

(1) Deadly Drone ...

said that although Afghanistan had known about the planned attack, Pakistan had not been informed.

Pakistan media reports appeared to concur and by mid-day Sunday indicated that Pakistan had not known about the planned attack. Dawn News said Pakistan was "seeking clarification" about the drone strike against the Afghan Taliban leader.

Quoting Pakistan's Foreign Office spokesman Nafees Zakaria, Dawn News reported Zakaria confirmed having "seen the reports," but said Islamabad was "seeking clarification."

He reportedly said in a statement that Pakistan wanted the Taliban to return to the negotiating table to end the long war in Afghanistan.

"Military action is not a solution," he added.

On Saturday, the U.S. conducted the air strike ordered by U.S. President Barack Obama, against a vehicle believed to be carrying Mansour.

The incident took place in the remote border area of Baluchistan in Pakistan. (Tolnews)

(2) Iran, India, ...

boosting connectivity with Afghanistan and central Asia.

Afghanistan's Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Karzai said in April that Tehran, Kabul, and New Delhi are going to finalize the deal on the development of Iran's Chabahar port very soon. Speaking to reporters at the Heart of Asia Conference in New Delhi, Karzai said the joint project is an important step towards promoting trade and investment ties among the three countries.

Meantime, Board Member of Chabahar Free Trade Zone Abdol Rahim Kordi said China is getting ready to build an industrial town in the port city of Chabahar Southeast of Iran.

Speaking to reporters, Rahim Kordi said a delegation of Cock-erill Maintenance and Ingénierie visited the port city of Chabahar to launch the Chinese industrial town.

According to the Iranian official, the industrial town will have 20 industrial units among others.

Chabahar is a free port on the coast of the Gulf of Oman. It is situated on the Makran Coast of the Sistan and Baluchistan province and is officially designated as a free trade and industrial zone by the Iranian government.

Due to its free trade zone status, the city has increased in significance in international trade. (FNA)

(3) Govt. Close...

contrary to the country's laws would be provided to the HIA, something the government maintained on occasions of talks with its opponents.

A halt to insurgency, laying down arms and accepting the Constitution were the Afghan government's basic conditions with armed opposition groups willing to talk to the government.

Earlier, the High Peace Council and the HIA signed a draft peace agreement and the draft was handed over to the HIA's delegation to dispatch it to Hekmatyar. The finalized draft agreement was handed over to the HIA delegation during a ceremony in Kabul and the HIA delegates would pass the draft to their leader, Hekmatyar, for his remarks. (Pajhwok)

(4) Corruption...

Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan Nicholas Haysom said that Afghans want lasting peace and the UN supports the peace process. He added the peace process should reduce violence.

"We would support a peace process which would see a reduction in the levels of violence to which ordinary Afghans are exposed to. We believe Afghans who are outside of the country are entitled to come back and be reintegrated as Afghan citizens in Afghanistan, and if this agreement would promote those and I think we have to give serious consideration," he said. (Tolnews)

(5) Kabul Investigating...

He was involved in the killing of thousands of innocent people, drug trafficking and spreading fear and horror among people," the statement said.

Afghan Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, while chairing a Cabinet meeting, said an investigation

to the death of Mullah Mansour was underway.

He said Mullah Mansour was more than likely dead in the drone strike and his death would be a huge blow to the insurgent group. He hoped most Taliban members and fighters would join the peace negotiation in the absence of Mansour.

A senior Taliban leader confirmed to The Associated Press that Mansour had been killed in a drone strike near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

US Secretary of State John Kerry, speaking during a visit to Myanmar, repeatedly referred to Mansour in the past tense.

"Mansour posed a continuing imminent threat to US personnel in Afghanistan, Afghan civilians, Afghan security forces and members of Resolute Support," Kerry said. "Peace is what we want. Mansour was a threat to that effort."

Kerry called for a post-Mansour Taliban to engage in serious peace negotiations with the Kabul government, saying, "It is time for Afghans to stop fighting and to start building a real future together." (Pajhwok)

(6) Expanded ...

Dr. Humayun Qayumi and Abdul Salam Rahimi, head of the administrative office of the President are accompanying President Ghani during the visit. (KP)

(7) Senate Returns ...

"Government wants to shift the burden to parliament especially Meshrano Jirga, but we are not ready to take the responsibility."

The Senate chairman said he had already said no one had the right to prevent implementation of development schemes, but electricity should be distributed to Bamyan and all provinces, insisting on uniform development.

Senator Mohammad Alam Ezidary from central Panjsher province said the investigation team was yet to present its findings on the matter.

He said the government should implement projects keeping in view people's needs and demands.

However, Senator Mohammad Hassan Hotak opposed returning the documents to the government. He said there might be problems in the documents, which needed an assessment. "Technical parts of the documents should be assessed in order to be clear for all."

