

**(1) You have ...**

among military and civilian officials attending the ceremony. Since Jan. 1 last year, Afghan security forces have assumed the full security charges from NATO and U.S. forces after the foreign troops switched from combat to support role, which focuses on training, advising and assisting Afghan forces. Nearly 13,000 foreign forces are now stationed in the country and being involved in the mission. (Xinhua)

**(2) Campaign to...**

the serious looming problem with joblessness in Afghanistan, Maroof said the government was duty-bound to create jobs for the skilled youth. He said their campaign was aimed at creating awareness among the youth about the importance of their stay in the country. He said they would encourage people not to leave their country and compel the government to respond to people's demands and problems. (Pajhwok)

**(3) IDLG Urges...**

in the lives of women," he said. Meanwhile, a number of women's rights activists have said that efforts done for women so far have not been adequate. "I have visited Afghanistan several times and declare Afghanistan a prison for women. Efforts have been done but they are not adequate efforts," women's rights activist Laila Qarayee said. Referring to the problems facing female employees in institutions, IDLG official said that harassment against women is not acceptable.

"I am aware that the girls who work in local bodies face problems, we will address all these issues," Yama said.

The IDLG is currently working on projects through its 34 provincial headquarters in 379 districts. It also monitors 156 municipalities across the country. (Tolnews)

**(4) US Contributes ...**

Partner" approach to combat the issue by preparing institutions to prosecute traffickers, protect victims, and improve regional coordination. (Pajhwok)

**(5) China Hopes...**

supports an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned inclusive reconciliation process," Hong said, adding China has always held that parties in Afghanistan would solve their differences through political dialogues to realize lasting peace.

Hong said the QCG had worked for creating favorable conditions for direct talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban and has played a positive role in building consensus and pushing forward the reconciliation process since its establishment.

"The Taliban is a significant part of the Afghan peace and reconciliation process. We hope all parties will work together, take care of each others' concerns, and strive for the early resumption of peace talks," Hong said.

He said China was willing to play a constructive role in the resumption of the peace talks in Afghanistan, under the precondition of respecting Afghan sovereignty and the will of concerned parties. (Xinhua)

**(6) Saffron Cultivation...**

Saffron grows well in temperate and dry climates. Mild winters with heavy snowfall and hot summers are excellent for the growth and production of the crop. Its vegetative growth coincides with cold weather and freezing conditions.

Saffron is commonly used in spices or colouring of food preparation, making medicine and perfume. Its leaves can be used as animal feed. (Pajhwok)

**(7) ANSF Launch ...**

Balkh has remained among the relatively peaceful provinces during the recent years. However, the anti-government armed militants have increased insurgency activities in a number of northern province recently, including certain parts of Balkh province.

Nowruz marks the first day of the Persian New Year, an event

that has been celebrated for more than 3000 years.

Thousands of people visit the northern Balkh province to participate in a traditional flag hoisting ceremony in Mazar-e-Sharif city which is performed in Hazrat Ali shrine.

Balkh is not host to thousands of Afghans visiting from various provinces of the country but scores of people from the regional countries are also visiting the province to mark and celebrate the start of the new Persian year. (KP)

**(8) Shaheen Military ...**

force in northern Afghanistan. He hoped that the aircrafts will enhance capabilities of Afghan security forces in the fight against militants.

Brig. Gen. Hartmut Renk, commander of Train Advice and Assist Command (TAAC)-North of Resolute Support, said: "Winning the fight does not necessarily mean winning the war. We can win every fight, but only the population, which is the key to winning the war, can win the war. Without the support of the population we cannot succeed." This comes at a time that militants have recently intensified their activities in northern Afghanistan and they frequently target security forces. (Tolnews)

**(9) 'Taliban ...**

and insecurity had lately increased in the province, with civilians bearing the brunt.

"Security forces are not telling the truth, the rebels are pushing them back and snatching areas from them," he said.

A civil society head, Abdul Gharaf Ishaqzai, said local officials had disappointed the people who wanted to go to Kabul and stage protests there. "Everyday different areas of the province fall to insurgents and the people are afraid the province will soon collapse."

However, the governor's spokesman told Pajhwok Afghan News the fears expressed by the PC members and activists were their personal views. "Security forces are struggling day and night to retain security in the province," he said.

