

(1) Sopko Counts...

repeat the same treatments with the women as they did during their regime.

"We also have to deal with the issue of how the Taliban are gonna treat women. That was a key goal of us in the coalition to improve the lives of women and girls in Afghanistan," Sopko added.

He said Washington has spent \$132 billion in the last 18 years in Afghanistan's reconstruction, but the goals for which the money were spent have not been achieved.

Sopko's remarks came amid the US and Taliban members have held sixth rounds of talks to find a political settlement to the Afghan conflict. (Tolo news)

(2) AGO Slaps...

of the ministry. The attorney general of Afghanistan assures that whenever the case is referred to the attorney, all issues will be pursued firmly and resolutely," said AGO spokesman Jamshid Rasuli.

Based on leaked documents, the company was supplying 5,000 kilograms of meat to the national police in a province, but they were receiving 10,000 kilograms of meat in bills by police commanders. In some cases, when police commanders were not prepared to do so, the company was using a fake stamp to do its job.

The documents show that the majority of the amount was embezzled in Kabul, Parwan, Nangarhar, Kapisa, Pajshir, Baghlan, Nuristan and Laghman provinces.

The total amount of contract between the Interior Ministry and the contractor company is estimated AFS1.2 billion (around \$15 million).

According to the sources, the owner of the company and its staff members had forged the stamp of the Ministry of Interior and were collaborating with police commanders in provinces to conduct the "embezzlement".

The company's name is Shuja Abdara and Hamid.

Anti-corruption organizations stressed the need for systematic efforts against corruption within the Ministry of Interior.

"In our perspective, the decision was made very late. The problem in the ministry of interior is not limited to one or ten cases of corruption, but it involves hundreds and thousands of cases which includes officials of the ministry of interior and others from outside the security agency," said Nasir Timori, a researcher at Integrity Watch Afghanistan.

The Interior Ministry's spokesman Nusrat Rahimi said a thorough probe is underway into the case. "Everyone involved in the corruption will be treated based on the law," he added. TOLONews reporter tried to seek a comment from the family members of Rasa, but his family members refused to comment on the issue. (Tolo news)

(3) Speaker Row...

settlement of the dispute. But Qazi Mir Afghan Safi, a lawmaker from Kabul province, said no delegation could settle the dispute until the house session was not organized in line with the law and principles of the house. "If a temporary speaker is elected and he convenes the session of the house, the problem could be resolved." (Pajhwok)

(4) Bala Murghab...

According to him, at least 10 security force members were killed and 11 others were wounded in the Taliban's attacks, which according to him started early on Thursday.

He said government forces control only an army base on the outskirts of the district's center.

He said the security forces will suffer "severe casualties" if reinforcements are not deployed to the area.

Local officials, however, denied commenting on the issue.

In the meantime, National Directorate of Security (NDS) said in a statement that at least 62 fighters of Taliban's so-called 'red division' were killed in security forces operations in central Maidan Wardak province on Thursday night.

The statement says that eight commanders of the Taliban's red division were among those killed. (Tolo news)

(5) Taliban Bomber...

foreign forces withdraw from Afghanistan.

The insurgent group dismisses the Kabul administration as a puppet installed by "American invaders".

The Taliban, however, has engaged in informal discussions with Afghan opposition politicians and civil society groups. The latest round of such talks

took place in Moscow this week.

A joint statement issued after the meeting on Thursday, however, offered no substantial outcome on issues such as a Taliban cease-fire during upcoming Muslim festival of Eid. (VoA)

(6) All Ports will...

National Bank, said they were committed to providing services to transfer all revenue of the government in a transparent way.

Nangyallai Sharifi, head of the Rahmani Transportation Company, told Pajhwok the process of revenue collection was previously slow but the process had improved and money could be deposited in the bank directly. (Pajhwok)

(7) Denmark...

with her daughter Marzia. With the dismissal of her plea, she has been denied the right to stay in Denmark. She could not meet the immigration ministry's requirement of producing a doctor's diagnosis to grant her humanitarian asylum.

Since Waziri is not a Danish citizen, she cannot avail herself of the country's health services without paying a steep price of around \$13,500, according to Marzia.

