

(1) UNODC, Ministry ...

forward to achieve the desired results."

The minister said that hundreds of elders would be encouraged to support the initiative against drugs, which would turn the program result-oriented.

The local elders and religious leaders, he noted could play effective role to promote awareness against drugs, he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(2) Ulomi Signs ...

He went on to say that China has agreed to help provide Afghanistan with equipment to help detect and neutralize roadside mines and prove metal detecting equipment for border gates.

"It was a very good trip for us. The provision of equipment by China will be very effective for us," he said adding that China has also offered scholarship opportunities to Afghan servicemen.

Ulomi said at the press conference that terrorism was a global threat, as well as a regional threat. He said that preventing the spread of insecurity in the region needs to be tackled jointly by Afghanistan and other regional countries.

"Terrorism is a global problem. This does not mean that it is only a threat for Afghanistan. If Afghanistan is insecure, it can result in insecurity in other countries as well. All the countries must pay attention to this issue," says Ulomi.

He went on to say he visited military training centers and arms producing companies while in China. (Tolnews)

(3) Ghani Seeks...

create facilities for return of Afghan experts to the country," he said.

He said fair provision of scholarships, better way of recruitment of new lecturers and better conducting of Kankur examinations were three major responsibilities of the ministry that required utmost attention.

Ghani said new technology should be extensively used to connect Afghan universities with each other. (Pajhwok)

(4) Ghani Vows to...

ministry's plan divided into five important parts.

The plan is about ameliorating planned and unplanned areas, residential schemes, the city's urban system and executive affairs.

The president hailed the plan as effective and thanked the ministry's officials for preparing a far-sighted plan in a short time.

Ghani said having an appropriate place for living was every human's right. He directed the Urban Ministry to make as part of the 100-day plan providing civil and military officials proper residential places as their absence created social issues, increased corruption and discouraged investment.

He ordered an investigation into all previous contracts for government residential schemes and a judicial inquiry against officials who misused their powers.

The president said government employees should not have partnership or participation in affairs of the private sector.

He directed the Urban Ministry to plan unplanned areas and adopt measures for bringing into being a legal framework for administration of townships.

The president said he would cooperate with the Urban Ministry in improving its affairs and for better coordination in area of infrastructure, a high council would be created.

The president also said he would prevent meddling into the Urban Ministry's affairs by powerful individuals, politicians, high-ranking officials and lawmakers. (Pajhwok)

(5) Taliban, Daesh ...

Taliban military incharge and another notorious commander Abdul Manan, are among those killed."

The fight left negative impact on the education in the province.

Mohammad Asif Shinwari, spokesman of directorate of education, said: "We have to close two schools in Ghalji and Achin areas due to continued clashes." The students were asked to come to other schools where there was no battle, he added.

Abdul Rahman, a resident of the locality, said that fear gripped the area and "people can't go to their fields due to fear of being killed." It is worth mentioning that it was the harvesting season in some remote areas of the province. Some reports say that several families migrated to safer areas.

Though the firefight erupted in remote areas of Shinwari area yet Afghan security forces stayed neutral or they might have not shared their strategies with media.

Haji Khaksar, Ghani Khail district chief, confirmed battle in remote areas of the district.

None of the said groups have shared reports regarding casualties so far but Zabihullah Mujahid, Taliban spokesperson, assured that he would share information after updating himself. (Pajhwok)

(6) Efforts on to...

Nazari, minister of women's affairs while addressing the seminar, underlined the importance of women's presence in all walks of life especially armed forces.

She added prejudice against women, violence against women in families, and illiteracy among women were main reasons for decline in their presence.

Nazari said the government had strong will and programmes to increase women's presence in the government.

Sulaiman Kakar, security advisor at National Security Council (NSC), said women's presence in security sector was significant. He added currently at airports, ports and borders the need for women police could be felt.

"In Afghanistan, based on our plans share of women in security sectors should have been 20 per cent by now. Unfortunately, this figure is 1.5 per cent which is shameful that we couldn't raise their share," he added. Kakar said government was serious to increase the figures to 20% in security organs in the next four years. He added the reasons for the women's share decline should be discussed in the seminar and they should come up with suggestions.

Sayedha Muzhgan Mustavi, deputy women's minister, said women's decline in government departments was a matter of concern. She added the seminar would also take up issues of women's role in leadership, judiciary, legislature, education and economy.

The gathering's suggestions, she said, would be submitted for president's consideration. (Pajhwok)

(7) Governor, Police...

has been controlled after the killing of scores of rebels.

Eng. Afzal Shamil, head of the delegation, who briefed the upper house about his visit to Kunduz said Governor and Police Chief sent wrong reports to the centre.

