

### (1) CEO Inaugurates ...

time required to export goods by streamlining and automating customs documentation. The opening ceremony was organized by the Afghanistan Customs Department (ACD), the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries, the Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority, and USAID.

Afghan companies are increasingly exporting their goods through HKIA, but clearing customs has been a lengthy and costly process due to the need to visit and clear goods at multiple agencies. With the OSS, all relevant entities are located under one roof, and Afghan exporters will experience fewer delays and costs as a result of streamlined customs clearance procedures over time.

"The Office of the Chief Executive is pleased and proud that you have taken initial steps – represented by the opening of this One-Stop Shop – to remove barriers to trade and to make it easier for exporters to access foreign markets," said Chief Executive Dr. Abdullah Abdullah. "Moreover, the use of air cargo and the establishment of recognized air cargo corridors between Afghanistan and places like Dubai and India allow Afghan traders to circumvent the problems that have arisen over the years regarding shipment of cargo via land borders."

The launch of the OSS follows the signing of a memorandum of understanding among five ministries and two other entities: the Ministry of Finance; the Ministry of Information and Culture; the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum; the Ministry of Public Health; the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock; the Afghanistan National Standards Authority; and the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries. In addition to obtaining the buy-in of entities responsible for customs clearance, USAID worked with ACD, which operates under the Ministry of Finance, to reduce the number of customs clearance steps from 29 to 14.

The U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan John R. Bass said, "the US believes that the steps taken today – the creation of this One-Stop Center – will help not only generate income and opportunities for Afghan businesses, and employment for Afghans, but it will give the world a different vision of Afghanistan and its future."

Mr. Khan Jan Alokzay, Vice Chairman of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries, said Afghan exporters will experience simplified and standardized controls and documentation under the OSS. "Afghanistan's carpets, saffron, dried fruits, and nuts have growing appeal in Europe, India, and the Middle East. Since the launch of the Afghanistan-India Air Corridor in May, Afghanistan has exported more than 1,000 tons by air. This and future air bridges will be strengthened by the One-Stop Shop at HKIA. It will also serve as blueprint for other OSS facilities in Mazar-e Sharif, Kandahar, and Herat," he said. (PR)

### (2) Save the Children ..

eastern province of Nangarhar killing at least six people and wounding 25 others. Following the attack, The Save The Children organization stated on Wednesday afternoon that it had temporarily suspended all projects in Afghanistan and had closed all its offices in the country.

This comes a day after Daesh launched a coordinated attack on the provincial headquarters of the aid agency in the eastern province of Nangarhar killing at least six people and wounding 25 others.

"Afghanistan is if you can imagine is one of the hardest places to work, we do care about the safety of our staff, there is a lot of security as part of our work, but it is a very unsafe place," said Carlos.

"Yesterday they (insurgents) took the credit for a major crime, but the names are different, one time it is Haqqani, one day it's Taliban and one day they are Daesh, but the nature of their deed is the same, those who resort to violence, no one can consider a difference between them," said Afghanistan's CEO Abdullah Abdullah.

Meanwhile, UK ambassador to Afghanistan Nicholas Kay has also said that the international community will continue its humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan.

The attack on Save The Children sparked strong condemnations internationally.

According to Save The Children officials, the children in Afghanistan are among the most deprived children in the world who have been pushed into isolation. He said that these children are in great need of international assistance.

Meanwhile, UK ambassador to Afghanistan Nicholas Kay has also said that the international community will continue its humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan.

UK envoy Kay said that currently over 3.3 million Afghans are in dire need of humanitarian assistance. "It is very important that we do not allow the terrorists to distract and that is the people of Afghanistan, the government of Afghanistan and international partners. We must not be distracted from the hard work that we are doing all of us together in partnership to build a better Afghanistan," said Kay.

In addition to this, Stéphane Dujarric, the Spokesperson for the United Nations

Secretary-General António Guterres expressed his sympathy to the bereaved families and said that the UN will continue its humanitarian assistance to the Afghan women and children.

"He expresses his deep sympathy with the families of the victims, human rights organizations provide life saving assistance to the most vulnerable women and children in Afghanistan. Aid workers and their premises and their assets should never be the target. The secretary general reiterates all parties to the conflict in Afghanistan obliged on international law to protect humanitarian workers and civilians," he said. According to statistics, in 2017, over 380 acts of violence were recorded in Afghanistan against aid workers and aid agencies which shows a 50 percent increase compared to 2016.

"All vulnerable sites will be identified, proper security measures will be put in place there," said Mol deputy spokesman Nusrat Rahimi,

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### (3) Governor of Western...

