

### (1) Ghani Says ...

then it means nothing will happen," Hilal remarked, calling on the government to come up with a positive response to the Taliban demands. (Pajhwok)

### (2) Iran to Launch ...

Last month, Deputy Minister of Industry, Mines, and Trade Mojtaba Khosrotaj described the Afghan market as "strategic" for Iranian merchants.

"Although Afghanistan is not considered a new market, presence in the market is strategic for Iran because we can have economic activities there in the long term," the deputy minister said at the time.

Back in April 2015, Iran and Afghanistan signed two cooperation agreements as part of efforts to boost relations between the two neighbors in various areas.

In a ceremony attended by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his Afghan counterpart Ashraf Ghani, high-ranking officials from the two countries signed the documents. (Agencies)

### (3) Resolute Support ...

said a statement of RS released here.

Campbell, who served three tours in Afghanistan, led coalition forces during a critical time in Afghanistan's history that encompassed numerous political and operational transitions, the statement added. During Campbell's command, coalition forces were reduced from 35,000 to approximately 13,000, the statement said, adding although troop numbers have been reduced as ISAF transitioned to Resolute Support, the international commitment remains strong with more than 40 nations continuing to provide military and economic support to Afghanistan.

The new commander of RS and U.S. forces in Afghanistan comes to his fourth tour in Afghanistan from his previous posting as commander of NATO's Allied Land Command in Izmir, Turkey.

Speaking at the ceremony, Nicholson praised the people of Afghanistan as well as the Afghan and Coalition forces by saying, "I believe that all who have fought bravely within the Afghan security forces and the Coalition are heroes." (Xinhua)

### (4) Pak Army ...

Gen. John F. Campbell relinquished command of both Resolute Support and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan to U.S. Army Gen. John W. Nicholson, Jr. in a ceremony at Resolute Support Headquarters," said a statement of RS released here.

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### (5) Afghanistan ...

of the 1,700 kilometer pipeline will pass through Afghanistan. This project will generate \$500 million USD annually for Afghanistan in transit tax. (Tolonews)

### (6) 'Taliban Support ...

creating barriers for the peace talks to kick off. This comes as the Taliban group representatives based in Qatar insisted on preconditions of the group before they sit-inf for direct talks with the Afghan government. Admitting that the group is unaware of the potential upcoming direct talks with the Afghan government, a spokesman for the group's political office in Qatar, Mohammad Naim, said last month that they have not changed their preconditions for joining the peace process, which he had announced at the Pugwash research center in

Doha on January 23.

The precondition of the Taliban including complete withdrawal of the foreign forces from Afghanistan, official recognition of Taliban's political office in Qatar, removal of Taliban from United Nations terrorist blacklist, halt to the arrest and elimination of Taliban, and release of the Taliban inmates from prisons.

Pakistan has offered to host the first round of direct talks between the Afghan government and Taliban representatives following the conclusion of the fourth round of Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) meeting on Tuesday. (KP)

### (7) Hakimi, Melbin ...

World Bank/IMF spring meetings and the recently held meeting between the IMF and the Afghan government in Istanbul also figured at the meeting, a statement from the Ministry of Finance (MoF) said on Wednesday.

Hakimi told Melbin of the preparations the Afghan government was making for the Brussels conference. The ministries concerned are reporting preparations for the conference to the cabinet on a monthly basis.

The conference on, slated for October 4-5, is an important opportunity for the Afghan government as it advances its reform agenda. Progress on the Afghan reform commitments is crucial to security and development assistance from the international community.

Hakimi shared details of the recent IMF meeting held in Istanbul to discuss the economic reform agenda, completion of the second and final review of the program and to start engagement on a medium-term macroeconomic reform. (Pajhwok)

### (8) Rabbani Meets ...

informed Rabbani about the NATO Secretary General's planned visit and his programs in Afghanistan, the statement said.

"Subsequently, Minister of Foreign Affairs called this visit important and valuable which will take place before Warsaw Summit of NATO and insisted on this Summit's importance for Afghanistan," according to the statement.

It said that both sides talked and exchanged views regarding the security situation, NATO's continuous cooperation with Afghan security forces and the Afghan Government's peace and reconciliation endeavors.

Recently the NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, reiterated the organization's continued support to Afghanistan. He said that NATO is trying to turn Afghanistan into a stable country.

He termed NATO's support as essential for stability in Afghanistan. "My view is that the Afghan national defense and security forces are facing a challenging security environment in Afghanistan. NATO has ended its combat mission, but we continue to support them with training, assistance and advising and the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) has taken over the full responsibility for security in Afghanistan," said Stoltenberg.