He said the Kunduz City, the provincial capital, had converted to military base and Taliban were still fighting security forces at the entrance of provincial capital.

He said around 16,000 families had been displaced due to the fear of air strike, while clearing operations was still underway in most parts of the province. (Pajhwok)

(8) President Stresses ...

offer the contracts openly and avoid secret deals.

The president lamented over the influence of powerful individuals on the state treasury and asked officials to stop illegal excavation of mines. (Pajhwok)

(9) 130 Laghman ...

lacked buildings.

Mujeddedi said high ranking education officials had promised to resolve education related problems in Laghman, but the promises were yet to be materialized.

Another problem, he said, was a shortage of professional teachers. However, he hoped the shortage problem would be resolved with graduation of students from Darul Uloom and teacher training institutes.

About allotting land plots to homeless teachers, the official said a land had been identified and other process completed to initiate a residential scheme for teachers.

In this regard, he said, they were awaiting orders from the central government to start the distribution of land plots to teachers.

A teacher at Shaheed Dr. Abdullah High School, Qari Abdul Mahmood, urged the president to fulfill his promise with teachers on land plots. He said large swaths of land were available in various parts of the province where the government could allot plots to teachers.

Provincial council secretary Mohammad Zahir Hussainkhel said all schools in the province were operational and no school had been closed due to insecurity.

However, he complained textbooks never reached Laghman in-time and some books were beyond children's understanding level.

Education Ministry's spokesman Kabir Haqmal said the ministry was committed to constructing buildings for schools across the country.

But he said the ministry could not embark on constructing buildings

simultaneously in all provinces and the task would be performed in phases. (Pajhwok)

(10) Parwan Residents...

The residents made the decision not to sit on their hands and wait for state money that many expected would never come.

Provincial council chief Haji Abdul Wali told Pajhwok Afghan News the residents of the district demanded the Public Works Department time and again to repair the damaged parts of the road but their demand could not be heard.

Mohammad Ayub, the resident of the locality, said: "We are poor people and live in a mountainous region where good roads are direly needed to transport goods and shift our patients."

Eng. Ahmad Farid, director public works, confirmed the road was in dilapidated condition and needed immediate repair. He said due to lack of funds they were unable to repair the road. (Pajhwok)

(11) Ghani, EUOPL ...

women and a man. A further eight women and two children were injured, along with seven men. However, a hospital official has put the injured total at 23 people.

In a statement to the press, Ghani said: "The killing of the civilians especially the women and children shows that the insurgents have been defeated in the battlefield by security forces."

He also passed on his condolences to the families of the victims.

EUOPL Head of Mission Pia Stjernvall also issued a statement Sunday afternoon condemning the attack. She confirmed that a member of EUOPL's security provider was killed and that two EUOPL staff members were injured.

Their injuries have however been described as not serious, she said.

"I'm deeply saddened by the incident at this occasion of which an employee of the security provider for EUOPL Afghanistan, a dedicated and highly professional security officer, lost his life while protecting the members of EUOPL mission."

"My thoughts are with the family and friends of our colleague and all the others who were involved with this tragic and cowardly attack against people who have come to this country simply to help the people of Afghanistan," Stjernvall said. "At the same time my thoughts are with the Afghans who were victims of this attack", she added.

"I can assure you that this appalling crime will not stop EUOPL from continuing its support to the people and government of Afghanistan. We are as committed as ever to Afghanistan and will go on to work with our Afghan and international partners for a safer Afghanistan", she said.

This was the second blast Sunday morning in Kabul city. The first occurred in the Kart-e-Now area but no casualties were reported.

The Taliban has claimed responsibility for the fatal bombing. The group's apparent spokesman said on Twitter that the suicide car bomber had been driving a Toyota Corolla and was from Paktia province. (Tolnews)

(12) 4 Abducted ...

release of the abductees.

He said that kidnapped included civilians and government employees. Zabihullah Mujahid, Taliban spokesperson, said militants had set free all abductees after their investigations except two government employees.

Rahim Gul, a resident of the area, said hundreds of Taliban fighters had blocked the roads searching passengers' vehicles and later took dozens of passengers with them. (Pajhwok)

(13) Senate to Investigate...

The chairman said administrative corruption and lawlessness resulted in increased activities of the opposition forces, a reference to the insurgents.

Paghman police chief Col. Amarullah Paghmani said the nigh letters were distributed fortnight ago in various parts of the town. He said the insurgents had warned religious scholars and prayer leaders against offering funeral prayers for government and security officials.

He said two suspects had been arrested in connection with the matter and handed over to the intelligence department for further investigation.

