

### (1) Kabul, Moscow

Kabelov conveyed warm wishes of Russian President Vladimir Putin to Ashraf Ghani and stressed on joining hands against terror. Ghani underlined the need that both countries should step up bilateral contacts to deal with emerging challenges.

Earlier on Tuesday, the Russian Interior Minister Vladimir Kolokoltsev called on President Ashraf Ghani at the Presidential Palace.

A statement from the Presidential Palace in Kabul said Afghanistan and the Russian Federation agreed that terrorism was an international phenomenon that needed more cooperation and joint strategy to be eliminated. (Pajhwok)

### (2) Stanikzai Nomination

Burhanuddin Rabani, former head of the High Peace Council (HPC). Also, Munir Farhad, the governor's spokesman, confirmed views expressed by Noor who is also the executive director of Jamiat-i-Islami political party.

He said nomination of Stanikzai for defence portfolio was against the national norms and insult to the blood of Jamiat leadership. Stanikzai was injured twice in two suicide attacks. He was present at the house of former HPC chief when a suicide bomber posing as peace messenger detonated his bomb concealed in his turban.

On Tuesday, the unity government has nominated Masoom Stanikzai as defence minister-designate and appointed Gen. Qadam Shah as Chief of Army Staff, replacing Gen. Sher Mohammad Khan Karimi.

A source while speaking on condition of anonymity said the decision had been taken after consultations between the president and the chief executive officer.

He said a formal announcement in this regard would be made soon and Stanikzai would be introduced to the parliament for a trust vote. (Pajhwok)

### (3) Past Govt.

Wali told Pajhwok Afghan News during an exclusive interview. She said the previous government though provided women with vocational trainings which did not yield fruitful results.

"Some projects are being implemented in the province but the schemes have no benefits rather than a negative impact on women who are caretakers of their families," she rued.

Malalai Wali said there were projects that also had positive and lasting impact on women's lives but in general, she said, much more needed to be done to change women's fate for better.

"Literacy programmes, opportunity for women to study in universities, health facilities and working opportunity in public and private offices have been provided for women," she acknowledged.

She added that facilities in academic, cultural, economic and political sectors have also had positive impact on women lives. (Pajhwok)

### (4) Lt. Gen.

Jacobson said the Afghan forces fought well in the ongoing fighting season. "The Afghan forces are well trained and well equipped and have become professional and they will emerge successful from the fighting season."

The deputy commander said Afghan national security forces had conducted successful operations over the past few months, when they reached for the first time some areas where they had not reached in the past.

Referring to the Operation Zulfikar in southern Helmand province, Lt. Gen. Jacobson said it was the first successful offensive that the Afghans planned and carried out on their own.

Besides other achievements, he said, the operation had resulted in detecting thousands of landmines, a rare example seen in the past. "The Afghan forces have complete ability to protect their country and people."

To another question about the conflict heading to the north, Jacobson said the insurgents targeted areas where they expected more gains and successes.

But the Afghan forces proved their worth in northern Kunduz province, where they not only pushed back attacks but also cleansed many areas of rebels, he said. (Pajhwok)

### (5) Khamenei Rules

online publication that covers the Middle East.

Khamenei's order was initially issued in December 2014, but it was revealed publicly Tuesday. The

move was endorsed by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, according to Rouhani spokesman Mohammad-Bagher Nobakht. "This is a thought-out order and the administration knows it to be its responsibility to carry out the order of the supreme leader with precision and in its entirety. The Ministry of Education also will perform its responsibility on this order," Nobakht said.

About three million Afghan refugees are in neighboring Iran, with most of them coming in the last 35 years, when civil war, an invasion from Russia and the U.S. war led to instability. Hundreds of thousands of children will be impacted by the ayatollah's ruling. Some 350,000 Afghan schoolchildren legally attend school in Iran while about 500,000 aren't in school. "The problem is that their identity has not yet been determined," said Rouhani adviser Alireza Rajaei.

Iranians have similar debates over immigration as other countries, including the belief that Afghan refugees are stealing their jobs and causing unemployment among Iranians. But Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli, Iran's interior minister, said that was not the case. "The jobs that Afghans have taken are not the type of work that would be done by Iranian laborers; therefore, the job market has not been affected for Iranians," he said. Tasnim also reported that province with little or no Afghan refugees have higher unemployment rates than those with a sizeable Afghan population. (Agencies)

### (6) Afghan Soil

community not to call Afghanistan a safe haven for terrorists. Afghans have their own history and will never allow anybody to rise up from Afghanistan and pose a threat to world. But everyone should shoulder their responsibility in this fight," he reminded.

