

(1) EU Urges

operations must start sharing their revenue with the Afghan people. Companies that do not pay their taxes voluntarily should have their licences revoked.

For ensured transparency in the vital mining sector the EU mission asked to Re-examine all mining licences that do not produce income for the Afghan Government.

In addition it suggested to ensure control over the largest and most active mining operations, where illegal mining was taking place - like the Lapis Lazuli mine in Sar-e-Sang. Last week the EU delegation in Afghanistan launched its 2017 anti-corruption campaign which would run for seven weeks.

The seven weeks campaign would be culminated with a high-level anti-corruption conference early in May, the statement said.

The EU anti-corruption campaign will on four themes: Natural resources and stability - the threat of illegal mining, Corruption in the judicial sector

Prevention of Corruption

Corruption in the security sector

Zabihullah Sarwari, spokesman for the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, said they would consider suggestion made by the EU.

He said the ministry was effectively coordinating with the government to chalk out a proper strategy to implement the suggestion made by the EU. (Pajhwok)

(2) Ten Taliban...

Zalmai Wesa said. There were no civilian casualties in the airstrike, he said adding that a number of weapons were also destroyed in the airstrike.

The Taliban has not yet commented on the airstrike. (Tolnews)

(3) On Time ...

The senior commanders briefed President Ghani regarding the military operations and supplies delivered to the defense forces in the areas under their control.

The Afghan Air Force plays a key role in delivery of the supplies to the ground forces with the current fleet of fixed and rotary wing aircraft.

The Air Force performs scores of sorties on daily basis with majority of them comprising cargo delivery, according to the Afghan Air Force.

The current fleet includes Mi-17 helicopters, C-130 aircraft and some other small aircraft although efforts are underway to further boost the capabilities of the air forces.

In the meantime, the commander of the United States Central Command General Joseph L. Votel has requested the US Congress to approve the budget for the Afghan forces Blackhawk program.

In his statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Gen. Votel informed regarding the significant capability gaps in Afghan Air Force, saying "The current rotary wing fleet consisting primarily of the Russian-made Mi-17 is both undersized and proving to be more expensive and difficult to sustain than originally envisioned and is experiencing a higher than expected attrition rate." (KP)

(4) 6 Ministers...

token, will be nominated as foreign minister, Ghulam Nabi Farahi as boarder and tribal affairs minister and Farooq Wardak as parliamentary affairs minister.

One of the probable ministers-designate told Pajhwok they might be introduced to the Wolesi Jirga for a trust vote till the end of March. But the parliamentary affairs minister does not require a trust vote from the lower house.

Nargis Nehan, currently serving as a civil society leader, said she had also heard about the possible nominations,

which are yet to be officially announced.

Speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahim said the president would soon introduce ministers-designate. He added the house would summon security top brass next week to on the situation in the country.

Last year, the lower house had disqualified some ministers after they failed to spend their development budgets. The government, however, took the case to the Supreme Court, whose decision is still pending. (Pajhwok)

(5) Announce ...

His colleague from Uruzgan province Mohammad Hanif Hanafi made the same demand, which he termed as necessary for the nascent democracy in the country.

An election date be announced soon so that people could prepare themselves, the lawmaker said, stressing awareness about the important process among the masses.

Senate chairman Fazal Hadi Muslimyar said the Independent Election Commission (IEC) should work for holding of the elections at the earliest and share their programme with the people.

He asked the government to task the authorities concerned with making full preparations for the ballot. (Pajhwok)

(6) Afghanistan...

billion in 2015, while the same figure has hit \$1.5 billion in 2016.

"China, Iran and India will soon replace Pakistan in Afghanistan's markets and Islamabad will lose its biggest market soon," he said.

Haqjou noted that blocking the paths to Pakistan for Afghan people and businessmen has incurred a loss of \$100 million for the merchants. (IRNA)

(7) Herat ...

activities in this district," said Lal Mohammad Omarzai, Adraskan governor.

