

(1) Threat from ...

Afghanistan and Pakistan," Dunford said.

He said the current US mission in Afghanistan was designed to further enable Afghan security forces and also to demonstrate America's enduring commitment to the region.

"The good news is President Ghani's administration is fully supportive of a US and NATO presence, and is an opportunity to strengthen the long-term strategic partnership that we're going to need to achieve our common objectives," Dunford said.

He said the US relationship with the incumbent Afghan government had made it much easier for Washington to move forward and for the two countries to identify common objectives.

He said last summer highlighted the Afghan forces continued to need American support to build their capacity specifically in areas like logistics, special operations, aviation capability. "There is no question about it, there is much, much work to be done in those areas," he felt.

"That's really the focus of what's called, Resolute Support, which is the NATO mission that is ongoing right now, which is focused on training, advising, assisting and developing Afghan capability in those specific, functional areas," Dunford said.

According to the American General, the commitment of the international community to the Afghans' future is also important to success, and in particular, the funding for the Afghan Security Forces.

On the upcoming NATO conference in Poland this summer, he said one of the key issues to be addressed was continuing international support and the funding to push the horizon out for the Afghan forces past 2020. "This is very important." (Pajhwok)

(2) Stanikzai Links ...

should ensure security of our borders to prevent an influx of foreign militants. We have the responsibility to end this war so that the world will know this war does not belong to the people of Afghanistan," he added. (Tolonews)

(3) SCO, UN...

that the increasing terrorism threat requires taking timely joint measures to ensure and maintain stability in the region and in the world. The parties said that the current legal framework between the SCO RATS and UNODC makes it possible to actively cooperate in security sphere.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was established in 2001. It is a permanent intergovernmental international organization. The SCO members are China, Kazakhstan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Afghanistan, Iran, Mongolia and Belarus are the SCO observer-countries, while Turkey, Sri Lanka, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia and Nepal are dialogue partners. (INTI)

(4) Many Provinces...

suspended their aid to fund the peace process which could not be revived.

"No positive step has so far taken for peace. Every time when voice for peace is raised in the country, it has easily become mute after a few blasts and suicide attacks," said the former governor of Parwan province.

Taqwa asked leaders of the unity government to shun sloganeering and take practical steps for peace in order the country could be rescued from its current problems.

He said the fragile security, devaluing currency and the withdrawal of foreign troops forced the youth into migration.

Taqwa said the unity government's solo aim was distribute government seats instead of improving governance. (Pajhwok)

(5) Juvenile Inmates ...

called on fellow teenagers not to be deceived by the Taliban.

These teenagers, interviewed by TOLONews journalist Shakeela Ahbrimkhal, urged their peers not to be deceived by the Taliban and other insurgent groups.

"Most of them who were arrested in connection with terrorist attacks have been given the wrong religious education and therefore, here, religious scholars came and teach them religious teachings

every day - in the morning and evening," said Mir Fayazuddin Amini, head of the juvenile detention center.

Currently the center holds 180 teenagers who are imprisoned for various crimes ranging from illegal mining, forging documents, cooperating with the Taliban, planning suicide attacks and other terrorist activities.

Of these inmates, 15 are in for having been involved in terrorist attacks.

"My uncle was in the Taliban and one night I took him clothes and stayed the night with him and that night security forces attacked and killed my uncle and detained me," said one of the boys.

"After this I will study and I ask others also not to be deceived by the Taliban," said another boy.

"When I am freed I will work and I will never commit a crime against the law and I will never forge ID cards again," said another teenager. The detention center not only provides the boys with a good religious education but they are also trained to make crafts. Currently the boys are learning to make beaded decorations.

Among the detainees is one teenager who was found guilty of detonating an IED against a Police Ranger vehicle. The boy has, in his craft lesson, now created model Ranger out of beads. (Tolonews)

(6) Elders Ask ...

During a gathering in Lashkargah, the provincial capital, tribal elder Amir Mohammad Akhunzada spoke on behalf of other elders, describing security in Helmand as "bad," urging people to control the situation on their own.

"Some figures are creating insecurity for their personal interests. Our traders are not willing to invest here and the war has reached Lashkargah's outskirts," he said, accusing foreign networks and some local officials of dividing tribes in Helmand.

"If the government doesn't take urgent steps for security, people would take the initiative themselves," he said.

Another tribal elder Hafizullah Khan, who saw robbers and drug mafia behind insecurity in Helmand, said government's negligence had compelled to join militants.

"It is responsibility of tribal elders to ask the government to stop such a negligent behaviour," a member of the provincial council, Bashir Ahmad Shakir, said, urging people to play role in maintaining security and supporting security forces.

