

(1) Afghan Forces ...

the international partners. Hailing the coalition forces for supporting the Afghan forces in training and equipment process, Stanikzai said the Afghan people and Ulemas should support the Afghan forces as they continue to thwart the conspiracies of enemies of Afghanistan. (KP)

(2) France, ...

were not able to consolidate and map. So because of this, today a five-year agreement between Afghanistan and France was signed and the French archaeological delegation will help Afghanistan in this regard," the deputy minister of information and culture Sayda Muzghan Mustafawi said. Currently the vast majority of Afghanistan's historical sites are under threat - especially those in insecure provinces. (Tolonews)

(3) Bamyan Women...

scientifically or technically, she claimed. "Women are standing beside their brothers against this discrimination against and insult to our people. We would raise our voice for justice across the world," she added. Razia Iqbalzada, a women's rights activist in Bamyan who participated in the protest, asked the government to pay attention to people's demands and address their problems.

"The government, without dispensing justice, would not last long. The national unity government is racist. We have lit up lanterns to attract the attention of the government to its unfair decision," she observed.

The protesters read out a resolution letter, saying the project should be implemented through Bamyan province, where people were still living in dark caves. (Pajhwok)

(4) New Kabul ...

Bank, once the country's largest private-sector lender, plunged into deep financial crisis due to the issuance unauthorised loans and other anomalies.

Reports put at 937.7 million the loans issued to a number of people, including the stakeholders. The government has so far recovered \$437 million. Twenty-four defaulters have paid back their debts until now. (Pajhwok)

(5) Daesh Unable...

question posed by Pajhwok Afghan News said NATO and Afghan forces jointly inflicted heavy casualties on Daesh fighters after the group launched its activities in Afghanistan.

"Daesh when compared to Taliban pay high wages to its fighters, but the IS activities and message are very different from Afghan culture and it is the main reason the group has failed to have influence."

He said the IS campaign and efforts were unsuccessful in reaching its goals or furthering its influence.

Deash emerged in eastern Nangarhar province but its control over many districts was reduced to only two districts in a short span of time, Nicholson said.

He had heard about Daesh moving to eastern Kunar province, saying joint military operations against the outfit would be conducted soon in Kunar. (Pajhwok)

(6) Paktia Protestors ...

the project was changed. In the interest of social harmony, he hoped, the authorities would not allow things to come to such a sorry pass.

According to another report, civil society activists of southern Helmand province also stressed the route of the project should not be changed. Helmand civil society institutes' head, Sardar Mohammad Hamdard, said differences over the project route could lead to disputes.

Agha Mohammad Quraishi, a civil society activist, alleged some politicians were provoking Bamyan residents to serve their personal interests. He said the government should look for an alternative way to electrify Bamyan. (Pajhwok)

(7) HOOAC ...

anti-corruption efforts as symbolic.

The head of the risk assessment of anticorruption and oversight committee, Abdul Aziz Aryaee, said: "The NUG's struggles to

overcome corruption are not acceptable. People should not be deceived in this regard."

"Even members of the public know that a number of individuals who were accused of corruption are now living free. This can reduce public trust in government," said MP Syed Ali Kazemi.

This comes after Ghani last month called corruption a "national shame" in Afghanistan, vowing further efforts to root out this problem. (Tolonews)

(8) Displaced...

in the rain and storms," said Gulbudin, one of the displaced residents.

"At the moment we have a little bit of flour and cooking oil. During the day we burn due to the sun and at night time we can't sleep for fear of snakes and scorpions. Even last night I killed a big scorpion," said Murad, another displaced resident.

TOLONews correspondent Hamid Shirzai visited the refugees.

One woman, who was shot three times in the leg and had her other leg broken before fleeing her home, said: "There is no government to bring peace to Afghanistan and let the people to live in peace. For how long should we tolerate war. People's kids were killed, Ghani sits calmly and Abdullah doesn't know the pain of losing a son."

Affected children in turn said that they spend their nights killing snakes and scorpions.

"War broke out in our village and Taliban made their stronghold in our house. The forces were targeting our houses and all the people left their houses and we don't have anything," said one displaced child, Khan.

"We want peace so we can return to our houses, there is lots of snakes and the sun is very hot, we are really scared," said Ghulam, another displaced child.

Asked about their plight, the Baghlan police chief Mohammad Ewaz Nazari said: "Obviously when there is war there is misery, we never forced people to leave their houses."

