

(1) Afghans Want...

negotiating with Afghanistan's government", he said.

The CEO said every Afghan wanted peace and stability and they were optimistic the new peace bid would help stabilise Afghanistan.

The Taliban have not yet formally confirmed the possible direct talks between them and the Kabul administration, but there has been growing speculation in recent weeks that new peace talks could be agreed after a Taliban delegation visited Beijing for discussions with the Chinese government.

The fresh talks are most likely to be held in Doha, Qatar, where the insurgent group has maintained a political commission to explore political settlements for the last three years.

A former senior Taliban official confirmed there had been significant progress in creating the right atmosphere for talks which he expected to start soon.

"You will be given very important details regarding peace talks by tomorrow or the day after tomorrow", he said.

President Ghani a day earlier said the Afghans should seize the latest emerging opportunity to win peace in their country. He said grounds for peace talks had never been better in the past.

Ghani has waged a strategic campaign to persuade Pakistan that closer security cooperation could dramatically reduce terrorism in the two countries. (Pajhwok)

(2) Taliban Reject ...

leaders to sit face-to-face with the Afghan government and put their demands to find out a political solution to the problem."

Some leaders affiliated with the Taliban political office in Doha are expected to visit Pakistan soon for discussions to explore ways for the proposed peace dialogue, another Taliban leader said on Sunday. "A small delegation will be visiting Pakistan in days for consultations," he said.

But Taliban's spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid in a statement said the media reports about changes in the Afghanistan case and talks with the Kabul administration were own analysis by the media outlets concerned.

Mujahid said every report and news that lacked Taliban's formal address or confirmation was false and far from reality.

Every step the Taliban would take toward peace talks would be announced through their formal sources and address, Mujahid said, an apparent reference to the Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan.

The statement said the Taliban's goal was Afghanistan's independence and the establishment of an Islamic government, for which the rebels had been using military and political means and would continue to do so.

It mentioned Taliban's relations with various countries, trips to these countries, meetings with officials there, participation of their representatives in international conferences and the opening of Doha office as part of their efforts to achieve the goal.

The Taliban's statement comes amid ongoing meetings of President Ghani with various political parties, jihadi leaders, influential figures and civil society activists to win backing for possible talks with the insurgents. (Pajhwok)

(3) 'We will neve...

Afghans themselves are able to preserve the environment our forces have created over the last few years, one of relative security and stability."

Carter told the men and women in uniform that he'd met with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Dr. Abdulla Abdullah in Kabul.

"There's one thing President Ghani said that I want to share with you. He said, 'Would you please tell your people that I appreciate the sacrifice they have made for my country.'" Carter said, "Just think about that — remember that."

Carter made a stop in Kandahar on Sunday as part of his first official trip to Afghanistan as defense secretary to thank U.S. troops there for their dedication to the mission and the progress they and their NATO and Afghan allies have achieved. (KP)

(4) Officials Allowed...

Afghan News that local officials had told them to cultivate poppies in their fields and they should not fear the crop's destruction by the government.

The grower claimed the illicit plant was grown this year in all the dis-

tricts and the anti-poppy campaign had been put on hold by local officials in order to collect bribes.

A government official in Lashkargah, the provincial capital, confirmed officials in districts had allowed poppy cultivation in return for millions of Pakistani rupees.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the anti-poppy campaign was supposed to be initiated three weeks ago, but it had been put on hold. "Besides district officials, high-ranking officials are also involved in the issue," he said.

A resident of Marja district, Abdul Ahad, said the government had promised giving in assistance wheat seeds, chemical fertiliser and other agricultural inputs to farmers, but was yet to honour its words.

He said the government's failure to provide farmers with the promised materials had resulted in increased poppy cultivation.

"Previously, people would cultivate poppy crops in areas under control of insurgents, but this year the crop is grown in government-controlled areas on a larger scale," Ahad said.

Another resident of Marja, Mara Jan, said other crops could not satisfy the needs of farmers for their low price in the market and thus their urgency to grow poppy crop.

