

### (1) Afghans Rounded ...

in Mansehra and Mardan districts. Security forces also conducted a search and clearing operation in Landikotal bazaar and residential areas. Five suspected Afghan nationals were arrested and shifted to the army garrison. (Pajhwok)

### (2) Cabinet Officially...

exactly 105 days after the formation of the National Unity Government (NUG). Just hours before the introduction of the cabinet, nominee for the Ministry of Water and Energy Mahmoud Saikal withdrew his nomination after expressing his conclusion with Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah. Saikal has been replaced by Abdul Rahman Salahi, an ally of former Minister of Water and Energy and former Jihadist leader Ismail Khan. On Monday former Gen. Director of the Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG) Jilani Popal, withdrew his nomination as Minister of Finance to keep his dual citizenship, according to officials. Another cabinet nominee Mohammad Yaqoob Haidari, who was nominated for the Ministry of Agriculture, has been on Interpol's most wanted since 2003 and asks the government for the suspension of his nomination until the allegations have cleared. The nominees will present their platforms to the Wolesi Jirga starting Wednesday and the next two days. The MPs will make their final decision sometime next week on the cabinet. (Tolonews)

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### (3) Governors for ...

Masoom Stanikzai and Gulab Mangal are respectively in the run for governors of Farah, Helmand, Ghazni, Kandahar and Nangarhar provinces. Former president Hamid Karzai had recommended Mangal as Kandahar governor, but later Masoom Stanikzai also jumped into the race, the source said. Halim Fidaee was initially considered as Helmand governor, but later his appointment to Ghazni came under discussion. "Now he is being tipped as Paktia governor." Farah, Helmand and Ghazni, provinces that are currently grappling with a variety of problems, including insecurity, will get new governors on a priority basis. But Fidaee, a former Maidan Wardak governor and member of the Change and Continuity team, said new provincial chief executives would not be named before a cabinet was sworn in. Farah, where several senior officials including the governor were sacked a day earlier, would get priority, Fidaee believed, denying he had been offered any slot.

President Ashraf Ghani's administration, promising substantive institutional reforms, has already replaced Kunduz and Paktika chief executives. (Pajhwok)

### (4) Panel for ...

mentations were fully enforced. The committee would underline proper ways how to implement these recommendations besides focusing on improved coordination among government agencies regarding human rights protection, he said. The acting minister cited a lack of inter-institutional coordination and awareness as reasons behind the poor human rights situation in the country. Sakhi Dad, Human Rights director at the Ministry of Justice, said the UN had been extending support to Afghanistan through the ministry for human rights protection. He said the UN had so far floated 400 recommendations to the Afghanistan government about 28 different issues concerning human rights. Abdul Wahid Hidayat, an official at the Justice Ministry, said UN officials had stressed transparency in the committee's activities. Earlier, multiple human rights

organizations had objected to the government of Afghanistan for giving little attention to human rights issues. (Pajhwok)

### (5) Zarif Submits ...

bilateral ties. The Iranian foreign minister is on a daylong visit to Afghanistan to submit President Rouhani's letter of invitation to his Afghan counterpart.

Zarif met the Afghan president, Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah and the country's presidential security advisor Hanif Atmar earlier today.

Earlier this month, Afghan President's Spokesman Nazifollah Salarzi said that President Ghani has decided to embark on a visit to Iran to sign a strategic security pact with the neighboring country on further mutual cooperation in the campaign against terrorism and combating drug trafficking. Salarzi, however, did not mention the exact date of President Ghani's visit to Iran.

He noted that the strategic pact had been proposed by senior Iranian officials during former Afghan President Hamid Karzai's tenure and President Ghani is going to sign it now. President Rouhani and his Afghan counterpart had a phone call in October to discuss the latest security developments in the region, and emphasized the need for both Tehran and Kabul to strengthen all-out cooperation.

During the conversation, President Rouhani announced the Iranian nation's satisfaction over the establishment of national unity government in Afghanistan. (FNA)

### (6) Pakistan ...

means were also discussed to further enhance the existing border coordination mechanism."