Over the past few months, clashes between security forces and Taliban are in progress and the rebels are in control of Disho, Baghran, Nawzad, and Musa Qala districts of the province. (Pajhwok)

**(10) Rauf Inami...**

deputy speaker, but none secured the 50+1 threshold.

Second Deputy Speaker Ibrahim said Mohammad Nazir Ahmadzai, a representative of Kochi tribe, Abdul Rahman Rahmani, a lawmaker from Balkh and Abdul Qayyum Sajadi from Ghanzi vied for the post of deputy speakers. Ahmadzai secured 85 votes and Sajadi 69 votes which were not enough to be declared as winners.

Deputy Secretary: The speaker said Irfanullah Irfan, a lawmaker from Kabul, Wazma Safi form Kunduz and Rubaba Parwani from Parwan failed to get enough votes to earn them the post of deputy secretary.

He said the second round of elections on the said positions would take place today (Tuesday). (Pajhwok)

**(11) Abdullah Directs...**

decree on reforming the country's electoral system just ahead of the lower house inaugural session.

The CEO termed the reforms vital to the conduct of fair and transparent elections. He renewed the government's commitment to holding the Wolesi Jirga and district council polls in a free manner.

He also promised cleaning up the election system of the country so that the democratic process was taken forward in the best way possible.

Abdullah hoped the conduct of fair Wolesi Jirga elections would transform the political environment, asking the security forces to be fully prepared to prevent any misadventure.

Earlier, President Ghani also stressed the need for reforms in the election system and conduct of the Wolesi Jirga vote.

The Independent Election Com-

mission (IEC) has already announced the panel had made all technical preparations to conduct the election on October 15, 2016. (Pajhwok)

**(12) Rabbani, OIC ...**

by an Afghan delegation to Saudi Arabia in near future and preparations for holding an international conference of Islamic scholars on the Afghan peace process in Saudi Arabia.

They stressed unity among Muslim countries and called the two-day OIC summit as important with regard to mustering support for the people of Palestine.

The summit commencing on Sunday under the theme 'United for Just Solution' comes against the backdrop of Israeli violations in the occupied city of Al-Quds, the West Bank and of the blockade of the Gaza Strip.

Rabbani will represent Afghanistan in the summit, the outcome which will be forwarded to the leaders of the OIC member states tomorrow. Some 49 countries of OIC would participate in the summit. (Pajhwok)

**(13) Afghans Have ...**

Ashraf Ghani in his address at the joint session of parliament on Sunday called for the Taliban to give up fighting and join the peace process.

The president also noted that "bringing peace and stability to Afghanistan" would benefit all sides including the Taliban.

The ongoing peace efforts involving China and the U.S. have raised hopes among war-weary Afghans that the four-nation talks would eventually help Afghans to live in an atmosphere of lasting peace and stability in their country.

Earlier, Afghan ambassador to Pakistan Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal told local media optimistically that face-to-face talks between the Taliban group and the Afghan government would take place in mid-March.

He also noted that Islamabad has pledged to facilitate the organizing of a joint conference of influential Ulama, or religious scholars, of both Afghanistan and Pakistan, in order to issue a Fatwa, or religious decree, to denounce the ongoing militancy in Afghanistan as being un-Islamic. Looking hopefully at the latest developments, Afghan political watchers believe that the steadfast attitude of the United States and China to deliver peace will bolster the overall multilateral efforts in this regard.

The ongoing militancy and terrorism in Afghanistan, according to Afghan political analysts, continues to threaten the entire region, including Pakistan, the United States and the world at large.

"Terrorism poses a threat to the whole region and to all countries including Pakistan and the United States, therefore, supporting the Afghan peace process will help to contain militancy and stabilize security in Afghanistan and the region," political and military analyst General (Ret.) Atiqullah Omarikhil told Xinhua.

Although the Taliban outfit has rejected the offer for peace talks with the Afghan government, political observers with regards to the prospect of increasing fragmentation among various factions of the Taliban militants, believe that part of the Taliban, if not all, would ultimately join the peace process.

"The ongoing peace efforts will gradually and finally pave the way for direct talks between the Taliban and the government of Afghanistan," a political observer and former Taliban official, Mohammad Hassan Haqyar, told local media recently. (Xinhua)

**(14) 15 IS Militants ...**

with small arms fire and motor shells and sporadic clashes continued until early Monday, the police official said, adding that no security force member was injured during the clashes. (Xinhua)

**(15) Female Convicts...**

said his sister eloped and she was arrested. "We handed her over to the government and the government handed her over to a tribal elder."

