

(1) NATO Confirms...

responsibility for security in Afghanistan, he said it had been a challenging time as there had been attacks in Kabul and fighting across the country. However, he said, the Afghan forces had dealt with these attacks and challenges effectively and had shown exemplary courage, determination and commitment in these very challenging environments. At the same time, he continued, the Afghan government had set out an ambitious reform programme. "We encourage the government to continue to implement these reforms." He said the alliance was determined to bringing peace to Afghanistan and strongly supported the Afghan government and NATO and its partners stood with Afghanistan. "Our forces continue to provide training, advice and assistance and we are beginning to plan for the next stage of our Resolute Support mission." (Pajhwok)

(2) Ghani Mulls ...

Ghani asked that a working document be prepared and shared with him within one week on a possible pilot phase of the project. He said that should a pilot phase be implemented, it will be rolled out in Kabul. He emphasized however that there was a need for close monitoring of the distribution of electronic ID cards. Among those present at the meeting were the Minister of Communications and Information Technology, the Minister of Interior Affairs as well as representatives of European Union, Independent Election Commission, USAID, GIZ, and a number of other advisers as well as the president's Special Representative for Reforms and Good Governance, Ahmad Zia Massoud. The president's adviser, Dr. Qader Wedan, kicked off the meeting with his working report on the distribution of the ID cards. This was followed by presentations by other participants and technical expatriate advisers also presented their views and recommendations. (Pajhwok)

(3) Over 2,000 Illegal ...

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(4) Increasing IS...

more worrying, however, is the fact that the so-called Islamic State organization is working more and more actively in Afghanistan, feeling more comfortable there," the president said. He said that ISIL is currently present in 25 out of 34 Afghan provinces. The Islamic State militant group, which captured large swathes of Syria and Iraq, has recently been making inroads in Afghanistan. In a letter posted online last week, the Taliban warned the Islamic State against recruiting insurgent fighters in Afghanistan. In May 2015, clashes between the Afghan Taliban and Islamic State left at least 27 dead. (Pajhwok)

(5) Record Afghan ...

been linked to the misuse of prescription opioids over the past few years, heroin was now "almost replacing" the trend. The number of Americans dying from heroin abuse rose from 5,925 in 2012 to 8,257 in 2013, reaching the highest level in a decade, the UNODC report said. Globally, some 32.4 million peo-

ple -- or 0.7 percent of adults -- are users of opiates like heroin and opium.

Asia remains the world's largest market for opiates, accounting for an estimated two thirds of all users, while the number of registered heroin users in China is increasing, UNODC said.

The agency also highlighted the "increasing importance" of Africa as a transit hub for Afghan heroin bound for Europe and other regions, reflected in the growing figure of seizures being reported in recent years by some African countries.

But although heroin seizures increased by eight percent in 2014, "we have not seen big signs of increased supplies in terms of seizure", said Me.

This suggests that traffickers may be seeking out new smuggling routes. (AFP)

(6) US, China ...

in Kabul to reform its economy and to protect its people from the threat that is posed by violent extremists.

"And that's why we've pursued multiple rounds of trilateral talks with the Afghan government in order to expand our cooperation regarding an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned reconciliation process, as well as Afghanistan's economic development," he said. And today, "we agreed to launch a new joint training program for Afghan medical and veterinary professionals," Kerry said. The Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi said China is ready to work with the U.S. and the rest of the international community to advance the reconciliation process in Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(7) \$335mIn USAID...

vestigation by the office of the Inspector General (OIG) assessing the status and sustainability of the Tarakhil Power Plant. Sopoko referred to the OIG review results as "alarming," expressing concerns that the power plant suffered from lack of use and high cost of operation.

"USAID OIG found that since the handover in June 2010, the power plant has been severely under-used and operated at just 2.2 percent of installed power production capacity," Sopoko said. "[Afghanistan's national power utility] had limited operations since accepting responsibility for the facility because it couldn't afford to operate the plant -- the fuel alone required to operate the plant as intended was estimated to cost approximately \$245 million per year." The high cost of operation has resulted in the Afghan government relegating the power plant to the status of "an emergency power source." The plant went unused during this year's avalanches. (Agencies)

(8) Northern Parts ...

Taliban's deputy governor in Baghlan province was killed along with some of his companions.