He added that security forces have made a lot of progress and they have proven that they are capable, professional and that they are able to respond.

The NATO ministers recently agreed to continue the train, assist and advise mission in Afghanistan. (Tolonews)

### (9) NATO Chief ...

Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani of Jens Stoltenberg's planned trip.

A statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Aram also discussed with Rabbani the NATO chief's engagements in Afghanistan.

The foreign minister hailed the scheduled visit as important and valuable. The trip will take place before the July Warsaw Summit, an important event for Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

### (10) Ghani Endorses ...

spokesman told the Voice of America Gen. Fenghui had urged Afghanistan to join the anti-terrorism mechanism. "President Ghani has endorsed the proposal," Syed Zafar Hashemi was quoted as saying. For his part, the president cautioned against making any distinction between good and bad terrorists. Kabul has long blasted Islamabad for turning a blind eye to the terrorists operating out of Pakistan and fighting inside Afghanistan.

Separately, a State Department spokesperson said Washington

was supportive of any role that Beijing could play in stabilising the war-torn country.

"China's a neighbour, and they have an interest in a strong, stable, terrorism-free Afghanistan...I'm not in a position to comment specifically about this proposal, since, as I understand it, it's just recently been set forth.

"And I understand President Ghani had some positive things to say about it. Again, we'd welcome any effort by members of the international community that would lead to a strong, prosperous, stable Afghanistan in the future." (Pajhwok)

### (11) Troops in ...

and so far the security forces have been able to clear several villages and taken control of the area. We are moving slowly to protect civilians," Faqiri said.

Abdul Jabar Qahraman, the head of the military operation in Helmand, said: "We are trying to reopen the road from Sangin into Lashkargah. The military operation still continues and we want to provide security for the high way." (Tolonews)

### (12) 6 Killed As ...

passerby also died in the blast. Those injured were mostly civilians, a provincial government spokesman told Xinhua.

The incident occurred roughly at 12:00 p.m. local time (0730GMT) at Akbar Khan Mina locality where Iranian and the Pakistani consulate buildings also located in the city that is the provincial capital of eastern Nangarhar province, 120 km east of Afghan capital of Kabul. The injured were shifted to hospitals by ambulances and civilian vehicles where some of the injured remained in critical condition.

No member of the diplomatic mission was hurt in the incident, according to officials.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack yet. On Jan. 13, seven security force members and two civilians were killed and 11 persons wounded after three gunmen attacked the same district. (Xinhua)

### (13) Balkh Gathering...

Independent Human Rights Commission's office in Mazar-i-Sharif, the provincial capital, on the law. Information and Culture Director Saleh Mohammad Khaleeq told Pajhwok Afghan News on the sidelines of the gathering that the access to information law had been approved in six chapters and 32 articles.

According to Chapter four, clause 16, commissions overseeing the implementation of the access to information law should be established first in the central capital and then provinces, Khaleeq said.

He said they organized the gathering with journalists and civil society activists to set up the oversight commission.

He said the panel would have 13 members including representatives of some government departments, political parties, civil society groups and human rights bodies.

Some representatives of journalist bodies expressed their pleasure over the creation of the oversight commission, but said besides government officials some journalists were also unaware of the law.

Kazim Haideri, a member of the leadership council of the association of journalists in the northern zone, said about a year had passed since the access to information law was enacted, but little knowledge was available about the law.

Tolo television reporter Arif Musawi said first facilities to interpret and understand the law should be brought into being. He said the provincial information and culture department should provide details of the law to journalists. NAI office official in Balkh Noor Agha Sharifi confirmed some journalists and local officials had little knowledge about the law.

He said his organization was ready to arrange a two-day seminar for journalists on the law in collaboration with the provincial information and culture department. The gathering issued a statement that urged the provincial information and culture department to facilitate the arrangement of seminars creating awareness about the law. (Pajhwok)

### (14) Bakhtariyan...

relics from Tela Tapa, Bagram region, Ai Khanum and Balkh in Afghanistan - of which some date back 3,000 years. According to officials from the museum, a number of relics discovered in Mis Ainak

(copper mine in Logar) area were exhibited in Prague.

"The relics from Mis Ainak [area] were displayed in Prague. Other countries have also asked to display the relics. We will carry on the process after an assessment," said AINUDDIN SEDAQAT, acting chief of local museums.

The national museum enjoys numerous foreign visitors on a daily basis with many saying it is very interesting for them to see the historical heritage and relics of Afghanistan.

