

(1) Pakistani ...

said the decree released to the media by Maulana Ziaul Haq Naqshbandi.

The so-called jihadi outfits were unmindful of the conditions that must be met before declaration of jihad. Furthermore, the elements involved in sectarian killings were guilty of 'fasad', as Islam did not allow killings in the name of sect.

"The Islamic government is bound to crush such rebels," said the decree.

It described the elements opposing polio immunization campaign as "misguided people". "And those killing women health workers are the worst criminals," the decree said.

Those who attack worship places of non-Muslims are the worst sinners and protecting non-Muslims is mandatory for an Islamic state, according to the decree.

Maulana Naqshbandi said the conference had decided to observe Friday (May 22) as a day for peace and love. On the day, sermons would be delivered in about 400,000 mosques against unlawful killings, he said. An Ulama board would be set up to counter the narrative of terrorist organisations like the TTP and IS.

A movement called "Eradicate Terrorism and Save Country" would also be launched, said the Maulana.

Religious leaders of other countries would be approached to get endorsements for the decree, he added.

Maulana Naqshbandi said the conference had also called for "international legislation" against blasphemy. (Pajhwok)

(2) President Stresses...

policies that could guarantee a comprehensive roadmap for economic self-sufficiency and bright future for the coming generation. Ghani said: "The MoF should work out a strategy which could help ensure flow of foreign direct investment and increase in domestic revenue."

The president emphasized over strengthening of accountability and tax payment system in the country. He directed the authorities concerned to focus on long-term projects instead of short-term. (Pajhwok)

(3) Taliban Growing...

"Taliban are now weak and do not have the ability to counter Afghan security forces assault. Heavy casualties inflicted on insurgents," he remarked.

There were authentic documents showing Taliban had active support from foreigners such as fighters from Chechnya, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and other countries.

MoD spokesman Brig. Gen. Dawlat Waziri said: "Following rumors of peace talks, Taliban have intensified their attacks in current year. The militants are losing morale and Afghanistan will achieve peace soon." (Pajhwok)

(4) IEC Seeks ...

responsibility to hold elections on time and the chairman of the commission should be allowed to speak in the house.

Nuristani said: "Technically we're prepared to hold parliamentary elections, but other relevant departments exempt themselves of responsibility."

He did not specifically name any organizations, but said: "The election commission had sent two plans to Presidential Palace, but no step has been taken so far."

He added at least \$80 million fund needed for parliamentary ballot and the international community would pay that on condition of reforms in poll panels.

"Inspection of the second round of presidential elections took most of our time which was in vain," he said, adding that lack of funds, reforms, and strong political will were major impediments on way of elections to be held on time.

"The commission announced the schedule for parliamentary elections that was supposed to be held last month but the government did not take any step," he continued.

according to Nuristani, if they were provided with financial means they would hold elections within five to six months.

Haji Zahir Qadir, deputy speaker, said: "We, the members of the lower house are prepared for elections to be held." (Pajhwok)

(5) MPs Demand ...

and equip the NDS. In addition, Afghanistan and Pakistan will each fight terrorism and both institutions will investigate accused individuals behind any terror incident within their respective countries. The MoU was signed by the first deputy of the NDS with Pakistan a few days ago, sources told TOLONews.

"The memorandum of understanding between Afghanistan and Pakistan is not a new thing. In the past, both institutions had such agreements, but now the focus of this agreement is mostly on jointly fighting terrorism," says Ajmal Abedi, President Ashraf Ghani's spokesman.

However, officials from the previous government told TOLONews that no such MoU was signed in the past.

The ISI Director has visited Kabul twice in the past 10 days. Once with the Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and once on his own.

In the past 13 years, fingers have often been pointed at ISI - accusing them of orchestrating attacks in Afghanistan. But since the creation of the National Unity Government (NUG), the strategy of government has changed and in recent times Pakistan has emphasized that it is a friend of Afghanistan and will support the country in its quest for peace. (Tolonews)

(6) NDS and ...

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Abedi meanwhile said that Afghanistan and Pakistan both face similar security threats.

"Afghanistan has a proactive policy now, and both countries, Afghanistan and Pakistan, now understand that they have to jointly fight terrorism because both countries are suffering from this security threat," said Abedi. The ISI Director has visited Kabul twice in the past 10 days. Once with the Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and once on his own.

