

(1) Afghanistan ...

development projects, irrigation and also affordable housing."

The Afghan finance minister and other government officials have been in Hainan Island of Chin for Boao Forum for Asia. The Chinese Development Bank (CDB), the lead financial body for OBOR, invests 890\$ billion into over 900 projects. China has also announced a 40\$ billion Silk Road Fund to invest in OBOR. This largesse would be spread over 60 countries - including Afghanistan.

"Last year, our GDP growth was close to 2 percent, this year, we anticipate it close to 3 percent," Hakimi said.

The International Monetary Fund projected a 2 percent real GDP growth for Afghanistan in 2016 and 3.4 percent for this year.

Since the withdrawal of NATO combat forces from Afghanistan at the end of 2014, Afghanistan has been wracked by violence as the Taliban continued to press their offensive, targeting mainly government forces and the Afghan military but with scores of civilians getting caught up in the deadly violence. (Pajhwok)

(2) Atmar, ...

situation in Afghanistan and the region.

They also talked about the war on terrorism, peace and bilateral political and security cooperation.

They exchanged views on the mentioned issues and agreed that technical teams of the two countries would meet face to face, the statement said.

Such discussions between the Afghan and US national security advisors would continue in future, it added. (Pajhwok)

(3) Above 1000 ...

of patients were examined in Kandahar City, the provincial capital, and districts during the past one year.

The respiratory disease has many types, but pulmonary tuberculosis (TB) was mostly detected in patients in Kandahar, he explained.

Though there is exclusively no hospital for TB patients in Kandahar, yet about 42 health centres are operational in Kandahar City and districts diagnosing and treating the disease.

The health centres provide free treatment with the help of World Health Organisation (WHO).

"Unfortunately, Afghanistan is among the 22 countries where TB is endemic."

He said there were 2,023 centres for diagnosis and treatment of TB across the country and doctors had been able to treat 88 percent of the cases.

TB is an infectious, chronic, and deadly bacterial disease characterized by the growth of nodules (tubercles) in the tissues, especially the lungs.

The symptoms of the TB include coughing that lasts three or more weeks, coughing up blood, chest pain, or pain with breathing or coughing, unintentional weight loss, fatigue, fever, night sweats, and chills.

A resident of Kandahar, Taj Mohammad, a TB patient, said he visited the Mirwais Hospital time to time to complete the course. He was provided treatment free of cost.

Dr. Azizi said they provided a special dose to TB patients at public health centres given to them by the WHO.

WHO in-charge for Kandahar, Dr. Selab, said the organization was trying to prevent the disease and treat TB patients all over Afghanistan.

He said 10.8 million people were infected with TB in the globe; about 1.8 million people had so far died of the disease. (Pajhwok)

(4) E-voting ...

Dawlati, a commissioner of the Independent Election

Commission (IEC).

Currently twenty countries, including the United States and some European countries, are using e-voting systems.

The technology which is used in an e-voting system helps to announce the results of elections within only three hours after polls have closed.

Fraud and vote rigging during the elections have been among the major concerns of the Afghan people in the past and allegations of fraud during the 2014 presidential elections severely eroded trust in the election process for Afghans.

After the establishment of the National Unity Government (NUG), under President Ashraf Ghani and CEO Abdullah Abdullah, the two leaders pledged to take firm steps to reform the election system in Afghanistan.

Electoral experts however believe that with the implementation of an e-voting system in the country, the election management bodies will be able to announce the election results within three days of the nation having voted. (Tolonews)

(5) MoD Calls...

Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and Chechen (movements), and third are those groups that belong to Pakistan like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and fourth are our own armed oppositions like Taliban and Haqqani network," Waziri said.

"Friendship with Pakistan is in our interest but if Pakistan accepts," Waziri added.

This comes after the Afghan National Unity Government (NUG) in January asked the then incoming U.S government to increase pressure on Pakistan in order to get them to stop backing insurgent groups that continue to wage war against Afghans.