But battles between insurgents and security forces have been ongoing for months in Dand-e-Ghori and Dand-e-Shahabuddin and large parts of the area remain under Taliban control. (Tolonews)

(9) Impose Moratoriu...

people and soldiers and... show no mercy when punishing them... including where it concerns capital punishment."

But Patricia Gossman, senior Afghanistan researcher at HRW, said: "The Afghan government needs to recognise that the death penalty is not only an unacceptably cruel punishment, but ineffective and possibly counterproductive in tackling terrorist threats."

Weaknesses in the Afghan legal system and the routine failure of courts to meet international fair trial standards made Afghanistan's use of the death penalty especially problematic, Gossman noted.

On December 18, 2007, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution by a wide margin calling for a worldwide moratorium on executions.

"President Ghani should impose an immediate death penalty moratorium and eventually do away with the practice altogether," the HRW official said. "Afghanistan's foreign donors who have bankrolled judicial reform for the past decade should make ending the death penalty a top priority." (Pajhwok)

(10) Afghan Taliban...

that it would put the Afghan institutions and officials involved in the executions at the top of its target list.

"We have thousands of suicide bombers at the ready to wage attacks on the enemy and take our revenge; we will not disappoint the families of our slain colleagues," the group said.

On Sunday, the Afghan authorities executed six Taliban militants convicted earlier of involvement in terrorist acts.

"In line with Islamic laws, the Afghan constitution and the demands of the relatives of those killed in recent bombings, the president approves the death penalties for these six people involved in terrorist activities," read a statement released by the Afghan presidency.

"The execution order was approved after a careful assessment in consideration of justice and Afghanistan's human rights obligations," the statement added.

Several local and international rights organizations voiced displeasure over the executions and urged Kabul to refrain from carrying out additional executions.

While the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) voiced its regret over the killings, the Afghan parliament welcomed the move. (AA)

(11) US, Afghan...

office said in a statement. It added that he would be transferred to Pakistan after a medical check-up.

In a separate statement, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's office said Afghan security forces defeated an al Qaeda cell in a joint operation with international forces, and suggested that the discovery of Gilani may have been accidental.

"During this anti-insurgency operation, Ali Haider Gilani ... was identified at the site of the operation, and was freed from terrorists," it said.

According to Ghani's office, the raid occurred in neighbouring Paktika province, which also borders Pakistan's restive tribal areas.

U.S. forces in Afghanistan confirmed Gilani had been rescued in a joint raid with Afghan commandos in the Gayan district of Paktika, according to a statement released on Tuesday.

Four enemy combatants were killed during the operation, which involved U.S. special forces and was carried out under the "Freedom's Sentinel" counter-terrorism mandate.

"When we first heard the news, we didn't believe it and only believed it once the foreign office confirmed it," Ali Musa Gilani, Ali Haider's brother, told Pakistan's Geo TV.

"Right now, we don't have any plans to celebrate. We are just waiting to see his face."

Ali Haider was abducted outside an office of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in his home town of Multan, in southern Punjab province, two days before Pakistan's landmark May 11, 2013 general election.

His father, a veteran PPP member, was prime minister from 2008 to 2012, when he was removed from office by the Supreme Court over contempt of court charges related to his refusal to reopen corruption cases against then-president Asif Ali Zardari.

A smiling Yusuf Raza Gilani was seen hand-in-hand with PPP chief Bilawal Bhutto Zardari at an election rally in Pakistan-administered Kashmir shortly after news of the release broke.

He briefly thanked supporters for their prayers and good wishes during his speech to the crowd.

Ali Haider's was not the only high-profile abduction in Pakistan in recent years.

The son of a Pakistani governor, assassinated for criticising the country's harsh blasphemy laws, was kidnapped in 2011. Shahbaz Taseer was recovered in the southwestern city of Quetta in March. (Reuters)

(12) Ghani Commends...

Twitter account: "Good news for Mr. Gilani's parents, the government of Afghanistan has safely handed him over to the Embassy of Pakistan in Kabul."

In an earlier message, the president said Ali Haider Gilani, son of former Prime Minister of Pakistan Yusuf Reza Gilani, was identified and rescued during the operation. "Afghan National Security and Defense Forces (#ANSDF) in a joint anti-terror operation destroyed an Al-Qaeda cell in Paktika province.

The US military said four enemy combatants were killed as a result of the operation. No other injuries or damage were reported. Through Operation Freedom's Sentinel, the US continues counterterrorism mission. (Pajhwok)

(13) Torkham Gate ...

forces wanted to extend barbed wire but the police prevented them.