Gen Rehman, his Nangarhar counterpart and representatives of Afghan Border Police and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) conferred on border security. A decision on discussions between commanders was taken during the last trilateral meeting on Dec 23 in Islamabad headed by Army Chief Gen Raheel Sharif, ANA chief Gen. Sher Muhammad Karimi and ISAF Commander General John Campbell. (Pajhwok)

### (7) Vote of Confidence...

new government was sworn in. Prior to introducing the nominees, President Ashraf Ghani told lawmakers he had done his best to put together a cabinet acceptable to them and they had the right to approve or reject the nominees. Wolesi Jirga's Deputy Secretary Irfanullah Irfan told Pajhwok Afghan News the house committee of panel heads had decided to let the nominees to explain their future plans on Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday.

After listening to their programmes, the house would grant a vote of confidence to the cabinet picks and heads of independent departments on Sunday. He said lawmakers would use their votes keeping in view work experience and eligibility of the nominees. However, some lawmakers and civil society groups have lashed out at the government for introducing inexperienced individuals as ministers-designate. (Pajhwok)

### (8) Number of Mentally ...

"You cannot ignore the fact that the Army has just spent over 10 years on intensive operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. You have soldiers who have been exposed to intense operations. There is pressure on their families and pressure on themselves, often during long tours," Stuart Tootal, a former colonel, now a mental health activist, was quoted by the newspaper as saying. Tootal urged the government to "to create a continuity of support" for retired troops suffering from mental problems, the Telegraph reported.

The Defense Ministry allocated 7.4 million pounds (\$11.23 mil-

lion) to treat soldiers with mental diseases in 2013.

In July 2014, Human Rights Watch (HRW) published a study suggesting that US veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder were four times more likely to suffer from drug or alcohol addiction. (Agencies)

### (9) Iranian FM, ...

Afghan president, Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah and the country's presidential security advisor Hanif Atmar earlier today.

Iran is one of the most important donors to 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 \$50mln annually to Afghan anti-narcotics efforts during the last five years.

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### (10) Security Leaders ...

firmly supports you and you shouldn't be worried about anything," Deputy Minister of Defense Mohammad Homayoun Fawzi said. "Over the course of history, the Afghan people have proved their courage to the world and this nation has collapsed many empires."

Mr. Fawzi went on to call Taliban insurgents cowards. "Those that resort to planting mines are in fact committing a cowardly act, because they have lost the capability to stand against you," he said.

First Deputy Senate Speaker Mohammad Alam Eziydar also spoke at the gathering. "The enemies of the security forces are enemies to our police, army, national directorate of security personnel, the people and they are the enemy of our religion; therefore you go to fight them with strong faith," he said. "It is a milestone development in our modern history that a confusing policy toward insurgents is now changing toward a more transparent policy." The graduates of Marshal Fahim Military Academy enter national security forces that are more expansive, well-trained and equipped than at any other time in Afghan history.

"There is a huge difference if we compare the resources available to you with the sources held by the opponents; you have got an army and special units," said Abdul Jabbar Taqwa, the Acting Governor of Kabul province. "Each and everything counts during battle, but you are facing a coward and intelligence war that the insurgents have waged against you."

Alongside their military training, graduates at the Marshal Fahim Military Academy have also received education in various other fields such as law, technology and linguistics. Marshal Fahim Military Academy was established with financial assistance from the United Kingdom and it is Afghanistan's largest military academy. Named after the recently deceased First Vice President of Afghanistan under Hamid Karzai, currently more than 4,500 cadets are enrolled in the academy. (Tolonews)

### (11) Fake ...

Counterfeit ID cards, printing press machines, a scanner, a computer and 95 fake licences were recovered during an NDS raid. The price of a one licence is said to be \$600.

Police captured 14 people from

different parts of capital on charges of murder, drugs and weapons smuggling and robbery. (Pajhwok)

### (12) Zarif Highlights...

Zarif also met and exchanged views on Issues of mutual interests, including campaign against drug-trafficking, with the Afghan National Security Adviser Mohammad Hanif Atmar. (FNA)

### (13) 5 Mayoral

presented their plans for the development of the city. Based on their programmes, they were awarded marks. Those who secured high marks were shortlisted," he added.

