

(1) Time is ...

train and advise the Afghan forces. The German president welcomed their warm reception and hospitality extended to them on arrival in Afghanistan. Frank-Walter Steinmeier said he first travelled to northern Balkh province and met troops from his country based in Mazar-i-Sharif, the provincial capital.

He said German troops were fighting shoulder to shoulder with Afghan forces against terrorist elements. "They (German forces) told me the Afghan army is more organized and strengthened compared to the past and cooperation with the Afghans to build on their abilities will continue."

The German leader thanked the Afghanistan government for its attention to security of diplomats and said German diplomats would normally continue their job.

The Afghan president said terrorism was threatening the region and the world and currently the menace's nature and shape had changed and needed a global consensus and campaign.

Ghani said sufficient reforms had been brought to the Ministry of Defense and the process continued, however the focus had been on the Ministry of Interior in order to make both the security organs free of politics and professional.

The president said the four-year security plan was ready and its implementation in cooperation with international partners would help further improve the capabilities of the Afghan security and defense forces.

The two sides also discussed upcoming parliamentary and district council elections in Afghanistan in July next year.

Ghani said the elections were of great importance for Afghanistan and thanked international partners, particularly Germany, of their cooperation in conducting the ballots.

The president hoped the elections would take place in a peaceful environment and in a transparent manner.

About the 'Kabul process' and the High Peace Council's activities, the president said the Afghan government was committed to establishing peace in the war-torn country.

The peace agreement with Gulbadin Hekmatyar proved that intra-Afghan dialogue could succeed, said Ghani, vowing to implement the peace deal with the Hezb-i-Islami Afghanistan.

The president once again said their priority was making peace with Pakistan first before negotiating the same with the Taliban because the rebels had no one leadership.

Ghani said time was running out for the Taliban to choose between peace and war, asking insurgents to reach a conclusion soon. (Pajhwok)

(2) National ID ...

Law relating the ethnicity. But the controversial issue was eventually resolved after President Ashraf Ghani issued a decree.

"The issue was resolved, Article 6 of the Census Law was amended and the cabinet approved it, later on the president approved the census law on the basis of the same amendment," said second vice president Sarwar Danish's media advisor Hedayat.

"Unfortunately the process is moving forward illegally, decrees are even not sent for years to the national assembly," said the head of the senate's legislative committee Ghulam Muhaiuddin Munsif.

Last week government announced the establish of an e-NIC rollout monitoring committee which includes representatives from the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), Ministry of Interior (MoI), Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG).

The new ID cards have better security features and will be extremely difficult to forge, officials said. (Tolonews)

(3) Trump Faces...

won't, even after a strategy rolls out." The question of how to define victory in Afghanistan bedeviled both of Trump's predecessors. And now, a decade and a half after the first U.S. bombs fell there, it falls to the former real estate developer with a penchant for short declarations on even the most complex issues.

"Now, we never win a war. We never win. And we don't fight to win. We don't fight to win," Trump complained to the National Governors Association in late February. "So we either got to win or don't fight it at all." (Monitoring Desk)

(4) Ukraine, ..

to be implemented, and the work of the OSCE monitors need to be allowed to proceed unimpeded."

Stoltenberg said the security situation in Afghanistan – "which remains challenging" – was on the agenda during Thursday's meeting.

"A stable Afghanistan is essential to regional security. NATO allies and Russia share a common interest to support the National Unity government and to work towards a free, safe and democratic Afghanistan," he said.

"The third and final topic we discussed was transparency and risk reduction," Stoltenberg said.

He said joint briefings on exercises and force posture at previous meetings of the NATO-Russia Council were important elements of

ongoing dialogue.

"They help to limit the risk of misunderstanding, miscalculation and unintended escalation," Stoltenberg said.

"Russia briefed on the upcoming ZAPAD 2017 exercise, and NATO briefed on Exercise Trident Javelin 2017.

"It is a dialogue that can continue at future meetings of this Council," Stoltenberg also said, adding that these "voluntary exchanges do not substitute for the mandatory transparency required under the Vienna Document".

The document covers security-building measures among OSCE states, which include Russia, the U.S. and European countries. (AA)

(5) 4th Afghanistan...

(But) in fight against terrorism, a big part of the efforts is done Afghanistan."

The chief executive called on representatives of other countries to convey the message of "balancing the cooperation in the war".

Referring to a number of regional countries, he said terrorism is still supported by some states in the region. "There is no difference between Daesh and Taliban as well as between good terrorists and bad terrorists," Abdullah said.