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(7) Iran, Afghanistan...

Afghan Minister for Refugees and repatriation Hossein Alami Balkhi who has come to attend a quadrilateral meeting between Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees due to be held on Tuesday.

'With participation in this meeting, we are seeking to somehow harmonize the affairs of refugees in Iran and Pakistan,' Rahmani Fazli said.

The interior minister said that in the meeting Iran is to raise the unauthorized entry of refugees to the Iran and to discuss how to pave the way for the repatriation of the refugees who have been living in Iran for several years.

Afghan refugees who return to their home country have to use their experiences to contribute to reconstruction of Afghanistan, Rahmani Fazli said.

He said that both Iranian and Afghan governments are determined to regulate the affairs of Afghan refugees in the course of one year and have agreed to control joint border so that all the immigrations to Iran will be lawful. (IRNA)

(8) Russia Closes ...

limited material support to the Afghan security forces.

Russian President Vladimir Putin was quick to offer support to the U.S. following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York in 2001 that prompted the invasion of Afghanistan. But relations between Russia and NATO quickly became strained as the alliance expanded in Eastern Europe over Moscow's objections. (Agencies)

(9) Taliban Advancing ...

no casualties to either side. He said the Taliban had seized a number of weapons like Kalashnikovs, machineguns, police vehicles and ammunitions from the bases.

Currently, he said, the Taliban had established a check-post five kilometers away from Pul-i-Khumri in the Ghorl Dand area, controlling people's movement.

He said the lack of coordination among Afghan security forces had enabled the Taliban to threaten the people of Pul-i-Khumri and bring under their control many areas in Dand Ghorl locality.

Despite these tough conditions, the provincial council chief said Baghlan police chief Aminullah Amarkhel had been called to Kabul, leaving his deputy to struggle with the situation.

Muhseni said despite the presence of Special Forces Unit commander Brig. Gen. Asadullah Sherzad and Public Order Police commander Daud Tarakhel in Baghlan, security forces had been unable to prevent Taliban's advance.

He said the central government should send security forces who were in high spirit against insurgents to Baghlan and a delegation to investigate how easily some areas fell to the Taliban.

But Baghlan acting police chief Col. Abdul Bashir Rashid told Pajhwok Afghan News security forces were currently locked in clashes with insurgents and security lines had been established in Baghlan-i-Markazi district and Dand Ghorl area to prevent the insurgents from advancing.

He said security forces, including personnel from the Special Forces Unit, were trying to purge the two areas from the presence of militants.

He acknowledged Taliban militants had seized control of four military bases, but said security forces had carried out "a tactical retreat" from nine bases. (Pajhwok)

(10) Afghanistan ...

being reported.

Taliban staged an insurgency in Afghanistan after their government was toppled in 2001.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed since then in Afghan war. (KP)

(11) Usmani Curtails...

of employees would be referred to the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Services Commission (IARCSC) after the orders of minister.

The issuance of financial types of orders had been brought under the jurisdiction of office of minister and it had been termed mandatory that a copy of such financial transaction should be kept at the minister's office in order to keep the financial matters transparent.

The process of Hajj related affairs, scrutiny of religious affairs, related contracts, conduct of MoUs and other affairs had the sole responsibility of the office of minister, the letter said.

according to the fresh orders, the secretaries were responsible to address legal affairs of the ministry after consultation with the minister.

Munib said the newly elected minister in his initial letter had ordered that secretaries of the ministry should discuss the issue with minister and then sign the paper.

He said secretaries and directors did not have the authority to sign papers without the consent of minister. He expressed concerns that hiring, removal or transfer of employees were the responsibility of the secretaries and directors and did not belong to minister.

He expressed concerns over recent changes and accused the new minister for removal of some officials. He alleged the minister executed orders without consultation with the president.

Munib said Abdul Malik Reza, director of mosques, Usman Hameedi, Hajj related affairs in-

charge in Saudi Arabia, Ibrahim Rabani, head of the minister's office, Karamatullah Sidiqi, research and investigative director and five other officials had been sacked without citing any valid reason. (Pajhwok)

(12) NDS Rejects ...

concluded based on previous mutual cooperation between the two nations.

