

(1) Heritage Sites...

safety during mining of natural resources.

SAARC Secretary General Arjun Bahadur Thapa said: "Afghanistan is bestowed with heritage sites and relics which need to be introduced on international level. Such sites attract tourists and the delegation wants to see more of these places."

He also lauded the arrangements made for the ceremony that marked Bamyán City as the cultural capital of SAARC and congratulated the president for its successful execution. (Pajhwok)

(2) Govt. Monthly ...

Yari, the NPC head, told journalists in Kabul the committee's investigations were still ongoing and their further findings would be announced later.

He added the MoD earlier oil contract was one of the biggest and had to be scrapped due to anomalies and non-affordability. But the government had to take emergency measures to support ongoing military operations, he said.

"After cancelling the contract, we had to take short-term measures. Based on the new contract awarded to a domestic firm temporarily, the government is saving \$9.8 million on monthly basis as compared to the previous deal," he added.

Yari said a long-term procurement document was being prepared, but it would take time due to its importance. After completion of the document, he added, any firm could openly participate in the bidding process.

The NPC head said the committee's 10th meeting, chaired by President Ghani, on Saturday night discussed 17 contracts from several MoD units, one from the civil aviation department and two contracts from the education ministry.

More than 20 contracts worth 39 billion afghanis had been approved by the committee, he said. During its last 10 sessions, according to Yari, the committee had approved 110 contracts worth 60 billion afghanis.

Since then, he added, more than 5.6 billion afghanis had been saved. "Without any doubt these savings and start of the approved projects would play a significant role in economic and infrastructural development and employment."

He said contracts other departments and ministries were being evaluated and people would be kept informed about any new development. (Pajhwok)

(3) Over 2,000...

and principal of a Madrasa, Mawlawi Abdul Rahman Mawlawi Zada, said "the Afghan forces are sons of this soil who are offering their chests as a shield against those who are prevent peace and stability in the country."

This comes as hundreds of religious clerics gathered in capital Kabul earlier to declare support for the Afghan security forces.

The security responsibilities of Afghanistan was fully transferred to 350,000 Afghan soldiers and police forces as security transition process from the NATO-led coalition forces to Afghan national security forces formally concluded at the beginning of this year.

The conclusion of security transition to Afghan forces was concluded shortly after the NATO-led coalition security forces formally ended the alliance's combat mission in Afghanistan after 13 years at the end of last year. (KP)

(4) Meshrano Jirga...

house had sent the amended version for approval to the Senate.

He added the main purpose behind the changes was to ensure speedy execution of government affairs and improved coordination between government institutions. The amended bill covered all central government institutions, including judicial and parliamentary departments, their secretariats, independent commissions, provinces and foreign missions.

Munsif said the amended bill barred officials from work in acting capacity beyond two months. In case of dismissal, demise or failure to get the trust

vote from the Wolesi Jirga, the president could appoint eligible individual as minister, he said. Ministers-designate could discharge duty as acting ministers in case they failed to get the trust vote from the lower house until their replacements were introduced to the lower house. Ministers-designate, attorney general, the central bank head, the National Directorate of Security (NDS) director and the Afghan Red Crescent Society chief are required by the Constitution to obtain a vote of confidence from the lower house after being picked by the president.

Earlier, the lower house took the stance that introduction of acting officials for trust vote was not important, but the upper house maintained it was necessary.

Munsif said under amended law, the president was bound to introduce an official to the lower house for approval to head a ministry if a cabinet pick was rejected by lawmakers.

Of the 54 lawmakers present, 53 approved the amended bill. (Pajhwok)

(5) Taliban Capture...

rebels and Afghan forces have been underway in Charchino, Khas Uruzagan and Dehraud districts of Uruzgan province since one month. Dehraud district also lost control of several police posts to rebels last week.

Ministry of Interior (MoI) spokesman Seddiq Seddiqi had always stressed that not even a single district would fall to rebels, while a day earlier, Yamgan district of northeastern Badakhshan province was overrun by insurgents. (Pajhwok)

(6) Taliban Talks...

Mawlawi Saleem and Sayed Eshaq Gailani.

The source added follow up discussions will likely take place in Qatar in July.

The meeting was reportedly organized by Pugwash - an organization of peace initiators. The Taliban on Saturday confirmed their delegation had held informal talks with Afghan representatives in Dubai.

