

(1) Former AG ...

the palace. He doesn't have this authority. There are a lot of people without degrees but have worked for more than one or two decades," he added. According to Sabit, firing those attorneys is illegal because they were neither without experience nor at the age of retirement. However, he suggested their performance should be evaluated. "He (Muhammadi) is an advisor. He should just advise the president." (Pajhwok)

(2) Construction ...

Batash said the Tajik company had re-launched work and would build the road leading to the dam. He told Pajhwok Afghan News only 15 percent of the project had been done in the past three years. He added \$4.5 million had been allocated for the project in next year's budget. Mohammad Saleh, a farmer from the Akhund Baba area of Almar, said they had long been waiting for the project's completion to irrigate their farmlands. "My brothers and I have 50 acres of farmland that needs irrigation water. We cultivate wheat and look to rains to irrigate our land," he said. The dam has been under security threat and some of its guards and security forces have lost their lives in Taliban attacks and roadside bombings in the past three years. (Pajhwok)

(3) Resolving Refugee...

necessary to provide settlements and employment for the refugees or their return would be temporary. Balkhi said there were at least 22 towns for refugees across Afghanistan but without any infrastructure and housing facilities. After returning from Islamabad, he said Pakistan had promised not to coerce Afghan refugees into repatriation, a cabinet member said on Saturday, a day after returning from Islamabad. Officials from Afghanistan, Pakistan and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) met last week to discuss the problems of refugees living there. Balkhi added the registration process for 1.5 million refugees without documents would be set in motion soon. Illegal refugees would be registered in a month's time and their harassment and forcible repatriation stopped, the minister said, citing commitments from the host country. (Pajhwok)

(4) 40% of New...

ministration. However, neglect on the part of the national unity government is just the beginning of New Kabul City's problems. Powerful individuals are said to have seized up to 40 percent of the land the construction was intended to happen on, and nothing has been done about it.

"In order to resolve this issue, there is a need for strong and clear will from the government in order to prevent the confiscation of land by powerful people and for the project to be successfully implemented," Yusuf Pashtun said. The New Kabul City project is located in Bareekaab and Deh Sabz area of Kabul, and was originally planned to house over three million residents, attracting over \$70 million of investments in the next 30 years. "Land confiscators do not want the project to fail, they say that can earn more with more confiscated land so they do not favor the failure of the project," Pashtun said. However, other analyst have expressed graver concerns about the land-grabbing. "The confiscation of New Kabul City project land will endanger the progress of the project, and considering the economic importance of the project, the government must prevent the confiscation of land," economic analyst Muhammad Quran Haqjo said. The New Kabul City project is expected to double the size of the capital. Initial work on the project started eight years ago. (Tolonews)

(5) President, ...

given its good relations with Pakistan and influence with the Taliban. During his visit, the analyst be-

lieved, the president would stress the need for greater support from Saudi Arabia for establishing peace in the county. (Pajhwok)

(6) Women Remind...

Director Nadira Giyah said: "We want the two leaders to give females adequate representation in the government in line with their campaign pledges." She recalled that Parwan's women, undeterred by a variety of security threats, had courageously participated in the presidential election process. "Now is the time for government leaders to keep their promises." Rauzia Nilab, a Kapisa-based rights activist, said: "Afghan women have suffered a lot under different regimes, losing their sons, husbands and brothers. But they turned out in large numbers to vote in last year's polls." She told Pajhwok Afghan News the president and the CEO had held out heartening vows to the women, who were still awaiting their implementation.

On the other hand, Kapisa women lashed out at the administration of former president Hamid Karzai for failing to take concrete measures ameliorate their lot. Malala, a resident of Tagab district, said: "A lot of money was spent by the previous government on a string of projects in the province. But most of the funds, we hear from many people, were spent uselessly and there has been no change in our lives." Their children were going to school but the women could not afford to pay the expenses, Malala said, seeking jobs for females to support their families.

Kapisa Women's Affairs Director Saifura Kohistani said her department had initiated efforts to resolve the problems of women and girls, who want cabinet seats and job opportunities. A resident of Jabalus Saraj district, Maryam who cast her vote in both rounds of the presidential elections, urged government leaders to implement their commitments. Parwan provincial council member Hasba Iffat said, "I am sure the government would introduce women nominees for the remaining cabinet slots, because the president has such plans." Kapisa Governor Mehrabuddin Safi agreed women could play as effective role as men in community development and prosperity. He asked government to give women their due share. (Pajhwok)

(7) Tokyo Pledges ...