In 2014, he added, the enemies faced with heavy defeats and their new "Azmi" operation has yielded nothing but defeat and bad name for them. He added conflict was ongoing in all provinces and security forces had eliminated many terrorists' sanctuaries.

He asked international forces to further strengthen Afghan army in order to flush out remnants of terrorists. (Pajhwok)

### (7) U.S Reaffirms

Secretary Carter's verbal commitments would translate into tangible and effective support for the Afghan forces. "Ashton is serious regarding the war against insurgency; I know him, I am confident he will seriously act toward the issue," MP Zekirya Zekirya told TOLONews. "It is hoped that aid will be provided to Afghanistan in a comprehensive manner," MP Syed Ali Kazemi said.

The U.S. has had troops on the ground in Afghanistan for over 14 years, marking the U.S' longest war in its history, as well as one of its most expensive, with the total bill estimated at nearly one trillion USD. The U.S military has suffered a total of about 2,300 casualties in its fight against the Taliban and other militant groups in Afghanistan.

On the other hand, some 32,000 Afghan military personnel and civilians have lost their lives during the war that began in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. As the U.S and NATO coalition gradually withdraw, however, Afghan casualty rates have seen increases, with renewed offensives by the Taliban in various parts of the country, including in traditionally more secure northern provinces. (Tolonews)

### (8) Abdullah Demands

Ashraf Ghani and NDS Chief Rahmatullah Nabil to discuss the matter.

It was during this meeting that he expressed his reservations about certain clauses within the agreement. Among these were matters relating to the training of NDS personnel and joint efforts to fight separatist movements.

Abdullah's deputy Mohammad Khan said that the CEO had been aware of the agreement in general but that additional clauses had been added without his knowledge. "According to my information his Excellency Abdullah was consulted only on the draft agreement, but he remained completely unaware of some articles which were included in the agreement later on," Khan said.

"For instance the agreement cites war against the separatist movement, but it doesn't make sense, I don't understand which separatist and where, because we do not have separatists in Afghanistan," he said.

In addition a number of MPs have denounced the agreement calling it shameful. They have called for it to be revoked.

"Every Afghan family has offered a sacrifice as a result of suicide attacks and Pakistan's military forces are accountable for this and no one can deny this reality, now you [law-makers] have the authority to reject the agreement," Wolesi Jirga speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahim said.

"I strongly condemn this shameful agreement in strongest possible terms," MP Shukria Barakzai said. Parliament's internal security commission meanwhile plants to summon Nabil to appear before them to answer questions and clarify the details of the MoU.

Meanwhile, Karzai on Wednesday added his voice to the matter and expressed his concerns over the signing of the MoU. (Tolonews)

### (9) President Stresses

operation, rights of citizens and refugees, human rights and women's international affairs.

The president hailed the plan and stressed meritocracy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Our government believes in equality, no Afghan is superior or inferior and this should become a culture in Afghanistan diplomatic representation in foreign countries."

He said Afghanistan missions abroad should serve people as their servants and stressed the need for assessing the capacity of Foreign Ministry officials. He said affairs of some Afghan embassies needed basic reforms.

The president said foreign policy was actually internal policy meaning that foreign policy should not be confined to a few individuals.

He said those involved in spearheading foreign policy should be familiar with internal policies and the cabinet members and provincial governors should be aware of the country's foreign policy.

Ghani said the country's foreign policy constituted the national interest and an active foreign policy could result in bringing peace and stability.

The president also said Afghan refugees aboard, particularly in Pakistan and Iran, should be extended support in addressing their problems.

He said the rights of Afghan workers in Arab countries should be safeguarded and they should be facilitated in finding jobs. (Pajhwok)

### (10) WJ Asks

against terrorism, averting possible threats and exchange of intelligence information.

Pakistani envoy told Pajhwok Zahir Saadat, a lawmaker from Panjsher province, said with signing of this agreement Pakistan tried to cover up its anti-Afghanistan propaganda. He predicted the agreement would have no positive outcome for Afghanistan except miseries.

Another lawmaker Shukria Barakzai strongly criticised the MoU and demanded revoking of the agreement immediately. She said signing such agreement meant Afghanistan recognized the Durand Line as legal border between the two countries.

Speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrihim said Afghanistan suffered the most due to Pakistan's hidden policies and middling in Afghan affairs. He said Pakistan was solely responsible for killing of innocent Afghans in bombing and other incidents of violence.

"The agreement is not in the interest of Afghanistan. It will not end the ongoing wave of violence in Afghanistan," the speaker noted.

Earlier, Ajmal Obaid Abidi, presidential spokesman had said: "The agreement was not something new between Pakistan and Afghanistan. In the past also, both the agencies had such agreements. Now the major focus of the agreement is on fighting terrorism." (Pajhwok)

### (11) Karzai Shows

Intelligence - National Directorate of Security (NDS) personnel.