The session will continue for two days where senior officials from Afghanistan and Central Asian countries will discuss a wide range of issues particularly boosting cooperation among countries in the region. (Tolonews)

(6) UN Underlines..

important step toward peace and stability in the country.

According to a statement from NSC, The UN representative stressed pledged made during the Kabul Process huddle should be implemented and coordination should foster a head of the next meeting.

He believed all steps taken for peace in Afghanistan had yielded a positive outcome but the Kabul process – an Afghan initiative for negotiations with insurgent outfits – had massive backing from the UN and the global fraternity.

He called for regional cooperation in the fight against terrorism, hoping regional countries would evolve a unified strategy to eliminate the scourge.

Atmar thanked the UN backing of the Kabul process as well as political and humanitarian support. He agreed regional cooperation was vital in combating terrorism, which posed a threat to the region. (Pajhwok)

(7) Dostum's ...

Ghani on July 12 told a press conference that Dostum traveled to Turkey following the Attorney General Office (AGO)'s permission, a claim rejected by Dostum office and said the AGO had no such authority according to the Constitution.

The AGO on Wednesday announced completing its investigating into rape and torture allegations against Dostum leveled by his political rival Ahmad Eshchi, a former governor.

The VP office said a number of Dostum's bodyguards had cooperated with the AGO in clarifying the case that was then filed at the court, an issue the statement said did not relate to Dostum.

Dostum's office also reacted responded to recent remarks of Special Chargé d'Affaires of the US Embassy in Kabul, Hugo Llorens, about Dostum, saying Afghanistan had an independent judiciary and organs that could deal with such cases according to the law.

"Irresponsible views expression by foreign diplomats in such cases create concerns for the Afghan people, we are sure that the US will not prefer one tribe over another, it will be better if we serve national interests in this critical time. Pursuing ineffective policies of removal would not benefit our international friends," the source said.

The office of Dostum stressed that effective steps should be taken for bringing reforms to government departments and law enforcement keeping in mind the current situation of the country and concerns of the international community, instead of wasting time on 'marginal' issues.

On Tuesday, top American officials asked the Afghan government not to come under political pressure in investigating allegations against first vice-president Abdul Rashid Dostum.

US Ambassador Hugo Llorens told reporters the allegations against Dostum should be investigated carefully and in a transparent manner.

The European Union (EU) and its member state Norway in a statement on Thursday also called for timely conclusion of investigation into gross human rights violations by Dostum. (Pajhwok)

(8) Key Pak...

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)

(9) EU Envoy Slams ...

a political affairs analyst. President Ghani at a press conference on

Monday said he will end the caretaking trend in government within the next six months. (Tolonews)

(10) US Lawmakers...

Afghanistan is effectively implementing a whole-of-government, anti-corruption strategy that has been endorsed by the High Council on Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption, as agreed to at the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan in October 2016, and is prosecuting individuals alleged to be involved in corrupt or illegal activities in Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(11) No one from ...

by its Arabic acronym in Afghanistan, the group has been fighting against Afghan forces over the past two years and has so far claimed responsibility for several high profile attacks in Kabul and other provinces.

The Iraqi envoy did not talk about casualties to either side in the battle for Mosul but accused the Daesh group of using civilians as human shield. He said the Al-Nuri Mosque had been destroyed, a place from where the group announced its 'caliphate' two years back.

Earlier, media reports said several Daesh rebels had fled Mosul to other places as defeat was imminent for the group. (Pajhwok)

(12) Trade Activities ...

in the industrial sector if the required electricity was ensured to the industrial sector. The president thanked the businessmen for investing in Kandahar for the sake of Afghanistan development and its people.

He asked the concerned officials to allocated land for investors in Helmand and assessment for the new industrial park in Kandahar should be carried out promptly.

The president said he was monitoring the power supply project to Kandahar himself and not delay in the regard would be acceptable.

Ghani said more electricity from Kajaki Dam would be produced, work on solar power generation was also underway and more electricity would be imported from Turkmenistan. (Pajhwok)

(13) American, ...

militants in the Nangarhar for some time now. The rocket attacks, however, indicate an intensification in the war against IS in the country.

Attaulah Khogyani, Nangarhar provincial government spokesperson told VOA that the rocket attacks on IS hideouts are conducted based on intelligence provided by the Afghan security agencies.

He added that the rocket attacks have targeted key IS members, killing several of them.

Rocket attacks more accurate Local residents in areas under IS control echo Khogyani's account and have welcomed the move, saying rocket attacks are more accurate and effective. Ground operations by Afghan security forces, they say, result in civilian casualties at times.