Horticulture and Livestock Project through ARTF," a statement from the embassy said. Japan has been assisting Afghanistan's nation-building efforts in various fields ranging from security sector to economic and social development fields, such as agriculture, rural development infrastructure and human capacity development. (Pajhwok)

(8) CIA Secret ...

a fifth of which was CIA money that came from an Afghan government fund that received monthly cash deliveries from the agency. The Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden had at first been concerned about the payment, fearing the CIA knew about the money and had tainted it with poison, radiation or a tracking device, the newspaper reported. The release payments were found in the 2011 raid by U.S. Navy Seals who killed bin Laden at his compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan. The CIA's contribution to Qaeda's bottom line, though, was not well-laid trap. It was just another in a long list of examples of how the United States, largely because of poor oversight and loose financial controls, has sometimes inadvertently financed the very militants it is fighting, the report said. While refusing to pay ransoms for Americans kidnapped by Al Qaeda, the Taliban or, more recently, the Islamic State, the United States has spent hundreds of billions of dollars over the last decade at war in Iraq and Afghanistan, some of which has been siphoned off to enemy fighters. (Tolonews)

(9) Envoy Stresses...

Speaking at a meeting of Iranian businessmen, Ahmad Nour noted that political factors have no impact on Iran-Afghanistan relations. He further added that Afghani-

stan is ready to facilitate visa issuance between Tehran and Kabul and there are good potentials to enhance cooperation between both public and private sectors of two states.

The diplomat said that Afghanistan is a major export destination for Iranian goods. Ahmad Nour underlined importance of diplomatic relations between Tehran and Kabul and said it was expected that Afghan president pay a visit to Iran on first month of new Iranian calendar year (March 21-April 20). Iran is one of the most important donors to Afghanistan, which has kept its promises to help to the reconstruction of the war-ravaged country.

Iran has built several roads, power transmission lines, border stations and many other infrastructure projects in Afghanistan to better link the two nations. Iran has also contributed more than \$50m to Afghan anti-narcotics efforts during the last five years. (FNA)

(10) Panjsher Residents ...

food to eat, and our children are living in cold weather," a resident Faqir Mohammad complained. "I don't know what would happen to us if floods come." The lives of dozens of people are at risk, an elder Haji Mirza said, demanding the government to take necessary measurements to prevent casualties. About 200 people including women and children lost their lives following heavy snow and avalanches about three weeks ago in Panjsher, leaving dozens of homes buried beneath. President Ashraf Ghani's Special Representative for Reform and Good Governance, Ahmad Zia Massoud, in his recent visit to Panjsher promised to reimburse the families who have suffered losses because of the avalanches. Massoud and the provincial council head Gen. Jurat donated over 2.4 million AFN personally to the families affected by the avalanches.

"We have already raised the issue to the cabinet that the government should pay the losses to those affected," Massoud said. "As the weather gets better, we will start building shelters for them." After the recent avalanches, Pakistan donated 24 tons of medicines, foods, clothes, blankets and other first aid materials to the people of Panjsher.

Iran was the second country to contribute in the donations by delivering 20 tons of essential materials to the Afghanistan Red Crescent Society (ARCS). The aids, however, have not been delivered to the affected areas so far due to closure of roads. (Tolonews)

(11) Health Dept....

at the hospital. Thirty percent of staffers are women. The Turkish agency has decided to transfer the hospital to the health department. In a formal letter, the agency wrote: "Responsibility for health services and equipment of the hospital would be transferred to the health department in four months." But Public Health Director Dr. Faridoon Habib said his department did not have the ability to look after affairs of the hospital. The Ministry of Health was not in position to equip the hospital and pay salaries, he claimed. In addition, he said the child mortality rate would increase if charge of the hospital was given to his department. (Pajhwok)

(12) Kabul Children ...

growth in the sport. "These programs help us find children with talent and skills," Frozan Tajali, captain of the national girls football team, said. "These grassroots festival can strengthen the basics of football in Afghanistan." Last year Afghanistan was the first Asian country to improve football in the country. (Tolonews)

(13) Special ANA ...

goggles, air transport, aircraft, armoured vehicles and modern weapons, an army commander said. Gen. Syed Abdul Karim said the newly deployed unit would operate in the northeastern zone, including Kunduz, Baghlan, Takhar and Badakhshan provinces.

