

(1) Norway Hosts...

Salih headed a delegation who participated in previous year Oslo conference.

The Oslo forum website says about Oslo Forum 2015 - Annual Mediators' Retreat "Co-hosted by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, the Oslo Forum is a unique opportunity for senior conflict mediators, high-level decision makers and other major actors in peace processes to share their experiences, identify challenges and reflect on their own and others' practice in a discreet setting and informal atmosphere.

Invitations are currently being extended to key national, regional and United Nations envoys charged with negotiating peace. Participation is by invitation-only.

Taliban have increased their presence in several regional and international level conferences in recent past. Taliban delegation showed their presence in Pugwash meeting in Qatar followed by meeting with High Peace Council (HPC) in China and later a meeting with Afghan women representatives in Norway. The last meeting between Afghan officials and Taliban delegation was held in Dubai where they met with several officials.

Mohammad Hassan Haqyar, a political analyst, said regarding these meetings that Taliban wanted to convey the messages through participation in such meetings that they believed the negotiations and table talks.

He said that Taliban wanted to convey their message to the international community that they agreed to talk on women rights and other political affairs. Such meetings would turn fruitful and provide opportunities to know each other view point, he added. (Pajhwok)

(2) UNAMA Helps...

Afghans to exercise their right to vote.

The provinces represented were Balkh, Sar-i-Pul, Jawzjan, Faryab and Samangan.

Balkh's Provincial Council chair, Ibrahim Khairandish, noted that the international community has provided technical and financial assistance to support democracy, and highlighted the critical role civil society should play in working with government officials to build a prosperous Afghanistan.

One participant at the event hailed the spirit of volunteerism as a way Afghans can work together for effective future elections.

"People must learn how to volunteer, how to put the national interest ahead of their own," said college professor Abdul Hamid Safawat. "Their capacity must be built by raising their awareness; that has to be done by civil society and local elders."

UNAMA is mandated to support the Afghan Government and relevant international and local non-governmental organizations to assist in the full implementation of the fundamental freedoms and human rights provisions of the Afghan Constitution and international treaties to which Afghanistan is a State party, in particular those regarding the full enjoyment by women of their human rights. (Tolonews)

(3) Presence of ...

their activities and presence in the house is legal until their successors take up their seats following the public's vote.

Recently, President Ashraf Ghani directed the Supreme Court to decide on the fate of the Wolesi Jirga based on Article 83 of the Constitution. However, lawmakers criticize this move by the government.

"The Supreme Court is directed by an acting chief therefore an acting director cannot legalize our presence in the house. Has Ghani received the required vote to become president of Afghanistan and has he completed the 50+1 vote in the presidential election?" asked Abbas Ibrahim Zada, an MP from Balkh. He said the president cannot decide on the lawmakers' fate until parliamentary polls are held.

Obaidullah Barikzai, an MP from Zabul, also waded in and said no organization except the Supreme Court can legalize the presence of the MPs and their activities after June 22.

Another demand by legislators was that a specific date be set for parliamentary elections in the near future. "A declaration should be issued and the president should be pressurized into revealing the election date within a week," said Makhdom Abdalullah Mohammadi, an MP from Uruzgan.

The Wolesi Jirga Speaker, Abdul

Rauf Ibrahim, said they once again call on the president and the Chief Executive to announce the election date as soon as possible.

According to Article 83 of the Afghan Constitution, the work period of the Wolesi Jirga shall terminate, after the disclosure of the results of the elections, on the 22nd of June of the fifth year and the new parliament shall commence work. The elections for members of the House of People shall be held 30-60 days prior to the expiration of the term of the House of People. This however, has not happened. (Tolonews)

(4) WJ Approves ...

mission suggested 100 percent increase instead.

The lawmakers suggested over 100 percent increase on tobacco products since such products were injurious to health. Majority of lawmakers approved the health commission suggestions.

The exact number of cigarette smoker and Huqah has not been confirmed but it is feared the number of the addicted person would be higher than expected in the country. (Pajhwok)

(5) 100 Etisalat ...

"This is a WB (whole blood) donation campaign, during which we are collecting blood so that it can be given to someone who needs a blood transfusion," said Dr. Masood, head of Central Blood Bank of Afghanistan. "We really appreciate this humanitarian act of Etisalat employees and assure them that their donated blood will be given to patients in urgent need of blood transfusion."

Etisalat launches this yearly campaign to extend a helping hand towards those sick people who are in need of blood transfusion and to encourage more people to give blood and promote the culture of giving and sharing in Afghanistan.

The first phase of this campaign was launched back in 2014 in cooperation with the Central Blood Bank of Afghanistan where a huge number of Etisalat employees donated blood for people in need.

As a part of its social responsibilities, Etisalat Afghanistan has been committed to support Afghanistan in the areas of health, education and other key areas that lead the country toward a better tomorrow.

