

(1) 'Mostly New...

back, only eight had been able to obtain a vote of confidence from parliament along with the new spy-master. (Pajhwok)

(2) More Than 300 ...

disasters include Badakhshan, Nuristan, Bamyān, Daikundi, Nangarhar, Herat, Badghis, and Ghor with majority of the affected, roughly 200, were killed in northern Pūnisher province.

While speaking at the Ministers Council meeting in Kabul, Abdullah stressed that adequate aid to the people must be sent immediately. He added that in the future the process of rescue operations should be fixed to respond to natural disasters quickly.

"This incident made us realize that the state of emergency committee should be better equipped and the level of the preparation needs to be increased," Abdullah said. "Our country is vulnerable to Mother Nature."

At the Minister Council meeting, Ministers discussed solving of the electricity issues of the country, reopening Salang pass, providing aid to the victims of the avalanches, security, and economic situations of the country.

Abdullah added that the lack of telecommunication services in the some valleys is the reason behind the lack of knowledge of such incidents.

"We have understood that most of the villages were not connected by telecommunication services in Pūnisher. This is a lesson to us all in the areas that need to be fixed."

According to reports the following districts of Pūnisher were affected: 38 were killed and 30 injured in Khenj; 113 killed and 40 injured in Paryān; 32 killed and 17 injured in Dara; eight killed and 10 injured in Abshar, while five others were killed and three injured in the central areas of the province. (ToloneWS)

(3) Japan will...

and returnees through further empowering communities, enhancing their access to basic services and improving their livelihoods.

The statement said that the UN-Habitat would address the urgent needs of those most vulnerable households through the establishment of Community Development Councils to upgrade underserved areas in order to avoid disillusion and frustrations and reduce the risk that those households are falling back in illicit and insurgent activities.

In total, approximately 236,000 people will benefit from this program. UN-Habitat, with generous contribution from the government of Japan, continues to support urban development by strengthening municipalities to deliver basic services through engaging communities and creating solidarity among citizens.

Japan has been assisting Afghanistan's nation-building efforts in various fields including security, education, health, culture, humanitarian assistance, agriculture, infrastructure and its capacity development. Cumulative Japanese assistance to Afghanistan since 2001 amounts \$5.78 billion. (Pajhwok)

(4) 11 Ambassadors, ...

of the sacked diplomats and ambassadors have been referred to the human resource department of MoFA for further procedures, the source added.

Some of the top diplomats' identities are as follows: Azizullah Karzai Afghan ambassador to Russia, Mohammad Qasim Fazeli ambassador to UNESCO, Ziauddin Mujadedi ambassador to Czech Republic, Ghulam Sakhi Ghaerat ambassador to Indonesia, Najibullah Mujadedi ambassador to United Arab Emirates, Sayed Ahmad Amarkhail ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Muhammad Dawood Yaar ambassador to the United Kingdom, Sham Lal ambassador to Canada, Assadullah Omar ambassador to France, Ziauddin Nezam ambassador to Italy and Nangialai Tarzi ambassador to Switzerland.

On Sunday findings by Pajhwok Afghan News revealed that most diplomats of MoFA are either family members or relatives of government officials or members of National Assembly, who have been appointed on the basis of nepotism trampling established rules and merit policy.

The findings disclosed that mostly sons and close relatives of government officials and members of parliament appointed to key posts to Afghanistan embassies abroad where most of them sought politi-

cal asylum. (Pajhwok)

(5) McKinley ...

confirm to kick-start negotiations process with the Afghan government.

Talking to female reporters in Kabul on Sunday on eve of Women International Day, McKinley said that his government support peace talks between the Afghan government and Taliban.

But he noted that women's representation in the peace process was important. Women rights were the top priority of his government, he reiterated.

On the occasion, McKinley conveyed the message of John Kerry, the US secretary of State in which he had said: "Stability in the world could be achieved if people respect women rights."

