

(1) Ghani Stresses...

on how to tackle the newly-emerging threats," the statement quoted the president as saying during the meeting.

The president sought Dutch support for getting greater advantage for river water in the Afghanistan and other development projects.

The Dutch Foreign Minister Bert Koenders assured the president of his country complete support in the development of Afghanistan. He said: "We will consider that in which capacity the Dutch could help Afghanistan to exploiting its water resources for its benefits." (Pajhwok)

(2) Netherlands ...

had agreed that some of Dutch troops could stay here to train Afghan forces.

He acknowledged Dutch troops had rendered many sacrifices during their mission in Uruzgan, Kandahar and Baghlan provinces under the command of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Currently around 100 Dutch trainers are involved in the training of Afghan security forces.

For his part, Koenders said his country had been supporting the Afghan government. He added the Netherlands was hopeful peace would prevail in Afghanistan.

He expressed satisfaction with the capabilities of Afghan forces, as illustrated by last year's successful security transition.

Dutch Defence Minister Hennis Plasschaert Jeanine said major developments took place in Afghanistan and her country remained committed to a long-term partnership with Afghanistan.

She said the Netherlands would provide training and other technical support to Afghan forces, but would not hand over security equipment. (Pajhwok)

(3) Japan Pledges ...

information and media centre said in a statement.

It said the Japanese assistance would be used through IOM on projects dealing with threats from natural disasters, capacity building of ANDMA officials and emergency response to a calamity.

The \$9.9 million aid would be spent over the next 32 months in selected areas of Herat, Faryab, Balkh, Jawzjan, Sar-i-Pul, Baghlan, Takhar, Bamyan, Helmand and Kabul.

UN estimates show as many as 250,000 Afghans lose their lives to natural disasters each year, besides losing homes, livestock and property.

Meanwhile, an Iranian plane carrying relief goods for survivors of natural disasters in Afghanistan landed in Kabul, the Iranian embassy said in a statement.

International affairs in-charge at Iran's Red Crescent Society, Husain Shafi Khani, said the assistance included blankets, tents and cooked food.

Afghan Red Crescent Society chief Fatima Gilani, who received the aid at the Kabul International Airport, thanked Iran and hoped the people of Iran would continue to support the Afghans in difficult times.

Afghanistan is no strangers to the wild monsoon rains that strike South Asia every year. But in the past few years, these rains and snowfall have become increasingly dangerous.

The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) has identified Afghanistan as one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change. According to UNEP, since 1998, more than 6.7 million Afghans have been affected by natural disasters and extreme weather events. (Pajhwok)

(4) Nazir Ahmadzai ...

as first deputy speaker and his colleague from Kabul Irfanullah Irfan as deputy secretary.

A day earlier, MP from Nangarhar Syed Ikram, Abdul Rauf Inami from Badakhshan, Abdul Qadir Qalatwal from Zabul and Kuchi tribe representative Hela Irshadi vied for the secretary slot in Sunday's election.

During the second phase of the election on Monday, Abdul Rauf Inami was elected as secretary of the Wolesi Jirga. Zaheer Saadat, a legislator from Panjshir province, and Kuchi representative Nazir Ahmad Ahmadzai competed for deputy speaker.

Based on today's voting, each candidate required 91 votes to win the seat. But only 42 votes were casted in favour of Zaheer Saadat who failed to win the slot. Nazir Ahmad Ahmadzai emerged the

winner by grabbing 93 votes.

Speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahim told the lower house that the administrative delegation of the house was complete after Ahmadzai's election as second deputy speaker. (Pajhwok)

(5) Senators Stress...

Taliban, Daesh and other insurgent groups.

"The laboratory is there. They just replace Taliban with Daesh. If they aren't stopped, kidnap incidents will shoot up to 1000 in one year," he warned, referring to the 31 passengers who were recently seized on the Herat-Kabul highway.