He said no government official had so far warned farmers against cultivating poppy plant in their fields and they were hopeful their crops would not be eradicated.

Another resident, Abdul Ghafoor, said economic problems forced farmers into growing the illicit crop. Meanwhile, the Garamsi district chief, Ayub Omar Omari, said the provincial Counternarcotics Department lacked financial resources to conduct anti-poppy campaign and owed 2.3 million afghanis to tractor owners who participated in previous campaigns.

Omari said anti-poppy campaigns needed tractors and tractor owners, who had not been paid their wages, were reluctant to destroy the crops this time.

The district chief said all government-provided tractors for poppy eradication were out of order and that was why, the crop could not be destroyed in many areas last year.

"Due to this, some farmers think officials are taking bribes not to destroy poppy crops grown by others," the district said, adding the accusations would increase if the faulty tractors were not repaired to destroy poppies this season.

Meanwhile, deputy governor Mohammad Jan Rassoulyar also acknowledged the increase in cultivation of poppy crop in Helmand this year against last year's cultivation.

However, he said they had no evidence if local officials were involved in allowing farmers to grow the plant. He said if local officials were found guilty, they would be referred to judicial organs.

Counternarcotics chief for Helmand, Lal Mohammad Azizi, said they had not yet launched the anti-poppy campaign, but were planning to initiate it in the next few days.

He said they planned to destroy poppy crops grown over 5000 hectares of land in Helmand.

Azizi confirmed owing money to campaigners and that all tractors were in faulty conditions, but said the issue would be resolved and the tractors repaired in order to launch the anti-poppy drive as per the plan. He said they had no exact information about how much land was brought under poppy cultivation this year, but a 10 percent increase was anticipated.

Last year, the poppy crop was grown over 103,000 hectares of land in Helmand and the authorities had claimed destroying the plant on only 2150 hectares of land against the planned 10000 hectares.

However, the Ministry of Counternarcotics had confirmed the destruction of the plant on only 700 hectares last year. (Pajhwok)

(5) Russia Wants...

the ambassador also briefed Haji Mohaqiq on the assistance of his country to Afghanistan, saying Moscow had facilitated more than 300 Afghan security personnel to receive training in Russia, since 2010 and soon would pave the ground for training personnel of interior ministry in Russia.

The ambassador also noted that in line with agreement signed between US and Russia, Moscow would provide 63 helicopters MI-17 to Afghanistan besides training Afghan pilots. Trade volume between Russian and Afghanistan had reached around \$966m which speaks of boosting relations. Thanking Russia for its contribution, Mohaqiq said that the emergence of extremist outfit of the so-called Islamic State or Daesh in

Syria, Iraq and its infiltration to Pakistan and Afghanistan expose threat to the world community and fighting the menace requires regional and world cooperation. (Agencies)

(6) Over 11,000...

Afghanistan, which has kept its promises to help to the reconstruction of the war-ravaged country.

Iran has built several roads, power transmission lines, border stations and many other infrastructure projects in Afghanistan to better link the two nations.

Iran has also contributed more than \$50m annually to Afghan anti-narcotics efforts during the last five years. (FNA)

(7) HRW Asks Pakistan...

abuse," Kine added.

A recent increase in Afghans repatriating from Pakistan appears related to coercive pressure from local governments on Afghans to return to their country since the December 16, 2014 attack on a school in Peshawar. Increase in arrests, detentions and evictions of Afghans were reported in the three Pakistani provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Kashmir and Punjab, the HRW said.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) also said the rate of spontaneous returns of undocumented Afghans increased from an average of 59 a day in 2014 to 749 persons in the first weeks of 2015. (Pajhwok)

(8) IS Threat ...

security organs would provide their report on overall law and order in the country. A comprehensive discussion would also take place on the threats posed by the group.

"We want the ministers and masses to be aware of what we are facing in the country," the CEO concluded. (Pajhwok)

(9) Court Suspends ...

the mayor, Safar Mohammad Safar, but he was yet to appear before the court, a reason Quraishi cited for his suspension from duty.