He added military operations were currently being conducted independently by ANA soldiers and NATO was equipping them. "Commandos and special the ANA unit are the biggest challenge the enemy and they are operating day and night to eliminate terrorism," Karim concluded. (Pajhwok)

(14) Kunar ...

officials in several provinces had said they had been directed by the Ministry of Interior not to share information with media outlets. The government's stance has angered journalists. The Afghanistan Independent Journalist Association (AIJA) in a statement said the National Security Council had prohibited provincial officials from sharing information with the media. It added the Ministry of Interior had been directed to issue information to the media on security issues in future. (Pajhwok)

(15) Shura Held to ...

involve up to 60 high schools in Parwan Province. All high school seniors will take a standardized math test and the top three students from each high school will receive text books to support their studies at a local university - an expense that is burdensome for most. "The key to a successful Afghan future is the people themselves," Miller said. "And you [educators] play a huge role in making sure that as young people become adults, they are working to make Afghanistan a great country."

According to Maj. Steve Beard, executive officer of TF Solid, the primary intent of the competition is to promote education. "It is important to the long-term security and economic development of Afghanistan," Beard said. "The competition also serves as a venue for positive interaction between local youth and Coalition Forces. We were extremely pleased to have five representatives from the Ministry of Education and 49 high school principals attend the event today." Haji Zalimi, director of education for Parwan Province, sat alongside Miller and talked about his concerns regarding education and security. "It's a good thing to have meetings like this and discussions about education," Zalimi said. "This is a good thing for us. It's good to have discussions, talk about it, and talk about what we can do to maintain security. We can then talk to the teachers and talk to the locals and find out what problems they have and what we can do to get our mission done here. We are thankful for all of your support." (KP)

(16) Public Representat...

and thereby stoking tensions in the town. Provincial council member Mohammad Nader Syedi also hit out at Fathullah for fanning communal violence. A hundred Afghan Local Police (ALP) members loyal to the MP were forcibly collecting Zakat and Ushr from locals, he claimed. But the legislator hit back at Qaisari for having links with rebels. He said Mullah Zabilullah had joined the peace process and then served as an ALP member to fight against insurgents. Disarming Zabilullah was an illegal action, he insisted. "Most of the areas may fall to Taliban with the support of Qaisari if the ALP group stops operating," Qaisari warned. Acting district chief Abdul Jamil Sadiqi said Qaisari was not responsible for performing the government's job. (Pajhwok)

(17) Rebel Leader ...

road into a village today. Furthermore, a religious scholar was gunned down in 9th police district of Maimana. Col. Mohammad Naeem Andarabi, police chief, said Maulvi Yadgar was killed by two unknown gunmen. The motive behind his murder remained unclear, he added. (Pajhwok)

(18) Powerful Figures...

commission, but some officials were creating hurdles covertly and wanted them to reach a compromise with powerful individuals on their occupation of homes. A government employee, Shah Mahmood, said: "I receive 6,000 afghanis salary per month and live in a rented house." Paying the rent

and meeting other family's needs was impossible for him to afford, he said.

The governor's spokesman, Omar Zwak, confirmed illegal occupation of government houses in Lashkargah, saying a commission had been assigned to investigate the issue. (Pajhwok)

(19) As Logar Land...

had documents proving their ownership of land that the Kuchis grabbed four years ago. Provincial council head Haseebullah Stanikzai also blamed the nomads and said that local officials had failed to deal with the situation.

"People of the area contacted me on the telephone, saying the nomads have blocked roads. We would share the issue with security officials to find a solution," Stanikzai said. Pajhwok tried to take the views of Kuchi leaders, but did not succeed. However, a nomad from Khaki area, Ziarat Gul, said they were allotted the land through a presidential decree in 2011. (Pajhwok)

(20) 5 Roads Rehabilitat...

boost local economy and improve living conditions of people. Schuldes also emphasized that the Afghan government would have to take the lead in safeguarding the proper operation and maintenance of infrastructure investments like the five city roads in Kunduz. The construction work was contracted to the Afghan Joint Venture "Credible Construction Company" and "Daftani Construction and Engineering Company". In May 2012, the survey and design works have been started. The work was completed in December 2014, under the supervision of Kunduz municipality engineers and RIDF engineers.

The project was financed through the financial assistance of the German government with costs of more than 6.5 million Euro (around 4 billion afghanis), and directly benefits 250,000 inhabitants of Kunduz city and moreover, up to one million inhabitants in Kunduz province. (Pajhwok)

(21) Iraqi Kurds...