Jilani Farhad, spokesman for the Herat governor, said more security forces will be deployed in some districts of the province.

"We have launched a few operations in Adraskan and have eliminated the Taliban, but due to the lack of permanent bases, Taliban have restarted their activities. Unfortunately Herat is faced with a lack of security forces," he said.

The spokesman for the Herat police department said they have plans to launch an offensive against insurgents in spring.

"Security forces have plans to launch a large scale operation in all parts of Herat province in the next solar year to eliminate all bases of Taliban from the region," Abdul Ahad Walizada, Herat police spokesman said.

It has been said however that the Taliban are active in eight districts of Herat province and that their presence is an obstacle in the way of implementing development projects. (Tolnews)

(8) Pakistan Stresses ...

cross-border movement of terrorists.

The meeting discussed the need of continued efforts for peace talks between Afghan government and Taliban under an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned reconciliation process.

The delegates also emphasized that regional economic cooperation and connectivity would strengthen prospects of lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan.

This was the first senior officials meeting for the next Heart of Asia Ministerial Conference which would be held in Baku, Azerbaijan later this year. (Pajhwok)

(9) Crossing-Point...

has also affected the trade and movement of people from other checkpoints in the tribal areas. Thousands of trucks with perishable materials are stuck on both sides for the past one

month, he added.

He said according to one estimate, traders from both countries have been losing about \$4 million a day because of the closure of crossing points. Pakistani traders are bearing about 80 percent of those losses.

He further said, "The rising tension between the two countries and the drawdown of the US-led coalition forces have already caused a huge drop in our exports to Afghanistan from \$ 2.5 billion to \$1.3 billion." The exports are expected to go down further with the growing uncertainty caused by this new low in relations between two countries, he maintained.

Moreover, he said the government is also losing huge revenue because of the closure of the border. According to figures, 500 trucks on average used to cross the border every day, paying Rs10,000 each in customs duty and transit fees, he added.

He said the closure has also affected local traders and those associated with the transportation business. The cumulative losses to the economy by this irrational action are incalculable and it would be extremely difficult to retrieve the situation; he remarked. (Pajhwok)

(10) Many District ...

and Shaki Darwaza districts. However, we are unable to deliver aid from the capital of the province due to road blockades," he said.

Provincial council secretary Ahmad Javed Javed said: "No assistance plans have been implemented in snow-hit areas due to road blockades."

But Mohammad Ishaq Yaqubi, another official of Natural Disaster Management Authority, said they had provided cash aid to families of avalanches victims in Shakhb Pur and Wandian areas of Shahr-i-Buzurg district. (Pajhwok)

(11) ISIS Spy ...

security forces did not suffer any casualties during the operations.

Nangarhar is among the relatively calm provinces in eastern Afghanistan but the anti-government armed militant groups have recently increased their insurgency activities in some parts of the province during the recent years.

This comes as the Afghan forces are busy conducting counter-terrorism operations in the restive districts of Nangarhar under the Shaheen-25 operations launched several weeks ago.

The operations are being conducted with the support of the US forces based in Afghanistan who are providing close-air support under a broader role granted by the Obama administration earlier last year to target the terrorist groups in the country. (KP)

(12) 15 Militants ...

defused within the period, Jamshidi noted.

The Kunduz province and neighboring Baghlan and Farayab provinces have been the scene of heavy clashes over the past couple of months as Taliban has been trying to challenge the government forces in the once relatively peaceful region.

The Taliban militant group has yet to make comments. (Xinhua)

(13) TTP Commanders...

border with South Waziristan Agency. The dead were identified as Haroon Shuikhel Wazir and Azmat Mahsud.

Suikhel belonged to the Akhtar Mohammad faction of the TTP in North Waziristan. Funeral prayers for the two were held in Laman area near the border. (Pajhwok)

(14) 2 Children ...

children were playing with it. Two of the children were killed and a third wounded, he added. (Pajhwok)

(15) 4 Policemen ...