About Etisalat Afghanistan: - Etisalat Afghanistan is part of Etisalat Telecommunications Group, headquartered in UAE, one of the largest telecommunications groups in the world. Etisalat Afghanistan launched their services in 2007 and has rapidly become the fastest growing telecommunications service provider in the country with an active base of 4 million subscribers. The company aims to be at the forefront of its market based on quality, innovative services and competitive pricing, with unsurpassed coverage in every province in the country. Since 2007, the company has invested US\$ 300 million in Afghanistan and is the first telecom company to launch 3.75G services in Afghanistan. (PR)

(6) Australia to ...

signals to detonate IEDs from hundreds of metres away.

The system was previously used by the Australian and other western forces to defeat the IED threat by the insurgents.

The Afghan national security forces fields the first units for the 2015 fighting season, according to a report by Australia's 9News.

The industry program for the new technology was launched by Australia's Defense Minister Kevin Andrews.

"Australia will continue working with our Afghan partners to defeat the threat of improvised explosive devices, including supporting future Afghan National Defence and Security Forces requirements for these force protection systems," Andrews said in a statement.

IEDs are also one of the main contributors to civilian casualties in Afghanistan. Taliban militants and insurgents from the other militant groups frequently use Improvised Explosive Device (IED) as the weapon of their choice to target the security forces.

Improvised Explosive Devices or IEDs remained the second leading cause of civilian casualties in the first quarter of 2015 resulting in 430 civilian casualties (155 civilian deaths and 275 injured), according to the latest report by United Nations. (KP)

(7) Kabul Hosts ...

Milibon also raised the issue of Daesh in Afghanistan and said joint efforts were needed between parties to keep the insurgent group at bay.

Also at the meeting was the Afghan Foreign Affairs Minister, Salahuddin Rabbani, who stressed that Afghanistan is committed to supporting human's rights, particularly women and children's rights, freedom of speech, and to safeguarding achievements of the past decade.

"Supporting and safeguarding the values of human rights, including the rights of women and children, special persons, freedom of media and caring about human rights is a huge requirement in leading the society towards development and safety," the minister said.

According to Afghan participants at the gathering, shocking incidents have taken place in recent times, including the Paghman rape case, the Farkhunda mob killing and scores of other cases. They said preventing such instances should be a top priority of the National Unity Government in order to improve people's lives and provide them with a safe environment. However, the EU ambassador said meeting such demands needs more work on the part of the Afghan government. (Tolonews)

(8) Delay in...

for parliamentary elections, insisting their work beyond June 22 would be illegal.

The incumbent parliament's tenure expires on June 22. Based on some media reports, the Presidential Palace has started discussions with several influential groups on the extension of parliament's term.

On Sunday, President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani reiterated the date for parliamentary polls would be announced soon and the government was committed to seeking financial resources for the elections.

Article 83 of the Constitution states: "The constitutionally mandated tenure of the House of People shall terminate after the disclosure of the results of the election, on the 1st of Saratan (22 June) and the new parliament shall commence work." (Pajhwok)

(9) Hundreds...

activity in the country continue rise. Recently, former president Hamid Karzai again expressed concerns over the rise of Daesh militants in Afghanistan, blaming their expansion into Afghanistan on foreign support.

He warned in an interview with Russian state-funded television network (RT) that the rise of newly-emerged Daesh extremists in Afghanistan would threaten neighboring Russia and China.

The ex-president believes the expansion of Daesh - which has seized several cities in Iraq and Syria - was impossible "without a foreign backing."

"So, if you hear ever in the coming days, or months, or years that Daesh is on the rise in Afghanistan, and is strong and expanding militarily, it will mean that it is a foreign-backed force intending to destabilize the region, particularly Central Asia, China and Russia," Karzai said.

These statements came a few days after Daesh militants reportedly beheaded a number of Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan's eastern province of Nangarhar. (Tolonews)

(10) India Seeks ...

Afghan government on statements made before the Parliament in which representatives of the Afghan government claimed "irregularities" and even indications of legal process to cancel the contract awarded to consortium of Indian companies by the previous Afghan government, headed by President Hamid Karzai, the official said.

The Steel Ministry took note of these reports and raised concerns with the Indian External Affairs Ministry, which would now seek an official government-to-government response on clouds hovering over the project, the official added. Meanwhile, the Afghan Iron and Steel Company Limited (AFISCO), the consortium led by Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), has been directed to remain engaged with the projects despite the consortium having reservations over the security environment in Afghanistan and several constituent members favoring scrapping the investments.