"If Pakistan wants Durand Line to be recognised as an international border, that demand is unacceptable. Talib is our brother, we have supported the peace process and would continue to do so, but we want clarifications," he continued.

Some senators said peace parleys with insurgents were ambiguous. Lawmaker Gul Ahmad Azami said he opposed peace at the expense of achievements of the last decade. "We want our democracy and interests preserved."

Nisar Ahmad Hares, another legislator, said: "We should have a proper understanding of those who take part in the parleys."

After formation of the unity government, bilateral relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan have been on the mend and President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani has said the time for peace talks was ripe. (Pajhwok)

(6) Balkhi, Aziz ...

with Aziz. Both sides stressed close coordination among Pakistan, Afghanistan and UNHCR on the repatriation of refugees.

Balkhi is in Pakistan to attend the 25th meeting of the tripartite commission on voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees. The two sides exchanged views on repatriation of refugees from Pakistan and their sustainable reintegration in Afghanistan.

According to a statement from the ministry, the advisor expressed satisfaction with the Afghan government's efforts to develop a comprehensive plan for the return of refugees.

For his part, Balkhi expressed gratitude for the warm hospitality Pakistan had extended to the Afghan refugees over the past three decades.

He informed concrete measures were being taken to incentivise the return of refugees and ensure their reintegration in Afghanistan, including allocation of plots, creation of jobs and microfinance and tax-free schemes. (Pajhwok)

(7) Masood Calls...

the parleys should not reverse the progress.

The nation expected the government to initiate development projects and ensure peace, he added.

"A strong national will is needed for durable peace. The government should step up efforts at national, regional and international levels to garner support for peace in the country," Masood remarked.

Disputes, he recalled, were resolved through negotiations and jirga had been able to settle complicated problems in Afghanistan. The traditional mechanism could yield the desired results, he believed.

Masood said the government should build efforts made for peace and stability by former president Hamid Karzai. The process could yield results if experienced individuals were included in the negotiating teams, he believed. (Pajhwok)

(8) Women Face...

election process was vital. "Women, generally speaking, don't commit fraud."

He promised to train and employ more women during the next elections if funds for the purpose were approved. "There are many challenges across villages for women to join the elections process. Insecurity and family disagreements are the two major hurdles," he remarked.

Aurangzeb, IEC secretary, said they could not manage to find women employee for over 2,000 polling stations during last year's elections. He added 13% of staffers working for the provincial council elections were women.

Gulalai Achakzai, IEC commissioner, said women wanted their rights in line with Afghan and Islamic laws. She urged the government to consider women for ministerial and provincial posts. (Pajhwok)

(9) US to Help...

would work with Afghanistan in dealing with the threats.

Referring to the natural disaster that claimed hundreds of lives in central Panjshir province, the NATO commander said they were ready to assist long-term rebuilding of damaged areas.

For his part, Abdullah called recent terrorist incidents as a matter of concern for the region and the world and stressed the need for essential cooperative measures in response. (Pajhwok)

(10) After Presidential...

PCs in Baghlan, Jawzjan and Bamyan provinces have returned to work.

Bamyan council head Tayyeba Khawari told Pajhwok Afghan News: "We welcome the presidential directive and want it approved by the parliament forthwith"

She said hundreds of people shared their problems with the council on a daily basis but the public representatives had been left helpless by Wolesi Jirga's decision.

Jawzjan PC head Abdulhai Hayat said the right to evaluate local governance was vital to the council, whose existence would be meaningless in the absence of such powers.

Baghlan council head Ferozuddin Emaq said the presidential orders had enabled them to resolve people's problems. He hoped an effective check on the local government would help stem corruption.

Sayed Abul Rahman, head of Kabul provincial council, announced an end to their strike at a press conference on Sunday. He said: "After the president's decree, we have decided to reopen our offices and resume work." (Pajhwok)

(11) Bamyan City ...

