

(1) Ghani Urges ...

government was determined to shorten the distance between the Presidential Palace and mosque.

"I ordered the ministries of Hajj and Religious Affairs and Finance to male permanent 3,700 employees who had been hired short term basis and award another 700 short-term contracts so that ulema feel themselves part of the government," the president said.

He said the Ministry of Martyrs and Disableds had been tasked with addressing problems being faced by families of martyrs and people with disabilities.

The president pledged to fight poverty, corruption, lawlessness, and insecurity to enable the next generation to live in peace and tranquility.

He praised scarifies rendered by the Mujahideen, saying the goals of decades-long could not be achieved without a strong economy and leadership.

The gathering was attended by a large number of government officials including Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah and former jihadi leaders, including Abdul Rab Rasseed Sayyaf, who asked the government not to give mujahideen a symbolic role in the government. (Pajhwok)

(2) Fight to ...

and its achievements had been recorded in history.

Abdullah called jihad a national and religious duty and said the Afghans had defended Islam and their country by sacrificing their lives.

He said Afghans currently experienced big problems and challenges against them had multiplied. Only a strong commitment to protect the national interest, honesty and people's trust could help the unity government succeed, the CEO added.

Abdullah said a strong determination and honesty in actions would enable the government to address the current problems and win people's hearts. "Our enemies are fighting in the name of jihad against civilians and their actions have never met Islamic rules," he added.

He said the existence of gap between the government and the masses resulted in losing people's support for security forces and left negative impact on good governance.

About peace negotiations with the Taliban, Abdullah said, "The efforts for peace talks with the Taliban are underway, but we have to be ready to face the bitter reality of war."

Afghan and Taliban representatives were scheduled to attend a conference on Afghan peace in Qatar on Sunday.

Abdullah, former president Hamid Karzai and a number of Afghan politicians have been invited to the conference.

Qazi Hakim would represent the Gulbadin Hekmatyar-led Hezb-i-Islami of Afghanistan (HIA) and the Taliban have confirmed their eight-member delegation would participate in the conference. (Pajhwok)

(3) HPC, Taliban...

and Taliban representatives, representatives of the Islamic Party, Pakistan and other countries and organizations will participate in these preliminary discussions.

However, the HPC has called the Pugwash conference in Doha an unofficial discussion with no agenda and rejects claims that official negotiations regarding peace between HPC representatives and the Taliban will transpire.

"These are not peace negotiations, it is just a gathering which is held every year. Each participant presents his perspective and there are also discussions on ways out of the dilemma in Afghanistan," said HPC adviser Qasimyar.

Taliban meanwhile also released a statement confirming they would send an eight-man delegation to Doha but rejected the possibility of peace talks with the HPC.

Elsewhere a number of former Taliban commanders said the meeting between the HPC delegation and Taliban representatives in Doha was a good sign and could point towards the beginning of peace talks.

"Taliban, Islamic party and the

government representatives never had a meeting around one table. Those who traveled to Doha are very important people and in our opinion such a meeting can be a preface for main negotiations," said Taliban former commander Abdul Salam Raketi.

Meanwhile National Unity Government (NUG) leaders emphasized the continuing efforts to prepare the ground for peace talks.

"We do not want war and we believe in peace and we will try to make it happen, and only in light of the overall peace, sustainable stability will be provided," said President Ashraf Ghani.

"It is our people's wish to reach peace and there are efforts by the government in this regard too, but the bitter truth is we are facing war," said CEO Abdullah Abdullah.

Meanwhile, representatives in the national council feel the peace negotiations with the armed opposition is meaningless, said first vice chair of Afghanistan's Parliament Abdul Zahir Qadir.

"Any decision by the government on the peace process must be shared with the national council so as to have the support of the national council," said Qadir.

Pugwash is an independent international organization - not associated with any specific government - that promotes dialogue and peace in several critical areas.

The Pugwash also held an unofficial meeting with Afghanistan government representatives and Taliban in Dubai in 2012 but no official peace talks transpired. (Tolonews)

(4) MPs Accuse...

attended a ceremony at the Presidential Palace.

The Presidential Palace event was to mark the Mujahideen's 23rd anniversary of defeating the Soviet Union in Afghanistan.

"Today our agenda was to question security officials over recent insecurity incidents but none of them were present," first deputy speaker Zahir Qadeer said, leaving the decision to MPs on whether to impeach the officials.

