

**(1) Security**

vote in parliament came just days after security forces abandoned the district of Sangin in the strategically important southern province of Helmand that has been heavily contested by the Taliban. The loss of Sangin, where British and American forces suffered heavy casualties trying to defeat the insurgents, highlighted the growing control exerted by the Taliban, who are fighting to restore strict Islamic rule after being driven from power by a U.S.-led campaign in 2001.

U.S. officials estimate that government forces control less than 60 percent of Afghanistan, with the rest either contested or under the outright control of militant groups. Last year, the United Nations reported 3,498 civilians were killed in the conflict and 7,920 were wounded, while at least 6,785 soldiers and police were killed in the first 10 months of the year, according to figures from U.S. authorities. (Reuters)

**(2) CEO Urges**

needed honest cooperation between the two countries. Abdullah said efforts were underway at establishing peace and Afghan forces were bravely defending their country against disruptors. Political, economic and military support of terrorist groups was threatening security of the region and the world and Afghanistan expected all regional countries would honestly help the Afghans get rid of extremism, the CEO said.

About summoning of security officials by the Wolesi Jirga, he said powers of the all three pillars were clear and the lower house had the right to summon ministers. (Pajhwok)

**(3) Over \$1 Billion**

technology in the upcoming elections, such as parliamentary elections and presidential elections in the future, major and bold steps have been taken in this regard," said Abdullah. From the total amount of money allocated for the elections in Afghanistan, so far 13 percent of the amount have been transferred to the account of UNDP in exchange of the logistics and transportation services provided by this institution, but keeping in mind that the UNDP has been one of the key supporters of elections in Afghanistan.

Afghan officials argue that the allocation of this amount of money is huge and insists that only two percent of the money should have been allocated for the logistics and transportation services.

In addition, observers and election monitoring groups have said that the lack of budget to fund the elections in Afghanistan could leave negative impacts on the transparency of elections in Afghanistan.

"First we have the election process and the preparations for the parliamentary and district council elections, it is natural these processes need financial resources, there is a dire need for the budget to implement the process and then conduct the elections," said member of Election and Transparency Watch Organization Habibullah Shinwari.

Alongside tens of other promises made by the leaders of National Unity Government (NUG), rolling out the digital national identity cards and election reforms were also the top of the promises. However NUG leaders have been under severe criticisms over their failure to deliver on their commitments.

Observers say that the NUG failure to deliver on the promises has been a key reason behind the reluctance by the donors to fund the elections in the country. (Tolonews)

**(4) Govt Asked**

increase the exports and support domestic products. "You know that trade deficit has decreased in past two years as domestic products have improved and exports have increased. We have plans on hand and this process will continue," said Qoqandi said.

(Tolonews)

**(5) 50% of**

Meanwhile, the acting head of reproductive health at the ministry of public health Zulaikha Anwari said that the quality of health services in the country is very low and also the health distribution programs are unbalanced in the country.

"However investments have been conducted on the health services, but the commitment of the health workers, quality of health is not satisfactory for us due to the lack of budget and resources," she said.

"40 percent of mothers are suffering from anemia, 95 percent of mothers are lacking vitamin D while another one percent of mothers lack of iodine, these are among the items which we need to focus on before and after births," said Attaullah Sayedzai, MoPH.

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) is also working on a five year plan for family planning and gaps between births in cooperation with the international organizations and donor countries. (Tolonews)

**(6) 23 Arrested**

were killed in the attack and at least 30 others were wounded. He had said at least twenty people having different positions and duties have been charged with negligence and an investigation is still underway.

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group claimed responsibility behind the attack but Hilal said it would be early to confirm who was behind the attack as investigations are still underway. (KP)

**(7) 18 Taliban**

have laid down arms and joined the government-backed peace and reconciliation process since mid-2010 when the government launched the initiative, according to officials, but the claim has been rejected by the armed outfit as baseless. (Xinhua)

**(8) Govt. Wants**

that the government's recent action and Rula Ghani's statement would have no impact on the position of Gen. Dostum as the vice president.

He demanded the government first of all explain constitutional powers of the president to the people.

