

### (1) Doha Confirms ...

Doha on Sunday.

This comes after a 20-member Afghan delegation, led by Attullah Lodin, the deputy chief of Afghanistan's High Peace Council, also confirmed that they would hold meetings with Taliban representatives at a meeting initiated by international peace initiators Pugwash. Their aim they said is to thrash out their perspective on political matters, especially that relating to peace in Afghanistan.

A spokesman for President Ashraf Ghani, Ajmal Obaid Abidi has said that "these people were personally invited to the conference. The basis is that we have always said that when the peace talks begin we will not only inform the people but we will proceed based on the demand of the people."

Meanwhile, the monitoring of the five Taliban leaders in Qatar - who were released from Guantanamo - will end at the end of this month. Concerns have been raised over the release of these leaders as analysts fear they will return to the battle fields. The US has said they maintain close contact with Qatari officials over the Taliban leaders who were freed under a prisoner-swap agreement with the US last year.

A US State Department spokesman Jeff Rathke said that "we remain in close contact, as we would in any circumstance, where we transfer detainees," while explaining that the talks were about five Taliban prisoners released from Guantanamo.

Mullah Khairkhwah, Minister of Interior, Mullah Fazel Mazloom, the Taliban Chief of Army Staff, Mawlawi Abdul Haq Wasiq, the Deputy Director of National Directorate of Security, Mawlawi Noorullah Noori, Commander of Kandahar Army Battalion and Mawlawi Muhammad Nabi Omeri served positions during the times of Taliban. These individuals were released last year in return for an American soldier from Guantanamo prison.

Recently, U.S. officials have warned that three of the named individuals have been in contact with Taliban about returning to the battle field. (Tolonews)

### (2) MoPH to...

manufacturing firms and companies importing health stuffs and current challenges in this regard were discussed and reviewed.

At the session, deputy of national administrative for norms and standards asserted that the administrative has made more than 40 standards for MoPH considering to the ministry's needs, adding that whenever MoPH asked for further standards in health sector, the administrative of norms and standard would make necessary standards in this regard. (BNA)

### (3) Contracts for...

procurement committee meets at a time when frustrations among people have grown over the unity government's poor performance.

Lawmakers say the government leaders have failed to meet people's expectations due to their differences. (Pajhwok)

### (4) Disabled Protestors...

the Afghanistan Human Rights Commission and the Attorney General Office had been formed to carry out the process of distributing plots to the disabled. "But no one did justice to us."

MoLSAMD officials did not speak to the media about the matter.

Statistics with the Wolesi Jirga's Commission on disabled show around 800,000 special persons, with women constituting 41 percent of them, have been living in the country. (Pajhwok)

(5) Rebels Facing countries, but he would not name the countries due to the ongoing peace process. However, he said the Afghan forces were able to keep the conflict in the north from being intensified.

The ground forces commander said he had been spearheading recent security operations in the north and as a commander, he could confirm that the rebels had suffered a lot. He said civilians in northern Kunduz and northeastern Badakhshan provinces escaped unharmed in recent violence that left only eight Afghan security personnel dead.

More than 100 fighters were killed in Kunduz and more than 50 insurgents in northern Badakhshan, he said.

Murad said people's fears about security were justifiable, but they should trust Afghan security forces that they would maintain order in the region. (Pajhwok)

### (6) ANSF Suffer ...

will be cut to a small contingent attached to the U.S. Embassy, according to White House plans.

The United States and its internation-

al allies have been gradually reducing their presence in the country, as it transferred more responsibility for the battle against the Taliban to Afghanistan's military.

The United States and its allies have pledged they will continue to fund and help equip the 352,000-person security force beyond that time.

Last month, Taliban militants overran a number of outposts in the northern province of Kunduz. Afghan forces have been slowed in recapturing terrain from the Taliban because the militants seeded the area with roadside bombs.

Afghan National Army soldiers fire artillery during a battle with Taliban insurgents in the Chahardara district of Kunduz province north of Kabul on May 3. (Photo: Bashir Khan Safi, AP)

Because the Taliban are not able to muster groups of more than several dozen fighters, they have been unable to mount offensives on anything more than small checkpoints.