Waliullah, a local resident in Deh Bala district said rockets have targeted IS positions only, without causing harm to the civilians in the area.

"Airstrikes and ground operations have caused civilian casualties. Rockets fired from the city (U.S. military base) are accurate and do not target civilians," Waliullah told VOA's Afghan service.

U.S. and Afghan security forces have been engaged in joint-counterterrorism operations against IS militants in Nangarhar and neighboring Kunar province.

Drone strike a success

Earlier this year, U.S. military and Afghan government promised to eliminate IS in Afghanistan by the end of 2017. Hundreds of IS fighters, including several senior commanders have been killed in recent months. A suspected U.S. drone strike late Tuesday reportedly targeted a gathering of IS militants in Kunar province, killing 11 fighters, including four key IS commanders.

Pentagon did not immediately confirm Tuesday's drone strike.

The IS terror group has been active in several districts in Nangarhar province. Recently, it has expanded to neighboring mountainous Kunar and Nuristan provinces as well, which share a border with Pakistan, to establish a persistent presence there.

Militant leaders killed IS has drawn the majority of its members from the Pakistani Taliban fighters, some former Afghan Taliban, and other militants from varied nationalities, including militants from India, Iran, Russia and central Asian neighbors.

In May, the terror group lost Sheikh Abdul Hasib, its leader in Afghanistan. Hasib was killed in a joint U.S. Afghan forces raid in eastern Nangarhar.

His predecessor and founder of IS's branch in Afghanistan, Hafiz Saeed Khan – a former Pakistani Taliban commander – was also killed in a U.S. drone strike in July of 2016. (VoA)

(14) Government ...

strength of the government system.

"It is not the Taliban regime who did whatever they wanted asking the government leaders to understand the situation," he said.

Razzeq asked the lawmakers to hold the government accountable being the representatives of people because people don't

have access and resources to keep the government accountable.

He said those, including government leaders, trying to divide Afghans on ethnic and linguistic bases were the enemy of Afghanistan.

Lawmaker Lalai Hameedzai said the Turkey-born alliance was made for personal agenda and its purpose was to divide the Afghan people.

Firs Deputy Speaker Mohammad Humayon Humayon also accused the government leaders for injecting differences among people. He, however, said they did not want to derail the government but to reform it. (Pajhwok)

(15) Pakistan Says ...

The Pakistani foreign ministry spokesman was responding to a question regarding the warnings issued by President Ghani to accept peace talks or get ready for the inclusion in the global list of specially designated terrorist groups.

President Ghani said last week that the Taliban group should understand that time is not waiting for them.

"They should wholeheartedly accept the peace process or they should get ready to be included in the international list of the globally designated terrorists," President Ghani said.

President Ghani further added that the government of national unity has a crystal clear approach and policy towards peace process since the beginning of its formation.

In the meantime, during a meeting with the German president Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the Afghan leader said less time is left for the Taliban group to accept the reconciliation process offers, apparently reiterating the government's previous stance that strict military operations policy will adopted along with the efforts to blacklist the group.

President Ghani further added that the priorities of the Afghan government is to reach to a peace agreement with Pakistan first and then with the Taliban group, emphasizing that Taliban is not having a single leadership and apparently gesturing towards the undeclared war being waged by Pakistan as he has consistently been emphasizing upon for a long time. (KP)

(16) Mohaqiq Labels ...

The budget spending is being delayed in the procurement authority. If there is corruption, it is inside the National Procurement Authority, but (when it happens) it is asked from ministers," Mohaqiq said in an interview with TOLONews on Friday.

Mohaqiq who also leads the People's Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan formed the Coalition for Rescue of Afghanistan with Balkh governor and CEO of Jamiat-Islami party Atta Mohammad Noor and with Abdul Rashid Dostum, the first vice president and the head of the National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan in Turkey late last month.

Mohaqiq pointed out to the new alliance and said it is aimed at ending the monopolization of power in government.

He said cabinet ministers have no authority, no job to do and are abandoned.

"A few companies that belong to certain groups get the projects, but unofficial individuals outside the country get their shares," Mohaqiq added.

When asked about who is corrupt in the National Procurement Authority, Mohaqiq did not name anyone and said "it can be anyone at the authority".

The National Procurement Authority meanwhile rejected Mohaqiq's remarks and said "all the decision in the authority are made jointly".

"At least 81 percent of the projects are under the authority of the high ranking officials," said Bakhtiar Najman, an anti-corruption specialist at the National Procurement Authority.

