

(1) Afghanistan ...

and not take them prisoner because "they will be released anyway".

He later retracted the comments but other senior policemen echoed them and villagers say such killings continue.

A spokesman for Raziq denied the allegations in the report.

"War is war, and we kill Taliban during fights," said the spokesman.

"They also martyr (kill) our policemen, but I'm committed to Afghan law and never step beyond it," the spokesman cited Raziq as saying.

In another example cited by the rights group, a former commander of police in Uruzgan province who received U.S. support remains at large despite killing dozens of civilians.

A spokesman for Uruzgan's governor acknowledged the accusations but said the commander and his forces had left the province. (Reuters)

(2) Emergency Power ...

pylons had fallen to the ground and few others got damaged their tops in the snowstorm, cutting off cables carrying 300 megawatt electricity from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Kabul residents consume imported electricity and the ongoing blackout in some areas has created many problems for them. (Pajhwok)

(3) PCs Want...

closed to the unity government said the new powers granted to the provincial councils were different from their earlier powers. (Pajhwok)

(4) mHawala Electricity...

of paying electricity bills. It will safe corporate customers both time and extra expenses and will help them manage every transaction at their convenience,' said Marwan Mohammed Saleh, CEO of mHawala. Processing electricity bills have always been costly and time-consuming for businesses in Afghanistan. mHawala tends to register all DABS corporate customers to make the process of bill payment easy and reliable. Meanwhile, the service is up and running in Kabul and will soon cover other provinces. How does the service work? Corporate customers will need to register with Etisalat mHawala in order to receive a portal and the required credentials. Once the customer receives the portal and credentials, he/she can simply upload all payable electricity bills on the portal and send it to their finance department for further process. The customer will then receive a receipt on successful payment. mHawala which is an innovative service from Etisalat, currently offers mobile money and branchless banking services through its mobile platform and agent network in Afghanistan; services include: cash-in and cash-out, person-to-person transfers, airtime top-up, balance inquiry, and electricity bill payment transactions.

In addition, mHawala has recently implemented salary payment project, through which government employees can receive their monthly salary in their mobile phone and perform their monetary transactions at any authorized mHawala agent across the country.

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)

(5) Rescue Operation

Atal 205th Corps Maj. Gen. Abdul Hamid Hamid, and Zabul security officials.

This comes after the 25-member mediation team of Zabul elders were in talks with the insurgents on Saturday on releasing the abducted passengers, but to no prevail.

Zabul's acting Governor Mohammad Ashraf Nasiri had warned that if negotiations between the tribal elders and the armed masked men did not triumph that military action will be taken.

In an attempt to identify the armed masked men Nasiri had recently blamed the abduction on local Taliban, the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Jhangvi militants and the Chechens. There has been no clarification on who the armed masked men are and who their affiliation is, but speculations from security officials battling against the masked men indicate that they are Daesh.

The 30 passengers, specifically belonging to the Hazara ethnic minority, were abducted last week from Shah Joy district of Zabul as they were on their way to Kabul on the Kabul-Kandahar highway. (Tolonews)

(6) Watchdog Reports...

smaller percentages are ordinary discharges. More than 1,200 soldiers perished in combat last year, according to the figures published in the report.

Taliban Negotiators May Lack Power to Implement Afghan Peace Deal - Experts

The American-led military coalition stated that the Afghan Army's size increased in the past few months, reaching about 173,000 in January. This remains the lowest troop level since the fall of 2011.

These new figures expose the challenge faced by the limited American contingent and those private contractors remaining in Afghanistan since the US mission officially ended combat operations in Afghanistan at the end of December 2014, after 14 years. The US currently keeps a residual force of 10,000 troops in the country. (Agencies)

(7) Official Underlines...

West of Pakistan's Gwadar port, holds immense strategic and economic significance for India. Chabahar and Gwadar ports are located in a common coast and they are 70 kilometers away from one another.

In July, Head of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafeyee announced that Iran plans to turn its Southeastern Chabahar Port into a trade hub in the near future

"Those investing in the area will have a secure and promising prospect," Shafeyee said in a meeting with Indian Ambassador to Tehran Shri Niraj Srivastava in the Iranian capital at the time.