He said there had been a lack of transparency in municipality's revenue collections as it was unknown how much of the income was used and how much collected.

The government had given the mayor a single-storey house, but he expanded the house to a three-storey building with funds from the municipality's revenue, Quraishi said.

But Safar rejected all the allegations against him and said, "The house I was living in for four years had damaged and needed reconstruction, so I spent my own money to rebuild and expand it." He said he was ready to stand trial.

Safar accused the appeal court director of fabricating the allegations after he denied him a plot of land in front of the governor's house. He called his suspension an illegal act.

Meanwhile, a number of municipality workers staged a protest against their department for not providing them with needed equipment and uniform.

"We would not work until we are provided with handcars, special uniforms, shovels and brooms," Niaz Mohammad, one of the protestors, said.

Provincial council head Safdar Mohseni also said people were unhappy with the mayor's performance for failing to resolve their problems. (Pajhwok)

(10) I will Not ...

According to Karzai the NATO and US forces failed to target the roots of terrorism.

Karzai is still believed to an influence in the new government of Afghanistan with reports suggesting that he is meeting President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani on regular basis to advise him on key policy issues.

He was one of the main critics of West's war against terrorism and refused to sign the bilateral security agreement between Kabul and Washington and the NATO status of forces agreement despite the draft security pact was approved by majority during a consultative Loya Jirga over a year ago. (KP)

(11) 50 Kids Return ...

had been selected for medical care in German hospitals for six months to one year.

Some of the children could not speak their mother tongue and would speak in German. One of the returning children was eight-year-old resident of Kabul's Astalif district, Firdosia. She spoke in German as she walked with a slight limp after she had one of her legs broken.

She was treated for her broken bone in Germany. Firdosia was waiting along with other children for her family to arrive and pick her.

Another returning child, Anar Kali,

an 11-year-old, who recovered from burn injuries in Germany, said she was happy to return home. She said children would play football and were taught hand signs early upon their arrival, picking up German quickly.

Agha Jan, a 15-year-old boy, who got her leg broken after a fall, spent one year in Germany. He hoped he would be able to continue his education and return to Germany for higher studies so that he could serve the war victims in Afghanistan.

He thanked the Peace Village and the Afghan Red Crescent Society, their parent organization, for giving him a new hope in life.

A Kabul City resident, Abdul Latif, who was holding his daughter's hand, said his daughter sustained burn injuries six months ago and she was selected for treatment in Germany. The 35-year-old father said his daughter had recovered.

Red Crescent Society official, Mohammad Nasir Zaki, said the treatment of each child in Germany cost 6000 euros being provided by their organization.

He said this way so far more than 4000 Afghan children had been sent for treatment to Germany under an agreement with the Peace Village.

Friedensdorf with dormitories, dining hall, playground and soccer field nestled together on a small hillside in Oberhausen in northwestern Germany is the place where children from war-hit countries like Afghanistan come to heal.

The group arrives after 80 children with broken bones and burn injuries were sent to Germany for treatment by the Afghan Red Crescent Society. (Pajhwok)

(12) Ulama Role...

critical juncture in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, peace in the two countries was a crucial and urgent need for the people of both countries. He went on to say that all concerned in the two countries and the region must join hands to ensure this noble goal.

During the course of their meeting, both sides agreed that Ulemas' efforts towards achieving peace were of utmost importance, and also agreed to work together to mobilize the active support and voice of Ulema in the two brotherly countries as well as from other Muslim states towards this cause. (Pajhwok)

(13) Ghani, Karzai ...

council member, was seriously wounded in an explosion and succumbed to her injuries in a hospital in Kabul.

Former president Hamid Karzai also offered condolences to the family and relatives of late Shinwari.

The demise of Shinwari created sense of insecurity among other provincial council members and they demanded the government to take necessary measures for their protection. (Pajhwok)

(14) Several Mineral...