The tribal elder after some days tied the knot of his sister with his son. He said the government should build prisons for women where they could server their jails terms.

Women's Affairs Director Bibi Hawa Khwawhal also confirmed there was no women's prison in Paktika and female criminals were handed over to tribal elders. She said: "No law allows handing over woman criminals to tribal elders."

The attorney said they had no option but to hand over female convicts women to tribal elders. He admitted the handover sometimes led to moral abuse as well. Governor's spokesman Nabillah Perkhel acknowledged the problem created by the non-availability of women's prison. He said recently the governor with his private expenses rented some rooms where female convicts could be kept.

There is also no prison for men in Paktika as male prisoners are held in a government building not built as prison which lacks proper facilities. (Pajhwok)

**(16) Taliban Seize ...**

Almar highway, according to the official.

But Hanif Bai, highway police commander, denied the ex-commander had rejoined the rebels. He said Gulbadin was besieged in Mirishkar area and seized the Taliban.

On the other hand, a provincial council member, Abdul Manan Qate, said Gulbadin had joined his father, also a Taliban commander in Almar district.

Qater recalled Gulbadin had joined the peace process along with 10 other militants in Almar district five months ago.

Ansarul Haq Faryabi, a Taliban leader, wrote on his Facebook account they had captured two intelligence agents in Almar. Faryabi said a Kalashnikov was also seized from the detainees. (Pajhwok)

**(17) NDS Seized ...**

four bags of potassium, 12 kilograms of explosives, 13 anti-tank mines, Kalashnikov, and seven vehicles.

One suspect was also arrested in the raid.

Mohammad Haleem Fidayee, the provincial governor, praised NDS operatives in his province and said that they have achievements not only in Logar but also in neighboring provinces.

He further said that militants are not able to face Afghan forces. (KP)

**(18) Illegal ...**

hundreds of bullets were from the detainees, who detainees, who were shifted to different police stations for interrogation, the official added. In all, more than 100 suspects were apprehended. (Pajhwok)

**(19) Badakhshan ...**

drugs out of Badakhshan but their plan was foiled.

Ahmad Naweid Firotan added that the smugglers hail from Atan Jalaw village of Argu district but they were arrested in Shakh Daan village of Kisham district.

Police have taken them under further interrogation to get to other members of this gang. (KP)

**(20) UAE, Germany...**

Mansour Hadi. Both sides also discussed developments in Syria. Steinmeier said in a statement that Germany and the UAE have always worked together "intensely" on Syria's future perspective.

Germany is suffering from the Syrian conflict as 428,000 Syrian refugees fled through Turkey and the Balkan states to Germany, according to the German ministry of interior.

Steinmeier left Abu Dhabi on Monday heading to Muscat, Oman. (Xinhua)

**(21) Britain Not ...**

got to break the business model of the criminal smugglers and stop the desperate flow of people crammed into makeshift vessels from embarking on a fruitless and perilous journey," it said. (Xinhua)

**(22) Putin, Sisi ...**

their flights to Egypt's Sharm el-Sheikh and to evacuate their nationals over security concerns.

Egypt is one of Russians' main tourist destinations, and the incident dealt a heavy blow to the country's already battered tourism sector. The Egyptian authorities have been taking a series of measures to boost the tourism industry. (Xinhua)

**(23) Russia Voices...**

test and rocket launch.

In face of the U.S.-South Korea war games, Pyongyang threatened to launch preventive nuclear attacks, which the Russian Foreign Ministry said is "unacceptable." (Xinhua)

**(24) No Sign of ...**

reached between Iran and the P5+1 group of countries went into effect on January 16.

Amano noted that both the 35-nation Board of Governors and the Security Council have asked the UN nuclear agency to undertake verification and monitoring of Iran's nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA and to report to the two bodies. (PressTV)

**(25) IAEA Urges ...**

IAEA said it was ready to cooperate with sides to resume its nuclear verification activities in the DPRK once a political agreement was reached among states concerned. (Xinhua)

**(26) OIC Summit ...**

president that comes as a culmination of OIC Cairo and Mecca agreements resulted from previous OIC Summits.

Twenty-three steps were also stipulated in the declaration, translating the support affirmation into concrete actions.