The Afghan intelligence and ISI will jointly interrogate the detained insurgents based on the agreement, the officials said.

However, the NDS officials rejected that the NDS operatives would be trained and equipped by Pakistan based on the latest agreement between the spy agencies.

NDS spokesman Haseeb Sediqi said the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with Pakistan is not against the national interests of the country and the agreement was concluded based on previous mutual cooperation between the two nations. (KP)

### (12) 41 Attacks on

in 41 incidents in Afghanistan and deliberately killed over 45 health workers, primarily polio vaccinators, in Nigeria and Pakistan.

"The UN General Assembly called on member countries in December to take concrete steps to improve protection for health workers," said Leonard Rubenstein, chair of the coalition, which included more than two dozen nongovernmental groups.

"However, ongoing targeted attacks on health facilities and violence against health workers, and the absence of a robust system of accountability for them, indicates that much more needs to be done," Rubenstein added.

The World Health Organization should fast-track its initiative to develop systems to collect and disseminate information on attacks on medical facilities and personnel, HRW and the coalition said. They also urged governments and non-state armed groups to do more to prevent attacks and to hold accountable those responsible.

The report was released in conjunction with an online map of attacks on health care produced by Physicians for Human Rights.

"Instead of being protected, medical care is actually a target," said Donna McKay, executive director of Physicians for Human Rights, a member of the coalition.

"Attacks on health facilities and workers violate international law and interfere with fundamental protections of the right to health," said Joe Amon, health and human rights director at Human Rights Watch, a member of the coalition. (Pajhwok)

### (13) Balkh

established a gas power station at a cost of \$75 million in the province. Head of the journalists' union in the northern zone, Gulab Shah Bawar, who organised the conference, told Pajhwok Afghan News the event was aimed at drawing the media's attention to the importance of electricity.

He said media could play an important role in creating awareness among the people to save energy and realise its value.

He said the Afghan media had the responsibility to encourage foreign companies for investment in the country's energy sector.

He said like Balkh, other provinces of Afghanistan had the same natural resources which could be used to produce the renewable energy. (Pajhwok)

### (14) 15 Afghan Doctors

Pakistani envoy told Pajhwok Afghan News Islamabad would pledge its commitment to provide necessary equipments for the facility.

He said Pakistan would train 15 Afghan doctors in the field of kidney and would equip the hospital till the completion of training of doctors.

He said earlier they also trained some Afghan doctors, but after completing their training the doctors got jobs in other places of Afghanistan and refused to join the Kidney Hospital.

Deputy Governor Mohammad Hanif Gardiwal said he held negotiations with Pakistani officials about the Kidney Hospital and the Pakistan ambassador assured his complete support to make the hospital functional. (Pajhwok)

### (15) Badakhshanis

soybeans (5.25 metric tons). Our 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)

### (16) Badghis Border

Afghan border police soldiers were however killed in the offensive, Jahed said.

There are no details of civilian casualties yet.

Taliban has yet to comment. (Tolonews)

### (17) Iran, Afghanistan

shuttling between the two neighboring countries.

Mansouri called for using Chabahar port facilities in Oman Sea and

said that Afghanistan and Central Asian states would be able to transit their imported and exported goods via this important port.

He also announced establishment of the working group to follow up implementation of agreements signed during the fifth joint commission meeting on bilateral road transport cooperation and added that the working group would present its reports on a monthly basis. (IRNA)

### (18) Top Pentagon

2013, there was still plastic wrapping on some of the chairs. At one point, a U.S. military officer suggested turning the facility into something the troops could use, like a recreational center or movie theater.

Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., the top Democrat on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, called the facility "one of the most outrageous, deliberate, and wasteful misuses of taxpayer dollars in Afghanistan we've ever seen."

But as Kafkaesque as the saga of the construction of the 64K building already was, SIGAR reported that its investigation ran into its own hall of mirrors when it tried to question military officials about what went wrong.

First, SIGAR reported that the Department of Defense launched its own investigation into the facility in May 2013. This was the one that first found the facility had never been occupied and suggested that the building be turned into a movie theater -- one of a few suggestions that were removed from the final report, SIGAR says.

A month after that DOD report was finalized, Gen. Joseph Dunford, then-commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, requested a second review of the facility because he apparently foresaw the potential for controversy. (ABC NEWS)

### (19) 29 Rebels

A security force wishing anonymity said seven Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers were killed in the battle.

Haji Janan, a local elder, said a number of ANA soldiers were killed and Taliban seized a huge cache of arms and ammunition.

At least 13 militants were killed and 22 others wounded another gun battle in Musa Qala district where and five hideouts of insurgents were smashed, a statement from the 215 Military Corps stated.