Dostum and his bodyguards have been accused of beating and sexual harassing his political rival Ahmad Ishchi. Ishchi in Dostum's custody for 16 days and was rescued by security officials. (Pajhwok)

**(9) Waziristan**

Afghanistan respected us like one respect his parents," he said.

Abdul Khaleq, another refugee said: "It was the month of Ramazan when we migrated. We had nothing for eat and wear and run out of cash, but the residents of Khost provided us place in their homes and respected us a lot."

He added: "The Pakistani military did not honour us the people of Afghanistan

Khan Wad Khan, the tribal refugees head, while thanking the government and people of Afghanistan he said Afghans proved they were brave people.

He said the enemy should know that Pashtons could not be separated at any cost.

As many as 500,000 tribal families had to migrate after Pakistani military launched operation Zarb-i-Azab in North Waziristan. Of the migrated tribal families 30,000 came to Khost and another 10,000 sought refuge in Paktika province.

The blockage of crossing points created problems in the repatriation of tribal refugees. Although, Pakistan reopened Torkham and Spinboldak crossing points but the Gulam Khan crossing point was still closed. (Pajhwok)

**(10) Polio Campaign**

health department officials said the vaccination campaign was successful in Pachiragam, Achin, Haska Mena and Kot districts. (Pajhwok)

**(11) Afghanistan**

Noori, Mohammad Shahzad, Zahir Khan.

Ireland: William Porterfield (captain), John Anderson, Peter Chase, George Dockrell, Ed Joyce, Tim Murtagh, Andrew McBrine, Barry McCarthy, Jacob Mulder, Andrew Balbirnie, Niall O'Brien, Paul Stirling, Gary Wilson, Craig Young. (Pajhwok)

**(12) 16 Taliban**

commented about Afghan forces airstrike and infighting incident.

But, the group's spokesman Qari Yousaf Ahmadi, wrote in his social media account that nine security forces suffered casualties by Taliban in the Qari Posty locality of Nad Ali district. (Pajhwok)

**(13) Key Daesh**

special operation of Afghan intelligence forces in Mangoti area of Shebrghan city, he said.

"Bilal was also involved in kidnapping Jawzjan court head and his three colleagues and workers of the Breshna Sherkat, rural rehabilitation and development, and education department on Sar-I-Pul-Shebrghan highway early last solar year," he said.

Bilal is also accused of killing her sister and other similar cases, Ghafori said, adding security situation on the highway would get improve with the detention of notorious Daesh figure.

A number of residents of Jawzjan and Sar-I-Pul provinces traveling on the highway were happy over the detention of Daesh member.

Samiullah, a resident of Sar-I-Pul province, said people were at great trouble and could not travel on the highway between 4pm and 9am when the Daesh group was operating there.

Jawzjan police chief, Brig. Gen. Rahmatullah Turkistani, said the security of Shebrghan-Sar-I-Pul highway was improved after first vice-president Gen. Abdur Rashid Dostum last year lunched an operation there.

But he said the security of the route was worsened when the militants belonged to Akhtar Bilal reemerged in the area. Security on the highway would be restored with the detention of key Daesh number, he said. (Pajhwok)

**(14) Police Defuse**

base is located in Bagram, some 50 km north of Kabul. On March 13, a woman was killed and 20 civilians wounded when an IED struck a local telecom company's vehicle in central Kabul.

The Taliban insurgency has been on the rampage since the beginning of 2015 when the Afghan security forces assumed full responsibilities of security from the U.S. and NATO troops. (Xinhua)

**(15) Merkel's Party**

federal election. The CDU has ruled the southwestern state for the past 18 years. (Xinhua)

**(16) UN Invigorates**

yet another record last year, hitting a remarkable 1.1 degree-Celsius above the pre-industrial period, the UN specialized agency World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said. (Xinhua)

**(17) Turks in**

years to repair the damage. Germany has about 3 million people of Turkish background, including some 800,000 ethnic Kurds. About 1.41 million have Turkish citizenship and are eligible to vote.

