

### (1) Illiteracy...

past 15 years, there are still problems in the sector, Danish said. He said this year, one million new students would start school, of which 43 percent of them are girls. He said however that insecurity is a key challenge for the education sector in the country and because of this, thousands of students drop out annually. He pointed out that the increase in violence against women could also be linked to extremism and to those who are uneducated.

He claims the lack of proper school buildings in the country is also a problem. Danish said security forces are determined to re-open schools in insecure parts of the country and also called on the public to "help with this."

The new school year officially started on Thursday. In the meantime, the acting minister of education Asadullah Hanif Balkhi said that millions of children still do not have access to education. Balkhi said 9.2 million children are in school in Afghanistan of which 39 percent are girls.

This comes after Save the Children showed that more than 1,100 Afghan children a day are expected to drop out of school in 2017, putting them at risk of exploitation.

"More than 400,000 children in Afghanistan - over 1,100 per day - are expected to drop out of school this year due to growing instability and a spike in forced returns from Pakistan," it said in a statement.

The statement said that the stark projection comes on the first day of the new school year in Afghanistan, when almost a third of all children across the country - 3.7 million - are unable to go to school, leaving them at increased risk of child labor, recruitment by armed groups, trafficking, early marriage and other forms of exploitation. On the start of Afghanistan's school year, Save the Children Country Director in Afghanistan, Ana Locsin, said:

"Today should be a happy day in Afghanistan as children go back to class for the first time after a long winter. Instead it is a day cloaked in tragedy for the millions who can't access education and are struggling to survive." "We know that children who aren't going to school are at increased risk of early marriage, entering the workforce where they can be exploited, or even recruitment into armed groups or being trafficked. And the longer they are out of the education system, the less likely they'll ever go back," she said. (Tolnews)

### (2) Taliban Denies ...

told VOA Friday. But he did not outright deny reports his group may attend a Moscow meeting, if invited. "When an invitation is extended to us, only then we can consider it and comment on it," Mujahid said. Reports of Pakistan meeting. He spoke a day after an Associated Press report said Pakistani officials hosted seven Taliban leaders in Islamabad in their bid to press the insurgents to return to peace talks with the Afghan government.

Pakistan brokered and hosted a single meeting between Taliban and Afghan officials in July 2015, but the revelation at the time that the insurgent group's supreme leader, Mullah Omar, had been dead for two years disrupted the peace process.

A senior Pakistani government official and an intelligence official told VOA they were unaware of any such "visit or talks." Both officials requested anonymity because they are not authorized to speak publicly on such matters. "Pakistan is trying to distance itself from hosting Afghan peace talks and would instead prefer they are held in a country acceptable to all the parties," the intelligence official maintained. Relations between Islamabad and Kabul have deteriorated in recent years because of Taliban-led attacks in Afghanistan, for which Afghan officials blame insurgent sanctuaries on Pakistani soil. Afghanistan open to talks.

Speaking in Washington earlier this week, Afghan Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani insisted Kabul has kept the doors for peace negotiations open to insurgents, but accused Islamabad of hindering efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in his country. "Pakistan's reluctance to end its support for terrorism underpins the continuation of violence in Afghanistan and the region. ... A paradigm shift in Pakistan is needed if any progress is to be made in peace efforts with the Taliban," Rabbani said. (VoA)

### (3) Sangin District...

Security Force and the Afghan National Police remain in Sangin district. "They repositioned the district center and ANP [Afghan National Police]

headquarters just over two kilometers south because the enemy had destroyed so much of the infrastructure in and around the center over the last several months and made it difficult for the people to reach the district government," Stump said. "This move to a new district center has been planned for some time," Stump added.

