

(1) Calls Mount ...

the ACCI spokesman Siyam Pesarlai said.

The One Belt One Road is a Chinese economic and diplomatic program which is aimed at transforming trade in the region.

The Chinese government has pledged that it will allocate \$40 billion in the initial phase of the project. Reports indicate that the government of Tajikistan, which is part of the route, has managed to attract Chinese investors to invest in that country. However, the Afghan government is yet to announce its programs about the key economic project.

The Afghan leadership in different occasions in international level has tried to preview Afghanistan's economic reputation when it comes to implementation of the One Belt One Road initiative. However, this is the first time that Kabul hosts a high level delegation from China for conducting discussions in this respect. (Tolonews)

(2) Plots Underway...

and for them to work together for a better future.

"It does not make sense that you fight against Afghans, but instead should insist on talks with foreigners," said one member of Hizb-e-Islami's political wing Amin Karim.

"You cannot gain victory only by relying on foreigners, you should have faith in Allah and the people," said the leader of the Mahaz-e-Milliy party, Sayed Hamid Gelani.

"Dictatorship by the National Unity Government caused Afghanistan to regress; if the nation does not open its eyes, this curse could increase," said former minister of interior Mohammad Omar Daudzai.

Speakers at the conference also raised deep concerns over what they called political dysfunction, saying this would further deteriorate the security situation in the country.

"In short we can say that today's political, economic, social and security situations show that practically we are engaged in turmoil," said deputy head of the Council of Jihadi Parties for the Protection and Solidarity of Afghanistan.

The conference was also attended by representatives of the reconciled Hizb-e-Islami group which reiterated its call to the Taliban to enter direct peace negotiations with the Afghan government instead of insisting on talks with foreigners.

The participants suggested government should double its efforts to address the issues facing the country on political, economic and security fronts. (Tolonews)

(3) Probe Unearths ...

of the High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption (HOOAC) Ghulam Husain Fakhri, the lack of authentic information on asset registrations among high ranking officials and military generals at the Ministry of Defense has paved the way for large-scale corruption within the security sector.

"The issue is that the intelligence, financial and administrative institutions as well as the people should cooperate with us, but they are not doing so and it hinders our bid to publicize assets declared by officials," Fakhri told TOLONews.

TOLONews' findings reveal that army generals are paid a monthly salary of between 40,000 and 60,000 Afs. One former general, Sayed Waqif Shah Saeedi was fired a month ago but built a mansion in Kabul. Saeedi had been a personnel officer at the Ministry of Defense.

Another general who lives in a luxurious house at Qargha Lake in Kabul is Aziz Amarkhail. He was once the head of the office of former defense minister Abdul Rahim Wardak. Gen. Saboor, a former intelligence officer for the Afghan Air Force is yet another mansion-owner, as is ex-army chief Gen. Qadam Shah Shaheem who has a big orchard in a suburb of Kabul city.

Shah Aqa Haidari, the former head of the procurement office of the defense ministry is another ex-army general with a mansion in Kabul, the TOLONews probe found. He was removed from his job over corruption allegations.

Despite continued efforts, TOLONews could not get comment from these former military personnel.

After assuming office in 2014, President Ashraf Ghani suspended the following officials from their jobs:

- Lieutenant Gen. Mohibullah, former deputy minister of defense
- Major Gen. Shah Aqa Haidari, a logistics officer for the Afghan National Army
- Major Gen. Abdullah Obaid, head of logistics, technical and financial department of the MoD
- Brigadier Gen. Abdul Rahman Ghorri, head of procurement and

sales at the MoD

- Brigadier Gen. Ehsanullah, head of financial, technical and maintenance department of the MoD

- Gen. Noor Khan Haidari, economic advisor to the MoD

The Ministry of Defense meanwhile said it does not have sufficient information about the assets of army generals.

"Based on the law, generals are paid between 40,000 and 60,000 Afs as their monthly salary. They also have food allowances and vehicle allowances but they do not get multi-story houses. I am also a general, but I don't have a building," the MoD deputy spokesman Mohammad Radmanish said.

Reports also indicate that many generals in Afghan security agencies have bought houses abroad.

Corruption in Afghanistan is a widespread and growing problem and the country ranks 169 out of 176 in Transparency International 2016 Corruption Perceptions Index. (Tolonews)

(4) Security Situation...

Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats said in a Senate hearing.

In February, Army General John Nicholson, the U.S. commander in Afghanistan, said he needs several thousand more international troops to break a stalemate with the Taliban. Reuters reported in late April that Trump's administration was carrying out a review of Afghanistan and conversations are revolving around sending between 3,000 and 5,000 U.S. and coalition troops to Afghanistan.