This comes as earlier reports suggested that the agreement will also allow ISI to train and equip the Afghan Intelligence - National Directorate of Security (NDS) personnel.

The reports further added that the Afghan intelligence and ISI will jointly interrogate the detained insurgents based on the agreement which was signed two days back by the Afghan deputy NDS chief.

The conclusion of the agreement also sparked furor among the Afghan lawmakers who called on Lower House of the Parliament - Wolesi jirga to summon the NDS chief Rahmatullah Nabil to brief the lawmakers regarding the agreement.

The latest agreement between Afghan government and ISI comes as the Afghan officials have long been criticizing ISI for supporting the insurgency in Afghanistan. (KP)

(13) 6 Foreign Firms ...

companies. ACAA Deputy Head Mahmoud Shah Habibi stressed his department would be in close cooperation with the companies interested.

"The bidding process would continue for next 10 days and after that the ACAA would review the proposals," the ACAA statement said, adding a company with higher capabilities and capacities would be awarded the contract.

The current contract to control Afghanistan air traffic with the United States expires by the end of June, a development that could see Afghanistan basically becomes a no-fly zone for international airlines.

The key air corridor between Europe and Asia has been managed by the US-led international military coalition or foreign companies paid by donor countries since 2001.

Two days earlier, Habibi said the Afghans lacked the capacity to control the air space, which he said was still 50 percent controlled by the American professionals. (Pajhwok)

(14) Soaring Maternal...

overcome the challenge," she added.

Underage marriages, continuous pregnancies, inaccessibility to health centres, poverty and lack of health workers in far-flung areas were among major reasons of mothers' death during pregnancy.

The public health ministry, she said, had taken many initiatives and increasing the number of midwives across the country was one of them.

Deputy health minister said 13 years back there were only 467 midwives across the country while the number has risen to 4,600 now.

Habiba Surabi, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)'s advisor on women, said women in remote areas still did not have access to health services and those who had short-term training in midwifery were providing services. (Pajhwok)

(15) MoFA Claims...

Afghans abroad and call on them to address the issue.

However, the Chamber of Commerce and Industries disputes this and says the number of traders deported totals over 600.

"UAE considered them a threat to their security and that is why they have taken this decision. Government must address this problem because their \$20 million is in danger," says Azraksh Hafezi, Director of International Relations at the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries. (Tolonews)

(16) Activists Want ...

centre for security forces should also be established.

"They should create a strong and legitimate administration to tackle all problems," he said, adding that government officials should pay special attention to the province. (Pajhwok)

(17) Rampant...

groups for themselves who were equally backed by influential and

did not work properly.

In his chat with Pajhwok Afghan News, he said: "The doctors don't come to work on time. They have opened their own clinics in front of the hospitals, charging high fees and selling counterfeit drugs."

Kakar said ambulances charged extra money from residents and officials' behavior with patients was a matter of serious concern. If officials tried to investigate, he said, they would face opposition from some powerful local elders who were supporting these doctors.

Garzewan district chief claimed Dr. Najib and Dr. Munir were extremely corrupt persons in the district. He had evidence of their graft and said had written letter to the health department many times.

Imam Yaar Taqwa, Kohistan district chief, said the district had 200,000 inhabitants with only two health clinics. Experienced doctors and professional services were non-existent, he added.

Taqwa added due to lack of professional doctors and quality medicine, residents took their patients to the provincial capital, which is located at a distance of 150 kilometres. Sometimes, he said, due to heavy snowfall and road blockade their patients lose lives on way to hospital. (Pajhwok)

(18) Court Verdict ...

Farkhunda and burning her body.

Those sentenced to 16 years in jail included Ghiasuddin, Hasibullah, Akramuddin, Mohammad Imran, Abdul Fatah, Ghulam Mohammad, Mohmand and Sayed Noor Rahman. The convicts have the right to appeal the sentences. (Pajhwok)

(19) Pakistan Envoy...

assistance for the socio-economic uplift of Afghanistan, particularly Allama Iqbal Arts Faculty in University of Kabul, Liaquat Ali Khan Engineering University in Bulk, Naeb Aminullah Khan Hospital, Logar 400-Bed Jinnah Hospital in Kabul, Nishtar Kidney Center in Jalalabad, and the provision of three thousand scholarships for the Afghan students.

