

(1) Ghani Woos...

Executive Officer Dr. Abdullah Abdullah also emphasized there should be no inference in the exam.

President Ghani thanked the Ministry of Higher Education for their efforts at ensuring transparency in the examination.

The president strongly urged provincial governors to prevent illegal intervention in the exam and take legal action against violators.

He said his security team, the National Security Council, would maintain the security for the examination and would cooperate with the Higher Education Ministry.

President Ghani said transparency in the university entrance test was considered as a great achievement for every governor. Those who managed the exam process well would be rewarded and appreciated.

About threats extremist elements pose to some educational institutes, Ghani said: "Educational institutes should be on high alert because extremism is against our culture."

Addressing the governors of 34 provinces, President Ghani said: "Go with a clear plan for retaking the usurped lands in 1396 so the struggle against these people becomes easy next year." (Pajhwok)

(2) Ministry Cancels...

About land-grabbing, the Ministry of Justice spokesman said usurping public land had long been a nationwide problem.

"The MoJ has prevented more than 16,194 acres of land from being usurped. Other public property recovered from their illegal occupants include 271 shops, six houses, an apartment and a sum of money in different provinces," he added.

Most of the land had been grabbed in Kabul and Balkh, Herat and Nangarhar provinces, the spokesman concluded. (Pajhwok)

(3) Ex-Kabul Bank ...

also indicate that Mr. Dawi was put on Exit Control List after he was summoned by the Afghanistan Attorney General's Office. Mr. Dawi has reportedly been arrested on charges of embezzlement of millions of Dollars in fuel and oil contracts.

Kabul Bank was seized by the government in 2010 after the exposure of a staggering \$900 million fraud, which led the International Monetary Fund to temporarily halt its hundreds of millions of dollars of loans to the country.

Kabul Bank was one of Afghanistan's largest private financial institutions founded in 2004 by Sherkhan Farnood, who was an international prominent poker player. Khalilullah Ferozi, the former chief executive of the bank, was another key staff.

President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani ordered to reopen the scandal case of Kabul Bank shortly after taking office as the new President of country. (KP)

(4) Construction of ...

At the beginning of 2018 the practical work will begin.

Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Pakistan, as per the CASA agreement, will be obligated to fund projects in the Afghan provinces designated by the agreement. Annually, the projects must add a minimum value of \$2 million USD and be focused in areas of infrastructure and public services.

The CASA 1000 project will relay one thousand three hundred megawatts of electricity from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is one of the biggest electricity transit projects in the region.

The project includes powerlines of 750 kilometers long. The imported power will be pass from Sang-Toda in Tajikistan to Nowshera in Pakistan. Some 560 kilometers of that line will pass through Afghanistan.

"The project was approved by World Bank and regional countries. Two Indian companies gave us the lowest rates and if we reach to an agreement by April, the project agreement will be signed with one of the companies," said deputy minister Amanullah Ghalib.

The total cost for the CASA 1000 project is \$1.17 billion USD. Afghanistan's share of the cost will be paid for by the World Bank. The United States, Britain and European investment banks have committed to help

in case of funding shortages.

It was expected that 300 megawatts of the imported electricity from the project will be added to Afghanistan electricity grid but now the ministry of water and energy said that by exploiting this project Afghanistan's electricity share will also be exported to Pakistan.

"Besides economic benefits of the project, it will also be of advantage to the country's security and political interests. We have always said that Afghanistan is a corridor and for the first time, Pakistan will be dependent to Afghanistan through TAPI and CASA 1000 projects," said Ghalib.

"If influential people of the country become united in national projects implementation and prefer public interest rather than personal interests, from side the project will be implemented and from other side will lead to Afghanistan's economic growth," he added.

Afghanistan will earn an annual amount of \$50 million USD from transit rights, which is a major amount for reconstruction in Afghanistan. It will benefit the implementation of number of public service projects worth \$40 million USD. (Tolonews)

(5) Afghanistan Asks ...

restored by Russia. There are more than 100 of them, being precise - 124. I will mention some of them. The Salang tunnel, the Kabul bakery, the Polytechnical University, the Jangalak automobile repair plant, and the power station in Pol-e-Khomri," Mohammad told Izvestiya newspaper.

He noted that the theme of Afghanistan's economic reconstruction was already raised during the talks between Afghan Ambassador to Russia Abdul Qayyum Kochai and Russian Deputy Energy Minister Yuri Sentyurin. Mohammad stressed that Afghan President Ashraf Ghani supports the strengthening of Russia's economic presence, and a special economic council was created for these purposes. (Sputnik)

(6) Security, Political ...

shame the government. Parliament speaker, Abdul Rauf Ibrahim, said the government has failed to seek cooperation from Afghanistan's major allies such as the United States to prevent incidents of this nature.