"I have come from Iran to visit Afghanistan and now I am here to see the national museum," said Ali Sharqi, an Iranian citizen. (Tolonews)

### (15) Pakistan Linked...

on common vision of a peaceful and prosperous Asia and to explore the challenges and opportunities of regional integration.

For centuries, Karzai said, Asia was the commercial, intellectual and spiritual hub of the world where ideas, goods and people crisscrossed and connected civilizations.

"Today as we try to revive those routes and networks, there are a plethora of initiatives underway in the form of strategies, regional organizations, transport corridors, infrastructure projects, trade and transit agreements, and banks."

In this regard he named India's Connect Central Asia, China's One Road One Belt, development of new ports such Chabahar-Zaranj, the North-South Transport Corridor, TAPI, CASA1000, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, Eurasian Economic Union, and multiple trade and transit agreements between countries of the region as fate-changing endeavors.

Karzai said he visited Pakistan more than twenty times, with utmost enthusiasm and sincerity, to address mutual concerns and to take concrete steps towards improving bilateral political and economic ties during his presidency. From the Pakistani perspective, he said, peaceful and friendly relations with Afghanistan were conditioned on the recognition of the Durand Line, one of the very negative legacies of the Colonial rule.

In the past 15 years, Karzai said he had constantly underlined the impossibility of the recognition of the Durand Line by Afghanistan; while expressing Afghan desire for friendly and cooperative relations with Pakistan.

"In regards to Afghanistan's foreign relations, we have clearly demonstrated to our brothers in Pakistan that our sense of sovereignty and independence is the single most cherished value for which we have sacrificed a great deal in the course of our history and for which we are known globally."

Karzai said the Afghans respected Pakistan's freedom to pursue its independent relations with any country in the world and Afghanistan would surely exercise the same prerogative.

"We have also clarified to them that our relations with any country in the region and beyond will not be to their detriment...a strategy of cooperation based on a civilized relationship will help both countries rise and prosper together."

He said they must strive to realize the full potential of Afghanistan's centrality as a transit hub and as a nexus of regional connectivity.

"Afghanistan provides the most efficient and the shortest route between China and Iran, between India and Central Asia, and between Russia and South Asia."

He said the main disconnect in this web of stability and prosperity was Afghanistan's lack of access to India and India's lack of access to Afghanistan and Central Asia through Pakistan. "This must be fixed if we are to create a fully integrated and stable region where each single country would benefit and prosper."

He said they also expected the presence of US and NATO would provide a conducive environment for regional stability and help Afghanistan benefit from greater connectivity and integration.

Karzai stressed a coordinated approach to connectivity between India and China and said close cooperation and confluence of interests between India and China was imperative for stability and would unleash unprecedented opportunities for the region and beyond. "Afghanistan fully supports India's Connect Central Asia strategy and China's One Belt One Road initiative and wishes to be active stakeholder in these grand visions."

"Only positive symmetry between India and China can generate a win-win outcome and create a mutually assured inclusion greatly benefiting regional peace and prosperity."

Karzai said during his presidency, he actively engaged with China to establish a comprehensive partnership and today Afghanistan-China relations were comprehensive and deeply friendly.

He called for seeking regional solutions to common security challenges and said they must recognize that the region would not fully reap the benefits of economic connectivity if terrorism and radicalism continued to cast a dark shadow over their potential and impede progress.

"Despite efforts by the international community, terrorism is far from being defeated and is rather spreading across the wider region."

He said it was imperative for China, India and Russia to play a leading role in a system of regional security that would strengthen domestic capacities and mobilize regional resources in an integrated manner.

He said their common vision for a secure and prosperous future could be achieved if they moved beyond a narrow definition of national interest and zero-sum games. "Our vision is not a Utopian dream. It can and must be realized." (Pajhwok)

### (16) Heavy Clashes i...

controlled by them, Haideri said. Kashm, Tagab, Teshkan and Argo districts have already been purged of rebels.

Ahmad Naveed Frotan, the governor's spokesman, confirmed the attacks on security posts in Baharak, but he had no information about casualties.

Baharak district is located 44 kilometers southeast of Faizabad, the provincial capital. (Pajhwok)

### (17) Japan ...

Junya Matsuura, and UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, Neil Buhne, made the announcement at the WFP office here. (APP)

### (18) Afghan Migrants...

and NDS but he was not accepted in the security ranks," said Shafiq, a cousin of Romal.

Salim - who survived the accident is meanwhile still in serious condition.