Relations between Kabul and Islamabad have been tense in recent years, with both countries accusing each other of not doing enough to tackle Pakistani and Afghan Taliban militants.

Afghanistan has accused Pakistan of turning a blind eye to Afghan Taliban commanders on its soil and even of supporting the militant group, something Islamabad denies.

Addressing journalists on Tuesday about Helmand province Waziri rejected rumors of Sangin's collapse and said the army had not withdrawn from the city. He said only a unit stationed at the main bazaar had been relocated.

"Only the unit was relocated in order to prevent civilian casualties," Waziri said.

Talking about security forces' operational achievements, Waziri said that army forces conducted 16 operations countrywide in the past week.

"33 Daesh militants were killed in Nangarhar in the past week," Waziri added.

According to him, seven successful night raids have also been carried out around the country in this time.

Security institutions have said that the Afghan security forces are planning to launch their spring offensive against the insurgents in the near future. (Tolonews)

(6) EU-Afghanistan ...

Forward.

The need to work together toward an effective cooperation on the basis of solidarity and information sharing was reaffirmed by both sides.

The parties agreed on the need to work together on information awareness raising campaigns, to reframe the discourse, to counter the narrative of people smugglers and traffickers and to direct prospective migrants to official sources of information, e.g. websites, providing accurate and updated information on EU asylum, migration and return policy as well as

development cooperation projects in Afghanistan.

The fight against smuggling and trafficking in human beings was another subject of discussion. The EU informed about the on-going evaluation of the call for proposals to strengthen law enforcement cooperation to better address migrant smuggling through the joint work of law enforcement authorities in EU Member States on the one hand and law enforcement authorities in Afghanistan on the other.

During the meeting, the parties also reiterated the common aim to ensure a safe, manageable, predictable and dignified return process of the Afghan irregular migrants in the European Union, who have no right to stay in the EU. Reintegration assistance, with a focus on the situation of returnees and programmes for reintegration in communities, was an important subject of discussion, during which notably the situation of vulnerable groups has been addressed.

The next meeting of the Joint Working Group is to take place in the second half of 2017 in Kabul. (Pajhwok)

(7) Terrorism, ...

the date change, there were some scheduling issues.

The Secretary General discussed this with US Secretary Tillerson in Washington last week and all 28 allies agreed to move the date forward to ensure that all of them could attend. Source added.

This would be an important meeting as it's the last ministerial before the meeting of NATO leaders on May 25. (Pajhwok)

(8) Security ...

liquid opium, 1,090 kg of morphine and more than 15,170 kg of ammonium chloride," it said in a statement posted in its official Facebook account.

Six drug traffickers and terrorists were also killed during the raid which took place on March 19 in the province, 555 km south of Afghan capital of Kabul, according to the statement.

The destroyed drugs and chemicals have been estimated at over 3.9 million U.S. dollars, the statement said, adding that more than 300 pieces of equipments that had been used for processing heroin and other drugs were also destroyed.

Helmand, notorious for poppy growing, is also a known Taliban stronghold.

The destruction of the drugs was a heavy blow for insurgents and anti-government militants as they have been using profits from the illegal drugs to fund insurgency, the statement added.

Much of the world's opium poppy is cultivated in the militancy-hit country, particularly in western and southern parts of the country, where government security forces have little presence. (Xinhua)

(9) Afghanistan ...

Ahmadzai said a proper system is place for the implementation of reforms in the ministry.

He also added that well coordination has been established between the donors and the procurement department of the ministry of defense for the proper allocation and spending of the funds.

Ahmadzai said the government has also started procurement of the locally produced food products for the armed personnel as efforts are underway to reduce the dependency of the armed forces to materials exported from the outside. (KP)

(10) Germany Arrests ...

the continuing investigation. The suspect is believed to have joined the Taliban insurgency in 2002 and entered a unit commanded by his father,

the statement said. In 2004, he took over the unit and received weapons including an artillery piece, a rocket and several guns.

He was involved in several attacks on foreign and Afghan soldiers, including one in which a convoy of seven or eight military vehicles was attacked with at least two bombs and rocket-propelled grenades, according to the prosecutors.