"In the past 48 hours, anti-government armed groups had unfortunately threatened and surrounded parts of the province, but with the intensive operations of military, these threats were broken and heavy losses were made to the anti-government armed groups," says Abdul Jabar Pardeli, Baghlan Police Commander.

Northern and north eastern parts of the country this year have faced unprecedented battles. It is reported that these insecurities forced Jamiat Islami Party and Junbesh Islami Party to join forces in these areas. So far, these two parties have not had a role in the battles, but allies against threats have been called beneficial by the Ministry of Interior.

Sediq Sediqqi, spokesman for the Ministry of Interior has said that: "Obviously, when groups of people join forces in different parts of the country and stand against anti-government armed groups, this can be to the detriment of the anti-government armed groups and benefit the country. But they didn't have a role in the release of Chahar Dara district of Kunduz, it was our security forces that gave a strong response to the anti-government armed groups". Earlier, there were reports that the Jihadist commanders have taken up arms to fight the Taliban, but in many instance, use of these forces followed many criticisms. Many people have empha-

sized that the government must work on formalizing these forces in the framework of ANSF in their areas, so that their activities are controlled by government. (Tolonews)

(9) NATO Has...

and challenges and showing exemplary courage, determination and commitment.

Stanekezai, who for the first time attended a NATO meeting, told a press conference in Brussels, that NATO had once again renewed its commitment to assisting Afghanistan in the long-term.

He said the defence ministers positively responded to Afghanistan proposals and demands and promised to strengthen the Afghan Air Force (AIF).

Stanekezai said the Afghan delegation presented proposals and demands in four areas, including continued support for Afghan forces, their equipment and strengthening the AIF.

He said the NATO defence ministers promised they would strengthen the AIF and provide the force with equipment and other facilities.

The alliance also renewed its pledge to continue financial support to the Afghan forces, the acting defence minister said. (Pajhwok)

(10) Sar-I-Pul PC...

after a presidential decree restored their oversight right.

Mohammad Noor Rahmani (PC head), Haji Assadullah Danish (deputy head), Masooma Ramzani (secretary), Mohammad Asif Sadeqi, Asadullah Khurram, Noor Agha Noori, Salahuddin Charikzada, Mohammad Husain Mujahidzada, Enayatullah Malem, Sayed Reza Alemzada, Mohammad Hanif Amini, Masooma Shadab, Malika Azizi, Mohammad Ali Hakimi and Noor Mohammad Baig are among members of Sar-i-Pul provincial council.

Some residents believed the council comprising of more youth could transform their lives but they were disappointed instead. Mohammad Mohsin Joya, a resident of Sari-i-Pul, told Pajhwok Afghan News many people were optimistic in the beginning after many youths managed to secure seats for themselves in the elections. "We thought these people would listen to our grievances but this did not happen." (Pajhwok)

(11) Pakistan Alone ...

of the national unity government in Kabul, the peace efforts with the Taliban have intensified, but both the sides failed in March to hold a comprehensive dialogue. However, some Afghan officials and Taliban representatives held several rounds of meetings in China, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Norway during the past few months.

Political experts believe these informal meetings could help pave the ground for formal negotiations in the future.

Political expert Wahid Muzhda said both Afghan officials and the Taliban had their own goals and they were successful in sharing their views with each other.

He told Pajhwok Afghan News the Afghan officials who met with Taliban representatives during the informal meetings had been strong opponents of the rebels in the past but their differences resolved to some extent after the meetings.

He believed the informal talks could help facilitate formal negotiations with the Taliban in the future.

Another political expert Azizullah Obaid also said informal talks could help the two sides understand each other's views of and open up new avenues of formal talks.

He called the government's current peace policy as a failure and said the government should involve all regional countries in the peace process and come up with a clear strategy. (Pajhwok)

(12) 'Forces Tactically ...

Local officials confirmed fall of the district to rebels who hoisted their flag on a building. Taliban set the district office and residential areas on fire. Casualties were inflicted on civilians and military personnel but the officials had no exact figure.

Taliban claimed control over Want Wegal district amid inflicting heavy casualties on security forces. (Pajhwok)

(13) Islamabad Rejects...

by an Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) officer.

The National Directorate of Security (NDS) spokesman, Hasib Siddiqui, told Pajhwok Afghan News the attack had been jointly designed by Maulvi Sherin, the Haqqani Network's operational commander, and the ISI officer, Bilal, in the Board area of Peshawar, the capital of Pakistan's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

The statement from Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that "we are sure that neither the Afghan people nor the international community would be misled by these motivated allegations."