Afghan and coalition officials said security forces have been able to hold terrain despite the high casualty rate among soldiers and police.

"This doesn't mean that the insurgents are more able and powerful than us," Ulumi said in an interview with a small group of reporters.

Casualties are particularly high among Afghan police forces locally recruited to defend rural villages and towns. They often are deployed in tiny groups to man checkpoints in remote locations without radios or the ability to call in a quick reaction force if they come under attack.

Some lack adequate training and the leadership that would enforce rules, such as wearing helmets and protective equipment.

"The Taliban sees that as easy prey," said Army Gen. John Campbell, the top coalition commander. "They're not using them the way they should." Campbell said the coalition is working on ways to improve security and effectiveness of local police.

The casualties have not hurt morale, Ulumi said, since the government works to take care of injured police and their families. He also said Afghans are accustomed to fighting. "They were born in war, they grew up in war," he said. "They know what war is about."

To replace the loss of international military power, the coalition is helping Afghanistan build up its small air force by expanding the number of fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters, and training pilots.

The Afghan air force has only five Soviet-built Hind helicopters. It has begun to add guns to Mi-17 transport helicopters, which are not designed to provide close air support for ground troops. (Monitoring Desk)

### (7) Senate Chair...

other side of the border, in order to be sent for battle across the border. Salangi is optimistic of Afghanistan National Security Forces' ability and calls any silence against the enemy clear treason.

"Anyone who kills an innocent Muslim for no reason, goes to the bottom of hell. If we have mercy on the enemy despite knowing that he has killed our people, it would be treason and a crime," adds Salangi.

The senate chairman, Muslimyar, has also criticized the recent insecurities, blaming it on a lack of leadership among security forces.

"There is no cooperation between police and the national army, as far as I know, there were over 10 orders for battle in Kunduz" says Muslimyar. Meanwhile, a number of senators call the recent insecurity in Kunduz a conspiracy and call the circumstances of the visit by Deputy Minister of Interior for Security Affairs and the Deputy Chief of Army Staff questionable.

"You know that when General Salangi and General Murad Ali Murad went to Kunduz, the notion of battle changed by 180 degrees, but three days later and before the battle could end, these generals were asked to come back to Kabul for unknown reasons," says Senator Faisal Sami. In answer to this, Salangi said that he had come back to Kabul on the orders of the Minister of Interior Noor-ulhaq Olomi.

"I had gone to Kunduz on the orders of the president, but since I am a police officer, I returned back on the order of the Minister of Interior," says Salangi.

During Saturday's session, the senate had asked the National Security Advisor and Governor of Paktika to answer questions regarding aid to the families of Daesh and to answer questions on insecurity in the northern parts of the country. But National Security Advisor Muhammad Hanif Atmar sent his deputy in his place - which the senate refused to accept. Atmar has been called to attend Tues-

day, to answer questions on why the ANSF has not been equipped as per the Bilateral Security Agreement to deal with insurgents. (Tolonews)

### (8) Pakistan Backs ...

in the talks. However, they said the discussions "should not be misconstrued as peace or negotiation talks". Insiders privy to the discussions in Qatar, requesting anonymity, told Pajhwok Afghan News besides Afghan officials and Taliban representatives, the participants included United Nations, Qatari, Turkish officials.

Another source said the Taliban were asked to present their opinions in written form and not given a chance to speak.

The dialogue has been organised in Doha by the Pugwash Council, which brings together scholars and public figures to work against armed conflicts and seek solutions to global security threats.

Former president Hamid Karzai, Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah and a number of political parties' leaders and lawmakers had been invited to the conference.

Qazi Hakim would represent the Gulbadin Hekmatyar-led Hezb-i-Islami of Afghanistan (HIA), the second largest militant group after the Taliban. The HIA has also a political wing led by former economy minister Abdul Hadi Arghandiwal.

Others invitees include Qutbuddin Hilal, Syed Ishaq Gilani, Haji Roolullah, Farooq Azam, Yunas Qanuni, Faizullah Zaki, Karim Khalili, Qazi Amin Waqad, Masoom Stanikzai and several others.

