

(1) Kabul Meeting ...

announced its support for any move that helps the peace process - including the quadrilateral session.

Members of the Meshrano Jirga said they are optimistic about the meetings on peace talks.

They called on President Ashraf Ghani to raise all the 'complicated' problems of Afghanistan at the session in order to pave the way for peace in the country.

Meanwhile, a number of Afghan lawmakers in the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of Parliament) on Saturday called on government to present the stance of the people of Afghanistan firmly and resolutely.

"Focus must be put on the problems clearly which could help us to settle our disputes with the Taliban and Pakistan to reach peace which is a fundamental aspiration of the people of Afghanistan," MP Farhad Majidi said. In the first meeting representatives from all four countries agreed to safeguard the sovereignty of the government of Afghanistan. (Tolonews)

(2) Extend Afghan ...

Peshawar school by the Pakistani Taliban.

"Pakistan's six-month residency extension reduces Afghan refugees' insecurity, but the government also needs to stop police abuse of refugees," said Phelim Kine, deputy Asia director. "A two-year extension both sends the message that refugees shouldn't be pressured to go home and would give officials time to work out resettlement to third countries and other longer-term solutions."

The temporary extension of the PoR cards, which officially recognize their holders' status as "Afghan citizen[s] temporarily residing in Pakistan," is a relief to the country's 1.5 million registered Afghan refugees whose existing PoR cards had expired on December 31, 2015. However, the six-month extension falls far short of the end-2017 date recommended by the Ministry for States and Frontier Regions (SA-FRON). The extension also fails to address the insecurity among refugees over the duration of that status and uncertainty regarding protection should the government end PoR status.

That insecurity is exacerbated by implicit and explicit threats by Pakistani officials over the past year, saying that after the expiration of their PoR cards, their holders become "illegal aliens and have no right to stay [in Pakistan]."

Pakistan is host to one of the largest displaced populations in the world. The 2.5 million Afghan refugees, which according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) include an estimated 1 million undocumented Afghans living in Pakistan as of November 2015, consist of many who fled conflict and repression in Afghanistan during the late 1970s and early 1980s, and their descendants. Some arrived as children, grew up in Pakistan, married, and had children of their own who have never lived in Afghanistan. Others have arrived in the decades of turmoil in Afghanistan since, seeking security, employment, and a higher standard of living.

Afghans in Pakistan have experienced a sharp increase in hostility since the so-called Pakistani Taliban, Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan, attacked the Army Public School in Peshawar on December 16, 2014, killing 145 people, including 132 children. The Pakistani government responded to the attack with repressive measures including the introduction of military courts to prosecute terrorism suspects, executions after the lifting of an unofficial moratorium on the use of the death penalty, and proposals to register and repatriate Afghans living in Pakistan.

On June 23, the federal minister for the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions, Gen. (Rtd.) Abdul Qadir Baloch, announced that there would be no official reprisals against the country's Afghan population in response to the Peshawar attack. Despite that promise, Pakistani police have pursued an unofficial policy of punitive retribution that has included raids on Afghan settlements; detention, harassment, and physical violence

against Afghans; extortion; and the demolition of Afghan homes.

Such police abuses have prompted fearful Afghans to restrict their movements, leading to economic hardship and curtailing access to education and employment. This oppressive situation has prompted large numbers of Afghans to return to Afghanistan, where they face a widening conflict and continuing insecurity. Deteriorating conditions in Afghanistan prompted more than 80,000 Afghans to leave their country in 2015 and seek asylum in Europe. The return of Afghans uprooted by police abuses in Pakistan, where many have lived for decades, to Afghanistan may add to the numbers of those seeking refuge in Europe as conditions deteriorate in Afghanistan.

"Pakistan could reduce police abuses by extending residency cards for Afghan refugees," Kine said. "This would also provide the government space to develop a long-term, rights-respecting solution for the Afghan refugees." (Monitoring Desk)

(3) Sanctions...

Vienna on Saturday in anticipation the long-held economic sanctions against Iran would be lifted.

The meeting was the culmination of months of negotiations on the Iran nuclear deal. Under the deal, the country will dial back its nuclear program and allow the IAEA to monitor the program for years to come, ensuring that Iran does not move towards nuclear weapons production. In exchange, Iran will have access to \$50 billion in long-frozen assets in foreign banks, and the ability to trade oil in the global marketplace. Some sanctions, however, will remain in place. The U.S. Treasury Department has detailed guidance on what the lifting of certain sanctions will mean for international trade.