Referring to recent statements of the Interior Minister Noorul-haq Ulomi - who blamed Kunduz insecurity on some people within government - the lawmakers asked for clarification of Ulomi's remarks and asked him to reveal the names.

"If there are people from inside the government involved in fueling insecurity, the minister should reveal their names," Balkh MP Rahman Rahmani said.

The MPs accused National Unity Government (NUG) leaders of being unable to ensure security and safety of citizens.

"Our government leaders are responsible for the blood of our forces," female MP from Kunduz Fatima Aziz stated.

"President Ashraf Ghani is involved in the insecurity because he did not form the cabinet in six months and that paved the way for insurgents to spread instability," MP Ghulam Hussain Nasiri said.

But interior ministry spokesman Sediq Sediqqi stated that Ulomi's statements were incorrectly interpreted.

"The interior minister talked about those who accept the Constitution but are quite unhappy and their discontent has caused insecurity in some areas," Sediqqi said.

Meanwhile, other lawmakers claimed that hundreds of people were being sent from western provinces to northern parts of the country, mainly to Kunduz, for apparent fighting purposes. "Daily, thousands of people leave western areas to northern areas and I am sure they are going for fighting," MP from western Herat Ghulam Farooq claimed.

The issue had already been raised with the National Security Council, he explained.

"We saw unnamed people were being sent to the north. When we asked them about their destination, they said they were going to northern Faryab for work. But we all know that there is no employment in the north," another MP Mohammad Abdoh

claimed.

These statements were expressed after some unconfirmed reports suggested that former warlords and Jihadi figures have started to conspire against the government. (Tolonews)

(5) Sayyaf Against..

Afghans a mujahid nation, Sayyaf said every Afghan had somehow participated in the defeat of the red army.

In a veiled reference to the Taliban, he said a handful of individuals who killed innocent people could never be entitled as mujahideen. He said he was not against the unity government but wanted more an effective role for mujahideen in the set up.

Hundreds of government officials, ulema, former jihadi leaders and elders attended the event. Sayyaf warned those trying to damage the dignity and status of mujahideen actually played with the honor and dignity of the Afghan nation.

He said mujahideen had never been grabber and autocratic. It were their sacrifices that brought independence twice to the nation against invaders, he said, calling on the unity government to foil anti-mujahideen propaganda.

"Mujahideen have proved they are good fighters, they showed how to beat the enemy, helped with the country's reconstruction and development that took place during the past 13 years," the former jihadi leader said.

He reminded President Ashraf Ghani of his election campaign pledge to overcome the distance between mosque and the Presidential Palace.

Sayyaf said he had never wished weakening the government, but sought a proactive role for mujahideen in the regime.

He said forms in the system to eliminate corruption and immoral acts would ensure their success. "By having such characters, the enemy will never be able to defeat us," he noted. (Pajhwok)

(6) Anti-Torture..

cooperation with civil society and human right entities to check torture.

The body in the meeting stressed for improving human rights situation in Afghanistan.

According to another report, Danesh in the meeting of the cultural committee of the cabinet discussed the problems of BNA and it was stated that the proposal for reviewing the structure of the body, its professionalism and ensuring coordination among press offices of the government and their wages were discussed and approved. The BNA was tasked to prepare a draft for amending the wage of its employees and present it to the next meeting.

In the meeting it was decided to prepare a law for checking begging and providing social support to the beggars.

The ministry for works, social affairs, martyrs and disabled was assigned to prepare the law in coordination with concerned bodies and present it to the next meeting. (BNA)

(7) Rebels Taste ...

attack in which 25 militants were killed and 21 others wounded in Alisher and Tereza districts.

"The fighters make all their efforts and use every technique to weaken the government's writ but security forces are ready and capable to frustrate their designs", Ghairat said.

Abdul Wali Wahidzai, a provincial council member, said the government should bring into use all its resources for security in Khost.

The Taliban announced launching their spring offensive last month with a massive attack on northern Kunduz province and bomb blasts in Khost. (Pajhwok)

(8) 'Pakistan-Gifted

brothers and expected the same from them. "But if they consider us, our people as enemy, then it is our demand from the government to eliminate them."

Muslimyar said a durable peace in Afghanistan could be established only when Pakistan withdrew its support from groups staging attacks in different cities of Afghanistan.