Deliberations include giving more authorities to forces on the ground and taking more aggressive action against Taliban fighters. This could allow U.S. advisers to work with Afghan troops below the corps level, potentially putting them closer to fighting, a U.S. official said.

In the same hearing, the head of the military's Defense Intelligence Agency said the situation would worsen unless U.S. trainers worked with Afghan soldiers closer to the front line, their numbers increased and there was greater intelligence and surveillance.

Trump has not been formally presented with the options yet.

Some U.S. officials said they questioned the benefit of sending more troops to Afghanistan because any politically palatable number would not be enough to turn the tide, much less create stability and security. To date, more than 2,300 Americans have been killed and over 17,000 wounded.

President Ashraf Ghani's U.S.-backed government remains plagued by corruption and divided by factions loyal to political strongmen whose armed supporters often are motivated by ethnic, family, and regional loyalties. Coats said that Afghanistan would struggle to decrease its reliance on the international community "until it contains the insurgency or reaches a peace agreement with the Taliban." (Reuters)

(5) Beijing Sets ...

Road countries studying at our university and many others are keen to come to China to study, especially to top universities like Tsinghua," said one programme manager at Tsinghua University's International Students and Scholar Center.

"Afghanistan was one of the first countries in the region, if not the first, to welcome the Belt and Road Initiative, which we see as a very visionary and transformational proposal by Chinese President Xi Jinping," said Ambassador Janan Mosazai. (Pajhwok)

(6) Germany ...

mulling over a return to combat missions in Afghanistan, but would focus on "train, assist and advise" missions.

The NATO secretary general highlighted the leading role Germany played in Afghanistan's north, noting that "If there is any increase, which is not yet decided, then we will go out and ask all allies and partners."

Merkel emphasized that she had "also made very clear" to Stoltenberg that Germany would not enhance its role in the global fight against Islamic State even if NATO agrees to US requests for it to take on a formal role in the coalition.

"I want to state very clearly, that even if such a decision is made, it will not mean that any military activity that Germany currently carries out, for instance, AWACS surveillance, will be expanded or something like that," she told reporters.

Stoltenberg also mentioned the conflict between Berlin and Washington over defense spending, noting that back in 2014, NATO members had not agreed to spend two percent of their GDP on defense "tomorrow," but to first and foremost stop cutting military spending and gradually

move toward the two percent target. "What we promised was to stop the cuts, gradually increase and then move towards 2 percent," Stoltenberg said. "And, actually, Germany and many of the European allies have started to do exactly that," he added. NATO members are encouraged to spend at least two percent of their GDP on defense, but only a few states in the 28-member bloc are able to meet the requirement. At the 2014 Wales summit, some countries argued that it is unrealistic to reach the two-percent target by 2024, as expenditure is largely based on each state's economic might.

In March, following a meeting with German Chancellor Merkel, US President Donald Trump lambasted Germany for not spending more on its own defense. (RT)

(7) Most National ...

proposed budget would go to projects concerning agriculture, rural development, education, security, health and the private sector development.

Zabihullah Akhtari, the provincial sectorial and technical director, told Pajhwok Afghan News if the budget was fully utilized, many problems facing residents would be resolved.

But provincial council head Dr. Mohammad Afzal Hadid said most projects executed with the national budget had always fallen prey to corruption.

He said such projects were often given to relatives of powerful men, ministers and lawmakers. However, he named no one. (Pajhwok)

(8) Afghan, ...

Pakistani forces had suffered casualties, but he had no figures.

Haji Quadratullah, a tribal elder from the area, complained Pakistani militias have been trying over the last few months to build new installations near the Durand Line.

He said: "Pakistani militiamen have set up new installations at the foot of the Zwaba mountain in Angor Adda and felled trees on Khwaja Khadar mountain. They have also resorted to aggression against our border guards."

The latest clash erupted at 8pm and lasted until 11pm, according to the elder, who said Afghan forces had suffered no harm in the incident.

Another resident of Barmal, Siddiqui, blamed the government for failing to pay adequate attention to the remote district and its people. As a result, he added, the Pakistanis meddled in their area. (Pajhwok)

(9) Addressing ...

said failing to pay attention to the key causes of the crisis in Afghanistan is the main reason for instability in the country.

Mousavi urged that it is not possible to establish a sustainable security in Afghanistan without the participation of the countries in the region especially Afghanistan's neighboring countries.

The Iranian official was of the view that the terrorist activities committed by Taleban, Al-Qaeda and Daesh (ISIS), as well as the unstable military balance between Taleban and Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF), uncertain situation in coalition government and the disputes among the elites of the government are expected to continue in the current year.

"Afghanistan, in its contemporary history, has faced three key crises namely stability, security and development," he noted.

The scholar added that none of the governments and the parties which have seized the power in Afghanistan could find a balanced solution for three aforesaid crises.