Other tribal elders insisted leaders of the country should appoint able officials in Helmand to reduce security issues.

Afghan Local Police (ALP) commander in Sangin, Ghulam Jan, said the security situation in Helmand could be improved if police were given their privileges and support in-time.

The governor's spokesman, Omar Zhwak, acknowledged security issues in the province, saying the government was trying to eliminate the problems.

"The remarks of tribal elders are their personal views and I don't want to comment about that," he said.

Helmand is one of the restive provinces of the country and currently Taliban fighters are in control of four districts of Helmand. (Pajhwok)

(7) Over 25,000

foreign countries, based on which nearly 15,000 laborers will be sent to foreign countries to work. Nazir Ahmad Hanafi, a lawmaker said. Ghulam Hussian Nasiri, another lawmaker said. Obiadullah Ramin, another MP said. (Tolonews)

(8) 120 Paktia ...

real duty of maintaining security," he promised. Sherzad said 120 policemen were currently acting as security guards of public representatives from the province.

Meanwhile, civil society activist Siddique Himmat alleged the policemen were assigned to VIPs by regional commanders on a quid pro quo basis. "Commanders do this to muster up the support of legislators for retaining their jobs." (Pajhwok)

(9) Eight-Year...

tribal elders decided to give the eight-year-old sister of the girl to the man. But the girl's parents did

not agree with the decision," said Ghulam Rasoul Qane Baghlan, a child protection network officer.

Baghlan Women's Affairs Department has confirmed the incident and said the child has not yet been returned to her family.

"One month ago the girl was given to a man by tribal elders when her sister escaped with another man. The girl has not been returned to her family and we are trying to solve the issue," said Khadija Yaqaen Baghlan, Women's Affairs director.

Meanwhile, a number of religious scholars and tribal elders said the action was against all Islamic principles and called on government to resolve the issue.

"Such action doesn't have any place in Islam and this action is against Allah and religious orders and those who are party to this action have committed the biggest oppression," said Mohammad Omar Haqqani, a religious scholar.

"We will follow the issue closely and we want the government to address the matter as soon as possible and those who are involved in the matter must be prosecuted," said Abdul Wahid Haqjo Nahrin, the People's Council head.

Forced marriages, child marriages and Baad are challenges faced by many women in the country.

Human rights organizations findings show that one of the main reasons behind the rising suicide rate among girls and women in the country is forced marriages.

Baad (also known as baadi) is illegal in Afghanistan as it is the taking of girls as payment in lieu of misdeeds of family members. (Tolonews)

(10) 100 Militants....

Samad's fighters in mountainous areas of the restive district.

The militants and security forces have fought several battles over the past few months in Shindand district, located 125 kilometers north of Herat City. (Pajhwok)

(11) Awareness Drive....

he said, fearing the trend would create new challenges if the government did not control the situation.

International Organization for Migration (IOM), in cooperation with other institutes in Bamyan, launched the awareness campaign to inform people about the risks of illegal immigration.

The campaign was supported by around 100 local ulema and prayer leaders, who received training on discouraging people from illegal immigration.

One of the religious scholars, Maulvi Hamid Hussaini, believed such campaigns were ineffective in address the issue in the absence of concrete measures to ameliorate people's lot.

He said the current uncertain situation in the country had forced people to go for immigration. "There are no job opportunities in the country; people have no option but to face risks while trying to achieve their goals," he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(12) Conditions....

refugees have lost everything in their quest to get to Europe and instead of being hopeful, their future now looks bleak.

Shamal reports that Macedonia border troops refuse to allow refugees to enter their country. (Tolonews)

(13) Nangarhar Marks

residents of Nangarhar all participated in the ceremony.

Haji Hafiz, a representative of the Foreign Ministry in Nangarhar, said that Germany should establish a consulate in the eastern parts of Afghanistan in order to further strengthen ties between the two countries.

"We are asking Germany that if possible establish a consulate in the eastern parts of Afghanistan for further improvement of relations but we also thank Germany for their support in recent years," Hafiz said.

Officials from Nangarhar's Ministry of Information and Culture also praised Germany for the support rendered to Afghanistan in the past 100 years.

Ershad Reghand, a civil society activist in Nangarhar, said that "Germany has helped Afghanistan a lot in the cultural section and we praise them for their support but we are asking them to help our youth in different sections".

Afghanistan and Germany's relationship begun 100 years ago dur-

ing Habibullah Khan's kingdom. (Tolonews)

(14) Alawuddin Girls..

just a telecoms operator; we have always strived to be a partner in the reconstruction of Afghanistan."