CNN reported the IAEA is expected to confirm Iran's compliance with the deal Saturday, otherwise known as "implementation day." Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif was positive throughout the day. "I believe it's not just an important day for economic activities in Iran. It is going to open the possibilities in Iran for economic engagement," he told reporters. "What is more important is that it's an extremely important day for diplomacy. Today is the day where we prove to the world that threats, sanctions, intimidation and pressure don't work. Respect works. Through respect, through dialogue, we can reach mutually accepted agreements." (UPI)

(4) Govt. Assures ...

in such a situation. This will once again bring crisis [in the country]. This is against the interests of the country," said Mohammad Naem Ayubzada, a member of the Selection Committee.

Some MPs meanwhile said that President Ashraf Ghani should issue a legislative decree in order to bring reforms in electoral bodies and the electoral process. "In order to avoid the legal gap, we should consider some amendments in electoral laws and reforms in the electoral bodies in a bid to convince the people and the international community," said MP Mohammad Abduh.

"The best way [to bring reforms in elections] is that the president should issue a legislative decree when MPs are on their winter vacation," he added. Bringing reforms in the electoral bodies was a key element of the political agreement signed between Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah in order to revive public trust in the election process. (Tolonews)

(5) Iranian President ...

implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)." Iran also promises more transparency of its nuclear program, letting the UN nuclear inspectors be able to monitor Tehran's atomic plant.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Mogherini Saturday jointly announced the implementation day of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the historic nuclear deal reached last July. (Xin-

hua)

(6) Operations...

parts of the country. The group has a presence in five districts of Nangarhar.

Based on some official sources, at least 144 Daesh fighters have been killed and 58 others wounded in joint military operations over the past 10 days.

In addition, nearly 800 Daesh rebels have been killed in Nangarhar over the past six months, reports say. (Tolonews)

(7) Insurgency

be deployed to the area to secure the project," he said. However, officials from the four countries started their discussions on the project several years ago, but in the past few years, efforts were accelerated to get it going.

TAPI is designed to transport 33 billion cubic meters of gas annually to South Asia for a period of 30 years. Afghanistan will receive nearly \$500 million USD annually in transit duties.

This comes after reports emerged on Saturday that the Taliban had captured several villages in Greshk.

Atal, the chairman of Helmand provincial council, said: "We witnessed the collapse of a village in Greshk two days ago. Unfortunately, Adam Khan village also fell to the Taliban last night."

Sarjang, however, said on Saturday the Afghan forces had the upper hand in the fighting. (Tolonews)

(8) Parliamentary...

conditions inside polling stations and other areas.

Nuristani was summoned by the lower house to provide information on parliamentary and district council elections.

Based on the IEC's new plan, schools will be designated as polling stations, new voter cards will be distributed, voter lists will be prepared and teachers hired as short-term workers, he explained.

Nuristani informed the legislators that they had shared the new plan with security organs. Without giving details, he said the election costs had been estimated and shared with the government.

Under Article 83 of the Constitution, members of the Wolesi Jirga shall be elected by the people through free, general, secret and direct balloting.

Tenure of the lower house ends after the announcement of the results of the elections on June 22 of the fifth year when a new parliament is supposed to embark on work.

The parliamentary elections will be held 30 to 60 days prior to the expiration of the assembly's term. The ballot due in April or May was delayed due to lack of funds.

President Ghani, subsequently, extended the Wolesi Jirga term on June 17 until the new elections are held. (Pajhwok)

(9) 1,800 Displaced ...

the head of another displaced family who returned from Pakistan three months ago said unemployment and a bad economy forced him to leave his hometown.

He complained about the mistreatment of some government officials with regards to displaced families.

"They have a stick in their hand. They hit the poor people while distributing aid packages," he added.

Such aid packages, from Saudi Arabia, are much needed as tens of thousands of Afghan families have been left displaced over the past few years - mostly due to the ongoing war. (Tolonews)

(10) UN Chief...

refugees and victims of natural disasters.

Meanwhile, Ban welcomed the lifting of sanctions against Iran as part of a landmark nuclear deal reached between world powers and Tehran last year. The implementation of the deal marks "a new chapter of dialogue" between the Islamic republic and the U.S., he said.

He also lauded the release of U.S. detainees by Iran, including Washington Post journalist Jason Rezaian, in a swap deal. (Xinhua)

(11) At Least 13

Nangarhar's provincial council

and his family is active in local and national politics.