Some lawmakers on Monday said that they are collecting signatures from their colleagues to impeach the security officials over the recent spate of attacks in the capital city that killed dozens.

"If I were the minister of defense, or the head of the national directorate of security, or the minister of interior, I would submit my resignation over the incident that happened in the 400-bed hospital," said MP Nawab Mangal

"The Honorable minister of defense of Afghanistan is sleeping 24 hours a day. I think, if we put him in a bag, close it and send it to another country, then the honorable minister will see that he has been taken to another country without a visa and passport," said MP Humayoun Humayoun.

"The national unity government and our international partners, particularly the United States, have, despite signing the bilateral security and strategic cooperation partnership agreements, not been able to defend Afghanistan. That is shameful," said house speaker Ibrahim.

The lawmakers further said that the weak performance of the government in the security sphere is one of the main reasons for the increase in terror attacks in the major towns.

"Let's conduct open voting for the dismissal of those who play with the blood of the nation because of their weakness and ignorance," said MP Nahid Farid.

"Do you want that they (terrorists) target several hospitals or the national assembly hall or the office of the president or the president himself, before you (lawmakers) then come and say impeach these people?" asked MP Arif Rahmani.

"We have seen impeachments before, but we have to be realistic and work practically," said MP Fawzia Kofi. (Tolonews)

(7) Govt's Delayed...

should have released HIA prisoners in line with the agreement. But ironically, the revealed, 70

more members of the party had been detained recently.

The individuals detained had come to Kabul and other provinces of the country to celebrate the peace accord, the sources revealed.

In addition, the government agreed to facilitate the return of refugees from Pakistan and Iran and provide them with plots and other necessary help. But no progress has been made so far.

The sources said the HIA had submitted the list of 2,500 detainees to the government, which promised to release them.

Ahmad Farozan, spokesman for the commission tasked with implementing the peace deal, said HIA leaders held regular meetings with the panel members and joint work on enforcing the accord was going on.

He claimed the government had kept most of its promises. One of the main articles of the peace deal had been implemented -- the removal of Hekmatyar's name from the UN blacklist.

About the release of HIA prisoner, he said the party had handed them a list of detainees and judicial organs were working on it.

Farozan said HIA should also honour the peace accord and disarm its fighters and force them into respecting Afghanistan's constitution.

On the issue of refugees, he said the HIA had submitted a list and the process of resettlement was underway.

President Ashraf Ghani and Hekmatyar signed the landmark peace deal in September last year after marathon talks between the two sides. (Pajhwok)

(8) Backing Abdullah...

(IARCSC).

However, he added, the CEO later took a somersault and introduced Naderi as IARCSC head. Naderi is close to President Ashraf Ghani.

Noor promised efforts to address public problems, saying he would not allow anyone to damage public interest.

Over the past few months, the governor and Ghani have been in touch on a new power-sharing mechanism. Noor's introduction as governor was part of the negotiations. Earlier he served as acting governor. (Pajhwok)

(9) Modern Print ...

70 million Euro for the establishment of the project.

"It will be a joint investment in the project. A modern printing industry will be established on 22 acres of land. It will be equipped with modern technology and be able to print the government's financial certificates," said Mohammad Ibrahim Shams, chairman government enterprises.

Economic commentators have said the only solution to Afghanistan's fragile economy and joblessness is that the government establishes new enterprises and swiftly revives old businesses.

"If the government is not able to rehabilitate the Jangalak factory site, then it should give it to private sector, but we need to revive it, because it is a major production facility," Sayed Qias Saedi, an economist. (Tolonews)

(10) Smuggling...

a number of Afghan fresh fruits traders said although borders are closed, up to five trucks of Pakistani oranges come into Afghanistan daily.

"There is a route near Jalalabad city, the capital of Nangarhar province, through which goods have been transferred by animals in mountainous areas. The goods are then transferred by small trucks that enter into the Afghanistan market," said Ghulam Mohammad, trader of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Musafir Qoqandi, spokesman of Ministry of Commerce and Industries said: "Goods illegally entering Afghanistan cause many problems and decreases the country's national revenue. No office assesses the quality of the goods that are entering Afghanistan illegally."

ACCI officials said government has done nothing to resolve problems that have been caused by the blocked route between Afghanistan and Pakistan. (Tolonews)

(11) Hospital Attack...

and we never thought they were terrorists," said Siama, doctor.