Hamidullah Lali told Pajhwok Afghan News in an exclusive interview the initial surveys discovered mines of muscovite stones, jade stone and turquoise in Tagabsha, Tagabghar and Sarbam Badqol areas of Waras district.

He said Dahan-i-Mori area of Panjab district had marble stones and Sayara Dara area of the district had quartz stones.

"The natural resources surveyed have high quality of minerals and can generate long-term job opportunities for local people and add to the country's income if they are extracted," Lali said.

However, he said some problems like lack of electricity, transportation routes, cold weather and impassible mountains prevented companies from developing the riches.

A lack of technical equipment and funds to conduct deep surveys and good marketing sources for minerals were other challenges facing the mining sector, he said.

However, he said small contracts for extraction of some minerals including 500 tonnes of turquoise stones and 57,000 tonnes of decoration stones in Bamyon earned the government 2.3 million afghanis in revenue last year. (Pajhwok)

(15) MP Wants ...

will always be with them in their fight against any group. Be it Taliban or Daesh," he noted. The government, he alleged, did not have strong will to fight terrorism. He sought many times the security forces to be equipped but the requests fell on deaf ears.

Bulghali locality was under Taliban control few days back but after these operations and with the help of the residents the area has been cleared of militants.

Mohammad Azim, a resident of the

locality, told Pajhwok Afghan News to ensure security in the area, people have taken up arms against Taliban. "Despite being a teacher and taking care of children, I fight against Taliban."

Maj. Faiz Mohammad, Special Forces commander, assured people to defeat insurgency in the province. "Taliban do not have the ability of fighting us face-to-face. They just plant roadside bombs and mines." (Pajhwok)

(16) Afghans Support...

interviewees have also urged the government to be cautious in dealing with Pakistan.

Twenty of the interviewees expressed opposition to the talks because of Pakistan's involvement and that Taliban were not the only threat, but Daesh was also taking a foothold in the country which Pakistan did not control. (Pajhwok)

(17) ANSF Kill 33 ...

national army have also wounded three militants and captured seven others during the operations, the statement said.

However, it didn't say if there were casualties on security forces.

In another incident 29 Taliban rebels laid down arms and surrendered to the government in northern Badakhshan province on Monday, the Interior Ministry said in a separate statement. "Eleven Taliban militants including two local commanders named Eidi Mohammad and Abdul Khabir renounced violence and joined the peace process in Tagab district, Badakhshan province on Monday," the statement said.

The former insurgents also handed over five AK-47 rifles, a rocket launcher and rounds of ammunition to the police during a ceremony, the statement noted. A day earlier on Sunday, 18 Taliban fighters, including their commander Safiullah Khan, laid down their weapons and joined the government-backed peace process at the same district, the Interior Ministry said in the statement.

Taliban militants fighting who stepped up their activities since late December when the NATO-led troops ended combat mission in Afghanistan have yet to make comment. (Xinhua)

(18) Female PC ...

"We are worried about our security and cannot go outside freely after our colleague Angiza Shinwari was killed."

Aziz demanded the government to adopt security measures for their protection.

Another PC member Habibi Kakar said that female members feared and they would not be able to attend meetings and conferences due to insecurity.

Humaira Rafi, another PC member said the government should deploy security guards for their protection. She added that even female workers faced with great threat after the assassination of Shinwari.

Nangarhar PC secretary Ajmal Omar said the government should deploy more security guards for the protection of PC members. (Pajhwok)

(19) Women Rights ...

growing violation of their rights. He said Islam gave equal rights to men and women, but it was the social injustice that women had been deprived of their basic rights. (Pajhwok)

(20) Businesswomen...

head of Khwaharan Carpet Company Bibi Shereen said.

The non-existences of markets that are accessible to women have deprived businesswomen in enhancing their businesses and decreasing their chances of contributing to the national economic development of the nation.

"There is no proper place for me and other female business owners to display our products," Murwarid, an Afghan businesswoman, said. "We wait for such international expos to have a chance to present our merchandise. We don't have access to micro-financing and loans."