A meeting was held between the local officials of both sides in Torkham he said while hoped that the issue would be resolved soon. (Pajhwok)

(14) Taliban Ban ...

after the two companies stopped their services.

"The two firms stopped working about a month ago. People no longer purchase their SIM cards and telephone sets. It has slowed down our business," he remarked. But Inamullah, a resident of the Sher Kala village of Andar district, said MTN and Etisalat networks were still working for some hours in daytime.

"I don't think the Taliban are behind the problem. Apparently, the issue lies with the companies themselves," he believed, asking the authorities to fix the fault.

In Kabul, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) said the militants had forced telecom firms in Ghazni and other provinces to stop operations.

MCIT spokesman Yasin Samim blasted the Taliban for torching telephone towers in some areas. "Security threats would not last long; we have talked to officials of telecom companies and the problem would be resolved soon."

Meanwhile, the Taliban confirmed banning the two companies from operating in Ghazni areas under their control.

The group's spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid said both MTN and Etisalat had violated Taliban's directions. Therefore, the fighters had stopped their operations.

"Whenever a clash erupts, we order telecom companies to suspend their services for a short time. But the two companies violated the orders," he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(15) Two Afghans...

law enforcement agency, said it did not rule out the possibility of new terror attacks in Europe, after bombings in Brussels killed 31 people in March. (Sputnik)

(16) UK Think ...

and the U.K. Treasury in warning of the consequences of a British exit.

NIESR says a so-called "Brexit" would see consumer spending per person fall by between 500 pounds and 2,000 pounds a year by 2030. It predicts the pound would fall, in turn driving inflation by between 2 percent to 4 percent higher than it would be if the Britain had stayed in the EU. (AP)

(17) Kremlin Says ...

has criticized Moscow for supporting insurgents in the Donbass region.

The West has imposed several rounds of sanctions against Russia over its alleged role in the crisis and what it said is a failure to fulfill the agreement, which has strained ties since the start of the crisis in early 2014. (Xinhua)

(18) Norway Extends ...

said, adding that the European Commission has recommended that several Schengen countries, including Norway, will have the opportunity to continue their control of the internal borders.

The European Commission last week proposed a recommendation to prolong proportionate controls at certain internal Schengen borders, namely in Germany, Austria, Sweden, Denmark and Norway for a maximum period of six months.

According to a Commission statement, the overall functioning of the Schengen area is still at risk and therefore the Commission proposed that the Council adopts the recommendation for member states currently carrying out internal border controls. (Xinhua)

(19) French to ...

create more low-paid jobs and further weaken workers' receipts.

With the 49-3 decree, the government will go through with its economic law without the Parliament's vote but risks losing the confidence vote.

Opponents could censure the government and seek no-confidence vote in the next 24 hours. They can propose a motion and if it fails the law would be adopted.

In 2015, the government has used the constitutional mechanism to force through controversial economic measures. (Xinhua)

(20) Jordan Signs...

extended-range precision TOW provides," said Scott Speet, Raytheon TOW program director. "We're looking forward to providing them this capability for

many years to come," Speet said. (Xinhua)

(21) Hungarian...

that 160,000 asylum seekers be distributed among EU states under a new migrant quota system. The EU interior ministers approved the proposal despite objection from Hungary, Romania, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Last December, Hungary submitted its appeal to the European Court against the EU mandatory quota system. (Xinhua)

(22) "Belt And ...

common concern at the meeting, Wang said.

Marking the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and the Arab world, this year's forum will kick off at Doha on Thursday.

At the 6th ministerial meeting of the forum held at Beijing in 2014, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed a larger "1+2+3" China-Arab cooperation framework.

"Over the past two years, the China-Arab cooperation tree has become fruitful due to mutual efforts," added Wang, noting that China and Arab countries have strengthened cooperations in political, economic and cultural matters in the past two years. (Xinhua)

(23) Russia ...

He said the effectiveness of Russia's heavy intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) will be four times higher by 2021 than that of the current ICBMs.

The future ICBMs of Russia will be able to deliver strikes from different directions, which would force the opposing side to provide an all-around air defense systems, he said.

The commander revealed that the new RS-24 Yars ICBMs, in both their road-mobile and silo-based versions, will constitute more than half of the effective combat strength of the RSMF by the end of 2021.