The Taliban caused "excessive damage" to the bazaar area making it difficult to provide services, the Pentagon spokesperson continued. (Sputnik)

### (4) Pak-Afghan ...

Ambassador highlighted, in his address, the historical significance of Pakistan Resolution of 23rd March, 1940 which successfully paved the way for a separate homeland for the Muslims of South Asia. He paid rich tributes to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslims of Sub-Continent for their untiring efforts and immense sacrifices that led to the creation of a separate homeland. Mr. Hussain said the Day reminded us to work collectively to build a strong and stable Pakistan. He said that Pakistan had made remarkable progress in various fields since independence but still there were challenges which required unity and sincerity to overcome them. The Ambassador also reaffirmed his country's commitment to elimination of extremism and terror. In this regard, he highlighted the anti-terror achievements made under the Zarb-e-Azb and Rad-ul-Fassad Operations. The Ambassador also emphasized the need for cooperation against militancy and terrorism. He said that Pakistan was strongly committed to the peace and stability in Afghanistan, and had made sincere efforts in this regard. A peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan was not only in the interest of Pakistan but of the whole region. He assured that Pakistan would continue its efforts for the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan. (PR)

### (5) Sopko Highlights...

security forces and said their salaries are taken by higher ranking commanders. "Ghost soldiers exist because names are either added - or never removed - from the Afghan payroll, and their salaries are pocketed by higher ranking commanders. When their commanders act in this way, how can we be surprised when 75 percent of all personnel losses to the Afghan security forces are due to soldiers simply walking away?" Sopko said. "The current Resolute Support commander, General John Nicholson, is actively trying to tackle this problem, but the number of ghost personnel may go into the tens of thousands," he added.

In his speech, he focused on corruption in security agencies and mentioned about the \$117 billion USD spent by the United States in Afghanistan over the past 15 years. "To date, over \$117 billion dollars have been appropriated for the Afghanistan reconstruction effort by the United States alone. That amount, adjusted for inflation, is more than the United States spent on the entire Marshall Plan after World War II, and does not include the actual costs of war fighting. Of that \$117 billion, over \$8 billion still remains to be spent, and the U.S. has committed to providing an additional \$5-6 billion a year through 2020," Sopko stated.

The SIGAR head meanwhile pointed out to U.S. counternarcotics mission as a failure of the United States' reconstruction effort in Afghanistan. "Perhaps one of the most glaring failures of the entire reconstruction effort has been the counternarcotics effort. The United States has spent over \$8.5 billion to combat opium production in Afghanistan. Yet 15 years later, opium production and cultivation are at near all-time highs, and eradication efforts have essentially collapsed, despite the fact that General Nicholson estimates that 60 percent of the Taliban's funding comes from the opium trade," he said. (Tolnews)

### (6) McCain ...

aggressive that his predecessor. "This is a very challenging issue. Not only Taliban, Al Qaeda is established there, Iranians are there; Russians are there. It's becoming a cockpit." He added: "It is one of the situations where we are going to have change in our approach and past practice of gauging our actions in Afghanistan on number of troops so that we can get them all out rather than achieving the goal of defeating the Taliban to stalemate. We are not going to win stalemate." (Pajhwok)

### (7) Russia ...

the Taliban," he told VOA's Afghan service in an interview last month. Russia, which had an ill-fated intervention in Afghanistan that started in 1979 and ended nearly a decade later, has been trying to exert influence

in the region again and has set up six-country peace talks next week that exclude the United States. (VoA)

### (8) Domestic ...

does not support them; if we establish a permanent bazaar, this would be very beneficial to women," said Nazia Haidari.

"The policy of women's economic empowerment, besides facilitating better working conditions, will also help them get access to resources, services and marketing to sell the products," said Nabila Misbah, the deputy minister of women's affairs for finance.

Participants at the expo said that organizing such exhibitions can help develop domestic production.

"Alongside Afghan carpets, all domestic products help to further develop the economy of the country; such exhibitions help people get acquainted with domestic products," said Ali Waseem, a visitor. (Tolnews)

### (9) US Turns ...

invited. The State Department hasn't publicly announced its position on the planned conference.

Last year, Pakistan, Afghanistan, China and the United States met to jumpstart the peace process but that effort faltered.

The official said the U.S. wants nations in the region, which have a shared interest in peace in Afghanistan, to increase pressure on the Taliban to negotiate with the Afghan government. Last week, Pakistani officials hosted seven Taliban leaders in Islamabad to press the insurgents into peace talks ahead of the Moscow meeting, two Taliban officials told the AP. Islamabad has been under international pressure to try to bring Taliban leaders, who have lived in Pakistan since their rule in Afghanistan was overthrown in the 2001 U.S. invasion, into some form of negotiations with Kabul.