His father, Mohammad Omar said: "This is all because we are facing a corrupt system today. Eleven Afghans died and only my son and two others remain alive and I don't know in what condition my son is in."

Islamuddin Jurat, spokesman for the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation said "The Afghan government can only run programs of awareness to try to stop the migration and show the consequences of illegal migration and its dangers. It cannot do anything else." (Tolonews)

### (19) Ex-Rebels ...

forces captured the district, but now the Taliban have warned me they would kill me because I handed over their weapons to government," he said.

He said the government should remain committed to its promises and protect their lives against militants.

"The provincial High Peace Committee provided me salary only for the first month and after that they said they had no more budget and I should earn money myself. Now neither I can go to my village nor I can stay in the city," Mohammad added.

He said one of his friends had been killed by militants for joining the peace process.

Another former rebel, a resident of Khwaja Bahauddin district, who wished not to be named, also said the Taliban were threatening them.

He said the militants had warned him to rejoin the group or he and his family would be put to death.

He said the government also left them alone and even did not provide them residential homes for living.

"We have no option but to rejoin the militants as the government doesn't seem sincere towards its commitment," the ex-fighter added.

Takhar HPC spokesman Mir Bahauddin Seddiqi confirmed the government was yet to help the reconciling militants.

He said donor countries had stopped funding the High Peace Council, rendering the body unable to provide jobs to surrendering

militants.

But he assured the problem would be resolved and salaries to the former rebels would be restarted soon.

The governor's spokesman, Sunatullah Taimori, said they had talked with officials in the central government to provide an urgent solution to the problem. (Pajhwok)

### (20) 21 Killed...

The Taliban-led violence continues in Afghanistan. Afghan security forces have pressed on clearing the militants in restive provinces as they assumed the full security charges from NATO-led troops since Jan. 1, 2015.

The Taliban responds by bombing and armed attacks. (Xinhua)

### (21) 5 Police ...

hammad Akbar, confirmed the attack-the security post's capture by the guerrillas.

A Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, claimed responsibility for the attack and said six policemen had been killed and many others wounded. (Pajhwok)

### (22) EU Urges ...

European Parliament, Council and with other stakeholders.

In February, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on all world leaders to sign the Paris agreement on climate change at a signature ceremony on April 22 in New York. (Xinhua)

### (23) Supporters ...

educated and poisoned?" asked Teri Garbetta, 25.

Guillermo Lopez, 28, a wireless network administrator, said Clinton was the strongest candidate the Democrats have to go up against the Republican candidate. (Xinhua)

### (24) EU wants...

from Turkey until they reach Greek islands.

Two officials told Reuters that Germany, the principal destination for migrants, is looking for daily flows to be "in the realm of three digits, not four" in order to start taking refugees directly from Turkey for resettlement. (Reuters)

### (25) Urgent Way...

the benefit of the Ukrainian people," said the press release. They also stressed the need for full implementation of the Minsk Agreements. On Jan. 1, 2016, the Free Trade Area between Ukraine and the EU entered into force. The EU is seeking an increasingly close relationship with Ukraine, going beyond cooperation, to gradual economic integration and a deepening of political cooperation. (Xinhua)

### (26) Syrian ...

hill overlooks the rebel-held town of Jisr al-Shughour in neighboring Idlib province, and the Ghab Plain, where rebel advances last year were seen as a growing threat to President Bashar al-Assad. (Reuters)

### (27) EU Launches...

new Emergency Assistance scheme and 200 million next year and in 2018.

Officials stress that the program, run by the department of the EU executive which runs humanitarian relief programs outside the 28-nation bloc, will not divert funds from its 1.1-billion annual budget devoted to helping the world's poorest. (Reuters)

### (28) Netanyahu

little to lose politically by formally asking for Mandelblit's approval, even if it was unlikely to be granted.

Since October, Palestinian stabbings, shootings and car rammings have killed 28 Israelis and a U.S. citizen. Israeli security forces have killed at least 172 Palestinians, 114 of whom Israel says were assailants, while most others were shot dead during violent protests. (Reuters)

### (29) Residents...

Wednesday, the Turkish military eased the 24-hour curfew it imposed on Dec. 14, although it still holds between 7:30 p.m. and 5 a.m. The reprieve comes three weeks after authorities on Feb. 11 declared the successful conclusion of military operations to stamp out the rebels. (AP)

### (30) Chinese, Russian ...

has proposed that the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and a truce-to-peace mechanism should be pursued at the same time.

China is willing to strengthen cooperation with Russia on this, Wang said. (Xinhua)