Acting Governor Ghulam Ali Wahdat said finance ministry had to pay \$500,000 allocated for the preparation of ceremony. (Pajhwok)

(12) Pakistan Set ...

press conference, a press release from the refugee agency said. Problems of Afghan refugees in Pakistan have increased after the Army Public School attack in Peshawar in December 2014.

So far, over 5,000 Afghan refugees have been arrested, 54,000 deported and hundreds of families forced to leave the neighbouring country, where a crackdown on unregistered foreigners is ongoing.

Led by the refugee and repatriation minister, an Afghan delegation arrived in Pakistan three days back to discuss the issue with Pakistani authorities.

The delegation, including Ambassador Janan Mosazai, on Monday met Abdul Qadir Baloch, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Mehtab Ahmad Khan Abbasi, Chief Minister Parvez Khattak and a number of other officials in Peshawar.

Both sides agreed on developing a mechanism for legalisation of registered and unregistered refugees. They also agreed on forming a joint committee to address the refugees' problems. (Pajhwok)

(13) Kazakhstan...

trade and economic relations between Afghanistan and Central Asia" was held in Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan and lasted from November 14th to 15th in 2012.

The main issues discussed in the workshop were decreasing main barriers of trade between Afghanistan and Central Asian countries; participation of Afghanistan's business community in playing a role in the country's economic development and employment sphere; investing in regional and bilateral economic projects, and the issue of economic cooperation and bilateral trade in Central Asia and Russia.

With special attention given to attracting women participants, around 50 senior parliament members, government officials, experts and private business representatives from Afghanistan's capital and various provinces as well as delegates from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation participated in that workshop.

The ESCAP Regional Dialogue is held to support the economic development of Afghanistan by continuing to reduce trade barriers, increasing interest and joint activities between entrepreneurs in Afghanistan, Central Asia and Russia in order to strengthen trade and lead to a rise in local production and job creation for a more sustainable economic future. The meeting will focus on identifying possible regional economic pro-

jects which could be implemented by joint efforts of entrepreneurs from Afghanistan and neighboring countries.

The expected results from the workshop include reduced trade and transport barriers, and increased joint activities between entrepreneurs of Afghanistan, Central Asia and Russia resulting in increased trade, local production and employment (Wadsam)

(14) Islamabad Order...

directives came after Afghan Ambassador Janan Mosazai phoned Chaudhry in late February, complaining that arrests of Afghans and raids on their houses by law-enforcers had become a serious concern for the government in Kabul.

Mosazai told the foreign secretary the Afghan government is serious about the return of refugees to their country. The ambassador urged Pakistani to continue to extend its traditional hospitality to Afghan refugees till their respectable return.

In his letter to the provinces, the foreign secretary said in the wake of a deadly attack on an army-run school in Peshawar, where 153 students and teachers were killed, Afghan refugees had been faced with serious problems.

The neighbours have reportedly agreed on setting up a joint committee to work out a mechanism for the documentation of unregistered Afghan nationals in Pakistan. (Pajhwok)

(15) No Peace ...

figures who helped lead militia mobilizations against the Soviet Union and then the Taliban in the past.

"Without consultation, especially with the Islamic Society Party, peace is not possible," Noor said on Tuesday while speaking to a crowd in commemoration of Marshal Fahim, who was also a prominent mujahideen leader from the Soviet and Taliban eras. "Step-by-step, the Islamic society party and other citizens who defended the country and had role in the defeat of the Soviet Union, Al Qaeda and other terrorists must be made aware of the actions that are taken and there should be consultation with them," he added.

In addition to promoting a larger role for mujahideen leaders and political parties in the peace negotiations with the Taliban, Noor also used the platform he had on Tuesday to question the veracity of a recent Human Rights Watch (HRW) report that accused him of being behind numerous human rights violations. He said the report was made corruptly, by members of organized crime groups, who he vaguely suggested were in cahoots with the Presidential Palace.