His father Malik Osman is an influential community elder in the Shinwari district near the Pakistan border who has spoken out against about the presence in the region of the Islamic State group. Khyogani said a guesthouse on the compound was crowded with people who had been invited to a family event.

"The number of casualties is likely to increase because there were so many people there," Khyogani said.

Enamullah Miakheil, spokesman for the Nangarhar Public Health Hospital, said that 13 bodies and 14 wounded people had been brought to the hospital so far.

President Ashraf Ghani condemned the attack, saying in a statement that as "terrorists lose their ability to fight Afghan forces on the battlefield, not they are carrying out terror attacks on residential areas."

The compound is close to the Pakistani consulate, targeted last week in an attack claimed by the Islamic State group.

No group has yet claimed responsibility for the Sunday attack, but a Taliban spokesman posted a message on Twitter denying Taliban involvement.

Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar, has seen the number of threats and attacks rise in recent months as the presence of IS has grown in the region.

Gunmen affiliated with IS have fought fierce battles with the Taliban, with IS taking control of at least four districts on the province's border with Pakistan.

In one of those districts, Achin, Shinwari's nephew Nasim is a former governor. Achin witnessed anti-Islamic State group and anti-Taliban demonstrations on Saturday when hundreds of residents called for the central government to rid their region of the insurgents.

The attack comes a day ahead of a second round of high-level talks aimed at eventually brokering a peace deal between Kabul and the Taliban, who have been fighting for more than 14 years. The talks will see representatives of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States and China meet to formulate a roadmap for a dialogue that will eventually, they hope, include Taliban representatives.

The first meeting of the group took place in the Pakistani capital Islamabad on Jan. 11. The Taliban have not been included in these meetings.

The meetings seek to revive a process that was derailed last July after the first and only face-to-face meeting between Afghan government and Taliban representatives in Islamabad. That initiative faltered when Kabul announced that the insurgent group's leader had secretly been dead for more than two years.

Subsequent meetings were cancelled and relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan chilled, as President Ashraf Ghani publicly blamed Pakistan for using the Taliban to wage war on his country. (AP)

(12) Suicide Bombing...

bloody bombing. Ataulah Khyogani, spokesman for the Nangarhar provincial government, speaking with Xinhua, confirmed the deadly attack, saying investigation has been initiated into the case.

In a sharp reaction, President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, in a statement released here by his office, condemned the deadly suicide attack in its strongest term, saying the terrorists after losing ability to confront security forces have resorted to attacking soft targets and killing innocent civilians.

Besides expressing sympathy with the families of the victims, the Afghan president said the country's national security forces would continue to target the enemies elsewhere in the country.

The government's Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah has also denounced the deadly suicide attack in its strongest term.

In his message, Abdullah put the attack on the enemies of peace in Afghanistan and issued directive to security organs to identify and bring to justice all those behind the bloody attack, a statement released here by his office said.

"Attack on civilians is a crime against humanity and I strongly

condemn it," a passerby, Habibullah, told Xinhua in Jalalabad.

"This is a barbaric act and a coward terrorist act to target and kill innocent people. Killing innocent people is against Islamic teaching and Islamic values," a street vendor Khan Mohammad told Xinhua here in Kabul.

No group has claimed of responsibility for the deadly suicide bombing.

This is the second deadly bombing in Jalalabad over the past five days.

In the previous attack against Pakistani consulate almost in the same locality in Jalalabad on Wednesday, for which terror group Islamic State claimed of responsibility, 10 people including three attackers were killed and nearly a dozen other injured. (Xinhua)

(13) AIIB President ...

article agreement: transparency, openness, accountability and independence," Jin told reporters in Beijing.

Thirty of the 57 prospective founding members, representing over 74 percent of the shares, have ratified the article agreement, thus becoming full members of the AIIB, and the remaining ones will have completed their membership processes by the end of this year, he said.

At their meeting, the governors also elected the bank's board of directors, which convened its inaugural meeting on Sunday afternoon and discussed a number of the bank's core policies, Jin said.

The AIIB plans to bring the first loans for approval before the end of this year, he added. (Xinhua)

(14) Syria Says...

were killed. It said around 80 of them were soldiers and pro-government militiamen and the rest civilians.

It added that many of them were shot dead or beheaded. (AP)

(15) Missing Indian...

to his friends about atrocities committed against Muslims in various countries and how the world ignores them.

