

(1) Southwestern...

geographic distribution of poppy cultivation in Afghanistan has emerged, consolidated and adapted to state-building and counter-narcotics efforts.

Section 4 focuses on the settlement of the former desert lands of the southwest. It uses the results of geospatial analysis and household interviews to chart the different patterns of settlement in the former deserts of Helmand and Bakwa. (Pajhwok)

(2) Afghanistan...

Dam, the new Afghan parliament building, Zaranj-Delaram highway, and some other projects are among the key investments India has done so far in the country.

The government of India pledged a fresh aid package of \$1 billion to support the reconstruction projects in Afghanistan during a visit by President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani in late 2016. (KP)

(3) Herat Drought...

Ghulam Nabi, 75, is a resident of Qaisar district of Faryab province and has lost everything.

"Some of our children are sick, a few were hit by cars on the roads, some are wounded, these are all the problems we are facing because of the drought; the drought has left us with nothing," said Nabi.

"We are destroyed, for the sake of God, do something for us and help us," said Mohammad Ayaz, a resident of Bala Murghab district of Badghis

Laal Bibi, 40, is a widow from Faryab who is also struggling to feed her two children.

"Yesterday I went to a home and washed their clothes, they gave me 200 AFs and I bought some food for my children," said Laal Bibi.

According to reports, in the past ten days over 600 families have been displaced from their areas due to droughts and floods in various regions of the country.

Last year the number of displaced due to war was an estimated 75,000 people. (Tolo news)

(4) Indian Director...

picked up the language by bingeing on Hindi films aired on their TV sets - tense political climates have led to the closure of several theatres in the country. Inevitably, Hindi movies are only infrequently aired in Afghanistan theatres.

Medhekar said: "The film traces the roots of the Bioscopewala back to his home country. I thought it would be befitting to screen it there. I'm keenly awaiting a positive response. It would give me satisfaction, [a belief] that, in the end, the Bioscopewala does find his way back home."

He says his letter states that Afghanistan has been portrayed in a positive light in the film.

In the past, several Hindi films have been shot in Afghanistan, including Feroz Khan's Dharmatma (1975) - which also starred Denzongpa - Amitabh Bachchan and Sridevistar KhudaGawah (1992) and Kabir Khan's Kabul Express (2006) among others. (Tolo news)

(5) Family Denies...

Tableegh (religious preaching), such hearsay regarding his whereabouts are spread," Zeeshan Aziz told VOA.

Aziz retired in 2005 after serving with the Pakistan army for 37 years. While Musharraf was the military chief, Aziz had been promoted to be the director general of military operations and the chief of the general staff.

Musharraf has been living in exile, avoiding appearances in several court cases pending against him, including charges of murder and treason. Aziz also authored a book after his retirement in which

he criticized policies of the former army chief.

Allegations that Pakistan's military covertly supports Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan in launching attacks against U.S. and Afghan forces have been a primary source of Islamabad's tensions with Kabul and the United States.

Pakistani leaders reject those charges, saying they are baseless and politically motivated. Officials maintain the country has rendered "unprecedented" sacrifices and has suffered tens of thousands of deaths of its citizens, including security forces in the war on terrorism, and in helping international efforts to stabilize Afghanistan. (VoA)

(6) Afghan Airlines...

make themselves ready," ACAA head Mahmoud Shah Habibi said. Officials of a number of private airlines meanwhile said unhealthy competition of foreign airlines in Afghanistan has created problems for them.

Currently there are two airlines in the country that said they are prepared to start flights to Europe.

Airline officials said they have new airplanes and are ready to fly to European countries.

"One of the challenges that a number of airlines are facing is the policy of open air space which allows foreign airlines to fly to Afghanistan," Ramin Yourish, an official from Kam Air said. (Tolo news)

(7) Taliban Warns...

21 in the southern province of Kandahar, officials said gunmen killed five members of a demining team that was clearing a segment for a planned gas pipeline. A sixth worker was missing following the attack in Maiwand district.

The deminers were working for the TAPI project intended to transport natural gas along an 1,800-kilometer route from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan to Pakistan and India, the officials said.

Zia Durrani, spokesman for the provincial police chief, said Taliban militants were behind the attack.

A Taliban spokesman said the incident was being investigated and that the victims were not wearing the usual uniform worn by TAPI workers.

The main Taliban organization in Afghanistan has declared its support for TAPI, calling it an "important project" for the country. (RFE/RL)

(8) Snow Kills...

all vegetables and crops.