Erdogan argues the proposed strengthening of the presidency will avert instability associated with coalition governments, at a time when Turkey is facing terrorist threats. Critics, including European leaders, say it will concentrate too much power in his hands. (Reuters)

**(18) Britain's May**

staying in the bloc. Just two days before the British leader launches the formal divorce procedure with the EU, May wants to try to stem demands in Scotland for a new independence referendum which could rip apart the world's fifth largest economy

and encourage nationalists in Northern Ireland to follow suit. (Reuters)

**(19) Sweden, Slovenia**

between the countries increased by 13 percent to 442 million euros (481 million U.S. dollars) in 2016.

Cerar told press that both countries should strive for further increasing cooperation in environment.

He highlighted that food, forestry and wood industries, health and pharmaceuticals, tourism and digitalisation were areas with biggest potential for more cooperation. (Xinhua)

**Russian Energy Minister Estimates Additional Revenue of \$26 Bln**

MOSCOW - Russian budget in 2017 may receive additional revenue of 1.5 trillion rubles (about 26 billion U.S. dollars), in case global oil prices stand at the range between 50 and 60 U.S. dollars per barrel, the Russian Energy Minister told the RT TV.

In an interview with the RT TV published on Monday, Energy Minister Alexander Novak said that the rising oil price has a positive effect not only on oil companies, but also on Russian budget.

To shore up persistently weak oil prices, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and 11 non-OPEC producers, including Russia, agreed in November 2016 to trim production by a total of 1.8 million barrels per day.

Russia has promised to cut its daily oil output by up to 300,000 barrels in a gradual manner. Novak has said that he expected Russian companies to reach the reduction target by the end of April. (Xinhua)

**Hollande Eyes Closer Trade Defense Ties with Malaysia**

KUALA LUMPUR - French President Francois Hollande will arrive here on Monday night to begin his second stop of the three-nation tour after Singapore, as the European country aims to boost closer economic ties with the region and pitch for a major defense deal to Malaysia.

Hollande, who will be the second French president to visit Malaysia after the 2003 visit of then President Jacques Chirac, will witness the signing of two agreements between the two countries, one on defense and the other on sustainable agriculture, said Malaysian Deputy Foreign Minister Reezal Merican Naina Merican during a briefing on Monday.

It is reported that Hollande, during the trip, will push for the sale of Rafale fighter jets, built by Dassault Aviation, as Malaysia is seeking new models to replace its outdated Mig-29N fighter jets.

When asked to elaborate on the defense deal, Merican said "at the moment, there is no contract, just cooperation agreement."

But he added that Hollande will pay a visit to the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) Base in Subang, where the president will be witnessing a static demonstration of a newly arrived A400m transport airplane.

Since Malaysia announced its fighter jet replacement plan several years, major defense companies including Dassault Aviation from France, BAE Systems from Britain and Saab from Sweden have proposed their products.

During the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition in Malaysia last week, Dassault Aviation signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Defense University of Malaysia, part of their lobbying efforts to push the deal. Aerial display using the Rafale F3b was also staged during the exhibition. (Xinhua)

**UK to Conduct Major Counter-Terrorism Exercise in October: PM May**

LONDON - Britain will conduct a major counter-terrorism training exercise in October across parts of Scotland and northern England, Prime Minister Theresa May said on Monday, days after a lone attacker killed four people in London.

"The UK government considers national security across the whole of the UK as a top priority," May said in a statement.

"Training operations such as this one play a significant part in making sure police forces and other response agencies are able to fully draw on the latest intelligence and resources from the UK's security forces to protect against terrorism anywhere on our soil."

Such exercises take place regularly, the emailed statement from May's office said. (Reuters)

**Saudi King Arrives in Jordan for Arab Summit**

DEAD SEA, Jordan - The Latest on the Arab Summit held in Jordan (all times local):

Saudi Arabia's King Salman has received a royal welcome in Jordan, in a lavish ceremony complete with cannon salutes, guards on camel back and a cream-colored vintage Mercedes.

Salman is in Jordan to attend the annual Arab Summit, to be held on Wednesday. Issues on the summit agenda include conflicts in Syria, Libya and Yemen.

Saudi Arabia is an important financial backer of Jordan. Jordan's King Abdullah II greeted the Saudi monarch on the tarmac at a military airport on the outskirts of the capital, Amman.