The Senate chairman was speaking a day after a 20-member delegation of Afghan officials flew

to Qatar to attend a research conference on peace in Afghanistan.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah also spoke on the occasion, saying the establishment of peace was the main demand of the people of Afghanistan, but the process should ensure that rights and dignity of every single Afghan was protected.

The top government official said the ongoing war in Afghanistan had roots where it had been planned, funded and directed, taking heavy toll on countrymen on a daily basis. (Pajhwok)

(9) UNESCO to...

falling down of Jam Minaret, but currently UNESCO says the minaret bended 2.8 cm towards Hariroud and it was not concerning.

UNESCO representative to Afghanistan stressed that Ghazni as cultural center of the Islamic world has top position; therefore, UNESCO was seriously overseeing the cultural heritages of the city.

It is said that most of the country's historical and cultural heritages are at the merge of destruction and the government has done nothing still to prevent it.

In the meeting, Minister of Information and Culture, Abdul Bari Jahani while praising UNESCO for cooperation in this regard asked the organization for continued cooperation in connection with preservation of the country's historical monuments and heritages. (BNA)

(10) 90 Afghan

will decide the fate of registered refugees in a meeting scheduled to take place in Kabul in August. The federal and provincial governments have issued strict directives to the police and other law-enforcement agencies not to arrest or detain PoR cardholders. However, registered Afghans are detained at security checkpoints.

The UNHCR and Afghan government have serious reservations about detention and harassment of registered Afghans by the police.

An official of the UN agency said the police recently arrested 27 registered Afghan nationals, who secured their release after getting legal assistance from the protection cell of the UNHCR. (Pajhwok)

(11) Farkhunda Case..

Farkhunda incident.

According to them soon after that they arrested an Arab resident in the area who allegedly had a radio-jamming device on his person. However, they were ordered by the Kabul Police Chief to release him.

However, Rahimi has not commented on this.

Farkhunda's murder made headlines around the world in March and prompted outrage and condemnation from leaders across Afghanistan and the international community. Many have said the incident was an embarrassment for those in Afghanistan who have tried to champion social progress made in the country since the fall of the Taliban regime.

Questions have been raised about both the continued prevalence of violence against women around the country, as well as the justice system's tendency to punish street-level offenders while steering clear of influential officials.

Before this, the Kabul Police have been heavily criticized for failing to take any action to stop the brutal mob attack on Farkhunda that occurred almost two months ago.

After being falsely accused of burning the Quran, Farkhunda was savagely beaten to death, set on fire and then thrown in the Kabul River, all in broad daylight and in a central part of the capital.

In addition, police officials have been accused of trying to cover up the truth of the attack, after it was exposed that police claims that Farkhunda suffered from psychological issues were falsified. (Tolonews)

(12) More Than ...

the province in their annual spring offensive.

But officials of the Defense Ministry (MoD) eased fears and assured the nation that neither Kunduz nor any other province

in the country was on the verge of collapse.

Last week, about 2,000 additional troops were deployed to the area to support the local forces. On Thursday, Afghanistan National Directorate of Security (NDS) said that they had confiscated weapons and ammunition that was being shipped in to Kunduz from Pakistan.

According to an NDS statement, the weapons and ammunition were secretly hidden in a vehicle and being transferred to Kunduz province. (Tolonews)

(13) Ghani Vows

tribal elders and religious scholars were part of the protests.

Twenty persons were killed and another 64 wounded when a suicide bomber blew himself up at a protest camp outside the governor's office. (Pajhwok)

(14) 57 Taliban...

defused seven different types of IEDs placed by enemies of Afghanistan for destructive activities in Kabul, Nangarhar, Dai Kundi, Kandahar and Paktika provinces," it said.

The MoI, however, did not comment on whether any security force members were injured during the operations. (Tolonews)

(15) 28 Development...

seven public baths and graveling a 30.224-kilometer rural road.

According to NSP Provincial Manager in Faryab province, these infrastructure projects have been completed at a sum of AFN 49,641,320 including 10% community contribution. Approximately, 4,502 families in various communities have been able to gain access to basic human needs upon completion of these projects.

It is worth mentioning that NSP has so far been able to execute 2,714 uplift projects in various sectors including transport, water and sanitation, irrigation, power, livelihoods, education, etc while the work of another 500 is currently in progress in Faryab province. (PR)

(16) ISIL-Claimed ...

of war and countless scenes of devastation, a line had been crossed and they had finally lost hope.

