

(1) Challenges ...

and global disputes should be resolved through dialogue as a political solution was the best way to resolve differences. He commended Ghani's support for the completion of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline. The project would be completed in time, he hoped.

The Turkmen president said Afghanistan was the gateway to most countries in the region and all of them could get maximum advantage of the war-torn country's strategic location. (Pajhwok)

(2) US Ambassador...

tremendous sacrifices for their independence, which they valued a lot. The diplomat added the people of Afghanistan were the main victims of the war on terror and they recognised the fact.

He continued Afghanistan had been in conflict over the past 40 years, starting with the Soviet invasion and continuing to Taliban rule.

Llorens said the unity government was committed to eliminating corruption. Graft-tainted individuals should be given severe punishment, he stressed. He also called for holding Wolesi Jirga and district council elections, saying free and fair polls would help restore public trust in the government and the system. (Pajhwok)

(3) Russia, China ...

extremism, drugs, and refugees pose a threat to security and stability in the country and the region. The sides express concern over the spread and activation of terrorist and extremist organizations in Afghanistan, first of all the growing influence of the Afghan 'wing' of the Islamic State international terrorist organization," the statement said.

On Monday, Xi arrived in Moscow for a two-day visit at the invitation of Putin. Later in the day, the two leaders held an informal meeting in the Kremlin. On Tuesday, the two leaders are expected to discuss strategic cooperation between the two nations, as well as international agenda items.

Putin said that during their meeting he and Xi managed to cover all the aspects of bilateral cooperation, including international issues, economy, military and humanitarian issues.

The ongoing visit is Xi's sixth trip to Russia during his presidential tenure. Moscow and Beijing cooperate in a number of areas, including energy, infrastructure and the military. (Sputnik)

(4) Helsinki Airport ...

because activity that compromised the security of passengers and air traffic could not be allowed inside special international locations such as the airport.

Police said that the demonstration proceeded peacefully otherwise. Earlier on Monday night, police removed demonstrators who had gathered in front of the Pasila police station. Officers claimed that the protesters attempted to prevent the free movement of police by measures such as sitting at the entrance to the parking hall.

Law enforcement said that the removal of the protesters took place peacefully.

In 2016 Finland tightened asylum guidelines for applicants from Afghanistan, Somalia and Iraq, making it much harder for them to obtain asylum. Over the whole year some 5,192 applications from Afghans were dealt with, of which 1,870 received a positive decision. The rest have been asked to leave the country. (YLE)

(5) Taliban, Foreign ...

"There is a big issue with the leadership of the forces, for instance, when a check post is under siege, reinforcements are not being sent in on time," said military analyst Mohammad Mohsin Mukhtar.

"Air and ground forces are on red alert to be dispatched to Kunduz," added Bahrami.

The Afghan security forces are currently tackling insurgents in at least 21 provinces and security threats are extremely high in some of these provinces. (Tolnews)

(6) Lithuania Troops ...

(TAAC-W), it said.

The Lithuanian contingent in Afghanistan currently numbers 21 soldiers. The new shift is to depart for the Asian country aboard a Lithuanian Air Force Spartan aircraft shortly.

The second team of military instructors is leaving for Iraq to replace six officers of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas Headquarters Battalion, who were deployed to the Inherent Resolve mission last February. (LETA/TBT)

(7) Afghanistan ...

Afghanistan is currently building Kamal Khan Dam, 120 km from the border with Iran, by the completion of which it can transfer hundred percent of the water flow in Hirmand to Godzareh in its territory.

The International Conference on Combating Sand and Dust Storms (SDS) which is

being hosted by the United Nations (UN) and Iranian Department of Environment would review Challenges and Practical Solutions to the issue.

Iran is among the world countries which have been badly hurt by the SDS phenomenon.

Iranian government has mounted a national campaign to fight the SDS, and it also has had active presence in the international events, which has led to approval of four resolutions about the issue. (IRNA)

(8) Hizb-E-Islami...

Over the past fifteen years, the Afghan government as part of its peace initiatives has knocked on several doors with the hope of persuading the militant group to endorse peace, but the Taliban has so far defied government's gestures and instead continues to carry out attacks on targets and the security forces. (Tolnews)

(9) Afghan Fans ...

coming into effect on 26 April 2017, unless he exercises his right to challenge the imposition of the provisional suspension before such date," the sport's governing body has said.

Shahzad, who has played 58 one-day internationals for Afghanistan, has five days from the notice of the positive test to ask for his 'B' sample to be tested.