The ambassador also mentioned about progress in women's access to politics, their economic promotion, improvements in education and health.

He said the new government should facilitate women's access to education, health services and improve their economic condition in the next five years. The US embassy's public relation department would launch a public awareness campaign to highlight women rights, he added. A hundred projects in politics, education, health and economy have been launched in the country by the US with the support of relevant organs of Afghan government, he recalled.

The US government has provided facilities for Afghan women to seek higher education up to master degree in US universities, he added. (Pajhwok)

(6) Pak- Afghan ...

undergoing qualitative transformation since the new government took over last year.

A statement from the prime minister house said that the meeting between the ambassador and the prime minister held in Islamabad on Monday. Mosazai thanked the government of Pakistan for providing generous support to Afghanistan in the form of relief supplies in the wake of the destruction caused by recent avalanches.

Sharif reiterated that Pakistan stood with Afghanistan in this hour of need and that he was deeply troubled upon learning about the devastating avalanches in Afghanistan. Pakistan would be happy to provide any further assistance that the people of Afghanistan might be in need of to meet this challenging situation, he said.

He expressed satisfaction over the increased security cooperation between the two countries and said the visits of Pakistani army chief have proved quite helpful in streamlining important matters.

The prime minister approved appointment of a focal person for following up implementation on the decisions taken during inter-ministerial meeting between the two countries, on a daily basis. A similar focal person would be appointed from the Afghan side as well.

He was pleased to note that first meeting of the Pakistan-Afghanistan Joint Business Council would be taking place in the next few weeks to attract international investors to both the countries.

Sharif said his country hoped the process of peace talks within Afghanistan would speed up and reach a successful conclusion soon. Mosazai on the occasion said that Afghanistan was highly appreciative of prime minister's vision of peaceful coexistence with all neighbouring countries.

He informed the Prime Minister that there is a strong domestic consensus in Afghanistan on peace efforts these days.

Matters relating to Afghan Transit Trade and CASA 1000 power transmission project also came under discussion during the meeting. (Pajhwok)

(7) Ghani Orders...

and Development Commission at the Presidential Palace on Monday, a statement from the palace said.

It said the president directed the commission to evolve a comprehensive plan for resolving the issue of clean drinking water in Kabul and take necessary measures to prevent further shortage of clean water in the coming years.

Ghani called for conducting studies on the groundwater resources in the New Kabul City basin to determine their potential.

The president said Afghanistan's engineering capacity should be used in chalking out effective short, mid and long-term projects in order to understand in which areas they needed foreign assistance.

Ghani said an effective environmental protection plan should be put in place and more work should be done for increasing green belt areas in Kabul city.

The president also said it should be investigated how they benefited from mountains in Kabul and comprehensive plans be evolved to improve the situation of urban transport and traffic.

According to the Ministry of Water and Energy, the increasing population, droughts and overexploitation of wells have reduced groundwater resources in Kabul basin.

The National Environment Protection Department says the groundwater has received tremendous amounts of pollutants due to a lack of proper waste and wastewater disposal and several years of droughts have further aggravated this problem.

Currently, nearly 30 percent residents of Kabul have access to clean drinking water. (Pajhwok)

(8) New Police

the new officers.

He said that chief for first police district, Jamila was also sacked and deployed to the human rights gender position of Kabul police headquarters.

Jamila was the only district chief who earlier told Pajhwok Afghan News that she was took bold steps against criminals in Kabul and she was patrolling herself during midnights to check criminal activities in the city.

President Ghani has recently said that police force should free itself of politics and the district chiefs and commanders for all police districts of Kabul should be appointed on merit basis. (Pajhwok)

(9) Abdullah Pledges...

nature of the case indicates that a mistake has been committed by someone else and another person is paying the price," Abdullah said. "Therefore, I want the case to be assessed thoroughly so that an innocent being isn't imprisoned."