"I reject the report and want to add that I know those who prepared the report live around or near the Presidential Palace, and some criminals who exist around us have shared in the conspiracy and want to make a conspiracy against the country's leaders," Noor said. During the 2014 presidential election, Noor was a major public supporter of Abdullah Abdullah, now Chief Executive, and a vocal critic of the ultimate winner, President Ashraf Ghani.

Noor was among eight Afghan strongmen who were alleged by HRW to have been involved in human rights abuses in the past, as well as drug smuggling, kidnapping and hostage taking. The HRW report asserted that the Hamid Karzai administration failed to prosecute any of the men, and urged the national unity government to take action to hold them accountable.

Meanwhile, Balkh Provincial Council Chair Mohammad Ibrahim Khairandesh also spoke at the ceremony. During his speech, he addressed growing concerns about the proliferation of Daesh in certain parts of the country. He called for greater efforts to gain the release of the 31 Hazara travelers who were abducted a couple weeks ago by a group claiming allegiance to Daesh.

"Unfortunately, every day new problems rise in Afghanistan - first the Taliban shed the people's blood, and today a now another problem under the name of Daesh has come to exist," Khairandesh said. (Tolonews)

(16) Number of Drug...

of the facility, said they lacked beds and equipment.

Seven years back, around 113 drug addicts were hospitalised, but the currently number is 80.

He explained more than 1,000 ad-

dicts had registered for treatment, but many of them were on the waiting list. The clinic has rehabilitated 950 addicts, including women and children, since its inception.

Haidari linked drug addiction to joblessness, inadequate awareness and family inattention. He said heroin was the most widely used drug. Clinical treatment is effective but the rehabilitated individuals tended to relapse because of joblessness, poverty and insecurity.

Another major problem is low capacity of the clinic, according to the official, who called for the creation of a rehabilitation centre in Daikundi province because the 20-bed clinic could not treat all addicts.

Daikundi has been declared a poppy-free province, but local officials expressed concern over the increasing number of drug users. Counternarcotics Director Mohammad Daud Maroof said no credible and comprehensive survey had been carried out on the current number of drug addicts in Daikundi.

A survey conducted in 2007 by the US Embassy showed 25,000 people were addicted to drugs in Daikundi. Maroof said they lacked funds for conducting a new survey but the number of the addicts was increasing in the province, which borders with Helmand and Uruzgan.

He claimed no farmer had cultivated poppies in the province and that was why the budget allocated for counternarcotics activities was spent on other development projects.

Public awareness programmes, such as television dramas, were underway to discourage the use of drugs, he continued.

Some people asked the government to take action and treat the addicts as soon as possible because some of drug users were involved in robbery cases.

Mohammad Ali, a Neili resident, said once he went to the local market on his newly-bought motorbike. But when he returned, the bike was not where it had been parked.

"Some time back the addicts had been to my neighbour's house and had stolen their hens. Now they have stolen my motorcycle. They will sell it at a thruway price to buy drugs," he remarked.

Civil society members opine the government is not paying ample attention to the addicts, which is why their number is increasing.

Sher Mohammad Entezar, a civil society activist, said major reasons behind these people getting addicted were immigration, unemployment and lack of communications with family members.

"The addicts are not criminals. Criminals are those who produce and smuggle drugs," he observed. Sher Mohammad was unclear about the drug supply sources. And if drugs were smuggled to Daikundi, he asked why the government did not stop it?

Figures released by the ministry concerned indicate that more than a million individuals in Afghanistan are addicted to drugs.

Earlier, there were 50 rehabilitation centres across the country and now the figure has jumped to 160. At least 97% of addicts in Afghanistan do not get the opportunity of rehabilitation, with many dying on roads. (Pajhwok)

(17) Policeman...

they had stolen were also recovered from their possession, he added. Police recovered two suicide vests in the provincial capital. (Pajhwok)

(18) Child Dead...

to a clinic in the district. Mohammad is being treated at Farah Civil Hospital.