Separately in Maidan Wardak province, Hussain Ali Balegh, a member of the provincial council, told Pajhwok that the Behsud district received 20 centimeter of snow during the past two days, making it hard to drive.

He said the snowfall had also affected people and crops in the province. (Pajhwok)

(9) Five Working...

areas of southern Afghanistan where armed groups with shifting loyalties operate and security is highly uncertain.

A Taliban spokesman said the incident was being investigated and said the victims were not wearing the usual uniform worn by TAPI workers. (Reuters)

(10) Lift Ban on...

people associated with this business faced multiple problems.

Abdul Ghani Musamim, the governor's spokesman, acknowledged problems faced by carpenters. The ban had been imposed in line with a presidential order, he explained.

The carpentry business has suffered a setback due to the ban. Thousands of people in the mountainous province are associated with carpentry. (Pajhwok)

(11) Turkey's IHH...

that the aid will be distributed in nine provinces, particularly in capital Kabul.

IHH will also host iftars (fast-breaking dinners) for 1,200 people, give zakat to 480 people and distribute Eid clothes to 1,000 orphans, Bazer added.

Baser said the IHH regularly provides support to 2,000 orphans with sponsor families, and also help those families in various ways. (AA)

(12) 4 Takhar Protesters...

fired on us, some protesters wounded, we want the soldiers who fired at protesters to be punished and the road would remain close until our demand is met."

Governor Spokesman Sunnatullah Taimour confirmed the incident and added ANA convoy was going through the area and the protester blocked the road on the convoy thus soldiers opened fire at the protesters.

He said four protesters had been injured in the incident who had been evacuated to the hospitals and their health condition was stable. (Pajhwok)

(13) Pakistan, Afghanistan...

in their declaration.

Ghani meanwhile said that the Indonesia conference in Jakarta was a good chance for the Taliban.

Ghani also welcomed the Ulema's stance, clarity and decision and called on other Ulema members of the Islamic world to play a pivotal role in maintaining peace and eliminating terrorism.

The president has endorsed such meetings of Ulema to end the imposed battle of Afghanistan and for regional stability. (Tolo news)

(14) US Sanctions on...

Afghanistan's national interests.

"We as an independent state will try to have good trade and transit ties with all the countries through different routes considering our national interests," MoCI spokesman Musafir Quqandi said.

"Chabahar Port is a very important port for Afghanistan in terms of trade. It can be a good alternative for most of the ports that Afghanistan uses," Mohammad Muhsin Amiri, an investor said.

Sources meanwhile told TOLOne's that President Ashraf Ghani will soon meet with ambassadors of Iran and India and a representative from the US to discuss the issues around Chabahar port.

Afghanistan sees Chabahar port as the best alternative to Pakistan for transit of goods.

The CEO's office said they hope the tension between the US and Iran will not adversely affect Afghanistan-Iran trade ties.

"We hope that the US-Iran issue will not have a negative impact on our trade ties with Iran," CEO deputy spokesman Jawed Faisal said.

Banks and financial institutions have also been affected and some economic analysts said these institutions will not support the project due to sanctions.

The Indian-backed Chabahar port complex is being developed as part of a new transportation corridor for land-locked Afghanistan that could potentially open the way for millions of dollars in trade and cut its dependence on Pakistan. (Tolo news)

(15) Another 61...

organs would be appointed as governors, deputy governors, analysts and advisors at the advisory board of national security so that the Afghan army leadership could benefit from their expertise.

It is worth mentioning that President Ashraf Ghani signed the retirement of 162 military generals last year. (Pajhwok)

(16) Waziristan Trade...

Another jirga will convene 10 days after EidulFitr to identify an appropriate site for the office. (Pajhwok)

(17) Small Constituencies...

against the Election Law and would yield negative results in elections.

The source said minimizing electoral districts would also help lawmakers and their constituents to be in close contact and would also help repel negative impacts of the single-non-transferable vote (SNTV) system.

Shehla Farid, a political science lecturer in Kabul University, said any decision about changes in the election processes should have been made earlier as she deemed it illegal to change the electoral system at this stage.

She said the IEC had previously shared its plan on minimizing electoral districts with the Presidential Palace, but the palace was yet decide on that.

Farid said minimizing electoral districts at this stage could not be implemented despite being beneficial for people and prevention of fraud due to security problems.

However, she said women would be major victim of minimizing electoral districts as people were still not interested in allowing their women to vote.