"In this attack, at least 16 American and Afghan soldiers were killed," said the statement. A spokeswoman said the attack was in Kunar province bordering Pakistan but it was unclear in which year it took place.

He is also suspected of trying to kill soldiers in another attack in which it was not clear whether the detonated bombs hit their targets, the statement said.

The suspect left his unit in 2008 shortly before getting married and was threatened with death, the statement said. In 2009, he fled to Pakistan and arrived in Germany in July 2011 via the so-called Balkan route for migrants. (Reuters)

(11) Saudi Business ...

pledges. Some global companies are also interested in investments in Afghanistan," Walid bin Talal was quoted as saying.

The president hailed the likely investment from the royal family in Afghanistan and said Muslim countries should cooperate on poverty eradication. Muslims states should not become safe havens for terrorist, he added.

Ghani believed democracy was striking root in the country and at the end of his term, democratic institutions would be emerge stronger and power would be transferred smoothly to a new civilian administration.

The president conferred the Ghazi Amanullah Khan Medal on the visiting dignitary for his efforts to strengthen trade and diplomatic relation between the two brotherly countries. The Saudi guest hailed Ghani's hospitality and leadership. (Pajhwok)

(12) WB to...

preparation of strategic plans for urban development, MRRD officials say. 20\$ million of the assistance will be presented to government to meet initial needs for studies.

Nilofar Langar, spokesperson for the ministry, says: "In line with the programme, we will develop strategic plans for cities and to know about economic needs of each city..."

At a meeting with Minister Naderi, World Bank operation head Ms Anna WoelInvstein has promised playing a greater role in Afghanistan's urban development sector. (Pajhwok)

(13) Govt ...

products and services," he said.

Afghanistan Industries Association meanwhile said currently Afghanistan is self-sufficient in 19 manufacturing sectors and the list will be submitted to the president in the near future.

"We assure our people and government that industries status is good and in 19 manufacturing sectors we are self-sufficient," said Sakhi Ahmad Paiman, head of Afghanistan Industries Association.

"Special attention is paid to domestic products and in 20 percent of domestic products we are self-reliant or about to become self-reliant," said Musafir Qoqandi, the spokesman for the ministry of commerce and industries.

Currently more than 2,000 big and small factories are active in the country and according to the industries association; these factories have had good achievements in producing shoes, beverages, food, carpets, dishes, plastic tools and printing. (Tolonews)

(14) Migration,...

the natural border, we had differences, but this difference between the EU and Hungary will be resolved by the beginning of this summer," Pinter said, adding that a joint working group between Hungary and the experts of the EU would be set up to overcome the matter. (Xinhua)

(15) Trump to...

the drilling and mining industries, a promise he made repeatedly during the presidential campaign. But energy analysts and executives have questioned whether the moves will have a big effect on their industries, and environmentalists have called them reckless. (Reuters)

(16) Turkey's Election...

noted at a meeting in Ankara. Under the present election threshold, in general elections a political party must receive 10 percent of the votes nationwide for any of its candidates to win a seat in parliament.

Ruling out any possibility of early elections after the referendum in the event the constitutional amendments are approved by the public, Yildirim said "The election will be held on Nov. 2019 ,3, as is planned."

The minister stressed that the constitutional amendment necessitated drastic changes to current laws, especially in the Election Law and Political Parties Act.

"We will make effort to regulate the legal infrastructure of Turkish law until 2019," he said. (Xinhua)

(17) UN Agency ...

recommendations aimed at putting in place a sustainable refugee response in Greece, including improving reception conditions as a top priority," the deputy UN spokesman, Farhan Haq, said at a daily news briefing here. "Steps need to be taken to provide more accommodation opportunities in urban areas and to address the specific needs of unaccompanied and separated children," Haq said. The situation in Greece can be managed, said Filippo Grandi, the UN high commissioner for refugees, but it would require moving from the current emergency response to a sustainable system.

Grandi called on European Union governments to provide strong support for Greece, saying that "More solidarity and responsibility sharing among across Europe is needed."