Initially the court asked Musafir to pay a fine of 10,000 AFS and the case would be closed. But six years later, the courts of Kabul issued a jail time for the photographer, who was not present in court.

"According to the laws of Afghanistan, the defendants must appear in court with their lawyer," head of NAI Mujib Khelwatgar said. "If the defendant and his lawyer are not present, then the ruling has no legal justification."

The Afghan photographer is known as Ustad Musafir, who is famous for his unique pictures that have been displayed at major exhibitions. (ToloneWS)

(10) Iran Planning ...

and lithium.

Khorrami Shaad put the value of the explored Afghanistan mines at about \$850 billion and said that if investment is made for the processing of the minerals annually over \$5 billion can be obtained through the export of the processed materials. He said Afghanistan has no access to open seas and Iran's Chabahar Free Zone is proper for the export of the materials to the world.

Iran is one of the most important donors to Afghanistan which has kept its promises to help to the reconstruction of the war-hit country. Iran has built some roads, power transmission lines, and border stations, among the other infrastructure projects which would better link the two nations.

Iran has also contributed more than \$50mln annually to Afghan anti-narcotics efforts in the last decade. (FNA)

(11) Baghlan Rebels ...

opportunities while 270 more were introduced to labor and social affairs department.

"Now, I have a carpentry shop in Baghshmal locality of Pul-i-Khumri and I'm satisfied with my work," said Ali Mohammad one of the fighter who had joined peace process. (Pajhwok)

(12) Empowered PCs...

powers granted to the provincial councils were different from those they enjoyed in the past.

He added the representative of provincial councils and officials of Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) had prepared a draft regarding powers of the provincial councils which would be sent to the Wolesi Jirga for approval.

In her exclusive interview with Pajhwok Afghan News, Silai said that PC members could better serve masses when they had power to evaluate the performance of local departments.

She added assessment and evaluation of local departments' performance did not mean interference in their affairs. PC members could advise local officials on issues of common interests, she added.

Silai, however, warned if PCs were deprived of their power then the members would not be in a position to address problems of people in efficient way. (Pajhwok)

(13) EU Expresses ...

Nuristan provinces," the statement added.

The death toll from a series of avalanches and flash floods kept rising, with the bulk of deaths coming from central Panjshir province, where above 200 lost their lives, including women and children. (Pajhwok)

(14) Xi Extends ...

and northern provinces of your country have been hit by serious avalanches, causing heavy casualties and property losses. On behalf of the Chinese government and people, and in my own name, I wish to express my deep condolences to the victims as well as heartfelt sympathy to the affected people.

He further added that I am convinced that the Afghan government and people are capable of overcoming the disaster and rebuild the homeland at an early date. The Chinese side is willing to offer assistance in rescue at the request of the Afghanistan side. (PR)

(15) OIC Commiserates ...

destruction to property.

The Pūnisher Province has been severely affected by heavy snowstorms, causing catastrophic avalanches.

The OIC Secretary General has appealed to Member States and Non-governmental organisations to extend urgent humanitarian assistance to alleviate the plight of the affected people. (WAM)

(16) Landmine...

that" Yesterday on my way to Madrasa, the security forces arrested me."Paktik a comparatively volatile province in the southeastern part of Afghanistan shares a long border with Paki-stan.A strong presence of the insurgents is believed to be in this province as the province has seen some deadly terrorist attacks. In November last year a suicide attack killed at least 45 people and wounded over 50 others. Suicidal bomber exploded his explosive materials among a huge gathering of people who were watching a volleyball tournament in Yahyakhil District. (KP)

(17) 3 More Dead,...

of over 200 persons died in avalanches in Panjshir province last week.

Kabri said that 196 bodies have been recovered while three bodies still missing in Tul area of Paryān district.

He added that emergency aid to the affected families in Arwi, Kujan and Khawak areas of Paryān district and in Landor area of Hesa Awal district was being distributed. Accordign to another report a man died in avalanche in Khanjan district of Baghlan province.