Shah Jahan blamed political interference and corruption among security forces in the province, which abuts the frontier with Iran in the far west of the country.

"I have resigned from my post because of the worsening security situation in Farah," he told reporters. He also cited "interference in my responsibilities from various individuals".

Although Afghan and U.S. military commanders have expressed growing optimism about battlefield successes against the Taliban, backed by increased American air strikes, the problems in Farah show how unstable security remains in many areas.

Farah, one of Afghanistan's poorest provinces, has seen months of fighting and accusations of collusion between some units in the police and the Taliban, spurred by cross-border smuggling and drug trafficking.

Jahan's resignation underscored how President Ashraf Ghani's government, engaged in an unrelated standoff with the powerful governor of Balkh province in the north, has struggled to maintain control in many areas outside the capital Kabul.

On Wednesday, hundreds of people took to the streets of Farah city, the provincial capital, setting fire to two police vehicles and protesting about the lack of security and demanding the provincial leadership resign.

"Farah has been suffering from a lot of internal issues for a long time," said Farid Bakhtawar, head of the provincial council. "Security forces are there but involved in corruption and selling their outposts, weapons and fuel to the Taliban."

Local officials have also accused neighboring Iran, which the United States says is trying to extend its influence in western Afghanistan, of providing the insurgents with money and modern weapons and explosives. Iran denies the accusation.

TALIBAN THREAT "WAY OVERBLOWN"

However the NATO-led Resolute Support mission in Kabul, which is providing assistance and training to Afghan forces, said the threats by the Taliban to take over Farah province were "way overblown".

"Additional assets have deployed to the area in order to bolster security operations and drive out the Taliban," Resolute Support spokesman Captain Thomas Gresback said in an emailed statement. He said Afghan forces were in combat with the Taliban in Pusht-e Rod district outside Farah city.

"The ANDSF will not lose control of Farah to the Taliban and will do whatever it takes to hold this province," he said.

Security forces were rushed in to defend Fara city after it came close to being overrun last week but commanders say the immediate threat has since subsided.

Mohammad Naser Hedayat, commander of 207th Zafar Army Corps based in the neighboring province of Herat, said three battalion-sized units combining army and police had been deployed to Farah to push the Taliban back.

"There is an ongoing operation in Farah and we understand there are problems we need to fix," he said.

"However, many in the city fear it could still fall. "Shops in the city were closed for days and there is still panic among the people that the Taliban are returning," said Haji Hashem, a car dealer. He said gunfire and explosions, though no longer so close, could still be heard outside Farah.

"The government here has lost its way and has no clue how to deal with the situation," he said. (Reuters)

### (4) US Designates ...

finances for southern and western Afghanistan. He is alleged to have passed on 10 million euros paid to the Taliban for the re-

lease of hostages in mid-2011 to the finance commission's leader in Quetta, the AP report said. (Tolonews)

### (5) US Forces Drop...

According to the US Air Force figures, the number of airstrikes in 2017 was twice that of those carried out in the past two years – 2015 and 2016.

US Air Force also has said this year they will bring in more airplanes to Afghanistan and will increase their support to the Afghan security forces on the battlefields.

According to the figures, US and Afghan Air Force have conducted an average of 15 airstrikes daily in 2017 in south of Afghanistan.

The Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan said following the announcement of Donald Trump's new strategy for South-Asia and Afghanistan, the number of airstrikes against insurgents has increased significantly.

"Airstrikes are up significantly in 2017 primarily due to the South Asia policy which President Trump has signed and allowing us to go after both the Taliban and ISK (Daesh) where they are. It is going to allow us to pursue them. The rules of engagement are now different," Resolute Support Mission (RS) Public Affairs Director Thomas Gresback said.

In the meantime, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has said that NATO will send in another 3,000 military trainers to Afghanistan to train Afghan forces.

Stoltenberg said the international community will not let Afghanistan to turn to a safe haven for insurgents.

"Allies and partners are also adding three thousand more trainers to the Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan, helping prevent Afghanistan from ever again becoming a safe haven for international terrorism. Afghanistan has taught us that prevention is better than intervention," said Stoltenberg.

Afghan Defense Ministry meanwhile said the Afghan Air Force has changed their tactics and that they are carrying out airstrikes with a new approach to eliminate terrorists.

"We have increased our attacks and also we succeeded to eliminate a great number of the enemy's strongholds, equipment and personnel by operations carried out by air and ground forces," Defense Ministry deputy spokesman Mohammad Radmanish said.

"There will be significant results if these (military) operations are conducted in good coordination," former military officer Gen. Ahmad Shah Sangdil said.

The new remarks about the increase of airstrikes and sending in more advisers and trainers expressed amid currently over 20 provinces of the country are insecure and nearly 14 districts in different locations have collapsed to the Taliban.