Russia has repeatedly voiced concerns over NATO's military buildup in Russia's neighboring countries. (Xinhua)

Greek PM Hails "Roadmap to Debt Relief" After Eurogroup Meeting

ATHENS - During a cabinet meeting here on Tuesday, Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras hailed the "road map to debt relief" discussed at the Eurogroup meeting on Monday in Brussels.

The leftist leader spoke about a "significant day" with positive news for Greece after six years of negative news and harsh austerity, even though no concrete measures were agreed upon by eurozone finance ministers on Monday. A press statement from the premier's office quoted him as saying: "Greece turns page, leaves behind six years of darkness and finally sees the light of growth."

For first time, Greece has been given a road map with specific gradual steps for debt reduction which will become more specific at the next Eurogroup meeting on May 24, Tsipras said.

He expressed optimism that through this path, the Greek economy would recover and social justice would be strengthened in the coming years. European officials have also welcomed the progress made by Greece regarding the legislation of reforms which paves the way for the completion of the first review of the third Greek bailout in the coming weeks and the disbursement of the next tranche. Eurogroup head Jeroen Dijsselbloem said on Monday after the meeting that developments would be discussed again in two weeks to achieve a final deal.

According to Greek government sources cited by the Greek news agency AMNA, the review of the Greek program will close without creditors asking for additional measures and a specific process to reach debt relief has been set. (Xinhua)

Kenya will Gain from Hosting Global Conference: UNCTAD Chief

NAIROBI - The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Secretary General, Mukhisa Kituyi, says Kenya is set to gain

much from hosting a UNCTAD conference due in July.

Kituyi, a former Kenyan trade minister, made the remarks after talks with President Uhuru Kenyatta in the Kenyan capital Nairobi on Tuesday.

He said more than 7,000 delegates would come to Nairobi to attend the 14th session of the UNCTAD, scheduled for July 17 to 22.

"The conference will be attended by many heads of states and will consist of a ministerial conference, a youth forum and the 4th World Investment Forum," he said in a statement issued after the meeting with Kenyatta.

Kituyi said Kenya would gain from the conference, which will be attended by big investors and mayors of major cities from around the world.

The UNCTAD conference, which takes place every four years, is expected to provide an opportunity to discuss the challenges of moving from decisions to actions on the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

President Kenyatta said the government will ensure the visitors have a smooth stay in Nairobi and called for more meetings between the government and UNCTAD as the conference day nears.

"The success of the conference is important for our country and Africa as a whole. It will have a lasting impact on the future of the economy," said the president. (Xinhua)

IS Claims Downing Syrian Military Helicopter in Homs

DAMASCUS - The Islamic State (IS) claimed to have downed a Syrian military helicopter in the countryside of the central province of Homs on Tuesday.

The IS affiliated news agency, Amaq, said its fighters shot down the helicopter over the town of Huwaysis in the eastern countryside of Homs.

The terror-labeled group took control of the town early this month, following battles with the Syrian troops, who have reportedly withdrawn to the nearby Jub al-Jarah area, which is only a few kilometers from the city of Homs and considered the eastern gate to that city, Syria's third largest.

The report comes as intense battles raged on Tuesday between the Syrian army and the IS militiamen in the vicinity of the T4 airbase east of Homs, near the ancient city of Palmyra.

The battles around the T4 airbase were coupled with airstrikes on the IS fighters who were trying to advance, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The UK-based watchdog group said the IS managed to take control of an abandoned military outpost near the airfield.

Meanwhile, the IS news agency said that the IS militants killed 20 Syrian soldiers, including two officers, during the battles in the vicinity of T4. (Xinhua)

Airstrikes Kill 10 in Rebel-Held City in Syria's Idlib

DAMASCUS - Warplanes carried out two airstrikes on a rebel-held city in the countryside of Syria's northwestern province of Idlib on Tuesday, killing 10 people and wounding tens of others, a monitor group reported.

A rebel commander with the Turkey-backed Ahrar al-Sham Movement was among those killed during the air raids that targeted several areas in the city of Binnish and the town of Nairab in the eastern countryside of Idlib, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The death toll could rise, as many people have been severely wounded, the London-based group said, stopping short of giving details about the identity of the war jets, as Syrian and Russian air forces are involved in pounding areas under the control of the al-Qaida-linked groups.

Much of Idlib had fallen to the ultra-radical groups, such as the al-Qaida-linked Nusra Front, Ahrar al-Sham among others.

After advancing in the northern countryside of the northwestern province of Latakia, the Syrian army is eyeing Idlib as the next battle against the terror-designated groups. (Xinhua)