms of heroin he was carrying in a car.

He said the smuggler fled due to negligence of security guards last night. The director of the detention center along with some other officers had been detained for investigation, Bikzad said.

Elsewhere, a police official was killed in a roadside bombing in Jawzjan province.

Intelligence chief Col. Sayyed Zamnuddin Hussaini said that 2nd Lt. Allauddin, engineering director for provincial police, was killed when the bomb he was defusing on Shibrghan-Sar-I-Pul highway went off prematurely. (Pajhwok)

(20) Heavily Pregnant...

relative said, but refused to provide his name.

Jawzjan civil hospital director Dr. Mohammad Haroon Elbegi confirmed medical test showed the woman had been raped. He said the victim had signs of torture on her head.

Her spouse, a policeman stationed in Ghor province, said she had not identified the men. He asked the government to bring the perpetrators to justice.

"I would commit suicide if the perpetrators are not punished," she warned.

Provincial human rights commission head Maghfirat Samimi called the incident as "shocking" and asked security officials to arrest the perpetrators and punish them. "Not punishing

Deputy Governor Abdur Rahman Mahmudi said two of the suspects had been arrested and efforts to capture the rest were underway. (Pajhwok)

(21) Brother Shoots ...

Zamina told Pajhwok Afghan News his brother had contacts with a local police commander, Abdul Wahab.

"I'm a teacher, I serve my community and in return support my parents but Abdul Wahab incited my brother to shoot me," the wailing teacher said. She alleged her brother was addicted to drugs and also had connections with rebels.

The governor spokesman said police had started their investigation to unearth facts.

Separately, one person died and seven others were wounded in a traffic accident in southern Kandahar province, said Samim Khpalkwak, the governor's spokesman. (Pajhwok)

(22) Guards, Residents...

an individual was looking to construct a building in the land when the local residents interfered and prevented him to start work.

He said the bodyguards of the law-

maker Sharif Kama started clash with the local residents leaving three people injured including a policeman.

According to Gen. Hamidullah the incident took place around 9:30 am local time and at least four security guards of Kama have been arrested. Gen. Hamidullah also added that an investigation has been launched regarding the dispute and the case has been referred to the relevant government institution.

According to reports nearly a quarter of a million hectares of land have been seized across the country over the last decade due to rampant corruption and weak regulation.

The Independent Joint Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee following a report late in November last year said often powerful officials have been involved in land grabbing.

The report further added that less than 34 percent of Afghanistan's land has been surveyed and legally registered, leaving the rest vulnerable to land-grabs. (KP)

(23) 2 Held with ...

department in Farah City, the provincial capital.

The liquid is usually smuggled from Iran to Afghanistan for onward transportation to different areas. The liquid is used in drugs and bomb making purposes, he added.

Counter Narcotics Director Gulab Suri Nasib said the detained individuals were the citizens of Pushkrotd and Balablook districts. He said the price of one liter acetic anhydride is around \$100. (Pajhwok)

(24) Dairy Factory ...

hased milk from hundreds of women keeping livestock and exported its products to Takhar, Badakhshan, Baghlan and Kabul provinces.

A resident, Zarmina, said she supplied 30 liters of milk produced by her cows to the factory on a daily basis.

Local officials said the factory produced quality dairy items than imported ones and urged Afghans to purchase local products for the sake of the country's economic betterment. (Pajhwok)

(25) EU Puts Off Fresh ...

Hollande, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko.

"There is plenty of work left to do. There are a series of questions to answer," he said, including where heavy weapons should be withdrawn to and how to secure Ukraine's borders.

The EU now has visa bans and asset freezes for 132 individuals and 28 entities for their actions in eastern Ukraine. Nine more entities — companies and separatist groups in eastern Ukraine not recognized by the West, including one from Russia — could also be added to the list. (AP)

(26) Merkel Sets

Putin but argued that all opportunities for a diplomatic solution should be pursued.

Last week, Merkel and Hollande met Putin in Moscow and followed this up with a conference call on Sunday also including Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko. The four are due to meet in Minsk on Wednesday, but so far no breakthrough has emerged in the nearly year-long conflict that has claimed over 5,000 lives.

He said whether to supply weapons, impose tougher sanctions on Russia in the hope of forcing Putin to compromise, or throw his full weight behind the revised German-French peace initiative, even though U.S. officials accuse Putin of shredding a prior cease-fire agreement signed in September.

In eastern Ukraine, regional police chief Vyacheslav Abroskin said seven civilians had been killed by shelling in Debaltsevo and another frontline town of Avdiivka on Sunday. (Reuters)

(27) IS Pulls Forces ...

his contacts in the area.

Four other rebels gave a similar description of the movements by Islamic State, which swept across northern Syria last year buoyed by its lightning advances in Iraq.

The Observatory said Islamic State had sent fighters from Aleppo to reinforce front lines with Kurdish forces and allied Syrian opposition groups that had seized the initiative of the Kobani defeat to launch new attacks on the group.

"The front has expanded," said Rami Abdulrahman, who runs the Observatory, adding that the jihadist group still had control over a wide expanse of Aleppo province.

Last week, two Islamic State fighters said the group had staged withdrawals from Kobani to redeploy forces to Iraq. (Reuters)