In Washington on Tuesday, Afghan Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani called for the U.S. to add to the 8,400 troops currently in Afghanistan - where the Taliban have stepped up attacks and the Islamic State group also poses a threat.

He said the Afghan government remains open to peace talks but doubted the Taliban would participate unless Pakistan cracked down on "terrorist safe havens" on its soil - a long-running source of bitterness between the neighboring countries. (AP)

### (10) MoD Welcomes ...

Soviet-made Mi-35 helicopters and seven transport aircraft, after a team of Indian experts assessed the Afghan air force's needs last year.

"We have been looking at the scale of the challenge the ANSF (Afghan National Security Forces) faces, particularly in one segment, close air support," Ambassador Manpreet Vohra said this week as quoted by Reuters. (Tolnews)

### (11) Britain will ...

that Afghanistan wants to go in that is a good thing, we are looking very carefully at what the procurement process for that technological solution will be," said Jermy.

On the issue of Afghanistan-Pakistan relations, the UK ambassador said that the relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan are crucial. Referring to the recent trilateral meeting between delegations from Afghanistan, Pakistan and the UK, Jermy said that he is happy to see that trade and commercial relations between the two countries have resumed.

However, he refused to comment on what was discussed at the trilateral meeting, but said that he hopes such negotiations open a new chapter in relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan. "Well we don't comment on discussions held by the national security advisors. But what we looking for from this engagement is an ongoing process of discussion between Afghanistan and Pakistan on all the issues that are important to both sides," he added. During the visit, Jermy reaffirmed his country's longstanding cooperation with Afghanistan. (Tolnews)

### (12) Farmers ...

sold on reasonable price it will help generate jobs and eradicate militancy and poppy cultivation.

Zia Gul, representing women farmers in the meeting, hailed development took place in the fields of bees farming, poultry farming and creation of agriculture farms in Logar province. She demanded more active role of women in agriculture sector. (Pajhwok)

### (13) Ministry to ...

investigations about the imported improved seed to find out whether the seed is compatible with our land and weather, because the farmers have constantly complained about the quality of the seed," said Yasin Farahmand, an agricultural expert.

"No one asked us about what we are growing or inquired about our needs for fertilizers and improved seed," said one local farmer, Karim. (Tolnews)

### (14) Afghanistan's...

it imported 1.4 million tonnes. He said Afghanistan imported more than 838 tons of flour from Kazakhstan, 472 tons from Pakistan and some from Russia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Iran, Malaysia, Japan and Saudi Arabia in the current solar year.

In 2006, Afghanistan imported 46 percent of flour from Pakistan, compared to the current level of 34 percent. Statistics show Afghanistan produces three-fourths of its wheat requirement domestically. Only one-fourth comes from abroad.

According to some reports, more than 800 flour mills have been closed in Pakistan due to a decline in exports to Afghanistan. About 11 years back, Afghanistan imported one-fourth of flour from Kazakhstan but the figure has now shot up to 59 percent in recent years.

Limited imports from Pakistan Sayam Pasarlay, spokesman for the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), said high quality and low price of Kazakhstani flour were main reasons due to which the import of Pakistani flour declined.

He added imports of many other things from Pakistan had also been cut. Two years back, 50 percent of Afghanistan's imports were from Pakistan but now only 40 percent of goods come from the neighbouring country. Afghanistan had been trying to strengthen its economic relations with Central Asian countries over the past two years as Pakistan was creating problems for Afghan traders, Pasarlay said.

According to Food Traders Union head, Fazal Rahman, 49 kilograms of Pakistani flour cost 1,170 Afghani while 50 kilograms of Kazakhstani flour priced at 1,150 Afghani in Kabul markets. He said the price of 49 kilograms of domestic flour was 1,150 Afghani.

ACCI spokesman, Musafir Quqandi, also said Afghanistan had curtailed imports from Pakistan due to its improved commerce relations with other countries. (Pajhwok)

### (15) IFJ Seeks ...

"The IFJ condemns the assault on journalist Bashir Attayee by a police officer. It's sad that police officers who should ideally be protecting journalists and public were involved in assaulting a journalist while he was covering a public event."