Faryab provinces have been the scene of heavy clashes

over the past couple of months as Taliban has been trying to challenge the government forces in the once relatively peaceful region.

The Taliban militant group has yet to make comments. (Xinhua)

(16) Hillary Clinton...

female leaders working to bring peace to Northern Ireland.

"What can we do to try to bring people together and to try to find that common ground, even higher ground, sister, so that we listen to each other again and we know that we can make a difference? I'm not sure it will come out of Washington yet, but I think it can come out of Scranton. Let's find ways to do that," she told the Society of Irish Women. (AP)

(17) Russian, Kazakh...

Syrian talks, which took place in the Kazakh capital of Astana on March 14-16, the Kremlin said, without giving further details.

The Astana peace talks closed without progress after rebels boycotted the meeting. Russia, Turkey and Iran agreed to hold the next meeting in Astana on May 3-4. (Xinhua)

(18) Homs City ...

those evacuating are from the rebels who refuse to embark on a "reconciliation" with the government, adding that they will be transported to rebel-held areas in the city of Jarablus in the countryside of the northern city of Aleppo.

Saturday's evacuation is actually not the first from al-Wair, as the original agreement for the rebel evacuation was reached in late 2015, when the first batch of rebels left the neighborhood. In 2016, another batch left, and the deal was mired later with renewed tension and battles, until being re-activated this month. (Xinhua)

(19) Refugee-Seekers ...

migrants crossing the Aegean sea from about 10,000 per day to less than 100 per day.

UNHCR said more than 20,000 refugees and migrants have arrived in the Aegean islands of Greece since March 20, 2016 when the EU-Turkey deal began to be implemented. Of the total arrivals, about half of them landed in Lesvos which received the bulk of the one million refugee arrivals from early 2015 to early 2016.

The EU said under the EU-Turkey agreement, 916 people had been turned back to Turkey as of March 16. (Xinhua)

(20) While Trump...

be completed in April, leaving the deployed ICBM arsenal at its smallest size since the early 1960s. (AP)

(21) No Desire...

emphasised the need for re-establishing a multilateral forum, like the Quadrilateral Coordination Group, for reviving the Afghan peace talks. In a piece he wrote for the Forbes magazine, Mr Zardari noted that the United States had invested billions of dollars in Pakistan since 9/11 attacks, which brought greater stability in the country but the "well of goodwill from which we [Pakistan] can draw is not endless". (Monitoring Desk)

(22) Turkmenistan...

part of the biggest international organizations, the message said. (Trend)

Trump's Travel Ban may do little to Prevent Terror Attacks: U.S. Expert

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump's ban on immigration from six majority Muslim countries may do little to deter the terror threat, a U.S. expert told Xinhua in a recent interview.

Trump recently revised the controversial visa ban to bar entry of citizens from six countries - Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen -

for 90 days and suspend entry of some refugees for 120 days. But the revised ban has been suspended by federal judges like the original one.

"The new immigration executive order most likely will do little to deter terrorists from entering the U.S. or attacking Americans or U.S. interests abroad," said Wayne White, former deputy director of the State Department's Middle East Intelligence Office.

That's because the ban would alienate many Arab Muslims, especially in countries on the no-go list, he said.

"Such alienation or resentment probably will make radicalization of individuals by IS, al-Qaida and their affiliates much easier," White said, referring to the world's two most dangerous terror groups. The exemption from the temporary travel ban granted to countries friendly to the U.S. - from Tunisia through Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan - was based not on lack of threat, but merely on political considerations, White said. (Xinhua)

Germany Supports Group behind Turkish Coup Attempt: Erdogan Spokesman

ANKARA - Turkey on Sunday accused Germany of supporting the network of a U.S.-based Muslim cleric it blames for last year's attempted coup, comments likely to aggravate a diplomatic feud between Ankara and Berlin.

On Saturday, German news magazine Der Spiegel published an interview with the head of the BND foreign intelligence agency, who said Ankara had failed to convince it that the cleric Fethullah Gulen was responsible for the coup attempt. "Turkey has tried to convince us of that at every level but so far it has not succeeded," Bruno Kahl was quoted as saying.