When the friends questioned the necessity of extreme action, he quoted scriptures and asked them to learn the true meaning of jihad (holy war).

ATS sources has further told The Hindu that Sultan's friends had asked him what he intended to do, and his answer had been a cryptic "wait and watch".

Sultan, officials said, uses a Wi-Fi connection for chatting on WhatsApp and never a SIM card. "We have been keeping an eye out to check where Sultan goes from Kabul, as we initially believed that he would try to go to Syria."

In December last year, India arrested three university students who were on their way to join Daesh in Afghanistan.

The students, all at final year, were coming from Hyderabad. (KP)

(16) 15 Development...

communities have been able to gain access to basic human needs upon completion of these projects.

Since its inception in Ghor province, the NSP has disbursed AFN 2,690,721,803 for implementation of 3,425 infrastructure projects in different sectors including transport, water and sanitation, irrigation, power, livelihoods, education, etc while the work of hundreds of others is currently in progress in various communities. (PR)

(17) 40 Development...

rural roads, extension of a water supply network and excavation of 193 wells equipped with hand pumps. Approximately, 5,015 families in different communities had an opportunity to gain access to basic human needs upon completion of these projects.

Since its inception in Kunar province, the NSP has been able to execute 2,219 infrastructure projects in different sectors such as transport, water and sanitation, irrigation, power, livelihoods, education, etc while the work of another 55 is currently in progress in various communities. (PR)

(18) Turkey's

trampled on freedoms in the country.

He also spoke out against the

arrest last week of some 20 academics who signed a petition condemning a military crackdown in the Kurdish-dominated southeast.

The European Union on Saturday condemned the arrests as an "extremely worrying development". (AFP)

(19) Foreign Monitors...

a gas pipeline About an hour after their arrival, the mission "heard the sound of one or two shots" and saw a hole in the window of one vehicle, the report said.

On its Facebook page, the mission condemned the "violent attack against its unarmed civilian monitors".

The head of the OSCE monitoring mission, Ertugrul Apakan, described the shooting as "entirely unacceptable".

"If monitors are unable to perform their duties, there can be no security and there can be no stabilisation," he said on the OSCE website. (AFP)

(20) Obama Declares...

financially struggling city, Flint was under control of a state-appointed emergency manager when it switched its source of tap water from Detroit's system to the nearby Flint River in April 2014 to save money.

Flint, which is about 60 miles (100 km) northwest of Detroit, returned to using that city's water in October after tests found elevated levels of lead in the water and in the blood of some children. (Reuters)

(21) Israeli PM ...

threat." The United Nations watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, announced on Saturday that Iran had complied with all the demands stipulated in the July 2015 nuclear deal, prompting the lifting of debilitating economic sanctions, imposed on the country in the past decade. (Xinhua)

(22) Serbia PM...

minister can either resign or he can ask President Tomislav Nikolic -- who is an ally and founded the SNS party -- to end the parliament and call for a vote.

Elections would then have to be held within 60 days.

"My decision is that we will have elections ... Serbia needs four more years of stability so that it is ready to join the European Union," Vucic said.

Serbia must "by 2020 complete its reform process and reach the gates" of EU accession, Vucic said.

In December, Serbia began the first two of 35 stages in negotiations for Belgrade to join the EU. "We want a society that wants to work hard and we want Serbians to tell us if they want the same thing," Vucic said.

In March 2014 the SNS was swept back to power in a vote that was held two years before parliament's mandate was due to expire.

The Balkan country -- which has been hard hit by the European migrant crisis -- is in EU-brokered talks in a bid to improve relations with Kosovo, with which it fought a war in 1998-1999, and whose sovereignty it does not recognise. (AFP)

(23) Somali...

said, adding that information about casualties is being given directly to families.

In a statement Sunday, al-Shabab claimed the number of dead Kenyan troops had risen to 100. It was not possible to verify that figure.

"This audacious attack -- the largest single attack against the Kenyan military inside Somalia -- comes as a response to the aggressive Kenyan invasion of Muslim lands and the Kenyan military's continued persecution of innocent Muslims, particularly in the northeast and the coastal regions," the statement said. (AP)

(24) EU Officials...

alternative to Russian gas. Since Moscow's seizure of Ukraine's Crimea region in 2014, EU tensions over reliance on Russian energy have escalated.

German firms have joined a project to double the amount of Russian gas shipped directly to Germany, bypassing Ukraine, drawing fierce opposition from nations such as Poland. (Reuters)