This comes at a time when Afghan High Peace Council (AHPC) officials say they are optimistic at the holding of such meetings in line with the peace process.

"These meetings are not formal, but will pave the way for the beginning of official peace talks and the AHPC is optimistic over these meetings," Shahzada Shaheed, a spokesman for the AHPC said.

Meanwhile, the former leader of Taliban's Jaish-ul-Muslimeen wing, Syed Akbar Agha also believes that there has been positive changes in the Taliban's position.

"I think that the situation and the views of Taliban are better now compared to the past and may these talks result in the beginning of the [peace] talks officially between both sides," he said.

Officials of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) have said that the achievements made in the area of women and human rights should be considered during any talks.

"We don't want peace just at any cost. We want peace which maintains human rights and women's rights," a spokesman for the AIHRC, Rafiullah Bedar said.

There are beliefs that only an effective National Unity Government (NUG) will be able to ensure peace for Afghanistan. The NUG has however made an effort to get the Taliban to the peace talks tables but common belief is that Pakistan is not being cooperative, say analysts. (Tolonews)

(7) Iran Confirms ...

Tayyab Agha, who is in charge of the Taliban's political bureau in Qatar, Iran's YJC news agency reported.

"They expressed readiness for negotiations and travelled to Tehran for talks," said Kowsari. They were not from the "hard-liner" Taliban, said the Iranian MP underlining that Iran will never accept extremist Taliban members.

"Iran welcomes those who want to resolve the issues via dialogue and negotiate with them

to solve the regional problems," Kowsari added.

Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency reported that Taliban's delegation travelled to Iran in mid-May to hold talks with the Islamic Republic security officials.

Taliban's delegation and the Iranian security officials discussed regional issues, in particular the recent developments in the Islamic world, as well as the situation of Afghan migrants, according to the report. Similar Taliban delegations visited Iran twice in the past to hold talks with Iran's security officials and to participate in an international conference.

Taliban emerged in early 1990s in northern Pakistan following the withdrawal of former Soviet Union troops from Afghanistan. They were in power in Afghanistan from mid-1990s until 2001. The hard-liner group has in recent years carried out numerous high-profile attacks on Kabul, Afghanistan.

Taliban announced earlier that it established a political bureau in Qatar to stay in touch with the other countries. (Trend News Agency)

(8) ANSF Retake ...

Zabul said that the area has several small jungles and gardens which militants were using as their hiding places.

Tokhi said that army and police have been deployed to Tapaskhur Tapa which will also reduce security threats in this part of Kabul-Kandahar highway.

Local residents of Tabaskhur Tapa said that because of the longer presence of armed insurgents and clashes in this area they were disappointed from their lives, even some women and children developed mental illnesses.

Ata Jan Haqbayan, head of the provincial council of Zabul province urged government for a medical facility and to provide opportunities for the children of this area to study since the area does not have a school. (KP)

(9) Kabul Students...

Ghani promised to increase the salaries of teachers and to allot each of them a piece of land within six months - a process which has not happened.

"The government should pay attention to the demands of our teachers because we pay the price," a schoolgirl Beheshta said. "In the next few days, our midterm exams will start and now we don't know what to do."

Dozens of students are also reportedly joining their teachers in the streets.

"The president is responsible for the students that are not studying. He needs to solve the problem," a teacher Farkhunda said.

The protesting teachers continue to warn that as long as their demands are not met, they will continue their strike.

"The president needs to fulfill his promises he made to us because we are in deep trouble in terms of shelter and salaries," a female teacher Massouda Ahmad complained.

Yesterday, MPs and analysts also criticized the government for what they called the derailing of the education process in a country where most of the population is either uneducated or less educated.

"The president is responsible for this situation because he had promised the teachers a land plot," a teacher Yar Mohammad Jabbarhail said.

Also, Senator Anarkali Honaryar called on the government to assess the demands of the teachers and put an end to their strike which she believes is a big blow to the country's education.

Based on statistics, currently Afghanistan has more than 200,000 teachers across the country, with the average salary being 7,000 to 13,000 Afghani a month. (Tolonews)

(10) Kuchi Elders...

Kuch council chief, Haji Gul Marjan, demanded punishment for the killers to prevent such incidents in future.

"Those involved in Friday's bombardment should be tried and be made an example for others to follow in future."