"I saw a terrorist on the fifth floor shooting a worker and then I hid myself," said Aidi Mohammad, a doctor.

Terrorists first detonated their explosive device near the hospital.

"17 hospital staff members were trapped on the upper floor. The suicide attacker had three hand grenades. He told them to get out, they answered that we are workers and then he exploded his explosive device," Bromand said.

"From the moment that the attack happened, I told myself that that 100% of the students (doctor students) were involved in the attack," said Sayed Abbas Mangal, commander of the military medical academy.

The hospital is equipped with surveillance cameras and its protection measures are very high.

"We asked Siyawash (medical person responsible for the hospital) about officials who had signed the accused doctor's appointment in such an important place," Mohammad Hashim Alokozay, head of defense commission of Meshrano Jirga said. Attack on military hospital is one of the deadliest and complicated terrorist attacks to have been carried out in Afghanistan. It is still not known who helped the terrorists to enter the hospital. (Tolonews)

(12) Afghan Special...

military officials estimate the Afghan government controls less than 60 percent of the country, with eight of 14 districts in Helmand under insurgent control or influence as a resurgent Taliban gains strength following the withdrawal of international troops from combat in 2014.

Helmand has long been a stronghold of the group, with nearly 1,000 coalition troops killed there since the U.S.-led military intervention in 2001, more than in any other province.

Afghan special forces freed more than 60 prisoners held by the Taliban in Helmand last May. (Reuters)

(13) Leaflets Call ...

believe the leaflets were being circulated by Daesh militants. He said it was the act of those who wanted to pave the ground for Daesh arrival.

The Taliban have said nothing in this regard. The Daesh group had been previously more active in Nangarhar and Zabul provinces. (Pajhwok)

(14) Ex-Envoy ...

head without the knowledge of Pakistan's army.

"Unfortunately, the US did not attain victory in Afghanistan, and the Pakistani government's behaviour toward militant Islamists did not change on a permanent basis. But for the period I was in office, the two nations worked jointly toward their common goals," he wrote. (Pajhwok)

(15) Panjsher ...

separate vehicles to Kabul. All the 25 detainees hailed from Baghlan, Badakhshan, and Nuristan provinces.

Esmatullah, a member of the provincial council, said cultivation of poppy crop had plummeted to zero in Panjsher but drugs from Badakhshan, Baghlan and Nuristan were smuggled through the province. (Pajhwok)

(16) Man Kills...

This solar year that ends on March 21, a dozen girls and women have been murdered and another 10 committed suicide in Jawzjan. (Pajhwok)

(17) Unexploded ...

local resident Khalil told Pajhwok Afghan News the mortar shell had recently been fired by unidentified people.

He added: "The children wanted to remove the mortar from the stream and sell it as junk but it exploded, killing all the three children". (Pajhwok)

(18) 8 Dead, 16

to hospital, he added He added another team from the (ANDMA) directorate and allied organisations was on the way to provide cash assistance to families of the injured and dead. (Pajhwok)

(19) Debate on ...

concentrate on fewer policy areas and become more efficient, for example, in fighting terrorism and protecting its borders.

"Times have changed, we need more flexibility and to adapt our institutional set-up", she said. (Xinhua)

ceasefire between the sides that was brokered in December by Russia and Turkey, which backs the rebels. (Reuters)

(20) Russia, Turkey...

and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed to develop relations "as equals" and establish "real coordination" to fight the militant Islamic State group in Syria, the Kremlin had said. (AFP)

(21) Russia Impatient...

(22)U.S. VP... South Korea is also going through political turmoil after a court removed President Park Geun-hye from office over a graft scandal.

Pence is also expected to visit Tokyo for a U.S.-Japan economic dialogue, according to a source familiar with the matter. (Reuters)

(23) Scottish Leader ...

something opposed by most Scots in last June's vote on leaving the bloc.

Ultimately it is the UK parliament in Westminster - where May commands a majority - which makes the call on whether Scotland can hold a second referendum.

But if May refused to approve such a vote she could provoke a constitutional crisis while potentially stoking discord in Scotland. (Reuters)

(24) Japan, U.S. ...

from the Ground Self-Defense Force's Camp Somagahara.

The drill marks the first time the plane has been used in a joint exercise since an Osprey crashed in waters off Nago, near the U.S. Marine Corps' Camp Schwab, in Okinawa, on Dec. 13 last year.

The incident, which saw five crew members airlifted to safety and then subsequently treated for injuries, involved an MV-22 Osprey making a "shallow landing" according to U.S. military accounts.