He has 12 days to determine whether he will challenge the provisional suspension. If he does elect to have a hearing then the ban will not be imposed until the outcome is known.

If he does not respond within 14 days, the ICC will have deemed him to have waived his entitlement to a hearing and admitted to having committed the anti-doping rule violation.

In reaction, a number of Afghans have initiated a campaign on social media sites (Twitter and Facebook), seeking end to the provisional suspension of Shahzad.

The campaign led by an Afghan sports journalist, Jafar Haand, has attracted hundreds of Afghan social media users. Haand told Pajhwok Afghan News hundreds of Afghans and cricket fans joined the campaign in a short span of time. "I saw our voice reaching the ICC and the 'Forgive MS' hashtag has become a sensation on Twitter."

Haand said he considered the campaign a right of Shahzad and in favour of the Afghan cricket, hoping their efforts would yield positive results.

He asked the Afghans and cricket fans to broadly participate in the campaign in order to be effective and strong.

Hasti Gul Abid, former cricket player, said Afghans had recently joined the cricket world and were not fully aware of international rules. He urged the ICC to end or reduce Shahzad's suspension period.

"Shahzad has confessed to taking the drug mistakenly and in ignorance, the ICC has to forgive his mistake."

The Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) has earlier said a defence lawyer was hired for Shahzad to work with the ICC on the issue. Shahzad is considered the back-bone of the Afghanistan cricket team due to his leading role in many victories.

His aggressive style is loved by many Afghans and foreign fans and is specially sought after in the T20 format. Currently ranked fourth behind McCullum, Dilshan and Guptill in the list of highest run-getters in T20 internationals, has performed exceptionally well in the shortest format of the game.

Shahzad has decent numbers in ODI cricket as well. In 58 games, the opener has accumulated 1901 runs at almost 34. He has four centuries to his name - the highest amongst Afghan players. His strike rate of 91.35 makes him a very popular player in Afghanistan cricket.

Here are some tweets by cricket fans seeking Shahzad's forgiveness: Najeebullah Akhterzai tweets, "Forgiving human mistake is a divine order. The ICC is requested to forgive MShahzad's doping penalty as a gesture of goodwill." Jafar Haand tweets, "Dear ICC, please kindly, as a gesture of goodwill, forgive/reduce MShahzad's penalty for the doping violation." Many other fans tweeted in support of Shahzad. (Pajhwok)

(10) High-Level...

President Ashraf Ghani announced he did not want peace from Pakistan; instead he desire normalization with the neighbouring country.

The US senators are expected to meet President Ashraf Ghani, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dr. Abdullah Abdullah and a number of other Afghan officials. The delegation's visit to Kabul comes as the US is giving final touches to its new policy on Afghanistan, where the security situation has nosedived in recent months. (Pajhwok)

(11) Iranian Presiden...

on the development of water resources development in Afghanistan earlier in March this year, saying "Water is for the benefit of our people and the region. Our guidance principle is to stand for our

people's rights."

"We expect from our neighbors not to be concerned whilst water networks and dams are established but to support these initiatives," he added.

Earlier last year, President Ghani had said work on key infrastructure projects including construction of water dams will start in accordance with the available resources.

During a meeting of the National Procurement Commission (NPC) late in March this year, President Ghani reviewed a report by the Ministry of Energy and Water regarding the construction of 29 large, medium and small water dams.

President Ghani said necessary measures will be put in place for the start of key infrastructure projects, considering a balance and the available resources. (KP)

(12) US Preparing Iran, Russia, the Central Asian states and China's Xinjiang region," he added.

In relevant remarks last month, a senior Afghan legislator revealed that the US helicopters have transferred a large number of ISIL terrorists to the province of Nangarhar in the Eastern parts of the country.

Last week, the US military helicopters transferred over 50 ISIL fighters to Barabad region of the town of Behsoud in Nangarhar province, Zaher Qadir said.

He also disclosed that a container full of military equipment was also delivered to the ISIL terrorists in Nari Obek region of Nangarhar province.

Qadir called the US as the actual murderer of Afghan people, urging the government to pursue the issue.

Nangarhar was among the relatively calm provinces in Eastern Afghanistan but the Taliban and ISIL have recently increased their activities in some parts of the province in recent years. (FNA)

(13) Afghanistan ...

last month, Mattis said the new U.S. strategy will take a "regional approach" rather than addressing the country's long-running war in isolation.

"We are taking a regional approach to this... We will take that forward to the president for a decision very soon," he said.