The IFJ asked the Afghan government to investigate and prosecute the guilty police officer and ensure that such incidents are not repeated in future." (Pajhwok)

### (16) No Uplift ...

and Gilan districts were the most insecure.

He said no development projects had been implemented in the mentioned districts last year due to insecurity. However, he said there had been no security problems last year in Jaghori, Malistan, Nawur and Jaghatu districts and development projects were implemented there.

"Daesh or Islamic State (IS) and other militant groups give money to Taliban in return for allowing them to fight against the government," he said, but did not share any evidence in support of his claim.

"There has been complete coordination among the Afghan forces and implementation of development projects is planned in Ghazni in the new solar year," Matin said. The governor said he had shared all the problems with the president. (Pajhwok)

### (17) American ...

and other relevant institutions to jointly work for the implementation of the decree. He also thanked Ms Caroline for supporting the Afghan people during the period she has been staying in the country.

In her turn, Ms Caroline said the Afghan people are friendly and warm and that she feels comfort by staying alongside them.

The ARG Palace said Ms Caroline was actively involved in supporting the Afghan people in various sectors, specifically in handicrafts, tailor works, and supporting the needy women. (KP)

### (18) Debt Bondage ...

years back, I didn't have cooking oil, sugar or flour to feed my family. Some of my family members were sick. I didn't know what to do. I came to the orchard owner and asked him for a loan.

After a pause, he took a quick look at his past and said: "I asked for a small amount of money, but the orchard owner gave me 50,000 afghani on condition that my family and I will

work on his orchard." (Pajhwok)

### (19) Police Criticized...

Throughout Kabul, crime occurs, resident have said.

Ahmad Sana is a resident of Qala Musa area of Kabul. His car was stolen in broad daylight recently while visiting relatives.

"We ate lunch and after 10 minutes, when I came out, I saw my car was not there," Sana said. (Tolnews)

### (20) Pakistani ...

he did not say if there had been casualties.

About a month back, more than 2,000 people were displaced and four individuals injured in similar cross-border incursions from Pakistan into Lalpura district. (Pajhwok)

### (21) Etisalat ...

operator in Afghanistan, Etisalat Afghanistan managed to extend its customer base to 6 million.

"We have always put ourselves at the leading edge of product development and innovation with passion to meet and surpass our valued customers' expectations," said Dr. Salah Zergueras, Etisalat Afghanistan CEO.

Inspired by its parent company, Etisalat Afghanistan has been a pioneer in introducing innovative telecom services and has strived to support societies by programs targeting individuals and businesses. (PR)

### (22) Karzai against...

Afghanistan is turning into a conflict zone for many countries," the former president said.

Karzai stressed the need for a joint struggle of the Afghan government and the nation to put the current miseries to an end and establish peace in the country.

"I once again call on the Taliban to join the national reconciliation process and discharge their responsibility in ending the troubles in the country," he said.

"I suggest the US to seek its presence in Afghanistan in peace not in war. The US should work together with the Afghan people for establishing peace instead of sending more troops that would definitely fuel insecurity," Karzai said.

America should explain to the world and the region the escalating security situation and empowering terrorism in Afghanistan with each passing year, he said.

The US should pave the ground for real fight against terrorism and cooperation of regional countries instead of engaging them dragging them into the war, he said.

He said regional countries, particularly China, India, Russia and Iran as well as the Shanghai and SAARC organizations could play an important role in advancing the Afghan peace process.

"I suggest Pakistan to seriously review its policies on Afghanistan, it should talk to Afghanistan through a door of friendship," he added. (Pajhwok)

### (23) Afghanistan...

reached the target of 230 in 48.4 overs with the loss of three wickets. Rahmat Shah brought Afghanistan home with huge six. He was also declared man of the match for his 108 crucial runs that steered Afghanistan to victory.

PR Stirling from Ireland was awarded man of the series trophy. Afghanistan Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah and some members of parliaments were present during the award distribution event and applauded for the team's victory.

