

### (1) 'Afghanistan's...

He said Afghan forces were fully capable to thwart any threat, but non availability of long distance missiles and weak air forces were among some daunting challenges.

He said Afghan Air Force would not be facing lack of fighter jets in the future because \$1.5 billion were being invested to uplift the air force.

According to Atmar, the issue of lack of weapons for police would also be resolved soon as talks in this regard had been held with friendly countries to assist in equipping the Afghan police.

He said the US was busy in training Afghan forces, a pledge that was reached in the BSA, but the process would take some time to yield results.

He said the BSA was signed after months of debate and discussion, adding that a consultative Loya Jirga was organized for BSA acceptance. And the agreement was approved by the parliament as well.

He said the country was fighting on the frontline against international terrorist groups such as Taliban Daesh, Al Qaeda, Haqani Network, Pakistan Taliban, Uzbek insurgents and Ansarullah groups that posed a huge threat to the country security.

He said talks on military assistance were underway with other countries to better equip security forces. The official ruled out the notion that security situation had deteriorated after BSA was inked. He said Afghanistan had the background of violence and insecurity.

In regards with peace talks the National Security Advisor said militants' councils in Peshawar, Karcahi, Waziristan and Quetta were not acceptable and the government would hold talks with groups that considered the Afghan constitution supreme.

He said Daesh was a dangerous outfit and the government had decided four months ago to eliminate the so-called Islamic organization that spread terror and brutality.

He said Daesh was a regional and international organization and wanted to use the soil of Afghanistan for its own designs. (Pajhwok)

### (2) USAID Announces ...

the Mine Action Coordination Centre for Afghanistan. The Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs, and Disabled and a network of Afghan governmental and non-governmental organizations would be engaged in the provision of victim support. The program's main goals included provide immediate medical and other non-monetary assistance tailored to meet victim's needs, train government ministries and institutions mandated to aid war victims to better meet the needs of those affected by conflict and enhance public awareness and advocacy efforts.

This is the third installment of ongoing US support for Victim's Assistance since 2007. ACAP III builds upon mechanisms developed under the previous two initiatives, which have supported more than 13,500 families since their inception. (Pajhwok)

### (3) Only Govt...

Pugwash Council. A number of political parties' leaders, lawmakers and civil society activists from Afghanistan attended the conference.

Back in 2013 Taliban opened an office in Doha, the capital of Qatar, but was closed following strong condemnation by the then government of Hamid Karzai.

Afghan government officials were invited to the conference but, they did not attend it.

MOFA Spokesman Shekib Mustagani said the conference was an informal interaction that was why the government officials did not attend.

He said Afghan government stance regarding Taliban's office was clear, adding that efforts were underway to initiate tangible peace talks with insurgents.

Ismail Qasimyar, the high peace council advisor on international affairs, said Taliban extended demand for an office in Qatar but no decision had been taken in this regard as of yet.

He said the government should accept some demands of the Taliban if it wanted to establish peace and stability in the country.

Earlier, President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani had said establishment of peace and stability was government top priority and steps were on to woo government opponents for talks. (Pajhwok)

### (4) Afghanistan, ...

the survey of a ring road that connects Mazar-i-Sharif to Herat.

A joint industrial exhibition of the two countries would also be launched in capitals of both countries, and direct

flights between Kabul and Tashkent would also resume soon, he concluded. (Pajhwok)

### (5) Obama is Nominating...

of the U.S. Marine Corps will be cut short after he began that job last October. But the rapid promotion is one of several that have marked Dunford's fast-tracked military career, which saw him leap from a one-star general to four stars in about three years.

Officials also said Obama is tapping Gen. Paul J. Selva, a top Air Force officer and pilot, to serve as vice chairman. Selva, who has clocked more than 3,100 hours piloting transport and refueling aircraft, is currently the head of U.S. Transportation Command at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois.