Dr. Abdul Hakim, head of the hospital, said Mohammad was struggling for life. Militants have not yet commented on the incidents. (Pajhwok)

(19) Former Head ...

states as an accusation of embezzling millions of dollars and being irresponsible in providing loans.

On Tuesday, the family members of the accused took to the streets of Kabul chanting and protesting "we want justice," stressing that the courts have failed to follow through with the verdicts.

"In the past three years my brother has appeared in court more than 40 times," Khalid Ahmad Dayani, brother of Dayani, said. "All we hear is that the Attorney General's Office is 'investigating' the matter, but there is no result." According to the law, the verdict of the appeals court should be

implemented as soon as possible so that accused is freed before the hearing from the third and high court, which will reconcile the verdicts of both primary and appellate courts.

The Supreme Court did not respond to a TOLONews request for comments and information. (Tolonews)

(20) Amu River...

Asmatullah urged the government to take preemptive measures.

Qurban, a Shor-Tepa official, said the district was located near the river and every year their lands were destroyed by floods.

Hazara Toqi, Hariq Bator, Pas Raq, Islam-Awlia and other localities faced threat from the river, he added. This year alone, at least 500 acres of land and 145 houses have been affected by floods.

Abdul Habib Karimi, a Kaldar district official, said the rise of water level was the biggest challenge to their day-to-day lives. Balkh officials say they have informed the centre many times about the threats. (Pajhwok)

(21) Akbarzada Rejects ...

vehicles in Shah Joy district of southern Zabul, driving the Hazara men away to Khak Afghan district of the province. "The government has started peace talks, while the fate of 31 passengers is still unknown," Muslimyar criticized.

"What do these peace talks mean when they [Taliban] abduct our citizens?" Reports suggest that the rescue operation, which was halted due to unfavorable weather, has resumed in Zabul. Over 50 insurgents had been killed before the rescue operation stopped, the provincial authorities said. (Tolonews)

(22) Woman Gives ...

of the babies weigh two kilograms each, a third 1.8kg kilograms and the fourth 1.7kg.

Nek Mohammad, 36, father of the babies, mentioned his economic problems. However, he voiced pleasure over the birth of the quadruplets as a divine gift. "I already had two sons and a daughter." A woman had given birth to four babies several months ago in western Herat province. (Pajhwok)

(23) Arms Withdrawal ..

Col. Andriy Lysenko, a spokesman for Ukraine's military operations in the east, said that government forces retain the option of returning the weapons to their original positions if hostilities resume.

Lysenko said fighting in Shyrokevne raged for more than three hours Monday. (AP)

(24) EU Criticises ...

will speak to Wallstroem and Arab League chief Nabil al-Arabi "to understand this situation", she added. Wallstroem has rarely commented on Saudi Arabia but in January she slammed the kingdom's treatment of blogger Raef Badawi, who had been sentenced to 1,000 lashes and 10 years in prison for insulting Islam. (AFP)

(25) Kazakhstan to...

apital in agriculture by 14.4 percent and investments in food production increased by 16.5 percent, the ministry said. According to the minister, processing of agricultural products currently accounts for 16 percent of the entire processing industry in Kazakhstan. (Agencies)

(26) Iraqi Troops, ...

Mosul is expected later this year. The army and militias now control the two towns to the north and south of Tikrit along the Tigris river valley and appear ready to move on the city itself. (Reuters)

(27) Iranian FM ...

groups, and expressed the hope that Tehran and the world powers would be able to reach a final deal during the negotiations. (FNA)

(28) Chinese Leaders ...

authorities to ensure the basic life requirements of the needy so that they can simultaneously usher in the moderately prosperous society along with others in the nation by 2020. "We should provide more timely help to the people," he said. (Xinhua)

(29) NEPRA Gives ...

after the execution of initial plan and that Iran has offered to bear 70% of expense of transmission line as well. NEPRA agreed to the plan after the hearing and gave its consent. (Agencies)