

(1) Afghanistan, Pakistan...

civilian and military officials in the Friday's session, a foreign ministry official said.

The discussion is taking place under the Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS) - a joint action plan for cooperation in the key areas of counter-terrorism and reduction of violence, peace and reconciliation, refugees' repatriation and joint economic development.

The talks, which started at the Foreign Ministry in the afternoon, will also continue on Saturday. A joint statement will be issued at the conclusion of the talks.

As a goodwill gesture, Pakistan had offered joint investigation into the Kabul's attacks that Kabul had blamed on the Haqqani Network.

Afghan Interior Minister Wais Ahmad Barmak and intelligence chief Masoom Stanekzai, who had visited Islamabad on Jan. 31, had stated they had "shared information" with the Pakistani officials about the Kabul attacks.

Afghan embassy sources say the Afghan side will like to listen to Pakistani side about the offer to cooperate in the investigation into the Kabul's attacks. (Pajhwok)

(2) India a Better...

At the same event, Iranian officials stressed the need for strengthening trade relations between Iran and Afghanistan. "Iran sees the establishment of railway between Afghanistan and its northern neighbors in the benefit of the region and it supports the progress of the railway between the five nations," said Seddiq QasemiZakeri, an advisor at Iranian embassy in Kabul.

Afghanistan has sent more than 1,000 tons of fresh and dried fruit to India through the Afghan-India Air Corridor Program since June 2017. (Tolo news)

(3) Fencing Along Pak-

hold the second round of discussion on Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity.

The action plan is aimed at cooperation in the areas of counter-terrorism and reduction of violence, peace and reconciliation, Afghan refugees' repatriation and joint economic development.

Earlier, a high-level Pakistani delegation led by Foreign Secretary Tehmina Janjua, visited Kabul on February 3 to hold a discussion with their Afghan counterparts. (APP)

(4) Booming Pine...

union in Khost said that due to the lack of alternative markets, a huge amount of the produce is smuggled to Pakistan.

"China is the global market for pine nuts - and we don't have an official agreement and we ask the president to sign a contract with China, so we can export to China and other countries. The other problem we face is that we don't have cold storage units and we must sell our produce quickly and at cheap prices," said AnarGul, the deputy head of the union.

"Our survey shows that this year we had around 10,000 to 15,000 tons of pine nuts and fortunately had a good market. Pine nuts to the value of 20\$ to 25\$ million USD was sold this (solar) year but unfortunately these nuts were not exported legally," said Nasir Alam Mir, head of Khost ACCI.

Khost pine nut exporters said that every year, Pakistan benefits from the illegal export of pine nuts from Afghanistan.

(Tolo news)

(5) Death in...

increased US pressure over militant safe havens.

"Pakistan has also been stressing the need of early repatriation of Afghan refugees as their presence in Pakistan helps Afghan terrorists to melt and morph among them," the foreign ministry said, following a suspected US drone strike in the tribal belt last month.

The official pressure coincides with a souring of public opinion toward refugees, with some Pakistanis saying Afghans have overstayed their welcome.

"Enough is enough, we served them for 40 years, shared our houses and treated them as guests," said Peshawar resident Mehmood Khan.

The UN's refugee agency has warned against any forcible or coerced repatriations, insisting they be voluntary.

In late January, Pakistan extended a deadline by 60 days for refugees holding proof of registration cards to leave its territory.

But as security in Afghanistan deteriorates further, refugees at an Islamabad camp said volunteers would be in short supply.

- 'Nothing left' -

Women carried buckets of water on their heads at the camp on the outskirts of Islamabad as young children played cricket in the dust near mud brick homes that lack electricity and clean water.

But none who spoke to AFP wanted to leave, all citing security and work as day labourers.

"There is nothing left in my homeland... only war and fighting," said Hajji Shahzada, 60, who came to Pakistan during the Soviet invasion four decades ago.

A recent report by the Norwegian Refugee Council found that seven out of 10 Afghans who had returned after living as refugees abroad have been displaced twice, chased from place to place by the insurgency.