President Tayyip Erdogan's spokesman said Kahl's comments were proof Germany was supporting Gulen's network, which Ankara refers to as the "Gülenist Terrorist Organisation" or "FETO".

"It's an effort to invalidate all the information we have given them on FETO. It's a sign of their support for FETO," Ibrahim Kalin told broadcaster CNN Turk.

"Why are they protecting them? Because these are useful instruments for Germany to use against Turkey." (Reuters)

Taliban Gunmen Kidnap 3 Passengers in Farah

FARAH CITY - Taliban militants on Sunday morning kidnapped three passengers in western Farah province, a public representative said.

Jamila Amini, who heads the provincial council, told Pajhwok Afghan News the passengers were kidnapped on the road between Farah City, the provincial capital, and Farah Rod district.

She said the kidnapping took place in Dehak area on the outskirts of Farah City this morning. The Taliban stopped a passenger car, pulled off three people and took them away.

She said the kidnapped persons belonged to Takhar province and they wanted to be recruited in the Afghan National Army (ANA).

They were abducted while en route to Kabul from Farah and taken to an unknown location, she said. The ANA's 207th Zafar Military Corps officials, when contacted, said they were unaware about the incident. The governor's spokesman, Wali Mohammad Naser Mahri, confirmed the incident but provided no details. (Pajhwok)

Afghan Athletes bring 165 Medals Home this Year



KABUL - Afghan athletes won 165 medals in international competitions in fifteen countries this year, a statement said on Sunday.

The statement from the Directorate of Physical Training and Sports to Pajhwok Afghan News said 700 athletes participated in international competitions during the outgoing solar year.

The Afghans featured in taekwondo, wrestling, boxing, judo, volleyball, water polo, para Olympic, athletic light, tennis, chess, martial arts, pankration, gymnasium, cyrus, bodybuilding, kung fu, Muay Thai, vovinam, taekwondo IITF, Wushu and other sports.

The games were hosted by Iran, India, the Philippines, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Tajikistan, Egypt, Turkmenistan, Thailand, Bhutan, Vietnam, Indonesia, Brazil and Russia.

Afghan athletes managed to win a total of 165 medals, including 35 gold, 40 silver and 90 bronze.

The Afghans also won medals in WTF Taekwondo, deaf football, Cyrus Para Olympic Games, Martial arts, Sports Gymnasium, Muay Thai, Bodybuilding, Karate, Gulf, Taekwondo IITF, Power Lifting, Pankration, Vovinam, Kung Fu, Boxing, Athletics, Judo and Wushu.

The statement also mentioned four gold belts Baz Mohammad Mubariz and Ahmad Wali Hotak grabbed this year.

The total number of registered athletes in the country is 389,049 including 18,081 females. (Pajhwok)

Ireland Break Afghanistan's Winning Spree

KABUL - In a do or die encounter to keep the series alive, Ireland on Sunday made a strong comeback beating Afghanistan by six wickets in their third ODI in New Delhi.

After winning the toss, Afghanistan decided to bat but early strikes from Irish bowlers left Afghanistan batting side reeling.

Afghanistan were five wickets down in less than 100 score, but all rounder Rashid Khan, Shafiqullah and Gulbadin who scored their fifties took Afghanistan to a commanding position of 264 in the allotted 50 overs.

In reply, Ireland's opening batsmen were pretty good as they looked for a different game this time after losing two matches of the series to Afghanistan and played each ball with merit. Opener Paul Strling brilliantly played with the bat once again helping his side reach close to the target, but he was dismissed just one run short of his century by Mohammad Nabi.

Middle order batsmen Balbirnie's 85 off 74 balls and Wilson's 28 off 28 balls were impressive in the successful chase of 264.

Afghan International Company General Petroleum is the main sponsor of the five ODIs series between Afghanistan and Ireland. (pajhwok)