Mohammad Hassan Haqyar, a political analyst, said the Doha conference was a positive step towards reviving the peace process in Afghanistan despite the event being unofficial.

Haqyar told Pajhwok Afghan News "the dialogue gives an opportunity for both the government and the Taliban to speak out their positions on the need and demand for peace and stability in Afghanistan".

The conference, he said, had US and other Western countries' support since the US had provided financial support to the Pugwash Council which had organised such conferences in France and Turkey in the past.

Haqyar said the most important point was that the Taliban had openly announced, for the first time, their participation in the dialogue process and had named the participants on their behalf.

Dr. Faiz Ahmed Zaland, another political expert, said the Qatar conference was in the interest of both the government and the Taliban, but added the government's weak stance had strengthened Taliban's position. He said the US and its allies had realised that the Taliban could not be defeated militarily so they started efforts for peace talks.

He said Al Qaeda had been replaced by Daesh in the region, making the Taliban to agree for peace negotiations, Zaland said.

He said the presence of Daesh or Islamic State group could prove dangerous for both Afghan forces and Taliban militants. (Pajhwok)

### (9) 312 School ...

1470 students, including 252 girls. The Darul Uloom has 9 branches throughout the province.

Mohammad Kabir Haqmal, the education ministry's spokesman, assured construction of school buildings would be initiated next academic year in Kunar. (Pajhwok)

### (10) Farkhunda

father is an Afghan. He told the judge that he had lived in Saudi Arabia but was deported after running in to trouble with police.

Mojaddedi ordered that the suspect be remanded in custody pending further investigations by the Attorney General's Office. Wahab was then led from court by security officials.

The second day of hearings ended and were postponed to Monday.

Farkhunda, a 27-year-old woman was brutally murdered during a public lynching in March after being falsely accused of burning the holy Quran outside the Shah-e-Do Shamshira mosque in Kabul city. (Tolonews)

### (11) Bamyan Preparing...

Being home to the twin Buddha statues that were destroyed by Taliban in 2001 and Band-i-Amir, Bamyan is among the historical provinces in Afghanistan.

According to officials, a five-day ceremony would be held in the ancient city starting next month. More than 5,000 people expected to participate in the event, including participants from SAARC member countries, the UN and other organisations.

Brig. Gen. Khudayar Qudsi, Bamyan police chief, told Pajhwok Afghan News the security forces were fully prepared for the events' security.

"We want the ceremony to take place in a good atmosphere and we hope many people would attend it."

Mohammad Nader Qasemi, Bamyan resident, said the event would highlight the historical significance of the province to the world and was a major cultural event for Afghanistan.

Officials of the information and culture department said a workshop was held in the city for 16 hotels and restaurant owners on how to provide better services and hospitality. (Pajhwok)

### (12) Journalists Blast ...

"Operation Zulfiqar" against militants in Helmand.

He added security incidents happened now and then but security officials were reluctant to allow journalist access to information in order to hide their weaknesses.

Mohammad Ilyas, a reporter with Azadi Radio, told Pajhwok Afghan News officials were busy with their own tasks and had no concern about their official obligation to share information with the media.

"The freedom of speech remains a hollow slogan. Taliban militants share information with media but government officials avoid it."

A military operation was launched a week back in Greshk and Nehri-Seraj districts but local officials are tight-lipped about the offensive.

Sardar Mohammad Sarawari, Aryana TV reporter, said access to information was the constitutional right of journalists.

He said President Ashraf Ghani had approved the law on access to information but journalists remained deprived of that right.

He warned that journalists would boycott government coverage if they were not allowed access to information.

Pajhwok tried to contact local officials for comments on the journalists' demand, but failed to reach any. (Pajhwok)

### (13) Ghani Throws ...

The government, he said, was making every effort to protect and honour journalists because it was their right and the government would continue doing so.

Ghani said media would be provided access to information in a legal framework. He asked journalists to play a patriotic role in the current circumstances and do not allow the enemy to mislead the masses through media outlets. (Pajhwok)

### (14) Media Meets

The ministry has called officials from these newspapers to the media complaints commission - provoking anger among journalists and media outfits.