According to the head of ACCI, Atiqullah Nusrat, a relevant organ has been recommended by ACCI to establish a fund that will provide loans and support for the businesswomen.

The handicraft exhibition is held in Kabul every year presenting the works of more than 50 companies and 109 businesswomen. (Tolnews)

(21) Long Draught ...

subsequent decrease in wheat crop this year.

Provincial authorities, he said were needed to import more wheat be-

cause Jawzjan consumed 100 tonnes wheat annually. (Pajhwok)

(22) Afghan Carpets...

Most of Afghan carpets are exported to the United States and Europe for a sale price of \$600 to \$4,000. (Tolnews)

(23) Protesters Denounce...

She added most of violence related cases were not progressed well in courts of law or somehow interfered by powerful individuals. "It is really a matter of concern when the government does not enforce the law to bring perpetrators to justice," Saqib said.

She demanded the government to publically sentence the perpetrators involved in violence against women. Najiba Ayubi, another protester and civil society activist, said: "The government should publically sentence perpetrators of violence against women so that no one can dare to commit act of violence against women in future." (Pajhwok)

(24) Carter Convenes...

eventually defeat it. They were holding a six-hour closed-door session at this sprawling military base that hosts Terry's headquarters.

Carter called the group his "Team America." The gathering was a highly unusual way for a Pentagon chief to begin his tenure. Rather than go to Iraq and hear from U.S. officials there, Carter said he wanted a wider and deeper look at the Islamic State, in part because he is new in office. Aides said participants were told in advance to leave their usual talking points home and be prepared for a freewheeling discussion.

Among other key participants were Army Gen. Joseph L. Votel, commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, and Lt. Gen. Michael Nagata, head of the U.S. program to train and equip a moderate rebel force in Syria. Several of Carter's top Pentagon aides also attended.

In remarks to troops at Camp Arifjan before the conference began, Carter said the key to success against IS is ensuring that the countries threatened by the group can preserve the gains achieved by the U.S.-led military campaign.

"We will deliver lasting defeat, make no doubt," Carter said, adding, "It needs to be a lasting defeat." (AP)

(25) Russian Offers Iran...

with the West by trying to sell them to Syria and other Middle Eastern countries.

Chemezov told reporters conflicts in the Middle East had helped boost Russian arm sales, according to TASS.

"I don't conceal it, and everyone understands this, the more conflicts there are, the more they buy off weapon from us. Volumes are continuing to grow despite sanctions. Mainly, it's Latin America and the Middle East," he was quoted as saying.

Last year, Russian foreign arm sales totaled \$13 billion, he added.

Chemezov was sanctioned by the U.S. government in April over Russia's role in the Ukraine crisis. (Reuters)

(26) Egypt Dissolves ...

Egyptian court also designated the Brotherhood as a terrorist organization.

Egypt has been facing a growing wave of anti-security terrorist attacks in the Sinai Peninsula and other parts across the country following the removal of Morsi in July 2013.

A crackdown on Morsi's supporters left hundreds of them dead. Thousands more have been arrested and are being tried. (Xinhua)

(27) US, Allies...

statement. With the coalition's help, Syrian Kurds have been pushing Islamic State in recent fighting.

An air strike near the Syrian town of Dayr az Zawr also hit an Islamic State oil facility. In Iraq, Islamic state tactical units, fighting positions, vehicles and checkpoints were hit in seven strikes near Mosul, Kirkuk, Al Asad, Ar Rutbah and Tal Afar, the task force said. (Reuters)

(28) IS a Serious ...

Operation Zarb-e-Azb was launched in North Waziristan, some extremist elements tried to emerge together on the IS platform, but their efforts were countered. "There is concern in the Gulf and other Muslim countries about ISIL," the foreign secretary noted. (Agencies)

(29) Iran Gaining...

jets as well as radar and missile systems, but we managed to achieve great achievements in the defense field." (FNA)