Marzia warned her mother's deportation to Afghanistan would amount to a death sentence. "She's in bed 99 percent of the time. She can't do anything." (Pajhwok)

(8) Dunford Vows...

al Qaeda and the Daesh. Top Taliban leaders have long sought the full withdrawal of all 14,000 remaining American troops from the country and have made the troop pullout requirement a main pillar of their negotiation strategy with Khalilzad's team. (Tolo news)

(9) 'Considerable' Progress...

Jamiat-i-Islami party head Atta Mohammad Noor.

Presidential candidate Hanif Atmar, Hezb-i-Wihdat party chief Mohammad Mohaqqiq and several other Afghan politicians took part in the event that coincided with a ceremony marking 100 years of diplomatic relations between Russia and Afghanistan.

In their joint statement, the participants thanking Russia for its hospitality said they had in-depth discussion on key issues and agreed to continue such meetings in future.

"Both sides held beneficial and in-depth discussion on ceasefire, protection of civilian lives, prisoners, the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan, establishing Islamic system, national sovereignty, territorial integrity, national unity, women's rights and others."

The joint statement said the discussions took place in a cordial environment and both sides made 'considerable' progress in their talks. As some issues needed further discussion, it was agreed that such meetings would continue. (Pajhwok)

(10) Govt Faces...

reiterated on a "collective decision" of at least 13 presidential runners for establishing a "caretaker government" until the upcoming presidential polls.

"I really don't know what are the achievements of the incumbent government for the people?" asked Masoud.

This comes a day after the US Ambassador to Afghanistan John Bass said that the National Unity Government's constitutional term has ended, however, he clarified that the United States "respects the interpretation of the constitutional court which has extended the government's tenure".

"We passed the end of the government's constitutionally mandated term," Bass said in an interview with TOLONews.

He said that he expects the government leaders and their cabinet members and staff members understand the "extraordinary period" and act with "self-restraint" during this period.

"We fully expect that the president and the chief executive officer and the ministers and their staffs understand that this is an extraordinary period and that they should be acting with a degree of self-restraint in how they conduct the business of government to limit that to the fundamental business of the government," he said. (Pajhwok)

(11) Taliban Rejects...

Last year in June, the two sides agreed on a three-day ceasefire which was widely welcomed by the Afghan people and Afghanistan's international partners.

Karzai's statement came a day after his meeting with Taliban members in Moscow, where the group rejected the calls for a ceasefire. (Tolo news)

(12) Peace Marchers...

The journey participants would meet Taliban officials and local residents to win their support for the ongoing peace process.

He said they would convey their peace message to Taliban and local residents in Musa Qala and hoped their message would be listened to.

Another member of the peace journey, Bacha Khan Muladad, said they were optimistic residents living in areas under Taliban would pledge their cooperation towards peace and ceasefire.

He said they would not only travel to Musa Qala but several other insecure areas to discuss peace and ceasefire with common people and Taliban insurgents. (Pajhwok)

(13) New Polio Case...

disease. There is no cure and the vaccine is the only safe and effective way to protect children.

All children should be vaccinated against polio during each campaign, until they reach the age of five. House-to-house vaccination is the only effective way to achieve polio eradication because it means every child has access to vaccination.

This strategy has been implemented in all countries, and has proven to be most effective. However, if parents live in areas where there is no house-to-house campaign available, they should take their children to the local health facility for free polio vaccine.

The polio vaccine is safe, even for sick and newborn children. It is important that newborns and sick children get the vaccine, because they may have lower immunity which makes them more susceptible to the virus.

Polio vaccination has also been strongly endorsed by national and global Islamic scholars.

Currently, only Afghanistan and Pakistan are reporting endemic polio cases. So far, in 2019, Afghanistan has reported 8 and Pakistan has 19 polio cases. (Pajhwok)

(14) Indian PM...

a suicide car bomb attack which killed 44 special force police officers in the disputed Kashmir region - an incident that brought the two nuclear-armed powers close to all-out conflict.