Pakistan, it said had always supported strong and sustainable democratic system in Afghanistan and condemned all cowardly acts of terrorism.

It said that Pakistani reiterated its condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. "We reaffirm our resolve to fight terrorism in close coordination with the government of Afghanistan," the statement concluded.

The NDS spokesman said that Bilal hailing from the Zakhil tribe maintained close and direct links with militants in the Tirah valley of Khyber Agency. The NDS official added 7.5 million Pakistani rupees had been set aside for the attack on the Afghan parliament. (Pajhwok)

(14) Forces Retake...

were casualties on both sides -- Taliban and security forces --, provincial police chief Khalilullah Ziai confirmed, without providing an exact figure.

This year's fighting season has seen a sharp spike in insurgent activity on a number of fronts -- especially that of armed conflicts in the once secure northern areas of Afghanistan.

Currently three other provinces are experiencing fierce fighting between Afghan Special Forces and the Taliban. These are Baghlan, Kunduz and Takhar. (Tolonews)

(15) US Expresses ...

abuses committed by security forces," the report said.

In his preface to the report, the Secretary of State, John Kerry, noted the successful elections in the country last year. "In Afghanistan, millions of people defied threats of violence to choose a new president representing the country's first peaceful transfer of power from one elected government to another," he said.

According to the report, widespread disregard for the rule of law and official impunity for those who committed human rights abuses were serious problems. The government did not prosecute abuses by officials consistently or effectively, it said.

"The Taliban and other insurgents continued to kill civilians and security force personnel using indiscriminate tactics such as improvised explosive devices (IEDs), car bombs, suicide attacks, rocket attacks, and armed attacks," the State Department said. (Pajhwok)

(16) Efforts on in ...

on security situation in the area, he said.

In addition, he said members of the council had initiated work to encourage women to achieve their enshrined under the Islamic law and Afghan traditions.

Women would be facilitated to have access to education, health services and job opportunities, he said, adding that women would be helped to get access to law and justice so that they could protect their rights.

The deputy head went on to say that concerned officials had investigated dozens of complaints of local residents of several districts.

He pointed out that education department, Rural Rehabilitation and Reconstruction and other organizations working with community had evaluated the completed projects. He assured to shift more focus on quality and quantity of education.

He said flaws and shortcomings were identified in public works projects which could be rectified with coordination of governor office. (Pajhwok)

(17) China Refuses to...

Republic of China, Xi Jinping, in September 2013 during his visit to Kazakhstan. He came up with the proposal to create a Silk Road Economic Belt. In October 2013,

during his trip to Indonesia, he presented a parallel initiative, the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. The idea of reviving the Silk Road became popular in China in the media and expert circles, who coined the slogan "One Belt and One Road".

Throughout 2014, the concept gradually came to be the pivotal issue in China's foreign policy and, to a lesser extent, in its domestic policy. Initially, it remained vague and did not envisage that institutional action would be taken as part of its implementation. However, the Chinese government created a financial framework of the New Silk Road towards the end of 2014.

Xi Jinping declared that China would be establishing a US\$40 billion New Silk Road Fund. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), which was founded by China and twenty other Asian countries in November 2014, will be an additional source of funds. In January 2015 it was promised that a private Energy Development Fund would be created. This fund is planning to attract investments worth US\$20 billion as part of the implementation of the New Silk Road concept.

The Silk Road is one of the important economic projects for Afghanistan that canceled due to increase of insecurities in the country. (ANN NEWS)

(18) Breshna Installing ..

accomplish the task. But security still remains a major challenge to us and the continuation of security threats in Kajaki district could undermine work on the project. Therefore the government must act and provide security for the project," head of DABS Mirwais Alimi said.

Meanwhile, officials from the Afghan Ministry of Interior (MoI) have warned that the armed insurgents intend to hinder progress on the country's mega economic project.

"The insurgents have always tried to dismantle Kajaki power dam. The main purpose of the (recent) Zulfiqar operation was to secure the Kajaki district.

Currently we have sufficient forces in Helmand and will not allow anyone to pose a threat and delay work progress on the dam," Sediq Sediqqi, a spokesman for MoI said on Thursday.