Zahidullah Rahmani had not long arrived at work when the first explosion threw the contents of his stationery shop over him. Struggling outside, he came across limbs and bits of flesh that he compared to leaves scattering the ground in autumn.

"I saw people naked and burnt," he said. "I saw people with half their bodies missing."

Mr Rahmani tried to help the injured but was so shocked he could not even speak. He remembered hearing some of them loudly praying, pleading with God to take them as martyrs. "I feel like I have died with all the city," he said.

Situated near Afghanistan's eastern border with Pakistan, Jalalabad is the strategically important capital of Nangarhar province. It is one of the few places in the country where US forces retain a significant presence, conducting what are formally described as counterterrorism operations - including drone flights - throughout the region.

While the situation in surrounding districts has been deteriorating for some time, the city itself has always been viewed as relatively safe. This has only added to the confusion about exactly what happened on April 18.

The blast that caused most of the casualties occurred in front of a branch of New Kabul Bank and is believed to have been carried out by a suicide bomber targeting government employees collecting their salaries. Two more explosions were heard soon afterwards. One hit a religious shrine and, according to police, the other was the controlled detonation of a bomb found by security forces. A fourth explosion happened outside town.

Shahidullah Shahid, a spokesman for ISIL, purportedly took credit for the attacks via Facebook. The Afghan president, Ashraf Ghani, then repeated this claim without offering any evidence to back it up. Other Afghan officials, including a ministry of defence spokesman, have joined Nato in doubting

ISIL's culpability.

Among people in Jalalabad there were various theories about who was responsible, with some even speculating it was an act of revenge carried out by the Americans for the April 8 killing of a US soldier in the city by a member of the Afghan army.

Analysts, meanwhile, have claimed the Taliban may have only denied it was involved because of the large number of civilian casualties. In February 2011 its fighters attacked the same branch of Kabul Bank, killing scores of people and causing widespread anger.

For generations, Timor Shah Wafa's family have looked after the shrine that was hit. That day he had cleaned it and gone out to buy oil to power a generator when a huge blast shook the air. With his house just metres away, his wife and son were wounded by flying glass. His brother was also slightly injured. (Agencies)

(17) Three Passengers...

the hostages but unfortunately, we found out that three of them were dead."

The fate of the other two hostages is still unknown. But Nasiri has given his assurance that everything is being done to secure their release.

"We have asked the tribal elders to help us in securing the release of the remaining two hostages," Nasiri stated.

This comes as the fate of 31 Zabul bus passengers is still unknown.

Thirty-one passengers travelling on Kabul-Kandahar highway were kidnapped on 24 February from Shah Joy district of Zabul.

Despite mediation by Zabul elders and an operation by security forces, there is still no information about the whereabouts of the fate of the hostages. (Tolonews)

(18) Japan PM...

Obama in Washington, where Abe said the U.S. and Japan must take the lead in completing a 12-nation trans-Pacific trade pact.

He arrived in the U.S. during a Washington battle over legislation that would give Obama the authority to negotiate the Trans-Pacific Partnership, or TPP, a cornerstone of his second-term agenda. In a reversal of politics-as-usual, it's Obama's own Democratic base that opposes him, and Republicans who support the deal. (AP)

(19) Death Toll ...

Euphrates River in Aleppo province, killing members of at least six families.

U.S.-led strikes had killed at least 66 civilians in Syria from the start of the raids on September 23 until Friday's strike, which brought the total to at least 118. The campaign has also killed nearly 2,000 Islamic State fighters, the Observatory said.

The group said at least 13 people were still missing from Friday's raid.

The United States has said it takes reports of civilian casualties from the U.S.-led strikes seriously and investigates each allegation. The U.S.-led air strikes have had little impact on the hardline Islamic State group, slowing its advances but failing to weaken it in areas it controls.

The group has built its own government in Syria's city of Raqqa, where it is most powerful.

Washington and its allies say their aim is to support what they call moderate rebels fighting against both Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and Islamic State. (Reuters)

(20) N. Korea...

been holding South Koreans including a South Korean missionary who was sentenced to life with hard labor last year for espionage and setting up an underground church.

The two Koreas remain technically at war, as their 1950-53 civil conflict ended in a truce rather than a peace treaty. (Reuters)

(21) EU, NATO ...

had been killed by Ukrainian artillery fire, violating a tenuous truce accord.

The BBC investigated the story but could not track it down and find the girl's body until a Russian journalist finally admitted that she had "never existed." (AFP)