"We hope that through our work with Alawuddin we can inspire other industry leaders to take part in the education of Afghanistan's youth, enabling Afghans to participate in their country's development," added Khoja.

Also in attendance was Afghanistan's General Director of Orphanages, Alhaj Sayed Abdullah Hashimi, who said: "We are grateful to Roshan for supporting the orphans, who are one of the most disadvantaged populations in the country, by providing them computers and access to technology. We hope this initiative inspires others in the telecom industry to launch similar social programs and support the future generation of Afghanistan."

The opening of this facility comes shortly after the inauguration of another computer lab at the ASCHI-ANA Foundation, one of Afghanistan's oldest charity organizations, which provides education to children living on the street. (Tolonews)

(15) 1,000 Rally

blocked the road. People including women and children are stranded inside vehicles."

While asking for the reopening of the highway, he said protest was a democratic right of all people, who should not cause problems for the general public.

Police spokesman Fahim Amiri confirmed the highway had been closed for several hours, creating trouble for passengers. But the rally had been peaceful, he acknowledged. (Pajhwok)

(16) Nangarhar ...

marking the 100th anniversary of Afghan-German friendship, Nangarhar information and culture director Orang Samim said Germany had carried out many projects in Afghanistan, particularly in Nangarhar.

"Afghanistan signed the treaty of friendship with Germany in 1915 and since then, Germany has completed many infrastructure development projects for the Afghans," he said.

He said Germany had constructed hundreds of buildings for education institutes in Nangarhar and urged the friendly country to assist Nangarhar in rehabilitating heritage sites.

The photo exhibition would continue for the next three weeks. (Pajhwok)

(17) Ex-Taliban ...

district of Herat province.

Meanwhile, the Taliban group reject intensifying tensions among the rival groups but the officials in western and southern parts of the country are saying they are closely monitoring the growing tensions among the group which sparked following the confirmation of Mullah Omar's death. (KP)

(18) Faryab....

complained themunicipality was also faced with a staff shortage and lack of financial and technical support. The challenges needed to be met to improve the department's performance, he believed.

Meanwhile, Governor Sadat instructed the relevant departments, including the security personnel, to cooperate with the municipality in the implementation of its programmes.

The municipality would sign a memorandum of understanding with the Adana city of Turkey, he said. Under the MoU, Turkey will cooperate with the Maimana municipality in preparing professional, technical and educational plans.

At its maiden meeting, the municipality's advisory council vowed to launch cleanliness campaigns, remove all barriers on roads and shift butchers to slaughterhouses.

The participants pledged illegal shops, ironsmiths, carpenters, cement, brick and gas sellers would be relocated to a proper place to keep the provincial capital in proper shape.

The chairman of the council, Mohammad Asif Paiman, said owners would be asked to paint shops and apartments. Those refusing to do the needful will be prosecuted. (Pajhwok)

(19) Fight with

casualties during the battle.

The Taliban have in recent months stepped up their attacks in Uruzgan and neighboring provinces in the south, including the Taliban heartland of Helmand where much of the world's illicit opium is produced. The crop, along with other contraband, funds the insurgency, now in its fifteenth year.

In Zabul province on Wednesday, two children were killed in an explosion behind the police headquarters in Qalat, the provincial capital, said AsadullahKakar, a member of the provincial council. Another civilian was wounded in the blast, he said, adding that the target was unclear and the incident is under investigation.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack. Roadside bombs, planted by insurgents, are a major threat for both Afghan security forces and civilians across the country.

In northern Balkh province, fighting Wednesday killed two police officers and eight militants in CharharBolak district, on the western border of the province, said Gen. Abdul RazaqQaderi, Balkh's deputy police chief.

"Around 100 Taliban insurgents, including foreign fighters, attacked police check points," Qaderi said. "The Taliban were pushed back after reinforcements arrived and right now the battle is going on in neighboring Jawzjan province."

The Taliban did not immediately comment on the Balkh report. (AP)

(20) Taliban

about three months ago.

Noorzai was killed one and a half month ago. Ahmadi appreciated Taliban's action. "Murderers and criminals punished by anyone is appreciable. Punishing them can deter criminal activities," he argued.

Meanwhile, Haji Mohammad Nader Noorzai, cousin of the victim, asked the government to arrest the criminals and punish them.

About a month ago, the Taliban arrested three people in connection with a kidnapping case. One of the captives was later killed and two others are still in their custody. (Pajhwok)

(21) Policemen ...

launched earlier which was led by acting governor Ata Mohammad Noor.