The UN high commissioner also renewed his call to the Greek government for clear coordination structures, with well-defined roles and responsibilities for all actors. (Xinhua)

(18) Iran Says ...

time a foreign power had used an Iranian base since World War Two.

The deployment ended abruptly however after some Iranian lawmakers called the move a breach of Iran's constitution which forbids foreign military bases, and the Iranian defence minister chided Moscow for publicising the arrangement. (Reuters)

18 Taliban Join Peace Process in Nangarhar

JALALABAD - Eighteen Taliban fighters including a notorious commander has surrendered their weapons and joined the government initiated peace process in eastern Nangarhar province, the governor house said on Tuesday.

The Taliban fighters including commander Bakhto Khan who had been involved in destructive and terror activities in Batikot and Ghanikhelo districts against government joined the reconciliation process at the efforts of intelligence officials, said a statement from the provincial government. Raz Mohammad, A former Tali-

ban fighter who joined the peace process, said Pakistan brainwashed the Taliban to carry out destructive activities by the name of Jihad and provided heavy and light weapons for insurgent activities.

He said the Taliban were directed to destroy roads, culverts, schools and bomb public places. Raz claimed they were recently ordered to bomb the Daronta tunnel and its electricity installations. He said in the first stage they assumed they were doing Jihad but latter realized that the insurgency was nothing to do with Jihad and they were simply destroying their own country and killing their fellow citizens.

The surrendered Taliban promised they would protect their country and would stand by the Afghan National Army and National Police and fight against Afghanistan's enemies. Taliban have not commented about the development. (Pajhwok)

Resistance as Anti-Poppy Drive Proceeds in Nangarhar

JALALABAD - The counter-narcotics department head for eastern Nangarhar province says the ongoing anti-poppy campaign in the province has been struggling with security challenges.

The department has launched the campaign to eradicate poppy grown on 14,000 hectares of land in 14 districts.

However, farmers say the government should have conducted the campaign during the cultivation of the illicit crop. They say the crop is about to be harvested and resistance to the campaign is inevitable.

Counter-narcotics head Idrees Sapai told Pajhwok Afghan News during an exclusive interview that 14,000 hectares of land has been cultivated with the crop in 14 districts.

He said the campaign was planned for 11 districts and only 1,500 hectares of land would be cleared of the plant.

The campaign was currently ongoing in Rodat and Bati Kot districts and about 150 acres of land has been so far cleared of the crop, he added.

Sapai said security challenges existed in the way of the drive, as insurgents resisted the campaign in Bati Kot district on Sunday.

On the other hand, local farmers criticized the timing of the campaign as the crop was near to be harvested. They said the government should have launched the drive during the crop's cultivation.

They warned if the campaigners arrived in their areas for eradicating the poppy, they won't allow them to do so.

A resident of Mamli area of Khogyani district, Khan Akbar, said he had cultivated the crop on his land because he incurred losses in other crops and the government didn't help him.

Meanwhile, a resident of Ghanikhel district, wishing anonymity, expressed concern at the campaign and asked the government why it did not conduct the campaign during the crop's cultivation.

Tribal elder Haji Gul Hussain said if security forces went to remote areas as part of the poppy eradication campaign, they might face resistance.

He said people had cultivated the crop due to extreme poverty and the government had also not assisted them.

Nangarhar deputy provincial council head, Dr. Lal Mohammad Durani, dubbed the complaints of people as legitimate and looked at the provincial administration's anti-poppy campaign with doubts.

He told Pajhwok said the campaign was just aimed at extorting money from poppy growers.

Another provincial council member, Ashab Wali Muslim, said the government lacked the ability to conduct the poppy eradication campaign successfully.

He said insurgents who earned money through the crop were engaged in clashes with government forces.

"Government forces abruptly leave a poppy field when they are fired at a few bullets by insurgents."

However, Idrees Sapai rejected the doubts about the campaign and said the drive would be conducted in all parts of the specified 11 districts. (Pajhwok)