The Kajaki Dam project entails the renovation and installation of turbines. The project was originally started ten years ago with \$150 million USD in aid from the U.S. government. The project was expected to generate 150 megawatts of power for Kandahar and Helmand provinces, but so far it has only been able to generate a maximum of 30 megawatts of electricity. (Tolonews)

(19) Taliban Mount ...

reinforcement from the Afghan National Army (ANA) and public otherwise we will suffer heavy casualties," he told Pajhwok Afghan News.

ANA soldiers and Public Order Police can easily be deployed from Manogay district of Kunar province since they did not have forces in our district, Gul explained.

Eng. Sadullah, head of Nuristan provincial council, said: "The district could fall to militants and two of our police have already wounded in the firefight." Civilians were confined to their homes since their houses were located near the district centre, he added.

The head of provincial council urged the central government to dispatch reinforcement immediately to flush out anti-state militants from the province.

Acting Governor Hafiz Abdul Qayyum confirmed the attack but he assured that "the district will never fall to Taliban and our soldiers are strong enough to thwart Taliban attacks efficiently."

(20) Police Commander's

However, one of his daughters-in-law was seriously wounded in the attack.

But the commander said his eldest son was to thank for having left the safety of the house where he was able to gun down a number of attackers. With him was his wife who stood by him handing him ammunition. She also, however, engaged in a gun battle with the Taliban from time to time.

"I first hit one of their gunmen, and then I kept fighting for an hour and half," said Hassan Mo-

habbat, the commander's son. (Tolonews)

(21) Baghlan River...

could not stop powerful people from illegal constructions.

He said police and the municipality had been weak in taking proper measures against the builders. Pul-i-Khumri Mayor Mohammad Safar said those who have partially blocked the flow of water inside the city were powerful men and without intervening of high-ranking government officials they were unable to take steps against them.

He mentioned two judges and two local commanders without identifying them.

Jawed Basharat, police spokesman, said the river zone directorate and the municipality should bring list of powerful men and police would take action accordingly. "This is weakness by the authorities' concerned to ameliorate the situation." (Pajhwok)

(22) Better Coordination

support helped thwart militants' plans."

Most of the areas were under security forces control except the border areas with Sangin, Musa Kala and Nauzad districts, he said, adding that "we control movements of rebels by carrying out military operations in those areas."

The residents extended complete support to security forces in identifying rebels' hideouts which had turned fruitful to establish peace and security in the area. Qayyum added. (Pajhwok)

(23) 350 mln KWh...

country in May 2015. The total volume of produced electricity is 1 billion 381 million kWh of electricity in May 2015.

Tajikistan has exported more than 1.32 billion kWh of electricity worth \$131.2 million.

Afghanistan received 1.1 billion kWh of electricity, while Kyrgyzstan was supplied with 236 million kWh of electricity by Tajikistan in 2014. (AKIpress)

(24) Girl Commits...

been a high school student in Class 11 in Shebarghan city.

According to the Afghanistan's public health ministry statistics over 9,000 suicide attempts were recorded across the country since the beginning of last year.

Since the beginning of last year 4,466 cases of self-poisoning and 707 cases of self-immolation were recorded in the capital, while 4,136 cases of self-immolation were recorded in the provinces. (Tolonews)

(25) Truck Drivers ...

20 kilometers away on the highway from Aibak city had been removed by the provincial police chief for unknown reasons.

Hamidi said he discussed the insecurity situation on the highway with relevant local officials on Tuesday last and called for protection of the road against rebels and illegal armed men. (Pajhwok)

(26) Turkey, Israel...

oglu had held secret talks in Rome on Monday in a bid to reconcile the two former allies. Ties between the two countries, once close, deteriorated in 2010 when Israeli commandos raided the Turkish-flagged Mavi Marmara, the largest ship in an aid flotilla which tried to break the Israeli blockade on the Gaza Strip. (Xinhua)

(27) Kerry off...

deadline for a framework accord was extended two days.

A senior U.S. official, meanwhile, said an end was in sight that could lead to an agreement. The official said the U.S. believed that technical solutions exist to resolve every issue that remains, but those solutions would require "very critical choices" by Iran's leadership. The official was not authorized to discuss the negotiations by name and spoke on condition of anonymity. (AP)

(28) EU Provides...

responsible for immigration in Lusaka, the Zambian capital, the EU official said an additional 25 million Euros will also be made available to build capacities in eastern, southern and Indian Ocean regions to support the improvement of migration governance and facilitate legal migration. (Xinhua)