

(1) Graft a Serious ...

governance is one of the major reasons. Eliminating corruption is difficult when government officials and judicial organs are tarred with the same brush."

Melbin called the ongoing insurgency in Afghanistan another major factor behind corruption, which was having a negative impact on the development of the country and efforts for peace. He stressed better management of financial affairs by interior and defence ministries.

Melbin also pointed to the presence of corruption in other state organs, saying international donors would not provide aid for education and training if the judicious use of funds was not guaranteed.

"We should identify weaknesses, keep special focus on removing them and devise an effective counter-corruption strategy. The Afghan government should do the same to deal with the issue," Melbin remarked.

He noted corruption had been fueling insecurity in the country, letting insurgents and criminal groups continue their illegal activities, illegal excavation of mines.

"Administrative corruption empowers insurgents against the government. All Afghans should accept the norm that a legitimate government should always be trusted and insurgents treated as enemies," the ambassador said.

The EU diplomat called upon the government to discharge its responsibilities in fighting against corruption. The people should also mount pressure on the rulers to perform their duty efficiently.

However, Melbin alleged both government and Afghan society had shown little interest in eradicating corruption. "Government officials benefit from corruption; which could not be controlled in a short time. All should work together to put an end to this culture."

He added the first step in this regard was to banish the culture of impunity and venality; otherwise eliminating the phenomenon would not be possible.

About European cooperation with the Ghani administration in sidelining graft-tainted Afghan officials, Melbin said: "They would do so if the Afghan government agrees. It's disappointing to see the corrupt exonerated by courts. It also shows the weakness of the international community."

Given the tenuous judicial system of Afghanistan, the envoy said, it was difficult to convince European courts to deport corruption-tainted Afghan officials to their country to face the music.

Melbin stressed he was disagreeing with a US intelligence official who said Afghanistan would face a political collision next year and said it was on interest of Afghans to make effective decisions based on their national interests and they all together should fight corruption.

The diplomat said he felt optimistic about Afghanistan's future after talks with President Ashraf Ghani on the elimination of corruption. Ghani assured the EU ambassador of his government's strong commitment to combating corruption. (Pajhwok)

(2) HIA Announces ...

and the circles allied with it were opting for continued war, the HIA alleged.

HIA, the second largest militant outfit behind Taliban, assailed the US for declaring two of its members as terrorists. Washington blacklisted the two HIA members at a time when President Ashraf Ghani requested Gulbadin Hikmatyar to join the peace process.

"It seemed the US is still keen on fighting and wants more bloodshed," the statement added. "The US insists on war and bloodshed in Afghanistan and some circles within the government see the peace initiative threat, the HIA has decided to take part in the peace process."

A source within the HIA told Pajhwok Afghan News a delegation had been appointed to take part in QCC meetings.

Earlier, the US designated two explosive experts, Abdullah Nowbahar and Abdul Saboor, as global terrorists.

The move comes a year after the Department of State's Rewards for Justice (RFJ) programme announced rewards for information on Nowbahar and Saboor. The secretary of state authorised a reward of up to \$3 million for information on Saboor and \$2 million on Nowbahar.

Noting that Nowbahar and Saboor are explosive experts for Hezbi-Islami, the State Department said both participated in the September

18, 2012 attack on a bus carrying foreign employees of the Kabul International Airport. A dozen people were killed.

Saboor was also responsible for a May 2013 suicide attack in Kabul that destroyed a US armored vehicle, killing two soldiers and four US civilian contractors. Eight Afghans -- including two children -- were also killed and another 37 wounded.

Khoshal Khalil, a Kabul-based political analyst, criticised the US move and said Washington should understand delicate peace process and avoid such steps at the current critical juncture. He asked the US to avoid such actions at a time when Ghani wooed the HIA to the negotiating table.

Khalil welcomed the HIA decision to take part in peace process, saying it would encourage militant groups to join the dialogue. He said HIA was a large party, whose inclusion in the peace process would help stabilise the country. (Pajhwok)

(3) Tehran, Kabul ...

another third country.