In addition to this, recently Taliban has advanced toward Farah city fighting against Afghan security forces. Despite ongoing fights in Farah city outskirts, fights also have been ongoing in parts of Kunduz province. (Tolo news)

### (6) Three Women ...

lives and jobs are not safe," a resident of the province Jan Mohammad said.

"There are many problems. There are illegal armed men who create horror among the people in the city," Raz Mohammad, a resident of the province, claimed. (Tolonews)

### (7) Zakhilwal Meets ...

Central Command chief General Joseph Votel in a phone conversation that the "entire Pakistani nation felt betrayed over US recent statements despite decades of cooperation."

Bajwa told Votel that Pakistan will not seek to restore US military aid, but it does "expect honorable recognition of our contributions, sacrifices and unwavering resolve in the fight against terrorism," the statement said.

US President Donald Trump on January 1 accused Pakistan of "lies and deceit" and said the United States would suspend around \$2 billion USD a year in military aid until Islamabad moves decisively against Afghan Taliban and Haqqani Network militants who he said have found safe haven within Pakistan's borders. (Tolonews)

### (8) China Denies...

of people have died in recent years in unrest blamed by China on Islamist militants. China has also worked with Pakistan and the United States to broker peace talks to end Afghanistan's Taliban insurgency that has raged since the militants were ousted by U.S.-backed forces in 2001.

China opened its first overseas military base, in the Horn of Africa country Djibouti, last year. China has previously denied having plans for other overseas bases, but the United States expects China to build more, with Pakistan a likely location. (Reuters)

### (9) Afghanistan Beats ...

Mujeeb and Qais Ahmad took four wickets each while Naveen-ul-Haq took one to restrict the New Zealand batsmen.

With today's win the Afghan Under-19 national cricket team managed to secure spot in the upcoming semi-final matches of the

World Cup. (KP)

### (10) Taliban Loses Two ...

explosive device was discovered and defused as well, the officials said.

The anti-government armed militant groups including the Taliban insurgents have not commented regarding the incident so far.

Faryab is among the relatively volatile provinces in northern parts of the country where the anti-government armed militants are actively operating in a number of its districts.

At least two Taliban insurgents were killed and three others were wounded in the airstrikes conducted in Qaisar district last week. (KP)

### (11) Pakistani Fruit,...

of Pakistan brought by drivers as shown in the video. Instead, one employee of the authority motivates investors and drivers to buy the fake certificates from a man named Muzammil. But when Muzammil finds out that he is pictured, he refuses any involvement in this matter.

The footage shows that later the customs official asks drivers to call for the help of the Finance Ministry's contracted employees who will charge the drivers for processing the phytosanitary certificates.

The fake document is dealt for 8,000 AfFs by investors and drivers. However, according to drivers, it takes a long and even impossible process to achieve the valid certificate for the imported fruit and vegetables which is issued in Peshawar City of Pakistan.

Drivers in Torkham said they have never achieved the certificate in Pakistan and that they buy them in Torkham.

The footage shows one driver who is standing in front of his truck loaded with orange. He says his truck is stopped in Torkham Gate for three years due to the lack of the certificate.

The Ministry of Finance says the institution has employed contracted workers to help the drivers in processing the certificates. Spokesman of the ministry said others except the contracted employees are not allowed to get the certificates for drivers.

"Anyone, except those who have not been hired through proper exam and those who do not have the required documents, are not allowed to work as a broker at the customs (office in Torkham)," Ajmal Hamid Abdul Rahimzai, spokesman for Ministry of Finance, told TOLONews.

"Government should be serious about the issue and it should take action against such elements in line with the law," said Abdul Latif Wahidi, civil society activist in Nangarhar.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) meanwhile confirmed that two types of Pakistani phytosanitary certificates are used in Afghan ports over the past several years.

"It was decided to inform the Pakistani ministry of agriculture through official channel to issue a certificate which can prevent the distribution of fake certificates," MAIL spokesman Akbar Rustami said. (Tolonews)

### (12) NATO to...

be reinforce in 2019 with the new needs for training of the Afghan national army," said Spanish minister Cospedal.

NATO allies have already promised almost \$3 billion to help the United States fund the Afghan military until 2020, which is developing an air force to complement its ground forces.

NATO particularly wants to train more Afghan special operations forces, which are key to countering Taliban insurgents and extremist groups undermining the weak central government in Kabul.

The alliance also wants to help build up the country's fledgling air force and train pilots. Another aim is to improve officer leadership standards. (ATN)

### (13) Khalilzad Warns ...

to Afghanistan is said to believe that the international allies and partners do not have enough patience to tolerate the continuation of tensions between President Ghani and Noor.