Iran's adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs went on to say that crisis of development in Afghanistan is an international issue which can be solved only through the participation of the international community. Mousavi noted that the International Conference on Afghanistan in Bonn in 2001 tried to provide a solution for the aforesaid crises, but because of not paying precise attention to how to solve them; the Bonn process faced problems.

He also argued that another mistake made by the Bonn process was its attempts to establish security in Afghanistan by relying on the military forces of the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), while continue to disregard the importance and the role of the countries in the region to achieve such a goal.

The Iranian official said that the solution for the crises faced by Afghanistan can be reached in three levels including internal, regional, and international. (IRNA)

(10) Afghanistan to ...

by MCC China under a build own

operate transfer (BOOT) model. Once completed, MCC will be in charge of overall operation and management of the line.

"At the same time, we want to benefit from Chinese investments in Afghanistan. We hope the contract will be implemented fully and start to benefit the people of Afghanistan and the people of China," Ambassador Janan Mosazai said in an interview.

Speaking to a multi-language magazine, the diplomat said over 95 percent of the current bilateral trade comprises Chinese exports to Afghanistan - electronics, clothing, furniture and construction materials. But China has limited imports from Afghanistan.

Afghan exports largely include traditional products such as handmade carpets and jewelry made of lapis lazuli from Badakhshan province, bordering China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Afghanistan is probably the only country that has lapis.

"What we are trying to do to address the imbalance is to increase or start the export of specialty Afghan products such as Afghan saffron, which consistently wins international awards, pomegranates, pine nuts and marble and onyx, which will have a very high demand in China," he said.

Mosazai told Beijing Review a contract for oil exploration and extraction in northern Afghanistan had been awarded to a joint venture between China National Petroleum Corp. and Watan Group. Several Chinese firms are in Afghanistan implementing projects funded by the Afghan government or by multilateral partners such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

Security cooperation, especially between the two militaries, was enhanced to a strategic level last year, he recalled, believing the partnership would have a good impact on counterterrorism, information-sharing, training and military equipment.

The neighbours, who held their first-ever strategic military dialogue in Beijing in 2016, will conduct a joint counterterrorism exercise involving our special forces in China this year - an important milestone in terms of deepening practical cooperation between their armed forces.

In response to a query, the diplomat said Afghanistan was one of the first countries in the region to welcome the Belt and Road Initiative, a transformational proposal from Chinese President Xi Jinping. It will boost cooperation among countries in the region and beyond.

He saw the initiative as move that would help Afghanistan leverage its plans for economic integration, linkage of its infrastructure with the region and realisation of President Ashraf Ghani's vision of reviving the country's historical role in the region as a land bridge, a centre of trade and a transit hub.

"We signed the MoU last May in Beijing, and our two presidents have identified three priority sectors under it: railways, roads and fiber optic networks. We have a five-nation railway project that will connect China through Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to Afghanistan and onward to Iran.

"It's a critical project that will not only link China to Iran, but also connect Central Asian republics through Afghanistan to Iran and through another railway network in the east and south Afghanistan to South Asia. That's also a priority in our cooperation in the Belt and Road Initiative..."

A high-level Afghan delegation is due to attend the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. Afghanistan is an official partner of the initiative, looking forward not only to discussions in the context of the forum, but also bilateral meetings on the issue. (Pajhwok)

(11) U.N. Torture ...

escaped injury when a bomb hidden under sofas in the Kandahar governor's residence went off while officials were having dinner, killing 13 people.

At the time he accused Pakistan's intelligence services and the Haqqani network, a militant group linked to the Taliban, of being behind the explosion. Last year Raziq, a feared commander known as a ruthless enemy of the Taliban, led reinforcements, supported by U.S. air strikes, to help repel an attack by Taliban militants in neighboring Uruzgan province. A U.N. report last month said torture and mistreatment of detainees by Afghan security forces was as widespread as ever, despite promises by Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and new laws enacted by the government. The International Criminal Court in The Hague is conducting a separate review of torture in Afghanistan. Modvig told a news conference in Geneva that he was not aware of any attempt to bring Raziq to justice.

"I think it's a matter for the prosecution authorities in Afghanistan first and foremost and of course it could end up in other places. But we would expect that the local prosecution authorities, the attorney general, would react to such reports, provided they are handed in to him."

The committee called on Afghanistan to make sure all allegations were investigated promptly, thoroughly and impartially, and that Raziq and other alleged perpetrators were prosecuted.

Nobody at the Afghan diplomatic mission in Geneva was immediately available to comment on the committee's report. (Reuters)

(12) Taliban...

can live there with their people," Raziq said.

He stated that the safe zone is established for the Taliban fighters in the country's south and the precondition for living at the zone is to cut off their ties with those Taliban who are still fighting against government forces.