This comes as the Afghan officials have long been insisting that the leadership councils of the Taliban group and the notorious Haqqani terrorist network are based in Peshawar, Quetta, and other parts of Pakistan from where they plan and coordinate attacks in Afghanistan.

The Afghan officials earlier said that the deadly explosion near the embassy of Germany in Kabul was plotted by the Haqqani network in Pakistan, although the leaders of the network and the Taliban have rejected their role in the devastating attack that killed over one hundred and fifty people.

"Afghan oriented militant groups, including the Taliban and Haqqani Network, retain freedom of action inside Pakistani territory and benefit from support from elements of the Pakistani Government," Pentagon said in a report last month.

The report further added "Although Pakistani military operations have disrupted some militant sanctuaries, certain extremist groups - such as the Taliban and the Haqqani Network - were able to relocate and continue to operate in and from Pakistan. The United States continues to convey to Pakistan at all levels the importance of taking action against all terrorist and extremist groups." (KP)

(14) Afghan-American...

he explained to AFP.

The art project boasts more than five hours of recordings from 70 different New Yorkers and will remain in Times Square until September 5.

Mojadidi first started working on the project in 2014, well before Trump ran for president and unleashed vehement rhetoric against unauthorized immigrants and took office attempting to restrict immigration from certain Muslim countries. The shifting political environment saw Mojadidi scrap initial plans to dot the project around the city and hold formal workshops in different communities. He said his subjects became "very nervous" about the idea.

"Why do we need to come there? Who else is going to be there?" he quoted them as saying. "In the end, it was all very one on one. So the way I implemented the project changed a lot." Nor is the choice of telephone booths insignificant.

"When I learned how phone booths were starting to be removed from the streets, not just in New York but in other cities around the world, I immediately thought about all of the stories that are trapped inside of these phones," he said.

"I thought of a natural way to bring stories back to the streets by using the phone booths, bring back the spirit of the phone booths." (AFP)

(15) Turkmenistan,

The Agreement on Cooperation in Scientific and Educational Sphere is signed between Magtumulgy Turkmen State University and Jauzdan Province University.

Following the talks, Presidents Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and Mohammad Ashraf Ghani signed Joint Statement.

At the top-level talks, the two presidents focused on the regional security and bilateral cooperation. Particular attention was paid to the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project implementation. At present, construction work on Turkmenistan's section of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline is under way. Moreover, the technical aspects of laying the gas pipeline on the territory of Afghanistan are considered.

The two leaders underlined the possibility of increasing the volumes of the mutual trade and its diversification and emphasized that the Intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation would work in this area.

The talks in Ashgabat confirmed the inviolability of the fraternal and good-neighbourly relations between our countries, their readiness for the close economic cooperation, joint implementation of large-scale transport and energy projects.

On November 14-15, 2017, Ashgabat will host the 7th Regional Economic Conference on Afghanistan. The negotiations on various aspects of the long-term regional economic cooperation will continue at the forum. (AKIPRESS)

(16) 62 Insurgents ...

Taliban hideouts and weapons were destroyed, the police chief continued.

He said more operations would be launched soon in different parts of Helmand to vanquish the insurgents.

On the other hand, a local security official revealed the Taliban had gathered in the district to plan a huge attack on Lashkargah.

But Afghan and foreign forces attacked the rebels before they launched an assault on the provincial capital and a large number of the militants suffered casualties.

The Taliban confirmed the operation, with the group's spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid claiming nine security personnel and only two fighters had been killed. He said the Taliban had defeated Afghan and foreign forces in Nawa and recaptured all areas of Nawa, once the most stable districts of Helmand, which fell to Taliban a year ago. (Pajhwok)

(17) Senior Police ...

Yesterday's explosion followed weeks after a series of explosions rocked capital Kabul, leaving more than 150 people dead and hundreds other wounded.

The explosion near the embassy of Germany on 31st May was considered as one of the deadliest since the fall of the Taliban regime.

The explosion also triggered political instability in the country after the protests organized in reaction to the explosion turned violent that resulted into the deaths of some of the protesters. (KP)

(18) Daesh Commander Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said a strong partnership among the US, Afghanistan and Pakistan was "a prerequisite" for sustainable peace in Afghanistan. He emphasised the importance of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) for facilitating Afghan reconciliation. (Pajhwok)

(19) IS Destroys ...

curriculum acceptable to Islamic State must be taught in areas that the group controls.

Girls forbidden to attend school A local resident who did not want to disclose his name for safety reasons told VOA that IS militants warned girls not to attend school. They make up 40 percent of the 18,000 enrolled students in the district's 47 government-run schools, which are currently closed for summer holidays.