Alizai added the candidates were given marks by a panel of experts, including provincial council members, four university professors and five representatives of unions.

Out of 100 marks, Ibrahim Frozesh secured 88, Ali Ahmad Osmani 85, Farhad Niayesh 84, Abdul Basir Samimi 83 and Rozbe Shuja 80 based on the plans they presented.

In his last visit to Herat president, Ghani had asked provincial council members to introduce some nominees for the post. (Pajhwok)

### (14) Saikal Withdraws ...

is said to be replaced by Abdul Rahman Salahi, an ally of Ismail Khan, former Minister of Water and Energy and a former Jihadist leader.

This comes as former General Director of the Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG) Jilani Popal, withdrew his nomination as Minister of Finance on Monday to keep his dual citizenship, according to a source inside the Presidential Palace.

The members nominated will present their platforms to the Wolesi Jirga after the introduction by Ghani. (Tolonews)

### (15) Parwan Population...

shopkeeper having lost everything to buy drugs.

"I sold everything including my mother's jewellery. I lied about everything to everybody and when my mother came to know about it, she fell sick for a long time," he added.

It is the fifth time he has been admitted to hospital, but rehabilitation efforts have had no impact on him because once out, he would easily find drugs again. "Just with one call, they will bring you anything on a motorbike."

Eid Mohammad, 28, slipped into addiction in Iran. Back home in Bagram district, drugs are easily available to him. "Maybe anything you do in this world is good, except using drugs. It ruins your life."

Shakir, a Charikar resident, claimed drugs were sold openly in places like the old city, Nawda, Tutumbara and Tajikan. He lambasted the government for not paying adequate attention to the issue.

"If the government were doing its job properly, we wouldn't have had so many addicts in our province," Shakir argued. Niamatullah Rashid, head of the hospital, said 430 addicts had been rehabilitated in Parwan over the last three years, but 300 of them returned to drug abuse.

Out of 10,000 addicts in the province 300 are women and 500 children. The figures saw a dramatic rise in the last three years, he said. (Pajhwok)

### (16) Logar Attorneys ...

Court head Abdul Qayyum said Afghan intelligence operatives had detained the attorneys. (Pajhwok)

### (17) Dozens of Street ...

authorities to give street children their constitutionally-guaranteed rights, including the right to education.

"We have the right to go to school and want the government to build a special school for street children," said Wahida, 14, one of the girls attending the rally.

She and her nine years old brother sell chewing gums and clean cars to feed their family. Civil activist Basir Beta said

children should not be forced into hard labour until they reached 18. He criticized the government for failing to improve children's situation.

According to the AIHR and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), five million children including three million girls are deprived of education. (Pajhwok)

### (18) Flood Victims

bution to them.

The allegation comes after the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) recently built houses for residents who had lost their homes to the natural disaster.

At least 72 people, including 15 women and 36 children, were killed and dozens others wounded in the devastating flash floods that washed away 1,200 houses in the district in June 2014.

The NRC has built homes for 650 families and provided each of them with a coverlet, coal and a heater.

NRC head in the north, Habibullah Mujadidi, said the new homes were allotted to the most deserving people.

He said the NRC spent more than \$600,000 to construct the houses and providing other assistance to the families.

Rahim Dad, a resident, said: "I lost all my family members to the floods and I currently live alone in a house built by the NRC."

Arbab Sirajuddin, a tribal elder, said the flood-affected people had long been facing numerous problems such as shortages of food, firewood, appliances and others.

He alleged local officials had misused and pocketed much of the aid that was supposed to be given to the affected families. He urged the international community to fulfill its promises of aid to the flood victims. (Pajhwok)

### (19) Bacha Khan ...

leads a breakaway faction of ANP, recalled Bacha Khan had spent 33 years either in jail or in exile for his service to the Pashtun nation.