"Those Taliban who are in Kandahar, Helmand, Uruzgan and Zabul [provinces] and have ties with smugglers and armed groups, should remove their relations with them and embrace a peaceful life. So far 10 key Taliban members have come here [at the safe zone] and have started a normal life," he added. (Tolonews)

(13) Afghanistan...

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(14) Saleh Accuses...

killed in a bomb blast a month ago. Saleh said Hekmatyar had hand in killing of innocent people in past 17 years, but he did not mention this in his recent speeches.

He stated that he is not against the peace process, but he opposes the way Hekmatyar was welcomed by government.

"I think organizing a big event for the person who issued fatwas of our killing for 17 years, who financed destruction for 17 years, who committed anything against his country from a foreign country for 17 years, who gave lecture for more than an hour and paid no respect to martyrs of past 17 years in Afghanistan, was a mistake," said Saleh. (Tolonews)

(15) 'Heavy Clashes' ...

wounded in the clashes.

On Thursday, security officials in Baghlan said Taliban militants have suffered a heavy casualty toll in the province and have been pushed back by government forces in the past two weeks following the launch of their summer offensive.. (Tolonews)

(16) University ...

test almost equaled. He said all students had been registered in biometric system in order to ensure the exam was transparent.

Majeedi said in the past powerful individuals would interfere in the exam process, but the practice had been prevented. One of the exam attendees, Mursal Amamzada, who had graduated from Jalaluddin Mo-

hammad Balkhi high school, told Pajhwok that the Ministry of Higher Education should ensure this year's exam was transparent compared to the past. (Pajhwok)

(17) Australia ...

look at the commitments of the Australian Defence Force in other parts of the region and indeed in other parts of the world," Turnbull told reporters in Sydney.

"It is very important that we continue - we and our other allies in the effort in Afghanistan - continue to work together," he said.

Australia currently has nearly 300 troops stationed in Afghanistan, training and advising Afghan forces. The top U.S. intelligence official said on Thursday security in Afghanistan would deteriorate even further without a modest increase in troops from the United States and its allies for the NATO-led force.

Afghan forces being trained by their NATO allies have only tenuous control in Afghanistan almost 16 years into the intractable war against the Taliban, the remnants of al Qaeda, Islamic State and other Islamist groups.

In February, U.S. General John Nicholson, commander of foreign troops in Afghanistan, told a Congressional hearing he needed several thousand more international troops to break a stalemate with the Taliban.

Reuters reported in late April that Trump's administration was carrying out a review of Afghanistan and that conversations were revolving around sending between 3,000 and 5,000 more U.S. and coalition troops to Afghanistan.. (Reuters)

(18) Afghan Security ...

of the Afghan Special Forces local unit said, as quoted by the outlet.

On Wednesday, the country's security forces pushed back Taliban terrorists from the northern city of Kunduz on the seventh day of the battle.

The Taliban movement, infamous for numerous acts of violence in Afghanistan, has captured large territories across the country. The Afghan National Defense and Security Forces are currently conducting joint offensive operations to combat the movement as well as other terrorists, such as Daesh. (Tolonews)

(19) 120 Addicts ...

Dr. Kamawal said 75 addicts were currently under treatment at the facility while another 120 more had also been admitted in compliance with the direction of the governor. Counter-Narcotics Director Mohammad Idrees Sapi called on the people to prevent their relatives from using drugs.

He also appealed to farmers to avoid growing the illicit poppy crop. (Pajhwok)

(20) In 16 Years,...

constructed within a year, the official promised, indicating lady teachers in Tagab would be offered higher salaries than their counterparts in other districts. Resident Ahmad Khalid recalled two girls' schools had been established in the Qurghal area of Tagab in the early years of Hamid Karzai's presidency. However, both were destroyed by militants. (Pajhwok)

(21) Kama Teachers...

distribute state-owned land to themselves. They also traded punches with the security personnel.

At a meeting in Kama, dozens of teachers asked the authorities to set free their colleagues without any delay and resolve their housing problem with a sense of urgency.

One of the teachers, Malay, told Pajhwok Afghan News the government not only shied away from distributing plots to them, but also resorted to mistreating the community. (Pajhwok)

(22) Paktika wells ...

provincial capital, Syed Mohammad, said the underground water level had recently depleted in the province. "Previously people would use water of canal and karez for irrigation but now machines are used." A civil society activist, Mohammadullah, said the government should resolve the irrigation water issue in order farmers avoided using water pumps. (Pajhwok)

(23) 56 War-...

governor, ranked the UN at a ceremony to aid distribution and urged continued assistance to the conflict-hit households - many of them yet to be helped.

One of the rickshaw recipients, displaced to Jalalabad from Pachtir Agam district, told Pajhwok his family faced huge financial problems. He hopes to help his family by driving the three-wheeler. (Pajhwok)