The two monarchs are expected to sign several economic and political agreements on the sidelines of the summit. Jordan faces an increasingly dire economic crisis, in part because of the spillover from conflicts in neighboring Syria and Iraq. (AP)

**UK Foreign Secretary Johnson Postpones Russia Trip Due to NATO Meeting**

LONDON - British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson has postponed a planned trip to Russia due to a NATO foreign ministers meeting being rescheduled, a spokesman for his office said on Monday.

Johnson was due to visit Moscow to discuss the differences between the two countries over Syria and Ukraine, in the first such visit by a British foreign secretary for five years following a deterioration in bilateral relations.

"We have unfortunately had to postpone the foreign secretary's visit to Russia planned this month due to rescheduling of the NATO Foreign Ministers meeting," a spokesman for Britain's Foreign Office said in a statement.

"The foreign secretary has spoken to (Russian) Foreign Minister (Sergei) Lavrov, and looks forward to reinstating his visit as soon as possible." The NATO meeting was brought forward to March 31 from early next month. (Reuters)

**Tokyo Stocks Lose Ground on Firm Yen, Uncertainty over U.S. Economy Policy**

TOKYO - Tokyo stocks fell Monday morning as a comparatively firm yen sent exporters lower, while uncertainty over U.S. President Donald Trump's economic policies pressured financial issues.

The 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average lost 291.74 points, or 1.51 percent, from Friday to 18,970.79. The broader Topix index of

all First Section issues on the Tokyo Stock Exchange, meanwhile, dropped 21.08 points, or 1.37 percent, to 1,522.84. Notable issues that lost ground by the morning break comprised insurance, securities and real estate-linked issues. (Xinhua)

**Italian President, PM to Visit Russia in coming Weeks**

MOSCOW - Italian President Sergio Mattarella and Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni plan to visit Russia in the coming weeks, Italian Foreign Minister Angelino Alfano said Monday.

"Our bilateral political relations are at a very high level today. In the next few weeks, our president and prime minister will visit Moscow," Alfano was quoted by RIA Novosti news agency as saying at a meeting with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Arkady Dvorkovich in Moscow.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed that Russia is preparing for the meeting between President Vladimir Putin and Mattarella on April 11, according to a TASS report. Peskov did not disclose possible date of Gentiloni's visit.

Before the meeting with Dvorkovich, Alfano told his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov that Russia remains a reliable partner of Italy despite difficulties.

Italy was Russia's second largest gas buyer in 2016 after Turkey, according to Russia's gas giant Gazprom. The two countries also cooperate closely in civil aviation. (Xinhua)

**Israel's Netanyahu Pledges his Commitment to Achieving Peace with Palestinians**

ERUSALEM - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged on Monday his commitment to work with U.S. President Donald Trump to achieve peace with the Palestinians.

"Israel is committed to working with President Trump to advance peace with the Palestinians and with all our neighbors," Netanyahu said in a video address to the annual policy conference in Washington of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the largest Israeli lobby group in the U.S. Referring to the Islamic State, he said that the "common dangers faced by Israel and many of our Arab neighbors now offer a rare opportunity to build bridges towards a better future."

Netanyahu hailed Trump for his "strong support" for Israel, citing their "exceptionally warm meeting" last month in Washington and the continuing billion-dollar U.S. military support.

Last week, Israeli and U.S. teams, headed by President Donald Trump's special representative Jason Greenblatt, held a round of talks in the White House in an effort to reach an agreement over curbing the Israeli construction in the settlements in the West Bank.

The talks were concluded on Thursday without a deal. However, on Sunday Netanyahu said the talks continue and he hopes "they will conclude quickly."

Netanyahu has been under heavy pressures by his right-wing coalition partners to keep the expansion of the settlements.

The Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank are seen by most of the international community as an obstacle to peace as they are constructed on lands that Israel occupied in the 1967 Mideast War, where the Palestinians wish to build their future state.

The last round of talks between Israel and the Palestinians reached an impasse in April 2014, mainly due to the expansion of the settlements. (Xinhua)