She said both the Constitution and the Election Law determined women's seats in the elections.

"Minimizing electoral districts is beneficial in provinces where people of different ethnic groups live", she said.

She said minimizing electoral districts might be required in a limited number of provinces, not in all.

The IEC decision comes as 20 political parties and groups held a joint meeting, demanding greater share for political parties in the electoral process.

They had said that votes of each electoral district should be transferable inside lists for political parties and coalitions. (Pajhwok)

DPRK Refuses to Grant S.Korean Reporters Access to Nuke Site Dismantlement

SEOUL - The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on Monday refused to receive a list of South Korean journalists who could witness the dismantlement of its nuclear test site, Seoul's unification ministry said.

Unification Ministry spokesman Baik Tae-hyun told a press briefing that the South Korean side tried to send the list of journalists who will witness the dismantlement of the DPRK's Punggye-ri nuclear test site via the communications hotline at the border village of Panmunjom.

The DPRK side continued to deny receiving the list, clouding the South Korean journalists' participation in the coverage of the dismantlement scheduled for Wednesday to Friday, the spokesman said.

Pyongyang has not responded to the unification ministry's comments.

On May 12, the DPRK invited journalists from China, Russia, the United States, Britain and South Korea to cover the dismantlement of the Punggye-ri nuclear test site, where Pyongyang conducted all of its six nuclear tests.

The DPRK's refusal came after Pyongyang canceled high-level talks with Seoul last week over South Korea-U.S. air combat exercises, codenamed Max Thunder.

The air drills allegedly involve about 100 aircrafts, including the F-22 Raptor stealth fighter jets. The radar-evading fighters are mobilized usually for an attack purpose. South Korea's defense ministry claimed that the air drills are defensive in nature. (Xinhua)

Belgium Goes to World Cup without Nainggolan

BRUSSELS — Belgium left midfielder Radja Nainggolan out of its World Cup squad on Monday despite a standout season with Champions League semifinalist Roma.

Belgium coach Roberto Martinez has long had a difficult relationship with the stormy midfielder but said he left him out purely for tactical reasons, saying Nainggolan was not the kind of player to take to a long tournament if he was only given a secondary position.

"I don't think Radja is a player to be used in a small role in any group," Martinez said. "We all know he has a very important role at club level and I don't feel that we can give him that."

The 30-year-old Nainggolan announced his retirement from international soccer almost immediately afterward. He made 30 appearances for Belgium and played at the 2016 European championships in France.

"Very reluctantly my international career comes to an end," Nainggolan wrote on his Instagram account. "Being yourself can be bothering."

After being called up for a warm-up game in March against Saudi Arabia, expectations had been that Nainggolan would be on the final roster.

Martinez said he traveled to Rome to explain his exclusion in person, but he declined to elaborate on that encounter.

Instead of immediately going for the final squad of 23, Martinez kept it to a wider selection of 28 considering injury worries concerning players like Jordan Lukaku, Romelu Lukaku, Michy Batshuayi and Thomas Vermaelen.

Thibaut Courtois, Vincent Kompany, Kevin De Bruyne and Eden Hazard were all named in the squad, which will face Portugal on June 2 before the team is cut to 23.

For the past two years, Martinez has never found a starting spot for Nainggolan. He was often a substitute while midfielders like Axel Witsel, who has moved to the Chinese league, continued to play. Compounding the player's on-field issues were off-field reports of ill-discipline.

However, Nainggolan was excellent for Roma in Serie A this season and in the unexpected run in the Champions League, where the team fell one goal short in the semifinals against Liverpool. (AP)

Beijing Sees April Pollution Levels Rise as Industry Curbs End

BEIJING - Pollution levels in China's capital Beijing rose by 20.8 percent year-on-year in April as industries, including steel, ramped up output following the lifting of winter curbs, according to official data released on Monday.

The average concentration across the city of small, breathable particles known as PM 2.5 was 64 micrograms per cubic meter last month, the Beijing Municipal Environmental Protection Bureau said on Monday.

The figure is above the average of 58 micrograms per cubic meter for 2017, while in January to April 2018, PM 2.5 levels in Beijing averaged at 59 micrograms per cubic meter, down 22.4 percent on the year, the bureau said.

Beijing, which was the top performer among 28 cities in northern China during October-February in terms of lowering PM2.5 levels, is targeting a reduction in its annual average for 2018 as part of the country's ongoing war on smog. (Reuters)