Dunford began his career as an infantry officer and has commanded at all levels. He served nearly two years in Iraq, including as head of the Marines' 5th Regimental Combat Team during the 2003 invasion, where he earned the nickname "Fighting Joe." He is well-connected internationally, often meeting with NATO and other coalition leaders, particularly during his Afghanistan command. His selection signals that even as the U.S. puts more focus on Asia and looks ahead to high-tech cyber and space threats, the administration still believes a strong ground force commander is needed to work through the ongoing conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and across the Middle East and Africa.

If confirmed, Dunford would be only the second Marine to serve as chairman. Gen. Peter Pace, the first Marine chosen as chairman, served one two-year term from 2005 to 2007, but was not renominated by then-Defense Secretary Robert Gates because the Pentagon chief feared a long, difficult Senate hearing focusing on the sharp divisions over the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, wouldn't confirm the selection Monday, but he gave the choice a thumbs-up — a critical factor for an administration that doesn't want to go through a drawn-out Senate confirmation process.

Dunford's most visible role came in 2013 when he was chosen to take over the job as top U.S. military commander in Afghanistan. During his 18 months there, Dunford oversaw the ongoing drawdown of U.S. troops, the transition to Afghan military lead in combat operations, and the tumultuous Afghan elections that dragged on and stalled efforts to reach an agreement on the U.S. military's future presence in the country. He left Afghanistan last August, preparing to take on his new role as commandant.

Dunford, 59, is a Boston native and holds master's degrees in government from Georgetown University and international relations from Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. (AP)

### (6) Pakistan ...

Dar gave the Afghan Finance Minister an update on progress achieved on the decisions taken during the meeting between the two Finance Ministers last November.

He said Pakistan had made continuous efforts to implement, as far as possible, all the decisions.

For facilitation of transit trade, efforts were being made like development of Web Based One Customs (WeBOC) System which would help in bringing transparency in the system and enable the Afghan importers and Customs authorities in both countries to trace the cargo en-route to Afghanistan.

Pakistan had resumed work on incomplete projects in Afghanistan in health, education sectors etc.

Dar said that funds for the Torkham-Jalalabad Highway had been released and the contractor would mobilize on ground within this month. Furthermore, the Rehman Baba School Boys Hostel would be completed very soon.

Eklil Ahmad Hakimi expressed appreciation on Pakistan's eagerness on completing projects in Afghanistan and said he would see to it that on all important matters, responses from the Afghan side were expedited.

Dar said South Asian countries had opened their doors to the rest of the world but there was lack of market integration and weak connectivity within the region. The demand for infrastructure, particularly electricity, was growing rapidly in the region as the economies modernized and shifted resources from agriculture to industry. (Pajhwok)

### (7) India Commits ...

and also focused on ways to improve trade relations in order to promote economic development of the coun-

try. Khurshid recalled that India has contributed a great deal in rebuilding the war-ravaged country but more needs to be done.

Khurshid said India should be more active in helping Afghanistan in institution building and training their personnel.

"We are giving 1000 scholarships a year but I think whatever we are doing is not enough. I think we need to raise our profile in Afghanistan," he said.

Bilateral ties between India and Afghanistan has been strengthened after the recent visit of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani to India.

"It is the continuity of the strategic relationship between Afghanistan and India. The visit took place at the right time. The review of the progress in bilateral cooperation that we have under the strategic partnership agreement were discussed by our President and Indian leadership and we are going to be implementing what was discussed and what has been decided by our two leaders in this state visit," said Shaista Mohammad Abdali, Afghanistan's Ambassador to India.

New Delhi has had close ties with Kabul since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001. India has granted Afghanistan \$2.2 billion in aid over the past decade.

"What President Ghani's visit has established is that the Indian role will continue to be as important as it has been in the past. With a new government and new ministers in Afghanistan, the relationship would improve in the next few months." said Dr. Radha Kumar, Director General, Delhi Policy Group.