AFISCO was crucial for India's geopolitical interests in Afghanistan and in the interest of country's diplomacy, the government has asked the consortium not to take any decision on announcing scrapping of the project, he added. Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), one of the members in AFISCO with an equity stake of 18%, has in the meantime communicated to the Steel Ministry to reduce its stake to a bare minimum since the south India based

steel mill did not want to remain invested in an 'uncertain' project, the official said. Apart from SAIL and RINL, other members of the consortium included iron-ore miner NMDC Limited, private sector steel companies like JSW Steel, Jindal Steel and Power Limited (JSPL) and Monnet Ispat. The \$10-billion project conceived in 2011 proposed setting up a mining project for the 1.2-billion tonne iron-ore reserves in the province of Hajigak, a six-million tonnes a year and an 800 MW thermal power plant. (Agencies)

(11) Foreigners Exploit...

said: "Foreigners imposed so-called war on terror on us and did not want political and economic development of Afghanistan."

She lamented foreigners wanted to use Afghanistan as a launching pad to get their targets in Central Asia by spreading bloodshed.

Provincial Council Member Asadullah Umarmkhel said government negligence offered an opportunity to rebels to strengthen their position in Kunduz and create instability.

He warned Taliban and IS were involved in spreading ethnic and sectarian violence among people which would have dangerous consequences in the long-run. (Pajhwok)

(12) Labour Ministry ...

in order to get approval and begin its formation. The president is the head of the committee, she added.

Dr. Oriakhel said the draft for the creation of national work had been compiled during the past three months because generating jobs and elimination of poverty was not in the jurisdiction of her ministry.

She said anti-corruption board of the ministry would be made functional to work for elimination of corruption from the ministry.

Answering a question regarding graft case of one of the senior officials, she said investigation had been launched and if corruption charges were proved the officials would be punished. She pledged that 50,000 retired persons would be provided with allowances and other incentives through a newly established banking system in 100 days.

According to the minister, the registration process of disable people and martyrs families would be completed in three months and their allowances would also be issued through the banking system.

She said the ministry would help develop capacities of 700 children at kindergartens and vowed to build more children training centers with the help of private and government institutions. (Pajhwok)

(13) Governor ...

highlight shortcomings of projects, he added.

He believed free speech would lead to a prosperous Afghanistan and point out government's flaws.

"I would like to focus on security, peace and reconstruction of the area," he pledged, adding that launching more development projects would leave far-reaching positive impact on peoples' economy. Several individuals were inducted in the government on different posts before his appointment which would be an issue to be dealt with, he added.

The people, he said had been going through miserable condition due to ongoing fight in northern districts of Helmand which could be controlled soon.

The governor reassured his all out support to media at a time when journalists were striving to get access to information. (Pajhwok)

(14) Ministry of...

not all the same, according to the Ministry of Finance (MoF). While some ministries draw from their optional budgets to bring on consultants, others are recruited under the ordinary budget by donor institutions.

"The Ministry of Finance hires the advisors from two sources, which include the optional and ordinary budgets," ministry spokesman Ajmal Hamid Abdul Rahimzai said. "Donors hire advisors from the optional budget, but with consideration of the budgetary unit." (Tolonews)

(15) Kidnappers ...

of the 31 abductees," Ahmadi said.

In February the insurgents kidnapped 31 passengers in southern Zabul province. Nineteen of the abducted passengers were freed in early May in exchange for 22 children and four women.

Meanwhile, Ghazni MP criticized the government for failing to release the abducted passengers.

"Struggles and negotiations have failed in releasing of kidnapped

passengers, therefore the government should pay serious attention in this regard," said Chaman Shah Etemadi, an MP from Ghazni.

In addition, families of the 12 abductees of the 31 passengers are still conducting a sit-in in the hope of securing the release of their loved ones.

Abdul Hassan, father of one of the abductees, said: "We are here until the government pays attention to our problem and releases our dear ones."

Bibi Aisha, mother of one of the kidnapped passengers, said the government should release the remaining abductees as it has freed 19 of the kidnapped passengers. (Tolonews)

(16) Famine-Like ...

districts had been closed for a month and a half because of intense fighting.

"Today is the 48th day of road closures in these districts, where food supplies on the verge of depletion. There is a strong likelihood of a humanitarian disaster if emergency supplies are not rushed there," the lawmaker warned.

With the road closed, he said, prices of edibles had shot up. In some remote areas, a 49-kilogram bag of flour accounts for Rs16,000, the MP claimed, saying the injured could not be treated due to the closure of health clinics.

The wounded could not be evacuated to Uruzgan, the provincial capital, as there is no let-up in clashes between the security forces and militants, according to the public representatives, who complained remedial measures had not been initiated yet.

Another MP from Uruzgan, Mohammad Hanif Hanifi, confirmed the road blockades had created famine-like conditions in the restive districts. The Taliban had mined the routes and placed huge rocks at several points, he alleged. (Pajhwok)

(17) Lukashenko ...

campaign. Alexander Lukashenko said that the fight against terrorism is a common priority for the entire global community and that it is essential to join efforts to eradicate this evil.