Nasir Ahmad Kalhzad, director natural disaster management authority, said that the incident took place when an avalanche burried a house in Bajga valley.

He said that the route leading to the valley was blocked but reopened by Rural Rehabilitation and Development workers. (Pajhwok)

(18) 7 Killed, 4 Injured...

assisted, pending a survey to assess the damage.

The death toll from recent avalanches and flooding has risen above 300 with scores of others injured.

The bulk of deaths came from central Panjshir province, where above 200 people lost their lives to avalanches.

Other provinces where avalanches and flooding wreaked havoc include Parwan, Herat, Farah, Ghor, Badghis, Baghlan, Badakhshan, Kunduz, Takhar, Sar-i-Pul, Nangarhar, Laghman, Kapisa, Nuristan, Bamyān and Nimroz. (Pajhwok)

(19) Imam Detained ...

the imam eight months ago in unconscious condition.

When the girl asked the imam to marry her, he again rendered the girl unconscious and raped her in Zardalo valley.

The imam was arrested and was currently being interrogated after family of the girl visited the district administration on Sunday to lodge a complaint, the district chief said. But Takhar Ulema Council head Abdul Samad rejected the claim

that the cleric had sexually abused his student, calling it a plot against imams. (Pajhwok)

(20) Snow Keeps...

lives.Asadi confirmed receiving 15 complaints from residents of the two areas against local government, accusing the administration of paying no attention to their problems.

A local influential figure, Asadullah Iftikhari, said 10 meters high snowdrifts had blocked entrances in some areas and 150 crews daily worked to clear the roads from snow, but it appeared beyond their ability to deal with the problem.

He said no local official had so far visited affected areas to assess people's problems and carry out rescue and relief operations.

"Local residents have stopped clearing roads with their hands because it is impossible for them to do so without having the required machinery," Iftikhari said.

Provincial Natural Disaster Management Authority head Mohammad Reza Rafat said the snowfall had not only cut off the two areas in Waras, but crippled hundreds of villages in Panjab, Yakawlang and Waras districts.

"We lack fund and equipment to clear roads from snow. Only emergency issues can be addressed because we have no extra budget." (Pajhwok)

(21) 8 Civilians ...

-tion to the blast.

This comes while, six other civilians were killed and two others injured after their vehicle struck a roadside mine in Achin district of the province, spokesman for the acting Governor Ahmad Zia Abdulzai said.

However, no group including the Taliban has claimed responsibility for the blasts. (ToloneWS)

(22) RAF Nurse Given...

help, and for me to be recognised in this way is truly humbling"

She identified the need for stronger training to prepare those working in the MERT and subsequently created a be-spoke course for all MERT personnel.

This included real-life training, better equipment awareness and the introduction of trauma risk management for members of the team. Sqn Ldr Thompson-Edgar said trauma risk management was "vital in helping individuals get through the psycho-logical aspects of what they have been through after horrendously awful ordeals". She said she was "delighted and very surprised" at having received the award.

"I look at the people that we evacuated off of the battlefield, and what we did was nothing in comparison to the bravery they showed," she said. "For those guys on the ground that need our help, and for me to be recognised in this way is truly humbling."

She noted that MERT was now a "globally acknowledged platform that is the pinnacle of pre hospital care".

"Our teams gelled so well, and worked so well together, and have set the bar for everyone else," she added. (Agen-cies)

(23) 1 Rebel Dead...

said that another militant wounded in the blast. Mohammad Saleh Saleh, Almar district chief, said Habibullah cousin of the Taliban's shadow governor for Faryab lost his leg, hand and an eye in the incident.

The area where the militants were making bomb was under Taliban control, he said. Elsewhere, two people wounded in a bomb explosion in Pul-i-Khumri, the capital of Baghlan province.