The findings should give nations hosting Afghan refugees pause, said NRC secretary general Jan Egeland.

"Now is not the time to deport Afghans... It can destabilise the whole region and lead to immeasurable suffering," he said in the report.

Often the refugees end up in major urban centres such as Kabul, competing for scant resources.

Kabul, straining to manage its expanding population and feeble economy, has failed to help them, says Sher Agha, a representative for the refugees in Islamabad.

"Providing jobs and employment is another issue, but at the very least they need shelter," he told AFP.

- 'Better to live' -

The conditions are so bleak that "many" returnees are sneaking back across the porous border and quietly taking up their lives in Pakistan, multiple refugees told AFP.

Abdul Malik was born an Afghan refugee in northwest Pakistan, living there for more than 40 years. But in 2016 he repatriated with his Pakistani wife and children.

They settled in a village near Jalalabad, in eastern Nangarhar province, where the Taliban and the Islamic State group have been waging a turf war.

"It was the most unpleasant experience of my life," Malik, wrapped in a traditional Pashtun shawl, told AFP during an interview in Peshawar.

The water was contaminated, the air was polluted, there

were no doctors, no clinics, no employment, nothing but "bad roads and difficult conditions", he said -- along with the constant fear of a brutal death at the hands of militants.

He lasted three months before sneaking back into Pakistan -- as many other Afghan families who could afford the journey have done.

Wali, who spoke to AFP at the Islamabad camp, said he would rather endure uncertainty in a country that does not want him than return home.

"Better to live here even if we face hunger and thirst," he explains.

"At least we will not die." (AFP)

(6) Kabul Records...

Police have arrested the wounded man in connection with the incident.

"They were a gang of armed men and they argued with each other. After arguing, they started shooting at each other and as a result two of them were killed and one of them was wounded," Mohammad Salim Almas, head of the crime investigation department (CID) of Kabul police said.

The interior ministry meanwhile said crime dropped by 40 percent last month after the ministry started a program to confiscate illegal weapons and banned the use of vehicles with blacked out windows.

"There are criminal networks and our investigative, intelligence and security departments are seriously working to identify them and arrest them," the interior ministry's deputy spokesman NusratRahimi said.

Kabul residents however, disputed this and said criminal incidents are on the rise in the city and that they are worried about the continued presence of illegal armed men.

"A person gets robbed in the middle of the day and there are no police to arrest (the criminals)," Mohammad Rashid, a resident of Kabul said.

"Crime is increasing day-by-day," another Kabul resident Sharif said.

"We know individuals who have committed big crimes, but have not been prosecuted," another Kabul resident AmrullahAzimi said.

NaqibullahHashimi, a member of Kabul provincial council, meanwhile said insecurity has caused people to patrol their areas at night in order to maintain their security.

"Residents in different police districts now patrol at night and watch over their areas and secure their safety," said Hashimi.

Despite the move to confiscate illegal weapons, Kabul residents say this has made little difference as there are still many armed groups in the city. (Tolo news)

(7) Mining revenue...

said illegal mining and denial of taxes by some companies prevented a large amount of revenue from reaching the ministry.

She said a list of individuals involved in illegal demining had been prepared and would be presented in the next meeting of the council of ministers. (Pajhwok)

(8) Half-Naked...

continue his demonstration. Bakhshi walked almost 500 meters from Balkh provincial council to the Shrine of Ali, in a winter chill of about 9 degrees Celsius.

"We don't have food, no security and no jobs so what should us youth do here; our

young work forces are leaving the country, and it will take a long time to rebuild the work force; why do the authorities not pay attention to us? Because of this I protested half-naked," Bakhshi said.

Bakhshi said he is also concerned about the youths silence against injustice and insecurity. He said he has a message for the youth.

"Wake up youth; Afghanistan needs you and you are the ones who can bring the broken ship to the coast; this is forty to fifty years that we have this misfortune (of war) because young people keep silent," Bakhshi added.

A number of youths in Balkh welcomed Bakhshi's move and emphasized the need for authorities to prevent terrorist activities in the country.