Shafeyee pointed to Iran's emphasis on the rail transport system, and said, "The country plans to connect Mashhad rail road in the Northeastern Iran to the Western Afghan province of Herat and launch development projects in Sarakhs special economic zone in Northeastern Iran.

Srivastava, for his part, described Chabahar Port as a key location for the promotion of Iran-India trade, and said, "New Delhi seeks to participate in development of the area."

The diplomat said that India has allocated USD 300 million to invest in the development of Chabahar Port and the country plans to take part in development of rail roads from the area and shipping lines in the next steps. (FNA)

(8) NSP Completes...

graveling rural roads. Approximately, 3,326 families in various communities have been able to develop a proper solution to their difficulties upon completion of these projects. (Wadsam)

(9) 5 'Save the ...

of Save the Children confirmed five employees were missing in Uruzgan province but she did

not provide more details.

However, father of one of the abductees confirmed that he had no contacts with his son. Taliban did not comment on the incident so far. (Pajhwok)

(10) 'MoFA New...

members of parliament held key posts in Afghanistan embassies abroad where most of them had sought political asylum.

MoFA spokesman Ahmad Shakib Mustaghni acknowledged appointment in the MoFA in previous years based on nepotism.

"All of our employees are not relatives of officials or political figures. And there is no law that bars those relatives working here," he said, insisting that appointments were based on the needs of the ministry.

"However, as we see that recently a major portion of our educated youth are interested in working at MoFA, so it has been decided in order to bring transparency so that everyone needs to appear for entry test," Mustaghni continued.

MoFA spokesman said the new leadership had major plans in bringing reforms and capacity building to the ministry.

He rejected recent reports that 11 ambassadors have been fired, but said working terms of 24 top diplomats were over and they were given retirement notifications. (Pajhwok)

(11) Damaged Gardez...

earliest. The public representative said vehicles carrying extra load should be banned from plying the route in order protect it from being damaged once reconstructed.

Driver Zainullah said the dilapidated condition of the road delayed vehicles from reaching their destinations and also caused damage to vehicles.

The taxi driver said if the government did not pay attention to the road's current condition, then it would have to construct a new road.

He said it had been a standard road when first built, but no care on the part of the authorities concerned shortened its life. Paktia Public Works director Abdullah Durrani blamed the Gardez-Kabul highway's rundown condition on heavy vehicles carrying logistics for foreign troops.

He said such vehicles had long been plying the road and they had to some extent contributed to the damage.

However, he rejected the claim that heavy vehicles were allowed to carry goods beyond the permissible weight, saying no such vehicle had been allowed. The director said the public works department planned to install two high tonnage weighbridges in the Patan border district and on the Khost-Gardez road.

The Public Works Ministry says repair works on the road would be launched soon. Deputy Public Works Minister Ahmad Shah Wahid, who visited Paktia few days ago, told Pajhwok Afghan News that he and their technical team had inspected the road's condition and repair works would be launched.

He called the road one of Afghanistan's important highways and said its reconstruction had been made part of the ministry's plans.

Reconstruction work on the 105km Gardez-Patan road was launched few days ago. (Pajhwok)

(12) Closure of PC...

The council's deputy head, Subhan Naibi, told Pajhwok Afghan News the closure of their office had a negative impact on good governance as people visited their representatives individually at their homes to share their problems with them.

He said they couldn't solve people's problems individually because council members had to jointly discuss such problems.

"We have been able to solve small problems of people as our office is closed, but the members do not attend meetings to make decisions and find solution to problems related to the provincial government," he said. Naibi said they could share vi-

able advises with the provincial administration how to improve governance, reconstruction affairs and people's situation if their office was open.

Daikundi residents also believe their problems could not be solved until the provincial council office is reopened.

Hashim Zahidi, a resident of Neili city, the provincial capital, said provincial council members should be granted the right to oversee local government's performance.