A positive step is the decision of India to invest in Iran's southern Chabahar port, which will help in providing a transit route to connect Iran via Afghanistan. (ANI)

### (8) Doha Talks...

Qari Din Muhammad Haneef, Abdul Salam Hanafi, Jan Muhammad Madani, Said Rasool Haleem and Hafez Aziz-ul-Rahman.

"After the start of peace talks, our people wrote their demands and conditions on paper and distributed it to all the participants. The talks started after that, where the Afghan representatives and Qayoum Kochi, uncle of President Ghani asked the Taliban to stop the war and agree on a cease fire. They called us brothers and advised us to come to Afghanistan and accept the constitution," a Taliban official told Reuters.

But this Taliban official said that they would continue to wage war until all foreign troops were withdrawn from Afghanistan.

In response, an Afghan representative said that the foreign troops had left Afghanistan and only their instructors remained. He said if the Taliban agrees to ending the war, these instructors will also leave.

"The environment of the meeting was that everyone wanted to move towards peace. There were also discussions over girls education and their rights," says Ismael Qasimyar, Global Affairs Adviser for High Peace Council.

But Presidential Palace spokesman Ajmal Abedi said: "This is just a conference, it is not peace talks and the representatives are not representing the government and the High Peace Council and have been invited individually," Ajmal Abedi. Although the talks ended without any agreement, but both parties agreed to another meeting in the United Arab Emirates in the next few months.

The peace talks are among the National Unity Government's priorities. In line with this Ghani has already visited Pakistan and Saudi Arabia with regards to the issue. (Tolonews)

### (9) Marked Increase ...

can't talk in national languages have increased inside the metropolitan and districts of Faryab province and they are coordinating with the Taliban fighters in the area."

He warned that security will deteriorate in Faryab if the government does not address the issue.

"If central government does not undertake to make the necessary arrangements to prevent these individuals from entering the country, Faryab could change into one of the most insecure provinces of the country," he said.

In addition, the acting governor of Faryab Abdul Sattar Barez has said that so far more than a hundred foreign nationals have been arrested and deported.

"We have arrested more than a hundred suspicious men, but released them after conducting an investigation and the men left Faryab province happily," Barez said.

Referring to the movements of for-

eign nationals in some regions across the country, President Ashraf Ghani's national security advisor Mohammad Hanif Atmar has said that the security forces are closely monitoring the movements of foreign nationals in northern parts of Afghanistan.

"With regard to foreign nationals who can't talk in local languages I must say that the security institutions have completed their investigations and their findings will be shared with the people of Afghanistan very soon," Atmar said.

This comes at a time when the northern provinces used to be the safest in terms of security, but over the past year, security issues have increased and people are quite distressed about the deteriorating security environment in the northern regions of the country. (Tolonews)

### (10) Warduj Fighting ...

Taliban had attacked security check posts and after five-hour firefight security forces retreated from the area.

He said only two policemen had been killed in the clashes. Abdullah Naji, provincial council head, however, said 17 security forces personnel had been killed and 26 more missing. A resident of the district said six policemen managed to escape. They had hid themselves in the jungles and then managed to arrive in the district centre, he added.

Unconfirmed reports said government forces had vacated 13 check posts in Sofian locality of the district due to militants' onslaught.

Col. Sakhi Dad Haidari, a senior police official, said more check posts had been established in the surrounding areas and preparations were underway to launch operations against insurgents. (Pajhwok)

### (11) Nangarhar Ulama...

vital for durable peace in the country. The participants of the gathering said if peace talks could not move forward then people would stage protest against both the government and Taliban. (Pajhwok)

### (12) 20% Ghor...

Those who teach students some of them are either Taliban or smugglers. The students also have no idea what to do and what to study," he noted. Charsada is another district where thousands of students remained out of schools.

Mohammad Alam, a resident of the district, recalled security was deteriorating since last one year but education sector is in shambles for years.

Of thousands of students, he said maybe few hundreds have managed to study despite many challenges.