Mohiuddin Noori said that this ministry aims at creating an international Iran-Afghanistan joint consortium with a third reliable country for investment primarily on big and medium mines and create access via railway for mines located in the border region of the two countries.

He added that mines in the west of Afghanistan are one of the most important areas for Tehran and Kabul to have access to railway, oil, gas and electricity.

He said that there are cement, steel, coals, marble, alabaster stone, and salt block mines in the west of Afghanistan about which Iran has rich experience.

There are gold, emerald and lazuli mines which are under the control of the opposition armed groups.

Regarding training cooperation on mine sector, Noori said that this ministry requires promotion in working capacity saying that Iran expressed its readiness in cooperating on promoting staff's knowledge. (IRNA)

(4) Afghan Drugs...

killed 32,000 people in the same period, calling drugs more dangerous for humans than terrorism. But despite this, he said, terrorism had been preferred over drugs

Media representatives from Pakistan, Iran, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan attended the two-day seminar and shared their experiences and ideas on countering the menace. (Pajhwok)

(5) Russia to...

Assistance Force (ISAF) was a NATO-led security mission in Afghanistan, established by the United Nations Security Council in December 2001.

According to the Russian minister, Russia does not intend to supply Afghanistan with all of the 6 million tons of oil products but it could easily supply 1-1.5 million.

"I do not think that we need to monopolize the market. We have proposed a strategic idea to our Afghan partners to form a strategic national reserve," the minister said. (Monitoring Desk)

(6) U.S Continues ...

Abdullah in advancing the National Unity Government's reform agenda to bring security and stability to Afghanistan.

Addressing the daily press briefing in Washington on Friday, Kirby was asked about recent Afghan news reports that in a video conference between US President Barack Obama and Afghan leaders, "Obama asked Abdullah not to interfere with the Afghan president's constitution powers."

The journalist, posing the question asked whether there was "any disagreement between the U.S and Afghanistan, regarding the peace process and the input from the CEO?"

In answer to this, Kirby said: "What I would tell you is that - again, without getting into details of conversations in another arm of government here - the president [Obama] regularly speaks with President Ghani and with Chief Executive Abdullah to discuss security, governance, other bilateral and regional issues. We were pleased to see the recent agreement on the Afghan Government's appointment of a new attorney general, a new minister of the interior, and new leadership of the High Peace Council."

He went on to say: "We continue to support and welcome cooperation between President Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah in advancing the National Unity Government's reform agenda to bring security and

stability to the Afghan people."

Earlier this month, Obama, during a video conference call with his Afghan counterpart, welcomed Ghani's recent efforts for direct talks with the Taliban. (Tolonews)

(7) Daesh Surfaces...

operation in the province. He said the documents show signs of the group's presence in the province and indicate Daesh was "trying to recruit people" locally.

He said the operation - led by himself - was launched in Kushende district of the province just over a week ago and ended on Saturday. Noor said the Taliban and Daesh insurgents were trying to establish bases in the province.

"Both extremist groups [Taliban and Daesh] are trying to destabilize this valley [near the Deh Yak village], as well as Kushende and Shulgara districts and other parts of Balkh province," he said. (Tolonews)

(8) Accord on ...

In an editorial in its Sunday's edition, The Express Tribune wrote the multilateral treaty provided for an international customs transit system to move goods in sealed vehicles from one country to another, without requiring extensive border checks.

The daily noted the trade potential between Pakistan and Afghanistan was much bigger than currently estimated, but non-tariff barriers, smuggling and other hurdles on both sides continued to impede growth in bilateral trade.

One disturbing aspect of the transit trade had been a major difference in value reporting by the two nations, it added. If the convention is successfully introduced, Pakistani trucks carrying export goods to Central Asian markets could cross the Afghan border without hindrance. (Pajhwok)

(9) Women's Street...

women's living conditions, violence against females continued to persist.