Nazir Khan, an elder, regretted the current insecurity situation in the country and said attacks which resulted in the killing of innocent people would further deteriorate the situation.

He said people could not restrain themselves from attending social and religious rituals such as digging of graves and participating in funerals. He urged the government to punish those responsible for the drone strike.

Patan said a delegation had been dispatched to the area to investigate the issue.

The NATO Resolute Support (RS) mission in a statement had confirmed the drone strike and said it killed and wounded insurgents in Khost.

"The RS had received information about civilian casualties in the attack and had started investigations in this regard." (Pajhwok)

(11) Minister Vows...

develop trust among them. Mangal lamented security situations were terrible in all border districts, where residents lacked access to education, health and other basic facilities. He said a delegation would be dispatched to Goshta, Maroof, Qarqin, Shur Tapa and Terwa districts to closely assess the situation there.

About elimination of corruption, Mangal said officials found guilty of corruption would be dismissed and replaced with qualified and talented persons. President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani has ordered all ministers to brief the masses through media about their 100-day plans. (Pajhwok)

(12) Taliban Order ...

yesterday and nobody was there when I reached the school this morning,"

he said, adding several other schools, including Shamsul Aarifeen, Sanayee and Jahan Mulki high schools had been shut.

Idrees, a grade 12th student at Shamsul Aarifeen School, said the school remained opened till 10am this morning and then closed and students and teachers left for home.

"I heard the Taliban asking the school administration to close the school."

Hassan Raza Yousefi, a provincial council member, confirmed the closure of schools in the area and said Taliban had decided to close all schools in the area in reaction to the casualties of civilians.

He said the Taliban had threatened school principals to close schools till their next order.

Mohammad Abid Abid, the education director, said the Taliban had threatened several schools to be closed.

"The schools are re-opened now after the area elders had a meeting with Taliban," he said, adding that the issue had been resolved in cooperation with local elders.

The Taliban have said nothing about the development. (Pajhwok)

(13) India's Steel...

infrastructure. Later the plans were revised downward to reduce the vulnerability of the project.

the three iron ore mines at Hajigak have an estimated reserve of 1.28 billion tonnes.

The consortium has state-owned firms SAIL, RINL and NMDC holding a combined 56 per cent stake with the remaining held by JSW, JSPL and Monnet Ispat & Energy among others.

When contacted, the SAIL Chairman told PTI: "The project is still official on."

Earlier, India's Ambassador to Afghanistan Amar Sinha had also denied reports that the project was being scrapped.

"Not correct. Meeting only did a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of the opportunities and strengths. No decision of this sort," he had tweeted following such reports.

A senior Steel Ministry official said the Afghanistan government has passed the mining act, but India is waiting for more clarity on the policy front.

"There are also administrative issues, regarding how to deal with the provisional government and clarity on the mining

law. Another issue is corruption, which has led to several other foreign funded projects being stalled," he added. (Agencies)

(14) Kabul Condemns ..

Nations, international human rights organizations and the world to exert pressure on the Myanmar authorities to stop crimes against humanity and assist those threatened by violence.

Sectarian violence and discriminatory laws against the Rohingya in Buddhist-majority Myanmar have sparked the region's largest exodus of boat-people in recent years since the Vietnam War.

More than 25,000 people, including many Rohingya but also economic migrants from Bangladesh, made the dangerous sea journey south from the Bay of Bengal between January and March this year, the UN says.

An estimated 1.3 million Rohingya scratch out an existence in Rakhine, one of Myanmar's poorest states - tens of thousands are trapped in displacement camps, with conditions outside often worse. (Pajhwok)

(15) Ariana Plane...

company had obtained illegal benefits from the Ariana plane, which flew from Kabul to Mashhad in Iran and then to Baghdad and Najaf cities in Iraq.

He said pilots of the Afghan plane were not allowed to examine passengers and logistic items carried in the plane.

Hassan claimed the pilots noticed masked men boarded a flight in Mashhad to Iraq. Hassan said he got the report one month ago and the plane daily ferried passengers from Iran to Iraq for the last one month.

The Wolesi Jirga commission had asked the Ariana director several times to appear before it, but he did not turn up and later shifted with his family to the USA, he said. Qais Hassan asked security organs to take immediate steps to bring the culprits to justice.

Abdul Qadar Zazi Watandost, another lawmaker, also confirmed Hakimi's shifting to the US. He accused the Ariana chief of his involvement in financial and administrative corruption.