Noor said the operations were launched as the militant groups were looking to establish regional operations base in the remote areas of Balkh province. (KP)

(22) Joint Initiative...

area as well as attracting tourists from the other provinces.

With funding from the Global Environment Facility's Small Grants Programme, and implementation on the ground by the Liaison Office, UNDP brought together local people and community elders to make a safe space where the ibex could live and breed in peace, according to the UN organization.

Villagers fenced off 20,000 square meters for the protected area and convened meetings where they agreed to a ban on hunting. They even selected a local man, Sakhi Dad, to guard the ibex enclosure.

"Before this, I loaded trucks with heavy stones for a living," explains Sakhi. "That job was really difficult and quite risky. But now, I enjoy working as a guard for the ibex project. It's safe and I earn enough to support my family."

The plan is that as the ibex population recovers, they will become a tourist attraction for families from nearby Kabul, creating new jobs and sources of income for local people, who are already starting to view the animals differently.

"They look so innocent, grazing in the fenced off area - like the children in our family," says Daud. "Now I feel bad that I used to hunt them. As their numbers grow, this area will be beautiful again." (KP)

(23) Provincial...

blamed the attack on Taliban militants, saying that Taliban fighters usually target government employees to terrorize citizens. Taliban militants have yet to make comment.

In a similar incident on Tuesday, unknown armed men gunned down a district educational officer in the northern Balkh province. (Xinhua)

(24) UN Calls....

day to appeal for additional and

more diverse legal avenues for admission of Syrian refugees into different countries and communities in the coming three years," said the High Commissioner.

Grandi added that offering legal alternative avenues for the admission of Syrian refugees must go together with investing in helping the countries in the region. (Xinhua)

(25) Head of ...

prevented from flying into Tripoli by a rival Islamist-backed government based in the capital. A third government is based in the east of the vast oil-rich country. Libya has been dominated by an array of militias since the 2011 uprising that toppled and killed longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi. (AP)

(26) Pro-Gov't...

to the source. Witnesses confirmed to Xinhua that several military checkpoints were established and the UAE armored vehicles were deployed across the main streets leading to Mansourah.

Scores of gunmen linked to the al-Qaida and the Yemen-based affiliate of the Islamic State group took control over key government compounds after defeating the Shiite Houthis forces last year.

The port city of Aden, Yemen's temporary capital, has been witnessing a state of chaos and lawlessness during the past months resulted in the assassination of Aden's former governor, several high-ranking security officers and judges. (Xinhua)

(27) Assad ...

along with several Islamic tombs. It also publicly executed soldiers and individuals accused of working for the government.

Three weeks ago, the Syrian army backed by Russia and Shiite fighters of the Lebanese Hezbollah group started a wide-scale operation for the recapture of the city, succeeding to retake it recently. (Xinhua)

(28) Iran Missile

point in putting the issue of Iran's ballistic missiles on UNSC agenda as the move would have no basis.

Ulyanov remarks come as the United States and some of its European allies are seeking a meeting at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on Iran's recent missile tests, which they claim were carried out "in defiance of" the UNSC resolution.

In a letter to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Spain's UN Ambassador Roman Oyarzun-Marchesi, the US, Britain, France, and Germany reportedly called for discussions on an "appropriate response" by the UNSC to Iran's missile tests. (PressTV)

(29) US, Three ...

OyarzunMarchesi for discussions on an "appropriate response" by the UNSC to Iran's missile tests.

The four countries claimed that the missiles used in Iran's recent tests were "inherently capable of delivering nuclear weapons" and were "inconsistent with" and "in defiance of" UNSC Resolution 2231 (2015), adopted last July to endorse a nuclear agreement between Iran and the P5+1 group of countries. Spain has been assigned the task of coordinating UNSC discussions on Resolution 2231. (PressTV)

(30) Over 31,000

The statement reiterated that the refugees are in need of immediate support, and warned that if nothing is done, the situation could have tragic consequences.

WFP made an urgent appeal for 2.5 million U.S. dollars to provide support to Malian refugees who need it to survive.

Since 2012, Mali which shares a long border with Burkina Faso has been at war with secessionist rebels, especially in the North, forcing thousands of Malians to flee to Burkina Faso. Since that period, WFP and UNHCR have been working in collaboration with Burkina Faso government and non-governmental organizations to assist the refugees fleeing conflict in northern Mali. (Xinhua)

(31) Yandong ...

two countries increase the complementarity of their innovation strategies and facilitate the incorporation of Israel's experience as a "startup nation" and its technologies into China's strategy of pursuing innovation-based growth. (Xinhua)