Alam added lack of attention by authorities and not hiring teachers based on merit were main reasons for nose-dive in situation of the education sector in the district.

Some of the students even work in police ranks simultaneously. One of the students speaking on condition of anonymity, said: "It has been three years that I have joined police and also study at a school in Ala Yaar locality of Firozkoh." He added he was passing every year without even knowing the curriculum or marking attendance at school.

Mohammad, another 9th class student at Quts Safa School, said he went to Iran for a year and after returning he went a class higher without going through exams.

Mohammad Hashim Faizi, member of provincial council, said insurgents and illegal armed men greatly contributed to destruction of the vital sector.

He said the situation could not get worse since the teachers were getting salaries without teaching and the students were going to higher classes without sitting any tests.

According to local officials, more than 4,500 illegal armed men and over 2,400 insurgents had been active in the province.

Khuda Yaar Waqif, a civil society activist, claimed schools in some districts were sources of recruitment for insurgents.

There were 30 schools in Charsada district, he added, but none of them were active. He urged the government to take serious steps to reopen these schools.

"We have communicated this problem many times with officials, but nobody has listened to us. Many children, including girls will remain out of schools," he lamented.

Director Education Sibghatullah Akbari insisted that 80 per cent of schools were functioning in the province and only 20% were closed due to challenges.

He rejected that teachers were appointed on basis of nepotism and that they were being paid without teaching.

He said major issue was lack of

books for students in the province. Out of 843 schools in Ghor, he added, only 200 schools had buildings and the rests were without any construction. As many as 200,000 students in the province are enrolled with 84,000 of them are girls.

Acting governor Sayed Anwar Rahmati said security forces in south and southwestern provinces were distributed unevenly and lack of enough personnel in the province had given illegal armed group a chance to rise. (Pajhwok)

### (13) 112 Bamyan...

were enrolled in the facility. "Sometimes, we study in open space under scorching sun."

Mohammad Hassan Asadi, provincial council member, said majority of schools that had no buildings were situated in the vicinity of towns and districts, but the situation in the centre of districts were better.

He added lack of buildings was a reason behind low literacy rate. Studying in open also contributed to bad health condition of the students and children, he added.

Asadi criticized the government for not paying enough heed to the vital sector in the province.

He said lack of building was not the only problem, but lack of stationary, furniture and laboratories had added to the students' miseries.

Education director, Ada, said out of 145,000 students in the province, 69,000 of them were girls.

More than 17,000 students, he said, had enrolled this year with 50% of them girls. (Pajhwok)

### (14) Baghlan Clashes...

heavy and light weapons to target each other's position, which caused casualties among women and children.

"Taliban do not allow anyone to go outside of homes," he added. The displaced people in Husainkhil, Zamankhil, Wazirabad and Gawhargan areas of Pul-e-Khumri City have demanded for foods and shelters.

Hamid Niaza, Baghlan Red Crescent head, said that food stuff including flour, ghee, rice and beans and tents would be distributed among the displaced persons soon. (Pajhwok)

### (15) Taliban Kill 2 ...

of rural rehabilitation department while Abdul Ghafoor, another slain passenger, was a civilian.

Both the dead men belonged to Farah province. Their bodies had been delivered to their families. Taliban, however, have not yet commented on the incident. (Pajhwok)

### (16) 3 Smugglers Held ...

drugs including hashish, drugs and opium from a van in Al-Tamoor area in Pul-i-Alam, the provincial capital.

The driver of the vehicle was arrested while two others managed to flee. The smugglers wanted to shift the illicit material to Kandahar province.

Separately, Maj. Gen. Fazal Ahmed Sherzad, police chief of Nangarhar province told reporters that police arrested a smuggler with 144 kilograms of opium in Khogyani district and another smuggler with 30 kg opium in Behsud district during the last 24 hours.