She said 705 cases of violence against women took place during the past one year across in the country and 536 of the cases had been referred to attorney and the rest of others under police investigation.

Acting Interior Minister Taj Mohammad Jahid promised he would always take care of female police personnel and would provide them with good duty opportunities if he was granted a vote of confidence by the Wolesi Jirga. (Pajhwok)

(10) Afghan Women ...

report harassment in real time "as it occurs and identify problem areas, or to send a message to friends, family members, or other nearby users to ask for assistance."

USAID's WIE teamed with Code Weekend, the first and biggest software and application developer community in Afghanistan, to recognize the Code Challenge, and nine teams of software developers from across Afghanistan submitted their designs and concepts for anti-street harassment smartphone applications.

Code Weekend founder Jamshid Hashimi said an application (women can download on a smart phone) would help them confront the common form of social injustice in Afghanistan.

"This gives Afghan women the chance to be innovative and creative in solving problems that affect not just them but everyone in the society", he said. (Pajhwok)

(11) MoD Authorizes ...

come just days after reports surfaced that Afghanistan's eastern border regions have once again come under rocket attack from outside the country.

The move also comes as Taliban forces continue to pose major challenges to embattled Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) in various regions of the country, in their bid to gain territory and strategic towns.

Following the end of the US combat mission in Afghanistan, the security situation has sharply deteriorated on the back of intensified attacks by the Taliban against Afghan forces. The sharp increase has shown no signs of abating.

"Presently the question is why are these wars fought in Zabul and Shindand and Badghis where only Afghan civilians are killed. What are the intentions behind these wars? If these wars are aimed at seizing power or fighting for the slavery of others, then it must be kept in mind that the people of Afghanistan are fully aware of these conspiracies," said Stanikzai.

Government's new shift also re-

flects growing concern among the residents in eastern regions of the country following cross-border firing. (Tolonews)

(12) Alleged Fraud...

speaker, but none could reach the 50+1 threshold.

On Saturday, Hamidzai Lalai and Saleh Mohammad Saljuqi ran for the position. But both Lalai (89 votes) and Saljuqi (68) fell short of the target. As many as 193 MPs took part in voting.

After the candidates' consecutive failures to win, re-election takes place between the two top vote-getters in accordance with the house's internal procedures.

Humayoon, who had obtained 99 votes and Qadir 93 in the previous round, vied for the first deputy speaker's position which went to Qadir, who bagged 138 votes against his rival.

But Hamidzai Lalai, during Sunday's session, claimed fraud in the race between his and Saljuqi. Erfanullah Erfan, deputy secretary, counted blank ballots in favour of Saljuqi, he alleged. (Pajhwok)

(13) UNESCO to...

Gholghola city, strengthening the porches for Buddhas located in the west, awareness regarding Hajigak iron ore exploration and its effects on historic monuments, research on local tradition and public awareness regarding the historic monuments. According to the local officials, UNESCO's cultural chief in Afghanistan Mr. Masanori Nagaoka informed regarding the launch of the projects during a meeting with the provincial governor Mr. Tahir Zahir.

Nagaoka welcomed Mr. Zahir's recommendation to include the destruction date of Bamiyan Buddha as a cultural catastrophe day in the world calendar and promised to share his recommendations with UNESCO chief.

This comes as an event was organized to mark the 14th anniversary of Buddhas destruction by the Taliban militants which was attended by senior officials, including UNESCO's cultural chief for Afghanistan Mr. Nagaoka.

The Bamiyan Buddhas were destroyed after the Taliban militants group blew up the world's two largest standing Buddhas - one of them 165ft high, earlier in 2001. (KP)

(14) Turkey to Build...

that the center would have two teaching periods.

During the day, students would be able to receive modern studies and in the nights the center would be open for religious studies.

The facilitator further said that the center would also have hostel for students to reside there.

He urged Nangarhar governor for land in the provincial capital in order to start construction of the educational institute.