Among those steps were the call for the international community to boycott Israeli products and its illegal settlements projects in the West Bank, urging the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to address the question of Israel's illegal settlements that undermines the two-state solution, enthrone peace and provide international protection to the Palestinian people. The OIC country members sitting in UNSC were told to address the call. (Xinhua)

**(27) UN Urges...**

was meant to "accelerate the national reconciliation process and create favourable conditions for fighting against terrorism."

Delattre said the UN Peacekeeping Mission in Mali, MINUSMA, had a "more robust mandate" among all the peacekeeping missions across the world.

However, according to Fode Seck, Senegal's ambassador to the UN Security Council, "this mandate is not adapted to the prevailing situation."

"Given what we have heard during our discussions with various actors in Bamako and what we have seen on the ground, we shall discuss re-adjustment of this mandate," Seck said. (Xinhua)

**(28) Pakistan's ...**

der with Saudi Arabia against any threat to its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

"Pakistan has consistently supported all regional and international efforts to combat militancy, extremism and terrorism and, to this end, has extended its full support and cooperation to the international community," it said. (Xinhua)

**Russia Sends UN List of Syrian Settlements Requiring Humanitarian Aid**

MOSCOW - Russia submitted to the United Nations (UN) a list of settlements in Syria which require immediate humanitarian aid, the country's Defense Ministry said Monday.

The Russian Reconciliation Center in Syria, Russia's truce center to reconcile the warring parties which began operations last month, prepared the list based on the requests of local Syrian administrations and Russia's own data, and then sent it to the UN, the defense ministry's spokesman Igor Konashenkov told reporters.

Russia has already delivered about 620 tons of humanitarian

aid as well as medicine to war-torn districts in Syria, Konashenkov said, adding that Russia is also ready to allocate vehicles from its Hmeimim airbase in Syria for the transportation of humanitarian goods.

As a truce proposed by Russia and the United States was accepted by the Syrian government and a range of opposition groups and went effective about two weeks ago, the Syrian crisis which broke out about five years ago is now on hiatus after more than 250,000 people have been reported killed and millions displaced.

But the scourge of conflicts still lingers on as the whole country is in dire need of humanitarian aid and crossfires are still reported after the ceasefire. (Xinhua)

**Slovak President Gives PM Chance to Create New Gov't**

BRATISLAVA - Slovak President Andrej Kiska is to task Prime Minister and Smer-SD leader Robert Fico with attempting to create a new government, it was announced at the press conference here on Monday.

Kiska at the same time pointed to the complicated situation that has arisen from Saturday's general election.

"There are different results from what most of the parties expected. There are several new parties, including radical political extremism in uniform," stressed Kiska.

Kiska is to meet six leaders of parties that were elected to parliament.

"I'd like to know how the party chairs view the possibility of creating a stable majority. The situation is complicated, and that's why I want to proceed systematically in order to find out which options we have and which we don't," explained Kiska.

According to the official result, the general election was won by the Smer-SD party with 28 percent of the vote. Second came Freedom and Solidarity (SaS) with 12 percent, followed by Ordinary People-NOVA (OLaNo-NOVA) with 11 percent. Five other parties and coalitions made it into parliament, each with under 10 percent of voter support. Voter turnout was 59.82 percent. (Xinhua)

**Militants Attack Tunisian Forces Near Libyan Border, 50 Killed**

TUNIS - Dozens of Islamist fighters stormed through the Tunisian town of Ben Guerdan near the Libyan border on Monday attacking army and police posts in a raid that killed at least 50 people, including civilians, the government and residents said.

Local television broadcast images of soldiers and police crouched in doorways and on rooftops as gunshots echoed in the center of the town. Bodies of dead militants lay in the streets near the military barracks after the army regained control.

Authorities sealed off the nearby beach resort town of Djerba, a popular destination for foreign and local tourists, imposed a curfew on Ben Guerdan and closed two border crossings with Libya after the attack. (Reuters)

**Opposition Accuses Syrian Forces of Massacre, Unsure on Peace Talks**

GENEVA - Syrian government forces backed by Russian air strikes committed a "massacre" of scores of civilians in Idlib governorate on Monday, part of a pattern of breaches of a two-week truce, opposition coordinator Riad Hijab told reporters on a teleconference.

Hijab said the latest fighting, as well as arrests by Syrian government forces, were causing the opposition to consider whether it should attend a round of peace talks in Geneva.

"It will be before the end of this week, there will be a clear decision about this," Hijab said. (Reuters)