Abdul Hai Yesheen, Jawzjan province's education chief, told VOA the IS militants destroyed biology labs inside the schools. Islamic State adherents say they consider study of the human skeleton to be a form of polytheism.

IS and rival militants from the Taliban have clashed fiercely in a fight for control of Darzab, and Baz Mohammad Dawar, acting chief of the district, said 10 Taliban militants were beheaded after they were captured by IS fighters last week.

Islamic State and Taliban fighters streamed into Darzab last month from two directions, and scores of Afghan government forces in the area were under siege until counter-strikes by Afghan and U.S. forces took effect. The center of the district was held by the Taliban, with IS militants controlling areas outside Darzab's center, but local officials said both groups subsequently were driven out by the combined Afghan and U.S. effort.

Airstrikes kill 7 IS commanders Airstrikes carried out by U.S. unmanned aircraft, or drones, have killed at least seven IS commanders during the past two weeks, the local officials said.

Two IS commanders who were known as ruthless for the many beheadings they carried out reportedly were killed on Sunday in Darzab. Another five com-

manders, including the deputy IS leader in the province, were killed last week in neighboring Qoshtaipa district.

IS militants have been most active in eastern parts of Afghanistan until recently, but the extremists have been trying to establish a permanent presence in several of the country's northern provinces.

Another source in the region who asked not to be identified told VOA that IS has been recruiting unemployed youths between the ages of 13 and 20 to join its forces. The militants are said to have recruited hundreds of fighters from Jawzjan and neighboring Sar-e-Pul province, where several districts are controlled by Islamic State or its affiliated groups.

Qari Hekmat, an ethnic Uzbek and former Taliban commander who switched his allegiance to Islamic State a year ago, is said to lead IS-affiliated groups in the region, and is credited with the recruitment of about 500 fighters in his new role. A large number of Central Asian fighters affiliated with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), previously associated with al-Qaida and Taliban in Afghanistan, have joined the IS cause in the northern provinces. (VoA)

(20) Taliban Cut into ...

and the road connecting it to Pul-i-Alam, the provincial capital, has been blocked over the past 14 years. The district residents travel through Nangarhar and Kabul to reach the provincial capital. (Pajhwok)

(21) 18 Taliban ...

Taliban insurgents also joined peace process in western Farah province of Afghanistan.

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

Uruzgan is among the relatively volatile provinces in southern Afghanistan where the Taliban insurgents and militants belonging to the other insurgent groups are actively operating in its various districts. This is not the first time a report has emerged regarding the infighting among the Taliban insurgents as numerous similar incidents have taken place in the past in other provinces, specifically following the death of the group's founder Mullah Mohammad Omar. (KP)

Offensive on to Wrest Back Pachiragam Control

JALALABAD - A military operation is underway to wrest back the control of the Pachiragam district of eastern Nangarhar province from militants, an official said on Tuesday.

Almost a month back, Daesh -- also known as the Islamic State (IS) -- launched coordinated attacks on the district and captured most of its strategic areas, including Torabora.

Qari Hijratullah, the district's administrative chief, told Pajhwok Afghan News the security situation had improved. Peace had been restored most parts of the district, barring a few villages, he claimed. The security forces have closed in on Markhani village.

Police chief Abdul Rahman Rahimi said the rigid terrain was a hurdle to the operation but security forces were still advancing at a good clip.

He added the offensive would continue until the last insurgent was eliminated and security forces and local uprising groups secured the area.

Residents also confirmed security had improved in the district but stressed assistance to displace families. Malak Toar, a tribal elder, said most villages were under security forces' control, but efforts should be made for the peaceful return of displaced families to their homes. (Pajhwok)

29 Taliban Insurgents Lay down Arms, Join Peace Process

FARAH CITY - Eighteen Taliban fighters in Uruzgan joined the peace process along with an additional 11 in Farah provinces, the MoI said in a statement. At least 29 Taliban insurgents laid down arms and joined the peace process in western Farah and central Uruzgan provinces this week, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) said in a statement on Tuesday.

"A group of 18 armed Taliban fighters renounced violence and surrendered to the Afghan National Police after their commander was killed in Tokhi village, Dehrawood district, Uruzgan province," read the statement.

According to the statement the group was involved in "planning and coordinating suicide attacks, and carrying out other destructive and terrorist activities in Dehrawood."

This comes after a group of 11 armed Taliban fighters also renounced violence and joined the peace process in Bala Bolok district of Farah after the group handed over their weapons to security forces, the statement read. (Tolnews)