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

### (24) 4 Robbers ...

injured condition. Forogh said four others wanted suspects were at large and police were trying to capture them soon.

He said a three-member group which had kidnapped a number of traders in the past was busted a week ago. He said the group had been threatening traders on the phone, asking for money.

Two persons involved planting landmines in Kabul were arrested a week ago while planting a landmine in the 11th municipal district of Kabul city, he reported. (Pajhwok)

### (25) Suicide Attacks ...

car entered the provincial capital from Reg-i-Rawan area where militants have strong presence. (Pajhwok)

### (26) Badakhshan ...

is not aware of the crime. Previously, the victim had said that she was raped by a man known as Abduraz. But on Thursday, the security officials, the victim and victim's mother said that the crime had been carried out by the father.

"I was at my neighbor's house, when I returned I saw the girl lying on the

ground and I also saw blood, when I asked about the issue, she said that my father had done something bad to me," said the victim's mother.

Security officials in the province said that the crime was carried out by the victim's father while he was drunk and that he has confessed to the crime. "After a series of investigations over the past three days, we come to know that this brutal act had been carried out by her father; her father is now in our custody and he will be introduced to the attorney," said Mohammad Nabi, security commander at Badakhshan police headquarter. (Tolnews)

### (27) 7 Rebels Dead, ...

repulsed after the arrival of reinforcement. The resident of locality who wished not to be named said the Taliban stormed the main bazaar in the district and torched three shops. (Pajhwok)

### (28) Taliban Shadow...

served as Taliban chief judge in Ghazni and decided many cases that involved Afghan security forces, civilians and abducted passengers. (Pajhwok)

### (29) Businessman's Son ...

"The kidnappers took him [the kidnapped person] out of his home and wanted to put him in the car but he resisted. The kidnappers then tied his hands and beat him with a walkie-talkie," Zainuddin, an eyewitness told TOLnews. (Tolnews)

### (30) Displaced ...

their government nor humanitarian organizations have helped them and that they have to work as laborers to feed their families and to pay the rent. "We lost whatever we had. We were forced by Taliban to leave our houses and we could not bring anything with us. Now we work to feed our families and also to pay the rent of the house which is 5,000 AFs per month," said Hadis Khal. (Tolnews)

### (31) Top UN ...

change, highlighting its deep links to the UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. Guterres said his messages to the meeting are simple. (Xinhua)

### (32) Putin Meets ...

not want to influence events in any way, but we reserve the right to talk to representatives of all the country's political forces, just as our partners in Europe and the United States do." (Reuters)

### (33) Turkey to...

European countries over campaign ban among the Turkish diaspora for the April 16 referendum on constitutional changes.

Erdogan also said he would have "face to face" talks with U.S. President Donald Trump in May, and Syria and Fethullah Gulen, the U.S.-based Islamic preacher blamed for July 15 failed coup, were the top bilateral issues. (Xinhua)

### (34) Russian Telecom...

Office defined extremist webpages and entrust Roskomnadzor to block them. (Xinhua)

### (35) Syrian Issue...

Kurdish militia, kept the relations strained.

Russia keeps up its cooperation with Syrian Kurdish militia, in an effort to balance U.S. military infrastructure in northeast Syria, in collaboration with People's Protection Units (YPG) armed wing of the PYG, which Ankara sees as an offshoot of outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party. (Xinhua)

### (36) Turkey's Erdogan...

Turkey is seeking his extradition from the United States.

Erdogan's words come at a tense time in Turkey's ties with Germany and the Netherlands following restrictions imposed on Turkish ministers wanting to campaign there for a referendum on ushering in a presidential system. (AP)

### (37) Xi, Putin ...

global issues has become a key factor in ensuring international stability and security, he added.

Putin said that contacts between the leading parties constitute a significant part of the Russia-China comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination, specifying that a productive exchange of experiences in legislative work and party building has been established by means of dialogue and forums. (Xinhua)

### (38) CSTO Calls...

political bloc comprises Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Although some experts believe that the CSTO is an amorphous, the report says that the CSTO is a "defence umbrella" for Eurasia, which may play a key role in case of escalation of the situation in the region. (AKI)