Kurdish security source said that the peshmerga fired a rocket at the car carrying the bomb so there were no casualties, except for the suicide bomber. About a dozen peshmerga fighters experienced symptoms of nausea, vomiting, dizziness or weakness, the source said. The statement said the analysis was carried out in a European Union-certified laboratory after the soil and samples were sent by the Kurdish Regional Government to a "partner nation" in the U.S.-led coalition that is fighting Islamic State militants in Iraq and Syria. The source described the samples as "leftovers from the suicide bomber", but declined to identify the laboratory. The White House said in a statement it could not confirm the allegations but found them "deeply disturbing" and was monitoring the situation "very closely."

A U.S. defense official said the use of chlorine as a weapon was a possible sign of "growing desperation due to the pressure being applied by coalition air power and Iraqi ground forces."

Iraq's Kurds were the victims of the deadliest chemical attack of modern times when Saddam Hussein's air force bombed the town of Halabja in 1988, gassing at least 5,000 people to death. The U.S. Central Command said on Jan. 30 that an Islamic State chemical weapons expert had been killed in a coalition air strike six days earlier near Mosul - the day after the car bombing cited in Saturday's statement. The expert, Abu Malik, had been a chemical weapons engineer during the rule of Saddam Hussein and then affiliated himself with al Qaeda in Iraq in 2005, Central Command said at the time. When he joined Islamic State, it gave the insurgent force a chemical weapons capability, it added. Malcolm Dando, professor of international security at the University of Bradford, and an expert on biological and chemical warfare, said chlorine was an easy gas to obtain. "It's extensively used, you only need to google industrial uses

of chlorine, it's extensively used industrially," he told Reuters. Western diplomats in The Hague, where the OPCW is based, have long feared IS fighters would get their hands on chemical weapons. It is not easy to make such weapons and IS tried to recruit experts when it took over Mosul last year, diplomatic sources told Reuters. They were not believed to have been successful. Kurdish forces, backed by U.S.-led air strikes, have taken a prominent role in fighting the Islamic State jihadists who last year declared a cross-border caliphate after seizing land in eastern Syria and northern Iraq. (Reuters)

(22) Russia Prepared ...

Russian forces took control of Ukrainian military facilities on the peninsula and a referendum on secession was hastily called. The referendum, which was widely denounced in the West as illegitimate, reportedly brought overwhelming support for secession. Russia annexed Crimea on March 19, 2014. In the documentary, which marks a year since the referendum, Putin says of the nuclear preparedness, "We were ready to do this ... (Crimea) is our historical territory. Russian people live there. They were in danger. We cannot abandon them."

The comments were reported on the state broadcaster's website after its transmission in the Russian Far East and before it appeared on the air in Moscow. Putin said his plans for a Crimean operation started after Yanukovich fled. "We never thought about severing Crimea from Ukraine until the moment that these events began, the government overthrow," he said, repeating Russia's contention that Yanukovich was the victim of a coup. He said he called for a "closed opinion poll" of sentiments among Crimeans about whether to remain in Ukraine. He didn't give details as to how this survey was conducted, but said "it became clear that 75 percent of the general population desired to join Russia."

Russia initially denied that the unmarked forces who took control in Crimea were Russian, but Putin later admitted they were. In the Sunday documentary, he said he ordered the defense ministry to deploy military intelligence special forces, marines and paratroopers "under the cover of strengthening the protection of our military facilities." Russia's Black Sea Fleet is based in Crimea; it retained the bases after the collapse of the Soviet Union under an agreement with Ukraine. Putin, however, claimed in the documentary that troops weren't sent from Russia into Crimea even though the upper house of parliament had authorized such a move and said the number of forces there never exceeded the 20,000 authorized under the agreement on basing the Black Sea Fleet there.

Putin also said Russian forces helped Yanukovich escape to Russia. After fleeing the capital Kiev, Yanukovich made one appearance in Kharkov, then disappeared for several days. Reports at the time said he and his security entourage went on a desperate journey through the eastern parts of the country and down to Crimea, looking for safety. Putin's retelling appeared to confirm those reports.

He said Russian security forces had tried to keep contact with Yanukovich as he moved through Ukraine and eventually "we brought him to Russian territory." (AP)

(23) 'Pakistan Won't...

State also came up in the talks. Mr. Sharif, while agreeing to strengthen relations with Saudi Arabia during the visit, also committed to intensifying security and counter-terrorism cooperation. The government, however, after evaluating the pros and cons, the official claimed, decided on staying neutral and playing the "role of a unifier" in Ummah. "We cannot afford to involve ourselves in the disputes among the Muslim countries," he explained. While it remains to be seen how Pakistan government acts in the coming days, some of the decisions taken so far indicate that it is not getting itself involved in the Middle East. (Monitoring Desk)