Saleem Khan Kundoozi assured the facilitator that soon he would select a suitable location for the institute. (KP)

(15) Ghani Reviews...

without any delay, noting the prioritization of the projects in consideration with the available resources.

This comes President Ghani said last month that the government is expected to start work on the construction of 21 water dams in the near future amid efforts to boost the agriculture sector of the country which is largely dependent on foreign exports.

The International Community has played a vital role in the reconstruction of key infrastructure projects in the country in the last one decade, with the United States and India, playing a key role in reconstruction of dams in the country since the fall of the Taliban regime.

The Indian cabinet last year approved the reconstruction and completion of Salma dam at a revised cost of INR 1,775.69 crore which is equivalent to around \$268,050,296.

Built on Harirod river, the dam is expected to produce 42 megawatt of electricity and will irrigate around 75,000 hectares of agricultural land. (KP)

(16) New Report ...

security is restored.

TOLONews' survey estimates the number of attacks during this period at around 1,084 while the figure was 1,438 during the same period a year earlier.

"Pakistan's intelligence service, ISI, commands the Taliban to operate where, which place and when?" former deputy minister of interior Mirza Mohammad Yarmard asked. The survey also reveals that Afghan forces launched almost 515 military operations during the past two

months while insurgents conducted 55 mine explosions in different areas across the country.

"Government forces launched 41 air strikes against the insurgents during this period while 16 suicide attacks were also carried out by militants during the same period," the survey read. (Tolonews)

(17) Ghazni Police...

personnel in the province. Due attention was not being paid to security in the province, he alleged.

Few months back, the militants staged attacks on the provincial capital, where key link roads were kept closed for several days. However, the fighters failed to overrun the city. (Pajhwok)

(18) Rupee Use

ary and want it to convert into rupees. Buying goods in afghanis has a great loss because shopkeepers sell them at double rate."

He said government servants were paid salaries in the afghanis which if used to buy goods had a great loss.

He said the government should take serious measures and set out a grace period after which no one should be allowed to sell or buy goods in the Pakistani currency.

"The president should give a week-long grace period to the provincial administration and force it into banning the use of the Pakistani currency. Creating awareness in this regard will not work, a tough stance is required."

Economics teacher at the Nangarhar University, Prof. Mohammad Bashir Dodyal, said the use of Pakistani rupees had a negative impact on the circulation and value of the Afghan currency.

"The credibility of currency lies in its circulation. If we convert the afghani into rupee and then buy goods in rupee, it hurts the credibility of the afghani."

He said changing afghanis into rupees benefitted moneychangers, but the practice had a bad impact on the value of afghanis. "The commission moneychangers charge in selling afghanis is tantamount to setting them ablaze."

A shopkeeper in Jalalabad, Matiullah, told Pajhwok Afghan News customers used to buy goods from his shop in rupees. "99 percent people buy things in rupees. We have no option but to sell our goods in rupees. If the government generalises the use of afghani, we will also sell our goods in the afghani," he said, confirming most shopkeepers bought the afghanis at low rate. (Pajhwok)

(19) 26 IS ...

were killed and three others injured as an explosive device they were planting along a main road in Achin district to target security forces, police said.

Reporting the bloody incident, police spokesman of Nangarhar province, Hazrat Hussain Mashriqiwal, told media on Sunday that two IS militants were killed and three others sustained injuries as their explosive device went off accidentally in Mazdaki Kandaw village of Achin district late on Saturday.

On the same way, a bomb blast claimed the life of a child and injured three others in Taliban former stronghold the troubled Helmand province, some 555 km south of Kabul on Saturday, a local official, Omar Zawak, told local media. (Xinhua)

(20) 3 Civilians ...

at 4:00am. The detainees are currently under investigation.

Dand-i-Ghori and Dahna-i-Ghori areas had been cleared from the presence of Taliban insurgents and Afghan security forces would also take steps for the disbandment of illegal gunmen, Nazari said. (Pajhwok)

(21) TAPI Gas ...

four nations had signed an initial investment agreement, clearing the way for updating the feasibility study and finalising the pipeline route in Afghanistan.