However, he said the letters had no impact on local residents and no religious scholar and imam had paid attention to the warning. (Pajhwok)

(14) Construction...

it was an expensive method that forced many growers to cultivate poppy crop.

The deputy governor said the project had been designed as per people's wishes and farmers had promised not to grow poppy in their fields once the canal reconstruction was completed.

He said projects were being implemented under the Food Zone Programme in areas where the illicit plant was grown.

The Zheri district chief called the canal project an important one as it would irrigate thousands of acres of land.

A resident of Seydan area of Zheri district, Syed Mohammad Agha, told Pajhwok Afghan News the Pashmol canal remained dried up for the last two years, depriving residents of irrigation waters.

He said water would increase in the canal once reconstructed and people would switch to food and legal crops instead of poppies. (Pajhwok)

(15) Three Killed...

reports of foreign troop casualties as yet.

The blast took place during busy rush hour in a densely populated area and severe damage was done to vehicles and buildings in the immediate area.

Afghan security forces have closed off the area.

This is the second blast Sunday morning in Kabul city. The first occurred in the Kart-e-Now area but no casualties were reported.

This comes after yet another IED exploded on Saturday night at the university of Kabul, injuring two lecturers.

No group has yet claimed responsibility for any of the blasts. (Tolnews)

(16) NDS Seizes Explosive...

showed that insurgents in Afghanistan had started using potassium chlorate to make homemade bombs. This is the same substance used to make matches catch fire.

According to their study, they found that over 60 percent of IEDs were being made from this substance - a material that is however considered extremely unstable.

This latest find comes just hours after a suicide car bomber killed three people and injured at least 18 in Kabul on Sunday.

This explosion was the second one of the day and the third in less than 24 hours. No casualties were reported in the earlier blast in the city but an IED that exploded at the Kabul university on Saturday night injured two lecturers. (Tolnews)

(17) Yemen ...

and allied military units loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh. The air campaign is aimed at weakening the Houthis and restoring to power internationally recognized President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, who fled the country in March in the face of a rebel advance. (AP)

(18) Kerry in...

past three years. The U.S. quietly proposed a meeting with North Korea in January, before the U.S. and South Korea began annual military exercises that North Korea regards as a provocation. The two sides, however, failed to agree on who could meet and where.

In light of the new developments, Kerry plans to reiterate America's ironclad commitment to the security of South Korea, U.S. officials said.

On Saturday in Beijing, Kerry expressed hope that the successful conclusion of a nuclear deal with Iran will send a positive message to North Korea to restart negotiations on its own atomic program. Kerry said he believed an Iran agreement could have "a positive influence" on North Korea, because it would show that giving up nuclear weapons improves domestic economies and ends isolation. (AP)

(19) Thousands ...

Naha, Okinawa's capital. Deadlock has deepened recently after preparatory building work on the coast begun in the face of vehement opposition from the local government in Okinawa.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe last month insisted the current re-location plan was "the only solution," while anti-base Okinawa governor Takeshi Onaga hit back saying that three recent popular votes in Okinawa all showed overwhelming opposition to the move. (AFP)

(20) US Raid...

blow" to IS, while Adam Schiff, a Democrat on the House intelligence committee, said US attacks "have put increasing pressure on the economics undergirding the terrorist organisation". (AFP)

(21) Egypt Hangs...

men had been arrested when police

and soldiers raided their safe house north of Cairo in March 2014.

Two army explosive experts and six militants were killed in an ensuing gunfight, adding to the list of charges against the six men.

But human rights groups had appealed for a stay of execution, saying two of the defendants had been in custody at the time. (AFP)

(22) Tajikistan and...

transmission line which is envisaged to span four countries and to bring hydro-generated electricity from the two Central Asian countries, Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic, to electricity-hungry Afghanistan and Pakistan. (AP)

Iraq war judged a mistake by today's White House hopefuls

WASHINGTON - A dozen years later, American politics has reached a rough consensus about the Iraq War: It was a mistake. Politicians hoping to be president rarely run ahead of public opinion. So it's a revealing moment when the major contenders for president in both parties find it best to say that 4,491 Americans and countless Iraqis lost their lives in a war that shouldn't have been waged. Many people have been saying that for years, of course. Polls show most of the public have judged the war a failure by now. Over time, more and more GOP politicians have allowed that the absence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq undermined Republican President George W. Bush's rationale for the 2003 invasion.

It hasn't been an easy evolution for those such as Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton, who voted for the war in 2002 while serving in Congress. That vote, and her refusal to fully disavow it, cost her during her 2008 primary loss to Barack Obama, who wasn't in the Senate in 2002 but had opposed the war.

In her memoir last year, Clinton wrote that she had voted based on the information available at the time, but "I got it wrong. Plain and simple."