He added the smugglers skillfully concealed drugs in the vehicles and wanted to transport to Jalalabad city. (Pajhwok)

### (17) Britain Could...

whims of smaller parties such as the Scottish National Party and the anti-EU UK Independence Party who would demand "sweeteners" in return for their short-term support. (Reuters)

### (18) Israel's Netanyahu...

Naftali Bennett, which has eight seats, to achieve even a minimum workable majority of 61.

"The responsibility for forming a nationalist government rests now on Naftali Bennett's shoulders," Likud said in a statement on Monday night.

It said Jewish Home had been offered several cabinet portfolios including education, agriculture, the post of deputy defence minister and a seat on the powerful security cabinet. (AFP)

### (19) Yemen Talks...

talks, which would bring together southern separatists and northern political parties, are aimed at forging common ground among opponents of the Houthis that would be used in any future dialogue

with the Shi'ite Muslim group, officials in Hadi's administration in exile said.

At stake is an attempt to end six weeks of Saudi-led military strikes that have caused hundreds of civilian casualties and added further hardships to an existing humanitarian crisis by imposing a naval blockade. (Reuters)

### (20) IS Claims...

group, which has captured swathes of territory in Syria and Iraq, claimed to have carried out an attack in the US.

Police said two men drove up to the conference centre Sunday in Garland, where the right-wing American Freedom Defense Initiative was organising the controversial cartoon contest, and began shooting at a security guard, who was wounded in the ankle.

Simpson was being investigated by the FBI over alleged plans to travel to Somalia to wage holy war, court records show.

Many Muslims find drawings of the prophet to be disrespectful or outright blasphemous, and such cartoons have been cited by Islamists as motivation in previous attacks. (AFP)

### (21) Central African...

has killed thousands and driven more than a million people from their homes.

"This is a major step forward for the protection of children in this country," said Mohamed Malick Fall, UNICEF envoy to Central African Republic.

"The Central African Republic is one of the worst places in the world to be a child and UNICEF is eager to work with local authorities to help reunite these children with their families."

Central African Republic is divided between a government-controlled, Christian-dominated south and a Muslim, rebel-held north. Several thousand U.N. peacekeepers and French troops seek to maintain calm.

The parties to Tuesday's deal will agree a schedule for the release of the children and their return to their families as well as protection and support to help them rebuild their lives, UNICEF said.

The armed groups have agreed to give UNICEF and its partners unrestricted access to areas under their control to identify the children and plan their release. (Reuters)

### (22) Ex-IRA Man...

McCartney's widow, mother and four sisters took their demands for justice all the way to the White House, winning support from Hillary Clinton and the late Sen. Edward Kennedy, and their campaign helped spur the IRA to renounce violence and disarm later that year. Davison was arrested on suspicion of ordering the killing but not charged. Two others, including his uncle Terence Davison, were charged with McCartney's murder but acquitted in 2008. Nobody was ever successfully prosecuted for the attack, which happened in front of dozens of witnesses, amid claims of IRA intimidation. McCartney's sisters accused Gerard Davison of making a throat-slashing gesture to his IRA colleagues in the crowded pub shortly before McCartney, 33, was fatally stabbed outside the pub. IRA members confiscated the pub's surveillance video footage, cleaned up the forensic evidence and ordered pub-goers to tell police nothing or risk IRA retaliation, according to police and court testimony. (AP)

### (23) Pakistan First...

projects with the Chinese cooperation will be completed on time. He said Pakistan and China will establish a special committee in order to ensure these projects are completed on record time.

The premier announced Rs20 million as reward for the workers at Quaid-e-Azam solar park.

He said this the first time in Pakistan that a democratic government is delivering. He added that his government also wants to improve relations with Afghanistan, and eliminate terrorism from the entire region. (Agencies)

### (24) Tajikistan...

26 EU countries, EFTA countries, and some Eastern European, Western Balkans and Mediterranean countries.

EUROCHAMBRES represents, serves and promotes European Chambers of Commerce and Industry through lobbying, development of projects and services to members. (AP)