In order to give a boost to the bilateral relations the heads of state agreed to step up interstate contacts in various areas.

Alexander Lukashenko invited the Afghanistan leader to visit Belarus in the near future. The invitation was gratefully accepted. (Agencies)

(18) Maidan Wardak...

development sector.

He said insecurity and land grabbing were main problems in the province and the newly-appointed governor should work hard to resolve some pressing issues. (Pajhwok)

(19) Access to ...

Nangarhar, said: "Challenges are not good in the eastern zone. There are no big challenges in Nangarhar and Kunar, but there are lots of problems in Kunar and Laghman provinces."

"Access to information is one of the biggest challenges journalists in the western zone of the country have," said Abdul Manan, a Kandahar journalist.

Meanwhile, Nai also strongly criticized government for not having approved the regulatory framework of employees associated with the media and called on government to make sure it is approved as soon as possible. (Tolonews)

(20) Yamgan District...

But Ahmad Navid Farotan, the governor's spokesman, said provincial officials along with Army Chief Lt. Col. Qadam Shah Shahim had visited Yamgan district late on Sunday and assured residents to purge the area of insurgents.

Earlier, Provincial Council Chief Abdullah Naji Nazari had said the district fell after reinforcements failed to reach on time. He hoped the district would be recaptured soon.

Taliban have not issued any fresh statement on Yamgan fate but the insurgents' group had earlier claimed 18 security personnel were killed, several others wounded and huge cache of arms seized during fighting for control of Yamgan. (Pajhwok)

(21) Qatar Secures...

statement said, adding that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar praises all parties involved in the process.

This comes as the parents of one of the abducted Tajik soldiers made a desperate plea to Taliban militants group in Afghanistan to free their abducted son.

The 21-year-old Tajik soldier Merajudin Shadeyov was abducted from the border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan at the same time the other soldiers were kidnapped.

According to reports the Taliban militants demanded to free their comrades in exchange for the freedom of the abducted soldiers. (KP)

(22) Civil Society ...

scholars and civil society activists were given an active role in the process.

Masooma Mohammadi, women's rights activist, hit out at the lack of coordination between civil society organisations and the High Peace Council.

Ali Ahmad Kawa, an activist from Herat province, said civil society organisations had a proactive role in ensuring human rights and democracy that were prerequisites for lasting peace.

Thus, he said, it was necessary that the groups were granted an active role in the peace process. But the government did not have a proper peace strategy and which was why it did not have tangible results, he claimed.

But Abdul Hakim Mujahid, the peace council's acting head, responded that Abdul Hamid Mubarez had actively participated in the peace process on behalf of civil society. The council is ready to consult civil society on an ad-hoc basis.

The peace body has 69 members, including nine women. In its five years of existence, the council has held peace talks with Taliban insurgents on several occasions but to no avail. (Pajhwok)

(23) Farah Fighting ...

and eight militants and ANA soldier were wounded in the firefight, he said.

A woman was also killed and a man and woman wounded when a residential compound came under mortar attack in Chuck village, he added.

The district chief feared civilians suffered casualties by ANA shelling. Scores of houses of civilians were demolished during the clash, he informed.

Mohammad Sadeq, chief of youth council, confirmed killing of a woman and injuries to two civilians. The residents, he said left villages when Taliban stormed the populated areas.

"At least five houses were completely damaged and scores of animals were also killed during the firefight," he added

Said Mohammad, another resident, said Taliban attacked security check posts last night.

However, militants have not yet commented on the incident. The insurgents' group confirmed killing of a woman and two civilians in mortar shelling. (Pajhwok)

(24) 2 Civilians Dead ...

capital of Logar province.

Maj. Qari Mohammad Wara, a senior police official, said that Dr. Lahor was on his way to his clinic this morning when gunmen took him off from his car and shot him dead.

He said that investigations had been launched to nab the culprits. Ahmadullah, a relative of the slain doctor, said that Dr. Lahor had no personal enmity with anyone. (Pajhwok)

(25) Israel Bans...

militant organization ruling the Gaza Strip enclave since 2007.

This fact-finding mission was appointed in last August by the United Nations, but Israel refused to cooperate with it after years of distrust between the body and the state over what Israeli officials say as bias in its treatment of Israel. (Xinhua)

(26) British PM...

India with Gandhi and South Africa with Nelson Mandela."

Cameron's Conservative government is currently locked in a debate about Britain's human rights legislation.

The party has promised to repeal the existing Human Rights Act, which incorporates the European Convention of Human Rights into British law, and replace it with a British Bill of Rights. (AFP)

(27) Jordan Concerned ...

a permanent and just solution to the Palestinian cause was reached.

Jordan, he said, is directly interested in resuming peace talks leading to the creation of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

He stressed that Jordan will continue to take measures to protect the holy sites in east Jerusalem. (Xinhua)