"Today our educated people are sacrifices and today we are subject to violence and some in politics are using us as sacrifices," said Zarifa, one young Mazar resident.

"It is time to tell government leaders that there has been enough oppression; work should be done for the youth, but every day we sacrifice our youths," said Khalida, another resident.

Bakhshi said his message to the country's leaders was that they should stop sacrificing the youth for their political goals and instead they should work towards achieving justice in the country. (Tolo news)

(9) Sayyaf in...

heir to the throne in June has shaken the political scene across the region. (Tolo news)

(10) Four Die in...

further details have been given regarding Friday's incident and no group has claimed responsibility for the incident yet.

This is not the first time a cricket match has been targeted.

In January 2014, five cricketers were killed in Laghman province when gunmen on a motorcycle drove by and opened fire on them. (Tolo news)

(11) Afghanistan Beats...

from February 9 to 19. All the matches will be played at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium.

The second ODI will be in Sharjah on Sunday. (Tolo news)

(12) Moneychangers...

Alokozai, ACCI deputy head, told Pajhwok Afghan News that the protest had harmed traders who were 90 percent dependent on moneychangers. He said traders did not trust banks and restrictions on moneychangers would bring down businesses.

The trader representative said the protest had a negative impact on imports and exports as well and traders had lost millions of dollars as a result, but he did not give any exact figure for the losses. Alokozai said he would discuss the complaints of moneychangers in the High Economic Council. Qazi Mir Ahmad, one of the striking money changers, said their strike was serving a big blow to traders. He said they would continue their protest against the central bank restrictions and would withdraw their capital and move abroad if their legal demand was not met. He said the new policy had rendered many money changers unemployed. But the central bank emphasized on the regulation. AmilHasho, spokesman for the central bank, said the banking law and the anti-terror financing law required such measures which would be enforced. He

said in accordance with the Constitution, money changers could not accumulate money and give loans. (Pajhwok)

(13) Zone level...

condition is the patient should take dose regularly otherwise it can create problems and can prove fatal," Ayubi said. "It is a great pleasure that such a center has been opened to diagnose and treat the disease." (Pajhwok)

(14) US Drones...

group loyalists have not commented regarding the airstrikes so far. Earlier, least eleven militants affiliated with the terror group were killed during the joint operations of the Afghan national defense and security forces in this province. The 201st Silab Corps in the East said at least two local leaders of the terror group were also among those killed. According to the Silab Corps, the operations were jointly conducted by the Afghan National Police, Afghan National Army, and Afghan Local Police forces in DehBala district. At least two hideouts of the terror group along with a depot containing medicines were also destroyed during the operations, the Silab Corps added. (KP)

Thai Protesters Urge Military Rulers to Give Up Power

BANGKOK — About 400 anti-government protesters rallied Saturday in the Thai capital, calling on the country's military rulers to give up power and hold elections they promised soon after staging a coup in 2014.

The demonstration, held despite the government's efforts to intimidate the protesters with legal charges, was one of the largest in recent years and reflected demonstrators' renewed confidence as the ruling junta's prestige has slipped due to corruption scandals and political sleight-of-hand. The point was underscored by the growth of the late afternoon rally from an initial 200 participants to about 400 by nightfall.

«Stop holding on to power. Stop delaying an election.» read a sign held by one protester, reflecting the main theme of the rally.

The protesters gathered near Bangkok's Democracy Monument, a traditional venue for political activity, but were kept across the street by more than 100 policemen who kept watch on their nonviolent demonstration.

More than three dozen pro-democracy activists face criminal charges for their last protest late last month, but many apparently attended Saturday's rally.

«It is very clear that regardless of the fear tactics and intimidation and baseless charges that the junta slapped on protesters, they remain defiant and relentless in expressing their rights and their freedom peacefully,» said SunaiPasuk, a researcher in Thailand for the New York-based group Human Right Watch. «Their campaign is very clear that they are reminding the junta of their own promises to hold an election within the end of this year and returning Thailand to democracy.» (AP)