"I don't think that Mr. Noor makes a mistake. He is a clever person. It would be a great mistake for him to stand against international forces. I think, there will not be any need for international allies to force Mr. Noor to accept the decision of President Ghani," Khalilzad noted.

He stressed that the problem between the two sides must end in the framework of the constitution as soon as possible.

Khalilzad went on to say that the world will not remain neutral in reaction to support of some government officials from Noor and the Kandahar police commander, Gen. Raziq. "They should not think wrong. This issue won't last for long. Now some individuals use this problem for their private interests. The system of feudalism is not acceptable either in Kandahar or Balkh," he added.

Previously, the Kandahar Police Chief Gen. Abdul Raziq in response to his removal from the position has said that he has not been appointed by the current government and that the state cannot remove him.

Noor has also often described as having built an empire in Balkh province as he re-

fused to leave his position as the governor of Balkh after President fired him. (ATN)

### (14) U.S. Dismisses Pakistani...

that a drone strike had taken place, however, and the comment from security officials suggested that it had hit its intended target.

Pakistan rejects American accusations that it is supporting and sheltering Haqqani militants using bases inside Pakistan to prepare attacks on U.S. and allied NATO forces in Afghanistan.

President Donald Trump has accused Islamabad in a tweet of "lies and deceit". Pakistan denies the allegations, saying that Washington has been trying to make it a scapegoat for the failures of its war in Afghanistan.

In the meantime, to Pakistan's annoyance, the United States continues its drone campaign against militants in mountainous border regions bordering Afghanistan where government control is limited.

Since Trump took office a year ago, these drone strikes have increased, though they are a long way off their peak of 2010.

Pakistan's Foreign Ministry on Thursday reiterated its position that "unilateral actions are detrimental to the spirit of cooperation between the two countries in the fight against terrorism".

The army said the strike had not eliminated any "organized terrorist sanctuary" but "struck individual target who had morphed into Afghan refugees", without specifying who exactly it believed had been hit.

The army said 43 of Pakistan's 54 Afghan refugee camps were in the northwest, and that it was essential that their inhabitants be repatriated. It said the incident vindicated Pakistan's stance that the militants could easily blend in with the refugees.

Pakistan is home to nearly 2 million registered Afghan refugees and another 1 million unregistered ones, displaced by decades of war in their country. (Reuters)

### (15) MoI to Share ...

President Ashraf Ghani has warned that government will punish all those who are found guilty of a security lapse.

However the general public's opinion is that government is not providing information to the people.

"When the government is not prepared to provide complete information, naturally such an approach leads to further speculations and rumors," said Sayed Ekram Afzali, head of the access to information commission.

But, contradictions exist about the transfer of security to a private firm.

"After receiving numerous letters from the ministry of interior about its lack of interest to take charge of security of the concerned hotel, the security of Intercontinental Hotel was handed over (to a private company)," said Mohammad Haris Nayab, deputy chairman of Intercontinental Hotel.

"Not at all, the security of the hotel was transferred by the same body (Ministry of Finance) that the hotel security belongs to and it was suggested that the security of the hotel should be transferred from the ministry of interior to a private security firm," said MoI deputy spokesman Nusrat Rahimi.

"All aspects of the terror attack on the Intercontinental Hotel will be investigated," said Ghani's spokesman Shalhussain Murtazawi.

"Whatever exists, it should not be kept secret from the people, people must know what really happened, why it happened and who committed negligence," said Mohammad Agul Mujahid, a former security officer at the hotel.

This also comes amid ongoing questions around the final death toll. (Tolonews)

### (16) German Judge ...

"Sorry, but this judge is dishonorable... There are laws in Germany and judges should adhere to them. Poor Germany, everyone is only thinking of our government in the first place. We are foreigners in our own country." (RT)

### (17) Blood Donation ..

Uzbek's blood is the same. Let's work together for our country," Gen. Mohammad Nabi Qate, member of the party said.

Members of the party called for a quick end to the ongoing violence in the country. "This nation is one nation and is united," Jabar Qahraman, a member of Watan party said.

"How long we should suffer and how long we should be divided?" asked Sitara Andar, member of the party. (Tolonews)

### (18) New Retirement ..

Meanwhile, military analysts said the draft law is not in favor of security agencies. "The main pillar of the security forces are those people who according to this draft law are about to retire. If these people are removed from the security departments, it will be difficult for the national army to prove themselves easily," military affairs analyst Jawed Kohistani said. Interior ministry however said the implementation of the new retirement-age draft law will bring reforms in the security forces lines. (Tolonews)