Police spokesman Javed Basharat said two civilians were wounded in a remote control bomb which exploded close to a police ranger near the National Directorate of Security (NDS) office on Sunday evening. An eyewitness Mohammad Ashraf said that front part of the ranger pick-up was damaged and a civilian car was destroyed in the incident.

But a Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid claimed commander of Baghlan highway had been wounded in the blast. (Pajhwok)

(24) Kerry, Lavrov in...

civilian areas may constitute a war crime, and if widespread and systematic, a crime against humanity."

Kerry said he hoped that the Geneva talks would lead to further de-escalation.

"But that's going to have to play out obviously over the course of the next few days," he said. In Brussels, three-way gas talks were also set to take place between

the energy ministers of Ukraine and Russia, together with European Commission vice president Maros Sefcovic.

Russian state-owned gas giant Gazprom threatened last week to cut deliveries to Ukraine over a dispute related to Moscow's move to supply gas directly to separatist areas and then demand that Kiev pay for it.

Rebel leaders in east Ukraine said that Kiev had suddenly ceased gas supplies, and asked for access to gas from Russia.

Ukraine's national gas company Naftogas did stop pumping gas to the separatist areas last month, saying it could not deliver due to a damaged pipeline, but added that deliveries resumed a few hours later.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has accused Ukraine of perpetrating a kind of "genocide" by denying energy to four million people living in territories hit by a humanitarian crisis.

The Kremlin appeared to soften its rhetoric, however, after the European Union unveiled plans last week for a continent-wide single energy market, with the goal of decreasing its reliance on Russian gas. (AFP)

(25) Netanyahu Brings...

return for Tehran's agreement, the West would ease punishing sanctions imposed over its nuclear program, which Iran insists is purely civilian.

"It's a duck. But this duck is a nuclear duck. And it's time the world started calling a duck a duck."

Last year, he played on a Budweiser beer advert to warn of danger from Iranian Scud missiles.

"You remember that beer commercial, 'This Bud's for you?' Well, when you see Iran building ICBMs, just remember, America, that Scud's for you."

Obama has refused to meet Netanyahu during his visit, and Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of State John Kerry will both be abroad. (AFP)

(26) Iraq Forces ...

is being carried out using fighter jets, helicopters and artillery targeting Tikrit to secure the advance and cut supply routes," he said.

Rebel forces battling government troops in the divided second city of Aleppo rejected a plan drawn up by UN envoy Staffan de Mistura for a freeze in fighting and demanded a comprehensive solution to the conflict. (AFP)

(27) Iran Fails to ...

would suspend critical nuclear activities in return for limited easing of sanctions, with all sides seeking a comprehensive deal. The IAEA will monitor any possible deal between Iran and the world's major countries, and will carry out its own investigation into Tehran's nuclear program. (Xinhua)

(28) Elections in ...

made to the electoral law, restrictions on the right to stand, freedoms of expression and assembly, and access to media limited the opportunity to make a free and informed choice, the Statement says, noting that the elections were not administered in an impartial manner. On election day, 230 observers from 40 countries were deployed, including 163 long-term and short-term observers deployed by the OSCE/ODIHR, as well as a 58-member delegation from the OSCE PA and a 9-member delegation from the EP. Opening was observed in 73 polling stations and voting was observed in 812 polling stations across the country. Counting was observed in 70 polling stations. The tabulation process was observed in 26 DECS. (Asia-Plus)

(29) President' ...

People's Democratic Party, Agrarian Party, Party of Economic Reforms, and Socialist Party have overcome the 5-percent threshold and won seats in the new parliament. (Agencies)

(30) Nuclear Deal...

bringing its highest authorities to the talks and leaving "no stone unturned". (Reuters)

(31) Xi Gets Royal ...

British royal family in enhancing cooperation in trade, environmental protection and culture, and welcomed the prospect of more royals visiting China. Fascinated by China since childhood, the prince, also the Duke of Cambridge, said his goal was to boost greater cooperation between the countries, especially in strengthening exchanges between young people. (Agencies)