Qari Yousuf Ahmadi, Taliban spokesperson, claimed killing five policemen and 23 ANA soldiers in the gun battle in Musa Qala. (Pajhwok)

### (20) Civilians Among 20

However, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid claimed killing nine soldiers and wounding 13 others during the clash. He said three armored vehicles of security forces were also destroyed in the fight.

Mujahid confirmed the death of only one rebel and injuries to four others.

A local elder Arbab Ghulam said: Security forces and rebels were fighting head to head. Militants were pushed back and the area is currently under the control of security forces."

Ten civilians were killed and 28 others injured during the recent operation in less than three weeks in Baghlan-i-Markazi district, he said, adding that most of civilian casualties resulted from fire by rebels and Afghan forces. (Pajhwok)

### (21) Govt. Urged

further added that the leadership of the Unity of Hezb-e-Islami Councils call on Afghan government to prevent signing such agreements in the future which are against the national interests of the country.

This comes as the former Afghan President Hamid Karzai has said he is deeply concerned with the signing of Memorandum of Understanding between the Afghan Intelligence and Pakistan's Military Intelligence - Inter Services Intelligence (ISI).

The office of the former president issued a statement calling on unity government leaders to immediately cancel the agreement. (KP)

### (22) Kabul Court

Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) last week Khatera urged the authorities to try her father for repeatedly raping her during the past several years.

Khatera further added that her father was a cruel person who repeatedly raped her since she was only 12-year-old and she informed her relatives and people but no one

paid attention to her plea.

The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission strongly condemned the brutal rape of the young woman and called on the relevant authorities to immediately take actions against the perpetrator. (KP)

### (23) Book Exhibition

with computer and about 500 others with book reading in his center. Abdulkarim Sharnwal, a teacher, said that he had studied several different books in Lincoln center in last two years. (Pajhwok)

### (24) Slow-Paced Wor

and take more time to reach the destination. "We spend four hours traveling on Maidan Wardak highway due to poor road condition, but it will take only one and a half hour if the road is asphalted," he said.

But he criticized the slow paced work on the road and said the government should pay urgent attention to the problem.

Mohammad Raza Khatibi, director of the construction company, said the cause of slow-paced work on the project occurred because of lack of budget that should be paid by Italy and existence of problems in relevant Afghan departments.

A public works supervisor Eng. Mohammad Amin insisted the implementation of the road construction project was ongoing according to the agreement between the company and the ministry. (Pajhwok)

### (25) N. Korea

were "strongly modified", including reflections of the missile exhaust flame in the water which did not line up with the missile itself.

North Korea, which regularly threatens to destroy the United States, had a record of offering faked proof to claim advances in missile technology, Schiller and Schmucker said, such as poorly built mockups of missiles on display at military parades in 2012 and 2013.

The pair agreed with analysis posted by experts on the websites 38north.org and armscontrolwonk.com that the missile was likely launched from a specially designed submerged barge, and not from a submarine. (Reuters)

### (26) N. Korea Cla

Commission (NDC) claimed that the country's nuclear arsenal was already highly developed.

"It has been a long time since we began miniaturising and diversifying our means of nuclear strike," the commission said in a statement carried by the North's official KCNA news agency. "We have also reached the stage where the highest accuracy rate is guaranteed, not only for short- and medium-range missiles but long-range missiles as well," the NDC said. (AFP)

### (27) U.S. Willing

grams "have changed over time, and they will continue to change over time to reflect a reality, whether that reality is on the ground in Cuba or in the United States."

The programs include courses in journalism and information technology at the U.S. mission in Havana. The United States sees them as normal diplomatic functions, but Cuban President Raul Castro said last week that they were "illegal" training for government opponents. The official said the programs have already been adapted but the United States would not halt them because they were the most direct way of supporting ordinary Cubans. (Reuters)

### (28) IS Learns

"This is a lesson for us. We consider what happened as a lesson not to underestimate our enemy regardless who he is," said one of the group's fighters inside Syria reached by Reuters via the Internet, who declined to be named.

The fighters are not allowed to speak to the media and face severe punishment if they flout the rule. U.S. Delta Force reached deep into eastern Syria in the early hours of Saturday for their ground assault, departing from their usual reliance on air strikes alone to hit the Islamic State, which holds swathes of both Iraq and Syria. (Reuters)

### (29) Iraqi Forces

to retake the city, where Sunni Islamic State forces have taken over tanks and artillery and large amounts of ammunition abandoned by fleeing Iraqi forces. The Anbar police chief, Kadhum al-Fahdawi, said reinforcements were arriving as Iraqi forces dug in. There was however no indication that the counterattack was imminent. (Reuters)