The agreement was signed between the four nations and the TAPI Pipeline Project Company in Istanbul last month. Afghanistan, Pakistan and India will have 5% shareholding each and the remaining 85% will be held by Turkmenistan. (Pajhwok)

(22) Turkey ...

(from) Cuba. But I get to Nigeria for here. My mother is in Spain now," one of the migrants, Ari, said.

This comes after at least five migrants drowned after a boat carrying Afghan and Iranian migrants to the Greek island of Lesbos sank off the coast of Turkey last Wednesday, Turkey's state-run Anatolian Agen-

cy reported.

The Turkish Coast Guard, using speedboats, rescued nine people and recovered five bodies, including a baby, in the Aegean Sea near the town of Ayvacik, it said. (Tolonews)

(23) 2007 Baghlan ...

students and five teachers welcoming the lawmakers to inaugurate a sugar mill.

More than 100 people, including school students, were wounded in the blast believed to be caused by a bomb full of ball-bearings on November 6, 2007.

Eyewitnesses at the time had said some students and civilians were killed in retaliatory firing by security personnel and bodyguards of lawmakers.

Asadullah, 60, lost his three young sons in the incident. He told Pajhwok Afghan News: "I had four sons, three of them were killed in the bombing near the sugar mill and one died two years after the incident. Their deaths broke my back and I lost hope in life."

The heartbroken old man has been working in the sugar mill against 6,000 afghanis in monthly wage and is living in an old house granted by the mill.

Inside the house, there is an old Iranian carpet, some mattresses and pillows and some old appliances. His sons Naqibullah was a policeman and Ahmad Wisal was in 12th class and Hashmatullah a 10th grader and Ahmad Seyar, a student of 8th class, when they died. (Pajhwok)

(24) Taliban Mourns ...

ban group has also led to bloody clashes among different factions and at least 200 were killed in the latest infighting that lasted for several days in western Herat province of Afghanistan. (KP)

(25) Disagreements...

long-held position regarding Assad, chief opposition negotiator Mohammad Alloush said in Geneva that a national transitional period in Syria could only begin "with the fall, or death, of Bashar al-Assad."

"It cannot start with the presence of the regime, or the head of this regime still in power," reports quoted him as saying. (Xinhua)

(26) U.S., France...

Moallem's comments a clear attempt to "disrupt the process", U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said the Syrian government and its backers were mistaken if they thought they could continue to test the boundaries of a fragile truce. (Reuters)

(27) Syria Army ...

to the historic castle of that ancient city.

Since capturing it last May, the terror-labeled group destroyed the city's notorious military prison and several Islamic tombs. (Xinhua)

(28) Libyan ...

agreement signed on December 17, 2015 in the Moroccan city of Skherat. The Tunis-based council named a government of national accord. On Feb. 23, the unity government received the support of the majority of the members of the house of representatives. (Xinhua)

(29) Non-Interference

require some form of assistance, of whom 72 percent have no access to drinking water and two million children are out of school, said UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien when he made a visit to Damascus last December. (Xinhua)

(30) Iraqi Troops ...

five others wounded by the clashes. The attacks came a day after similar offensives by IS group on Allas and nearby Ajil oil fields as well as Makhoul mountain in north of Tikrit, which were also repelled by the troops. (Xinhua)

(31) Helicopters...

helicopters from the Saudi-led coalition struck armored vehicles and a government compound used by the militants in al-Mansoura district, a stronghold in north Aden. There was no immediate comment from the coalition. (Reuters)

(32) Somali Forces...

ambush on the group in El Ali village Saturday evening," said Abdulle.

Abdulle noted his soldiers did not suffer any casualties. Al-Shabaab has not commented on the development.

The ambush comes a week after Pentagon said its special forces killed 150 Al-Shabaab militants in the Hiiraan region following a drone attack. (Xinhua)