What might seem a hard truth for a nation to acknowledge has become the safest thing for an American politician to say - even Bush's brother.

The fact that Jeb Bush, a likely candidate for the Republican nomination in 2016, was pressured this past week into rejecting, in hindsight, his brother's war "is an indication that the received wisdom, that which we work from right now, is that this was a mistake," said Evan Cornog, a historian and dean of the Hofstra University school of communication.

Or, as Rick Santorum, another potential Republican candidate, put it: "Everybody accepts that now." Santorum didn't always see the war that way. He voted for the invasion as a senator and continued to support it for years. Last week, he mocked Jeb Bush's reluctance to give what now seems the obvious answer when he was initially asked to reconsider the war in light of what's known today. "I don't know how that was a hard question," Santorum said.

It's an easier question for presidential hopefuls who aren't bound by family ties or their own congressional vote for the war, who have the luxury of judging it in hindsight, knowing full well the terrible price Americans paid and the continuing bloodshed in Iraq today.

Florida Sen. Marco Rubio and Texas Sen. Ted Cruz weren't in Congress in 2002 and so didn't have to make a real-time decision with imperfect knowledge. Neither was New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie or Ohio Gov. John Kasich, who served an earlier stint in Congress. All these Republicans said last week that, in hindsight, they would not have invaded Iraq with what's now known about the faulty intelligence that wrongly indicated Saddam Hussein had stockpiled weapons of mass destruction.

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, in an interview Sunday on CBS' "Face the Nation," summed up that sentiment: "Knowing what we know now, I think it's safe for many of us, myself included, to say, we probably wouldn't have taken" that approach.

Those politicians didn't go as far, however, as war critics such as Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul, a declared Republican candidate who says it would have been a mistake even if Saddam were hiding such

Burundi president appears in capital, warns of Islamist threat

BUJUMBURA - Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza on Sunday made his first public appearance in the capital Bujumbura since an attempted coup last week failed to oust him, warning of a threat posed by Islamist militants from Somalia.

The east African nation was plunged into crisis after Nkurunziza said he was seeking a third term of office.

Critics said the move would be unconstitutional, and there have been almost daily protests since Nkurunziza's announcement, stirring memories of an ethnically driven civil war that ended a decade ago.

At a news conference, Nkurunziza, who has not been seen in the capital for days, did not address the crisis in his country but said he was "very pre-occupied" by the threat posed by the al Qaeda linked militant group al Shabaab.

"We take seriously the threat of al Shabaab," said Nkurunziza. He did not elaborate, but Burundi contributes forces to an African Union peacekeeping mission battling al Shabaab in Somalia. In recent years, the group has attacked Kenya and Uganda, which also provide troops.

A spokesman for the Islamist group had no immediate comment.

A leader of a group of Burundian civil society groups, Vital Nshimirimana, said demonstrations against Nkurunziza's third term bid, which had largely come to a halt in recent days, would resume on Monday.

"We ask the international community to follow closely the situation in Burundi in order to stop the harsh reprisal against protesters, civil society activists and opposition leaders," Nshimirimana said in a statement.

Until the coup attempt, protests had occurred almost daily in the outskirts of Bujumbura. Protesters hurled rocks while police fired tear gas, water cannon and were also seen firing guns at the protesters.

Diplomats say the longer unrest continues the more chance that a conflict, which up until now has been largely a struggle for power, reopens old wounds in a region with a history of ethnic killing.

More than 105,000 people have fled to neighboring states, including next-door Rwanda, with the same ethnic mix as Burundi and which was torn apart by a genocide in 1994 that killed 800,000 mostly Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

At the Gashora camp in Rwanda, Hakizimana Leonidas, a farmer who said he was a Tutsi, said he fled Burundi a day after last week's coup attempt.

"I want to see Burundi as a peaceful country but the problem is that those who could be protecting us are the ones causing chaos," said Leonidas, 46.

The constitution and a peace deal that ended the civil war both specify a two-term presidential limit. But Nkurunziza is seeking a third term anyway, relying on a court ruling that his first term does not count because he was appointed by parliament, not elected. His opponents and some donors have questioned the court's impartiality.

The heavy-handed response of the police to demonstrations in recent weeks has drawn stern rebukes from Western donors, who have urged the president not to run again, while the African Union condemned any attempt to seize power through violence.

Pope Francis called for an end to the violence in Burundi during prayers held at St Peter's Square in the Vatican.

Asking for a prayer for the people of Burundi, he said: "May the Lord help them to escape from violence and act responsibly for the good of the country." In March, the Catholic church in Burundi, which represents more than two-thirds of the population, came out against the president seeking a third term. (Reuters)