She slammed the United Nations for not giving Bacha Khan a peace prize the way the world's body conferred it on Nelson Mandela, a South African anti-apartheid revolutionary.

When asked about the trenches Pakistani forces are digging along the Durand Line in Balochistan province, Nasim Wali replied the Berlin Wall could not separate Germans and the trenches would not divide the Pashtuns.

ANP central committee member from Balochistan Aurangzeb Kasi said observing the death anniversary of Bacha Khan in Nangarhar was aimed to reassure all Afghans that they would continue his mission.

Born in 1980, Bacha Khan was a Pashtun independence activist and a lifelong spiritual leader known for his nonviolent freedom struggle.

He strongly opposed the partition of the subcontinent when the Indian National Congress accepted the plan. "You have thrown us to the wolves," a perturbed Khan told the Congress.

However, Bacha Khan pledged allegiance to Pakistan after its creation in 1947 and demanded an autonomous Pashtunistan, but he was frequently arrested by the Pakistani government between 1948 and 1954.

Bacha Khan also spent much of the 1960s and 1970s either in jail or in exile. Upon his death in 1988 in Peshawar under house arrest, he was buried at his house in Jalalabad following his will.

Tens of thousands of mourners attended his funeral coming from Peshawar to Jalalabad. Despite the heavy fighting at the time, both sides of the Soviet and Afghan armies and the mujahideen declared a ceasefire to allow his burial. (Pajhwok)

### (20) Close French...

Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

which is a disrespect to him. (KP)

### (21) Multi-Million....

this technology to the people of Afghanistan and enable the AZ Corporation to grow its business with the Eco-Ice System". The Eco-Ice System, which now holds 29 patents, is the only completely automated bagged ice production and bagging system that can be purchased or leased for world-wide use. It is also the only fully National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) certified bagged ice production system ensuring that the user can produce clean, pure bagged ice of the highest quality. (Pajhwok)

### (22) 10 Engineers...

technical government departments manage public infrastructure projects effectively, efficiently and within budget and time constraints.

The engineers taking part in the training represented the Department of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (DRRD), the provincial Education Department and the Department of Public Works (DoPW).

DCP is a basic mechanical tool for surveying underground and sub-structures of roads and tests if the subsoil underneath roads is compact enough to bear the expected loads.

The training followed practical work on three modules. The engineers learnt what soil strength is, how to design and write a measurement protocol and how to analyse the DCP data.

Participants learnt to perform these operations to improve work quality in civil road construction projects. A full DCP set will soon be provided to each of the five provinces to allow engineers to improve the design and construction of road and building foundations.

The trainings were part of a joint capacity development programme by the Regional Capacity Development Fund (RCDF) and the Regional Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF), both financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). (Pajhwok)

### (23) Militants ...

them." He said police had taken measures against vehicles with tinted glasses to improve security in the city and the process of obtaining arms licences had been made tough. (Pajhwok)

### (24) Afghan

renewed my hope and now I am healthy and happy. In the future I want to become a doctor." (Tolonews)

### (25) 8 Civilians

detained in the past two years. Three months back, police had seized 700 kilograms of drugs and arrested four traffickers in an operation in Paktia. (Pajhwok)

## Russia Must Strengthen Army to Defend Itself: Putin

MOSCOW - President Vladimir Putin said on Tuesday Russia must strengthen its armed forces to protect its sovereignty against the "challenge" posed by other countries that might threaten Moscow.

Putin's comments reinforced his commitment to an expensive program to modernize the armed forces, which the Finance Ministry has signaled will be excluded from any budget cuts forced on the government by a growing economic crisis.

"We will continue to strengthen our armed forces and military organizations as a whole by making them modern, mobile, well-equipped and capable of performing their main task - to neutralize risks and political, potential threats to the security of our country," Putin told a meeting of Russia's industry commission. Putin has also accused the United States of trying to subjugate Russia, has blamed the West for the overthrow of a Moscow-backed president in Ukraine last year and has said Washington stoked protests against him three years ago. (Reuters)