According to the NPA statistics, at least 130 companies have violated the procurement law and have been deprived of participation in bidding processes of projects. (Tolonews)

(17) MoI Contractors ...

projects under contracts with the MoI; but the ministry due to administrative corruption and laziness had not paid them the seven billion afghanis outstanding amount.

"The institutions concerned haven't responded with a satisfactory answer to contractors and except insulting and threatening."

He claimed several delegations tasked with resolving the matter had failed in their task after being influenced by some MoI officials. He said non-provision of the cost to contractors by the government had plunged them into a financial crisis and they weren't even able to clear their permits.

Totakhail said the mentioned companies wanted President Ashraf Ghani and CEO Abdullah Abdullah to take steps for addressing their issue.

He demanded tasking a neutral delegation with investigation into the companies' problem, adding the delegation should also identify private construction companies which had committed negligence in their works.

Sayed Jawad Haidari, ANUCC deputy chief, said they had many times shared the issue with the MoI and the Ministry of Finance (MoF) through official channels, but in vain.

He said if the issue wasn't addressed, the

companies would have no option but to stop working on their construction projects in capital Kabul and provinces and would hold protests and pitch sit-in tents near the Presidential Palace and the MoI.

Khan Jan Alokozay, first deputy head of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI), also spoke on the occasion. He said the ACCI would defend the rights of the companies and would soon convey their voice to the Presidential Palace and the CEO office.

Alokozay asked the government resolve the issue in a span of one month keeping its promises entrepreneurs and the private sector.

He said continuation of such issues would dishearten the business community and investors.

Abdul Jameel, a spokesman for MoI, denied commenting on the issue for now, saying the authorities of the ministry would discuss the issue in the light of documents next Saturday at a press conference. (Pajhwok)

(18) Border and ...

by the BMSC to 19. The ongoing process of refining the curriculum allows us to keep the course at the top level," said Dita Nowicka, the BMSC Director. She further noted the success of the previous courses that resulted in a better representation of women in the last course with 18% of participants being female.

Topics covered during the course included international drug trafficking and counter-narcotic co-operation between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, transnational anti-crime and anti-drug activities in Central Asia, human rights and gender in border security and management, asylum seekers and refugees at the border as well as leadership and management.

"The BMA courses provide an excellent opportunity for participants to learn about new developments in their profession and for us to hear from them what they think. For the students in this particular course, we have chosen subjects requested by previous participants. We will in turn use their feedback to improve future courses, making them as relevant as possible to participants' needs," said Michael Holman, BOMNAF's International Training Specialist.

"It is important to bring different agencies and nationalities around the table and train together, as it is always good to see things from a different perspective. Skills that you don't use on a day-to-day basis are easy to forget once you climb up the ladder, but being a border and customs officer on the Afghan border you get to wear a lot of different hats. Therefore it is vital to know every single one of the aspects of border management, and that is what this course provides," said Jonathan Holland, the course instructor. (akipress)

(19) All-Girl Afghan...

confirmed the girls had been granted an exemption, called a parole, that would allow them to travel.

"I look forward to welcoming this brilliant team of Afghan girls, and their competitors, to Washington DC next week!" Trump's daughter, Ivanka Trump, wrote in a statement on Facebook. "These girls represent our world's future scientists, engineers, and innovators!"

While officials did not comment on the reasons for initially denying the girls visas, the United States often denies visa requests from Afghans over fears that they will refuse to return home.

Members of the team said they see the competition as a chance to help improve conditions in Afghanistan, where women and girls often face significant limitations in public and private life.

"Afghanistan is a war-torn country where it is difficult for women to improve," said 15-year-old Lida Azizi. "But now this is a big chance for us to attend in the competitions and also it's good for our country." (Reuters)

(20) Mortars Kill..

on Thursday when a mortar shell hit their home in Shah Joy district, Zabol governor's spokesman told Pajhwok Afghan News.

Gul Islam Seyal said the injured children had been taken to a local hospital but he had no information about their condition.

There has been no word from the Taliban about the two incidents. (Pajhwok)

(21) ALP Forces...

of 100,000 afghanis by each house was accepted, he said.

Haji Jumma, a tribal elder of the village, said no one was hearing their voice in the government and security organs. "No one, except the God, hears our voice."

On the other hand, provincial security officials said such claims were propaganda of militants.

Police spokesman Karim Yurish said ALP forces in Faryab served under the command of the provincial police headquarters.

He said no incident of civilian deaths had happened in Khairabad area of Dawlatabad district. "The elders may be forced by militants to complain this way," he said.

However, Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) head Gen. Abdul Mannan for the northern zone, had earlier accused ALP forces of killing innocent people. (Pajhwok)