The ambassador noted relationship between the two countries was improving in all fields but, unfortunately certain elements were trying to undermine the efforts made by the leadership of two countries for enhancing the relationship.

He added that such forces would not be able to spoil the friendly relations between the two neighbours.

Earlier, Director General, Frontier Works Organization (FWO), Maj. Gen. Muhammad Afzal, Ambassador Syed Abrar Husain, Acting Governor Nangarhar Muhammad Hanif Gardiwal and Deputy Minister Public Works, Noor Mengal jointly inaugurated the commencement of the work on the road. (Pajhwok)

(20) Badakhshan's ...

grassroots outreach education and marketing program in Badakhshan is addressing malnutrition in the region. About Badakhshan:

1. 54 children have died due to ARI / Pneumonia in 4 remote and inaccessible districts of Badakhshan province this year.

2. The area lacks well developed infrastructure. Medicine, blankets and children's clothes are transported by truck, horse and on foot to the districts. Accessing this area is difficult because of the snowy conditions and high altitude.

3. Emergency medical assistance is provided by mobile medical teams. (PR)

(21) ACB and Alokozay ..

ACB Chairman Shafiqullah Stanikzai said: "The money will be spent on programs and matches for the National Cricket team and for training the U-16 players."

This comes shortly after the Alokozay Group signed a 15 year agreement with Afghanistan's Football Federation to improve facilities and help train players in the country. (Tolonews)

(22) Kerry Warns...

the North said it had successfully test-fired an SLBM, defying a UN ban on its use or testing of ballistic missile technology.

A fully-developed SLBM capability would take the North Korean nuclear threat to a new level, al-

lowing deployment far beyond the Korean peninsula and the potential to retaliate in the event of a nuclear attack.

In a scathing attack on Kim Jong-Un, Kerry said his leadership was one of the most "egregious displays... anywhere on the planet" of reckless disregard for human rights. (AFP)

(23) 'Terrorists' May...

use the term foreign fighters to describe people from Europe and the Middle East who have travelled to fight with IS in Iraq and Syria.

Stoltenberg cited NATO's own efforts to work with countries in North Africa and the Middle East to tackle the root causes of the migrant problem. (AFP)

(24) Assad, Under...

for the boys to clear the area because there are lots mines," the commander said.

The offensive, a joint operation with the Syrian army, is one bright spot for the Syrian leader. Over the past two months Assad has lost more of his country to a patchwork of groups that include Islamic State, which is also on the march in neighboring Iraq. (Reuters)

(25) White House...

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." (AP)

(26) Obama Puts...

police headquarters before heading to a community center to meet with youth and law enforcement and give a speech. "I'll highlight steps all cities can take to maintain trust between the brave law enforcement officers who put their lives on the line, and the communities they're sworn to serve and protect," Obama said in his weekly address out Saturday. (AP)

(27) US Navy's...

The George Washington will conduct exercises in the region before heading home, Alexander said, but he wouldn't specify whether any would be in the contested waters of the South China Sea.

Sailors in dress whites lined the 1,092-foot- (333-meter-) long flight deck, and huge American and Japanese flags hung in the massive, open bays below. Families of crew members, some tearing up, waved American flags and held up handmade posters on shore. (AP)

(28) Iran FM ...

based on mutual interests and respect.

He emphasized that improving stability and security in the Middle East would bring favorable results for Europe. (Agencies)

(29) Nigerian Military...

Borno state said the strategic town of Marte, near Lake Chad where the four countries meet, had again fallen into Boko Haram hands.

At least 55 people were killed last week in two raids on villages near the Borno state capital, Maiduguri -- the first attacks in and around the city for three months.

Olukolade said in a separate statement that Marte had been "deserted", with no military presence for "quite some time" because of the push against the militants in Sambisa Forest. (AFP)

(30) EBRD to...

Republic, to electricity hungry Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Previously, as part of its focus on the electricity sector in Tajikistan, the EBRD arranged a financing package of US \$75 million for modernization of the Qairokkum Hydropower Plant in the north of the country. The project will include an innovative climate resilience mechanism. (TCA)