He said the PC office should be reopened as soon as possible so that they could share their problems with their representatives who would forward the problems to the authorities concerned.

The Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) had announced that a draft law allowing PCs to evaluate local government's affairs, had been shared with the council of ministers.

A meeting of the cabinet, chaired by President Ashraf Ghani, last week decided to give back PC members their right of evaluation.

The Provincial Councils Coordination Commission on Tuesday set President Ashraf Ghani a three-day deadline to issue his decree reinstating their oversight right, otherwise they would launch a protest movement. (Pajhwok)

(13) Survey Launched...

been established on the routes coming from KP and motorway. Patrolling has been stepped up and vigilance has been beefed up at interchanges on motorway. (Agencies)

(14) Kandahar Bank...

the cameras' memory chips. The raid was reportedly carried out by a senior official at the bank, an employee of nine years, with the help of his son and brother-in-law who were also on the rolls.

In their statement, the three bank officials said they had removed the cash to prevent it from being looted by robbers and would return it if their demands on corruption were met.

But regional director Fazel Ahmad Azimi said he did not believe the statement had been issued by the three workers and that corruption could not be combated with corruption.

To investigate the issue, a central bank delegation from Kabul has arrived in Kandahar and has launched its investigation with the help of security officials, but has been unable so far to trace the whereabouts of the three officials.

But it is said the senior official has sent a statement to a website saying they would return the money if their conditions were met.

He said not on a single afghani from the money had been spent or changed into a foreign currency and the money was withdrawn in reaction to corruption by the bank officials and after his repeated calls seeking help of higher ups fell on deaf ears.

He urged President Ashraf Ghani to intervene and deal corrupt bank officials with an iron fist. Addressing the Kandahar police chief, the bank official said he had withdrawn the money to fight corruption and convey his message to high officials. He said if their demands were accepted, they would return the money to the government.

Kandahar police chief Gen. Abdul Razaq said the bank's official statement had not reached him directly but he had information that the statement had been published in a website.

The police chief said if the statement really belonged to the bank official and if he proved his loyalty to Afghanistan, he would not be harmed and his conditions would be accepted.

But Fazel Ahmad Azimi said he did not believe the statement belonged to the bank official who looted the money. "You cannot fight corruption by committing corruption," he remarked.

He said the delegation from Kabul and security officials were investigating the issue and those who had guaranteed loyalty of

the bank officials during their appointments had been arrested and were being questioned.

The central bank has also sought Interpol's help in arresting the three officials, the regional director said. (Pajhwok)

(15) "His Excellency"...

s in Kabul, foreign embassies, consulates and other diplomatic offices in Afghanistan.

The letter has asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to also share the issue with the embassies, consulates and other diplomatic offices of Afghanistan in foreign countries.

This letter was published on social media on Monday (02 March 2015) which has been strongly condemned by Afghans in "facebook" since the country is hassling with natural disaster and a high profile government official is worried for the title of his name. (KP)

(16) Municipality ...

working without salary creating problem for their daily lives.

"Every day we borrow our food items from shopkeepers. We have waited for too long but to no avail," he added.

Engineer Mahmood Amiri, Maidan Wardak mayor, acknowledged the employees did not receive their salaries. He added they had already sent this year's budget to centre and were awaiting approval. (Pajhwok)

(17) Kunduz ...

linked the increase in revenue to improved coordination among government departments with the municipality. He said the revenue would be used in important welfare projects for Kunduz residents.

However, some residents complained about spread of garbage in the city and blamed the municipality for negligence.

Mahmood, a shopkeeper, said that the garbage in front of his shop was laying for months and the municipality workers did not discharge their duties efficiently to remove the trash.

He said that the stench from the garbage really disturbing and could spread diseases among people.

But Kunduz mayor said that they were facing shortage of equipments. Omarkhail added that Kunduz city had a population of 70,000 residents while the current inhabitants of the city have reached to 400,000 people. He hoped a new master plan created for Kunduz city would resolve the problem of the capacity of residents. (Pajhwok)

(18) Contractor for...

the issue, therefore, I informed the Ministry of Interior and sent them letters several times," Badghis Acting Governor Ahmadullah Alizai said. "But so far I haven't received a response from them."