Transport Minister Mohammadullah Batash and Ariana Airlines administration director Omaid Mastoor were also present at the press conference. Batash called the agreement as illegal and said the Ariana flight took two hours and 40 minutes reach Mashhad from Kabul, but it took eight hours to return to Kabul.

Omaid Mastoor also confirmed flights to Iraq and called the deal as illegal,

but he avoided to share further details about the agreement. (Pajhwok)

(16) Protestors...

Shindand resident, said "capital of Shindand will be in a better position to control the law and order situation if upgraded into a province."

He said the unity among tribes in the district could be put at risk if it was divided.

Mirwais, another resident, said political indifferences were not allowing the district to be promoted as a province.

He said the district had a vast area and was populous which qualified it to be a province.

Nadir Khan Katawazai, a lawmaker from Paktia province, assured the protestors that Shindand would not be divided into districts without the consent of its residents.

"The Wolesi Jirga is with you. I will discuss your demands with other lawmakers in the parliament and it is your right that Shindand be upgraded into a province," he said, asking the protestors to give him a list of demands.

The demand letter said peace in Shindand could only be prevailed if it was not upgraded into a province.

If the officials concerned ignored their demands, they would continue peaceful protests and officials would be responsible for that, they warned.

Tawab Ghorzang, Independent Directorate of Local Government (IDLG) spokesperson, told Pajhwok Afghan News the IDLG had received orders about the division of Shindand

into few districts but no action had been taken so far. "Services will get improved with division of the district and the respected inhabitants will live a better life," he added.

He said they were technically looking into possibilities of dividing Shindand into more districts and would soon take a decision in this regard. (Pajhwok)

(17) Return of ...

high and together they had watched over the dusty Bamyán Valley since the sixth century, several centuries before Islam reached the region.

The Buddhas of Bamyán were two 6th century monumental statues of standing buddhas carved into the side of a cliff in the Bamyán valley in the Hazarajat region of central Afghanistan, situated 230 km (143 miles) northwest of Kabul at an altitude of 2,500 meters (8,202 ft).

Built in 507 A.D, the larger in 554 CE, the statues represented the classic blended style of Gandhara art. (KP)

(18) IS Take Areas ...

said the Selab Military Corps had conducted 162 operations in seven eastern provinces killing 2,364 rebels and injuring 748 others during the past two years.

"This year, we also launched 28 operations in which 149 insurgents were killed and 115 wounded. We would further extend the operations," Waziri added.

To a question about coordination between security organs, Waziri said, "Few years ago the Chapa Dara valley was known as the valley of death, the Want Wegal district was under Taliban control for seven years, but security forces recaptured the district and ensured security in the valley."

He said the security situation had improved on the Nuristan highway after security posts were established along the road to Want Wegal district and in Gulsak area.

The commander said the military corps were equipped with helicopters for combat operations and transferring injured security personnel.

"Previously we did not have helicopters to shift wounded soldiers to central hospitals, but now we have them," he said.

About an under construction hospital for the corps, he said that the hospital would help treat all wounded soldiers on the zone level.

Previously they would take wounded soldiers to Kabul hospitals, he said. (Pajhwok)

(19) 12 Militants...

bombs in the Maiwand and Arghandab districts. The militants were planting roadside bombs in Maiwand's Bibank and Arghandab's Hadera areas, he added.

Separately seven civilians were wounded when two vehicles collided head-on on the Herat-Kandahar highway, the police spokesman said, blaming the collision on reckless driving. Police had shifted the wounded people to hospital. (Pajhwok)

(20) 3 Insurgents...

in Afghan war. The report was made from the casualties recorded in the first four months of this year which showed an increase by 16 percent from that of the first four months of 2014. (KP)

(21) U.S., Japan...

duce the new missiles, a model for joint weapons development programs.

"It is the U.S. Department of Defense's best case of equal funding and engineering shared with an allied country to develop and ...

field a new weapon system to better enhance the national security of both nations," Ellison said in a statement. Raytheon said the new SM-3 IIA missile had bigger rocket motors and a more capable kill vehicle that would allow the missile to engage threats sooner and protect larger regions from short- to intermediate-range ballistic missile threats. (Reuters)

(22) 45 Dead...

Saba news agency said 44 people were killed and more than 100 wounded "including woman and children". (AFP)