Modi's new cabinet is also likely to be sworn in soon, but the new government is not in for an easy ride. The country is facing economic slowdown and pressing questions about security and reform. (RT)

(15) China, Japan...

or even the global perspective. As economic globalization suffers setbacks amid rising unilateralism and protectionism, it is the duty of China and Japan to cooperate in a mutually beneficial way to plan for the long-term prosperity and stability of the region and the world.

From the regional perspective, Chen said that it is urgent to complete as early as possible the negotiations over the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the trilateral free trade agreement among China, Japan and South Korea.

The two sides should also strengthen cooperations and coordinations at important multilateral occasions such as WTO, G20 and APEC, he said.

Chen said that China-Japan relations are back to the normal track of stable growth in political, economic and cultural exchanges and need continuous "updates." (Xinhua)

(16) 'Approaching...

issued in May 2018, called for a force of only 250 or so officers and enlisted men. By comparison, a guided missile destroyer has a crew of around 170 and a fully staffed aircraft carrier has over 6,000 people on board.

Facing it across the ocean is Russia's Northern Fleet, which includes the aircraft carrier Admiral Kuznetsov, battlecruiser Pyotr Velikiy, at least half a dozen missile destroyers, and another dozen or so missile and attack submarines.

In his remarks on Wednesday, Lewis acknowledged the Russians are "proficient undersea operators."

To mark its return to the big leagues, the 2nd Fleet is supposed to command the Baltic Operations (BALTOPS) naval exercise next month. Some 18 countries are to participate in the annual NATO maneuvers, which Lewis called an "unambiguous display of strength in the Baltic region" that will show NATO's ability to "deter aggression and project stability."

Since the 2nd Fleet has no actual ships of its own, the US vessels involved with the exercise will presumably come from the 6th Fleet, headquartered in Italy.

As for the fleet's aspirations in the Arctic, Lewis had to admit the polar ocean is not a "competitive space" for the US naval forces right now.

The US currently operates only two icebreakers, which has prompted naval officials to decry an "icebreaker gap" with Moscow for the past several years. Russia currently operates about 40 specialized vessels and is building a series of new atomic-powered icebreakers that hold out the promise of the Northeast Passage open for large-scale international shipping.

Even China is getting into the icebreaker business, issuing tenders last month for floating a 500-foot nuclear-powered vessel. (RT)

(17) 'Where Is the...

regions who rejected the February coup in Kiev and troops dispatched by the Western-backed government to suppress them.

All 283 passengers and 15 crew members on board the Boeing-777 were killed. Kiev immediately blamed Russia for the incident, and most Western media uncritically agreed.

Mahathir was skeptical that anyone involved with the Russian military could have launched the missile that struck the plane, however, arguing that it would have been clear to professionals that the target was a civilian airliner.

"I don't think a very highly disciplined party is responsible for launching the missile," he said.

The Dutch-led Joint Investigation Team (JIT), whose report last year blamed Moscow for shooting down MH17, barred Russia from participating in the investigation, but involved the government of Ukraine. Although Malaysia is also a member of JIT, Mahathir revealed that his country's officials have been blocked from examining the plane's flight recorders.

"For some reason, Malaysia was not allowed to check the black box to see what happened," he said. "We don't know why we are excluded from the examination but from the very beginning, we see too much politics in it." "This is not a neutral kind of examination," Mahathir added.

Rejecting the JIT accusations, Russia made public the evidence the Dutch-led researchers refused to look into, including the serial number of the missile that allegedly struck MH17, showing that it was manufactured in the Soviet Union in 1986 and was in the arsenal of the Ukrainian army at the time of the tragedy. (RT)

(18) Japan Says Russia...

denied the NHK report aired last Friday, but most major Japanese newspapers have followed up with similar reports since then.

Trump withdrew the United States a year ago from a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and global powers under which Tehran curbed its nuclear program in return for sanctions relief. Since then, Trump has ratcheted up sanctions on Iran, seeking to reduce its lifeblood oil exports to zero, to push Tehran into fresh negotiations on a broader arms control deal.

Tensions have risen between Iran and the United States after attacks this month on oil tankers in the Gulf region. Washington, a backer of Tehran's regional rival Saudi Arabia, has blamed the attacks on Iran, which denies the accusations.

Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov will hold a one-to-one meeting on Friday. (Reuters)

(19) Stand Firm...

spanning polity that ruled much of modern-day France, Germany, the Low Countries and Central Europe from Aachen.

Former laureates have included French President Emmanuel Macron, Pope Francis and Britain's wartime Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

In its citation, the prize committee said Guterres, a former prime minister of Portugal, had been chosen for his advocacy of cooperation, tolerance, pluralism and multilateral cooperation.

Guterres said Europe and the global order, with the United Nations at its apex, risked being undermined by rising nationalism and xenophobia at precisely the time when it was needed more than ever to tackle challenges posed by issues such as climate change and migration.

"The bitter truth is that we have taken too many things for granted," he said.

"Human rights has lost ground against the agenda of national sovereignty," he added. "The failure of Europe would inevitably be the failure of multilateralism and the failure of a world in which the rule of law can prevail." (Reuters)

(20) Crop Fires...

is already bitter," said Hussain Attiya, a farmer from Topzawa Kakayi in northern Iraq. "If the situation continues like this, I would say that no one will stay here. I plant 500 to 600 acres every year. Next year, I won't be able to do that because I can't stay here and guard the land day and night."

IS militants have a history of implementing a "scorched earth policy" in areas from which they retreat or where they are defeated. It's "a means of inflicting a collective punishment on those left behind," said Emma Beals, an independent Syria researcher.

IS militants claimed responsibility for burning crops in their weekly newsletter, al-Nabaa, saying they targeted farms belonging to senior officials in six Iraqi provinces and in Kurdish-administered eastern Syria, highlighting the persistent threat from the group even after its territorial defeat. IS said it burned the farms of "the apostates in Iraq and the Levant" and called for more.

"It seems that it will be a hot summer that will burn the pockets of the apostates as well as their hearts as they burned the Muslims and their homes in the past years," the article said.

Hundreds of acres of wheat fields around Kirkuk in northern Iraq were set on fire. Several wheat fields in the Daquq district in southern Kirkuk burned for three days straight last week.

Farmers in the village of Ali Saray, within Daquq's borders, struggled to put out the blazes. The militants had laid land mines in the field, so when help arrived in the village of Topzawa Kakayi, the explosives went off and seriously wounded two people, according to the local agriculture department and farmers.

In eastern Syria's Raqqqa province, farmers battled raging fires with pieces of cloth, sacks and water trucks. Piles of hay burned and black smoke billowed above the fields. (AP)

(21) Pence Says...

Mexican imports to pressure the country to do more to crack down on the surge of Central American migrants trying to cross the border.

The move could put the trade deal in jeopardy.

Trump just recently removed U.S. steel and aluminum tariffs on Canada and Mexico, clearing a roadblock to a North American trade deal that his team negotiated last year. The trade penalties were a sore point in relations that reached a low last summer when Trump called Prime Minister Justin Trudeau "weak" and "dishonest" after the Canadian-hosted Group of Seven summit of major industrial nations.

"President Trump and I believe the relationship between the United States and Canada has never been stronger and that is a reflection of his leadership and your leadership," Pence told Trudeau. Pence later said at a news conference that Trump is a "great friend of the Canadian people." Nelson Wiseman, a political science professor at the University of Toronto, called Pence's comments "laughable." "Canada, like the Europeans and the Japanese, is waiting Trump out, calculating reasonably that a new administration will be more grounded and consistent," Wiseman said. "I don't expect Trump will ever again be in Canada as president. So much for strong relations." (AP)

(22) Univision Says...

interview. Ramos, one of the most influential Spanish-speaking journalists in the United States, had said shortly afterward that Maduro cut short the interview when he was shown a video on an iPad shot a day earlier of young Venezuelans eating food scraps out of the back of a garbage truck.

In the interview excerpt shown Thursday, Ramos offers to hand over a list of what he says are more than 400 "political prisoners" in Venezuela. Maduro refuses to take the list, denies there are political prisoners in Venezuela and says Ramos is trying to provoke him. The interview came at a particularly tense time in Venezuela, where Maduro is locked in a power struggle with opposition leader Juan Guaidó for control of a country that has suffered from a humanitarian crisis for years. (AP)