In response to the statement, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) has said that a final decision has not yet been made about the withdrawal of forces from Badghis province. "So far we haven't made a decision, the letter which was sent by the Ministry of Public Works to the Department of Public Protection Forces was indicating the issues facing them," MoI spokesman Sediq Sediqi told TOLONews.

According to Deputy Minister of Public Works, Mr. Wahid, President Ghani originally gave a nine month deadline to complete the high project. Another meeting with ECCI has reportedly been scheduled in the coming weeks. (Tolonews)

(19) Top Pakistani Cleri...

amicably. He said that Pakistani nation could only pray for positive outcome of the dialogue.

He said both countries had been facing war for decades and now time was ripe for the government of Afghanistan to try to resolve the issue through dialogue.

The PUC, he said was in contact with the federal and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governments on the issue of Afghan students studying in Pakistan and a PUC delegation would soon call on the KPK chief minister and federal interior minister in this regard. (Pajhwok)

(20) 2 Passengers ...

Police reached the area and evacuated the wounded to a hospital for treatment. Hayat blamed the accident on negligence by driver. Police were investigating the mishap.

Mohammad Rafiq, spokesman of Herat zonal hospital, confirmed receiving 13 wounded. (Pajhwok)

(21) Vehicle Laden...

recovered 79 Kalashnikovs with magazines and detained one person in connection with the seizure, Rogh Lewanai said.

The weapons were seized two weeks after police intercepted a vehicle in the Shahjoy district and recovered 180 Kalashnikovs, two machineguns, five rocket launchers, more than 50 walkie-talkies, thousands of bullets and other ammunitions.

At the time, police had said the weapons were destined for southern Ghazni province from Kandahar. However, they did not say as to which group the weapons belonged to.

Soon after the weapons were seized in Shahjoy, masked gunmen kidnapped 31 bus passengers in the town.

The kidnappers have reportedly demanded the weapons in an exchange for the hostages, but this has not been officially confirmed. (Pajhwok)

(22) Assad Accuses ...

with Syria and reject Erdogan's involvement in supporting the terrorism in Syria."

It was not the first time that Assad and his government lashed out at the Turkish government under Erdogan's leadership and accused them of supporting the radical groups, whose members, at least the foreigners, are believed to have infiltrated Syria through Turkey. (Xinhua)

(23) China Responds to ...

porter's economy. The United States and some of its allies, notably Israel, suspect Iran of using its civil nuclear program as a cover to develop a nuclear weapons capability. Iran denies this, saying it is for peaceful purposes such as generating electricity.

Kerry and Zarif met in the Swiss lakeside town of Montreux as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu prepared to criticize the diplomacy in a speech to Congress in Washington.

Despite the tough tone of Zarif's remarks quoted by Fars, the Iranian struck a more conciliatory tone when he spoke briefly to reporters after about two hours of talks with Kerry.

Asked if the two sides had reached an agreement, Zarif replied: "We'll try, that's why we are here."

"There is a seriousness that we need to move forward. As we have said all along, we need the necessary political will to understand that the only way to move forward is through negotiations," he added.

Speaking after the morning round of talks, Kerry told reporters: "We're working away. Productively."

The two sides have set a deadline of late March to reach a framework agreement and of June for a comprehensive final settlement that would curb Iran's nuclear activity to ensure it cannot be put to bomb making in return for the lifting of the economic sanctions. Iran wants a swift end to sanctions in any deal -- one of the sticking points in the high-level negotiations. While the United States has played the lead role in the talks with Iran, it is representing five other major powers: Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia -- a group collectively known both as the P5+1 and the E3+3. Speaking in Geneva, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier sounded an upbeat note, saying the negotiations had made more progress in the past year than in the previous decade. "The talks between the E3+3 and Iran are also advancing well," he told the U.N.-backed Conference on Disarmament. "I would even go so far as to say that in 10 years of negotiations, we never achieved as much progress as we have made this year." (Reuters)