"Unfortunately, we have growing evidence of increasing challenges and violence against journalists," said Sediqullah Tawhidi, director of NAI - a media supporting agency. "This is a serious threat to freedom of expression."

MoIC officials, however, denied restrictions on the media, saying their recent actions against some newspapers was to stop what they called contemptuous publications.

"Articles being published by these newspapers are offending others," said Abdul Bari Jahani, Minister of Information and Culture.

Meanwhile, Ajmal Obaid Abidi, a spokesman for President Ashraf Ghani, stressed that government was committed to supporting freedom of expression in the country.

"Freedom of expression is one of our main achievements and we are committed to backing media outlets in their work," Abidi noted.

But the journalists widely condemned MoIC action against newspapers, calling it against the articles of the Constitution on freedom of expression.

"From my point of view, it is totally against the law and it means restriction on the media," journalist Shah Hussain Murtazawi said.

Admitting challenges to the reporters and violence against them, Sediq Sediqqi a spokesman for the interior ministry stressed the need for protection of journalists.

"It's really horrifying to know 47 percent of violence against journalists is attributed to government departments. The government needs to take solid steps to address these problems," Sediqqi said.

Freedom of expression in the war-torn Afghanistan is considered one of the main achievements made over the past decade. (Tolonews)

### (15) Do Not ...

compromising with the lives of the Afghans while sitting in for peace talks in Qatar, UAE and other countries.

He accused Qayum Zakir for being involved in such deals and said he is involved behind the murder cases of

the Afghan people.

This comes as the Afghan Senate House Speaker Fazal Hadi Muslimyar said Saturday the he is not optimistic regarding the peace process brought to us by Pakistan, insisting that he is personally not convinced with the reconciliation process which comes through Pakistan and the main motive behind such efforts are not ascertained.

He suggested that the Afghan government and nation should fight against all those armed groups who are against the nation, political system of the nation and oppose the representatives and leaders of the nation by calling them their enemies.

Muslimyar also added that both the Afghan and Pakistani governments should take practical steps in eliminating those groups who are funded from Pakistan, if both the nations are working together to bring peace and stability in the region.

This comes as a delegation of the Afghan High Peace Council (AHPC) officials are expected to meet with the representatives of the Taliban group in Qatar today.

Afghan High Peace Council (AHPC) officials said Friday that the Afghan delegation consists of 20 members who will attend the meeting and will have open discussions with Taliban representatives.

Deputy High Peace Council Chief, Ataullah Ludin, quoted in report by Reuters said "The open discussions are based on peace in Afghanistan. There will be representatives from Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Taliban and some other organisations."

Ludin further added that the meeting will also be attended by two members of Hezb-e-Islami party led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. (KP)

### (16) Kunduz Residents...

and air offensive.

He added the operations would start this afternoon and residents were ordered to leave homes in order to prevent civilian casualties.

Amruddin Wali, the provincial council's deputy head, said they were against the decision since most of the families had no place to stay in Kunduz City.

He said the government should have established a camp for the families where aid could easily be delivered to them.

Mirza Abdul Qayum, a resident of Gortapa area, said he could not vacate his home along with his 10 family members. "I can't take my family out of this place because I have nobody in Kunduz city to stay with. The government should decide about our fate."

Kunduz governor Mohammad Omar Safi had said more than 12,000 security forces personnel would take part in the operations, which would also extend to Badakhshan and Faryab provinces.

The decision comes a week after 2,000 insurgents stormed Imam Sahib district and 20 security forces personnel and 140 rebels were killed in the ensuing clashes.

The clashes had already displaced thousands of families after the insurgents launched their attacks on police and military posts near the provincial capital nine days ago. (Pajhwok)

### (17) 35 Taliban...

still continue in the areas and more troops have been sent in from Kabul to support the local troops, Amarkhil said.

However, he did not provide details about the casualties of the Afghan forces in the clash.

Baghlan borders with Kunduz province which has witnessed a week of heavy fighting after insurgents attacked several districts of the province. More than 200 insurgents, 36 Afghan troops and four civilians have so far been killed, according to officials.