The crash marked the first major accident involving an Osprey since its deployment in Japan in 2012. (Xinhua)

Japan, Saudi Arabia Vow to Step up Economic Ties

TOKYO - Japan and Saudi Arabia agreed here on Monday on a "Saudi-Japan Vision 2030" plan to advance bilateral economic ties. The plan was announced after a summit between Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the visiting King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia.

"I feel that the plan will further strengthen the strategic partnership between our countries," said the 81-year-old king at the beginning of the summit.

Abe, for his part, said that he wants Japan to "boldly advance ties with Saudi Arabia, the country key to the stability of the Middle East." Part of the plan involves setting up special economic zones in the Middle East country to attract Japanese investment by easing regulations and simplifying customs procedures.

The two sides will also advance negotiations over listing Saudi Aramco, Saudi Arabia's national oil company, on the Tokyo Stock Exchange as part of its partial privatization, according to the plan.

In a bid to diversify its heavily oil-dependent economy, Saudi Arabia has announced a "Saudi Vision 2030" growth strategy last year, which includes privatizing some state-owned companies. (Xinhua)

IS Fighters Completely "Trapped" in Mosul: U.S. Envoy

BAGHDAD - Islamic State (IS) fighters are completely "trapped" and "the last road out of Mosul" has been cut off, claimed a US envoy Sunday in Baghdad.

"Just last night, the 9th Iraqi army division, up near Badush, just northwest of Mosul, cut off the last road out of Mosul," said Brett McGurk, U.S. envoy to the anti-IS coalition. Meanwhile, Iraqi government forces have expelled IS fighters from about 30 percent of

western Mosul, a senior official from the elite Counter-Terrorism Service(CTS) said Sunday, a major progress in the massive operation to retake the second largest city of Iraq. The official said that CTS soldiers clashed fiercely with IS members in the old city center in western Mosul, stressing that the enemy's power has been greatly weakened in the battle.

Iraqi government forces launched the offensive to liberate western Mosul on February 19 after declaring the full control of eastern Mosul late January.

McGurk also announced that Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi will visit Washington next week to hold discussions with US President Donald Trump on the further cooperation between two countries. (Xinhua)

Danish PM Proposes Postponement of Turkish PM Visit

COPENHAGEN - Danish Prime Minister Lars Loekke Rasmussen said on Sunday that he had proposed delaying the planned visit to Denmark by Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim. In a press release, Rasmussen said the decision was made in light of the escalating tensions between Turkey on the one hand and Germany and the Netherlands on the other hand.

"Under normal circumstances, it would be a pleasure to welcome the Turkish Prime Minister Yildirim," Rasmussen said, noting that he had a "frank and constructive dialogue" with Ankara on Dec. 10, 2016, during his visit to Turkey. "However, with the current Turkish attack on Holland, the meeting can not be seen separated from that. I have therefore suggested to my Turkish colleague that our meeting be postponed," the prime minister said in the press release. (Xinhua)

Trump Expected to Announce Vehicle Emissions Rules Review

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump is expected to announce a restart of a review of vehicle fuel efficiency rules sought by the auto industry at an event on Wednesday with the chief executives of U.S. automakers, according to two sources briefed on the matter. Trump is expected to visit Ypsilanti, Michigan, a Detroit suburb, to tout his administration's decision to revive a review of the feasibility of the 2022 through 2025 vehicle emissions rules, after the Obama administration moved in its final days to lock in the rules. In addition to the chief executives of General Motors Co, Ford Motor Co and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV, officials from Japanese and German automakers are also expected to attend. A White House official confirmed Trump plans to visit Michigan, but did not immediately confirm details. Automakers have been pushing the Trump administration for months to reverse the Obama administration decision. The Environmental Protection Agency had until April 2018 to decide whether the standards were feasible under a "midterm review," but moved up its decision to a week before President Barack Obama left office in January. (Reuters)

Polish Prosecutors Summon EU's Tusk as Witness in Intelligence Probe

WARSAW/BRUSSELS - Polish prosecutors have summoned European Council President Donald Tusk as a witness in a case against former secret service officials that relates to events when Tusk was Poland's prime minister, Warsaw district prosecutor's office said on Monday. The summons announcement came two days after Poland's foreign minister said the government would start obstructing European Union business as the bloc angered Warsaw by reappointing Tusk as chairman of EU summit meetings. The eurosceptic Law and Justice (PiS) party, in power since 2015, has brought prosecutors under direct government control. Prosecutor Michal Dziekanski said Tusk had been summoned to testify in the investigation against former heads of the military counter-intelligence services (SKW), who are "charged with co-operating with intelligence services of another country without the required authorization of the prime minister." (Reuters)