The insurgents have increased their attacks in the northern parts of the country which has increased the concerns of the locals. (Tolonews)

### (18) Taliban Capture

of Badakhshan. Abdul Karim, a resident of the area, said the Taliban could launch their attacks from the area

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid confirmed the fighters had seized 13 border police posts in the area. Elsewhere, two security personnel were killed and as many wounded after they were ambushed by militants in northwestern Faryab province, an official said on Sunday. One Afghan Local Police (ALP) man and one volunteer security guard were killed in the ambush that took place in the Almar district last night, Mohammad Saleh Saleh, the town's administrative chief, said. (Pajhwok)

### (19) Azizullah ...

Khan in 1975 and then as the Loya Jirga chief in 1977. He served as advi-

sor to King Zahir Shah and a member of the Rome movement."

Writer and journalist, Abdul Nafi Himmat, said Azizullah Wasifi had pursued higher studies in literature and had worked in different capacities during King Zahir Shah and President Duad's regimes.

He said Wasifi remained jailed for some time after the 1978 coup that toppled Daud government and then he exiled himself to Pakistan, where he continued struggling to protect Afghanistan's national interest.

After the ouster of Taliban from power in 2001, Wasifi, who had a say in the Bonn Conference on Afghanistan, did not serve on a government post, but kept advising officials.

"Wasifi was a patriotic politician and his death is a huge loss," Himmat said. (Pajhwok)

### (20) NIA Looking ...

by the home ministry and will be issued by the competent court this week.

The NIA request to the Afghan government includes verification of his address, his complete bank account details, associates in that country and the Gulf and call data records, they said.

Majeed was arrested by NIA upon his return from Iraq and booked under sections 16, 18 and 20 of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act and Section 125 of the Indian Penal Code. The three UAPA sections stand for commission or conspiring to commit a terrorist act and for being a member of a terrorist organisation, while Section 125 of the IPC relates to waging war against a nation which is in alliance with the government.

Majeed landed in Mumbai on November 28 after spending nearly six months in Iraq, following which he was immediately detained by the security agencies and later arrested.

Last May, four youths from Kalyan, including Majeed, had left the country to visit holy places in West Asia but disappeared thereafter. They were suspected to have joined IS.

According to police, the four engineering students had flown to Baghdad on May 23 as part of a group of 22 pilgrims to visit religious shrines in Iraq.

The US has already given preliminary evidence of the Internet Protocol address used by Majeed before allegedly joining the outfit and the mails shot off by him. (Agencies)

### (21) Kerry in...

to win over, he said.

Kerry was planning to meet Somali refugees from Kenya's Daddab camp and talk to students there via a video link. Both Washington and the United Nations have said they are concerned about Nairobi's decision to close the camp in a bid to stem militant attacks.

Kerry was also due to set out plans for U.S. President Barack Obama's visit to Kenya in June, his first to his father's homeland since taking office. (Reuters)

### (22) New Migrant...

than 1,200 drowned in a series of tragedies last month.

Most of the migrants rescued Saturday were being taken to Sicily or southern Italy, while some have already landed on the Italian island of Lampedusa.

Several hundred migrants, mostly Africans but also including many fleeing the civil war in Syria, set out from Libya every day on rickety boards hoping to make it to Europe. (AFP)

### (23) Pro-Kurdish...

Party members previously ran as independents. Running as a party, the HDP is taking a risk as it must meet the threshold, but it would gain a sizeable voice. (AP)

### (24) Kerry Pledges...

to broaden and deepen our partnership with you," Kerry said.

He said the countries would start an annual partnership dialogue and that U.S. officials would provide technical assistance to Colombo on a range of matters, including anti-corruption efforts and returning stolen assets.

Samaraweera said that Kerry's visit "signifies our little island nation's return to the center stage of international affairs." The minister said Sri Lanka would become a "full-fledged parliamentary democracy" and an "investor's paradise." (AP)

### (25) President Ilham...

organizations too, President Ilham Aliyev thanked for the resolution on Khojaly genocide which was adopted by the Pakistani parliament.

The head of state thanked for the greetings of President Mamnoon Hussain and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, and asked Mohammad Ishaq Dar to communicate his greetings to the Pakistani President and Prime Minister. (Agencies)