On this Muslimar asked lawmakers to vote on whether to return the documents to the government or not. Of 36 lawmakers present, 33 voted in favour of returning the documents to the government and only two opposed the decision and a third raised white card. (Pajhwok)

(8) Senate Throws ...

house of parliament member, Dr. Zalmay Zabulai, welcomed the draft agreement, but criticized AIHRC and asked the government to prevent attempts at derailing peace talks.

"Not only Hekmatyar, but many others who violated human rights are now working with the government. They should also not be forgiven. Anyone who joins the peace process, we should welcome them and should not prevent them from jointing the process," he said.

Senator Gulalai Akbari from Badakhshan also welcomed the peace agreement, saying "We will not let anybody prevent peace process in Afghanistan. Any group that drops arms should be encouraged and supported in order to encourage others to join the peace process."

Another senator, Mohammad Hassan Hotak, said all people of the country, especially the people of Uruzgan, supported the agreement between the HIA and the government.

"It has not been mentioned in the agreement what would happen to the arms and ammunition the HIA owns? Whether they will be handed over to the Afghan government or will remain with the HIA," Senator Nisar Haris said, while welcoming the deal.

Some other senators also voiced support for the agreement, asking the government to prevent elements creating problems in this regard.

No individual or group has the right to create hurdles to peace talks, first deputy chairman, Farhad Sakhi, who chaired today's meeting, said.

He asked the AIHRC to consider sensitivity of the issue and not

to create hurdles for peace talks with the HIA. (Pajhwok)

(9) UN Chief ...

the HIA was in accordance with the Afghanistan Constitution. "I thank the US for being ready to help us in this regard."

Ban said he would visit Afghanistan in near future and urged President Ghani his government should ratify the climate change convention.

President Ghani welcomed the UN demand and said he would appoint a working team to finalize the convention by the end of the current year. (Pajhwok)

(10) ACCI Concerned ...

Businessmen claim that insecurity has forced traders to take tens of millions of dollars out of Afghanistan over the last year. (Tolnews)

(11) Ministry of Public ...

MAYAT project.

Nurses are important first-line health workers providing comprehensive care to the Afghan population, especially those in remote and rural areas. They provide care to individuals, families, and communities at all levels of the Health system.

Dr. Najia Tariq, Deputy Minister of Public Health, while talking on the occasion said that improving nursing education and care is a priority for the Ministry of Public Health in its efforts to increase the accessibility of high quality, affordable, gender- and culturally-sensitive nursing care.

Robin Martz, USAID's Child Survival and Reproductive Health Team Lead, said "USAID is committed to improving nursing services in Afghanistan. Nurses are the backbone of Afghanistan's health care system and play a critical role in ensuring the resiliency of Afghanistan's healthcare system."

The USAID HEMAYAT project improves the quality of the community health nursing education pre-service program, strengthens the Afghanistan Nurses' Association, and has helped establish the Afghanistan Midwifery and Nurses Council as the midwife and nursing regulatory body. (PR)

(12) Mansour's ...

be a significant development as Afghan government troops, backed by a small contingent of U.S. and partner forces, prepare to take on an emboldened Taliban during what is expected to be a punishing summer fighting season, read the statement.

Mansour took over as the group's leader in July last year after news emerged of the death of the Taliban's former leader Mullah Omar two years earlier. (Tolnews)

(13) 23 Prisoners ...

A local police commander, who wished anonymity, said two prisoners belonging to Taliban were destroyed in Sestani and Karo square areas of Marjah district and several inmates were freed. Taliban have not yet commented on the incident that followed weeks of serious clashes in the area. (Pajhwok)

(14) Police Facing ...

attention from the government. According to Dawlatzai, the Taliban are in full control of four districts -- Baghran, Dishu, Musa Qala and Nawzad and partially control Kajaki, Sangin, Nad Ali, Greshik, Marja and Khanshin.

He complained about vacant police posts and said police did not have a special hospital and thus succumbed to death from injuries. The official reminded the minister of the issue of lacking professional police officers.

Dawlatzai informed the minister about an ongoing offensive codenamed Khanjar against rebels on the Kandahar-Helmand highway. Lawmakers and provincial council members were also present on the occasion. (Pajhwok)

(15) Personal Interests...

Afghans are seriously worried about the current situation and they may be forced into closing the doors of parliament," it warned. The statement added Afghans would not see reforms in the election system until they raised a united and consensus voice.

"Some figures inside and outside of the government dream to bring only some minor changes to the electoral system in order to deceive people," the election watchdog said.

However, the statement said the

people, civil society institutes and political parties were serious and they would not let anyone play with the nation's fate.

TEFA asked the international community to break silence and follow the electoral reform issue in line with its pledges it had held out to Afghans about a decade ago. TEFA said the international community could help accelerate the electoral reform process.

Reforming the electoral regime is part of the national unity government agreement between then candidates Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah. (Pajhwok)

(16) Mullah Mansour ...

the death of their supreme leader death in the US drone strike, but a senior Taliban leader told a foreign news agency that Mansour had been killed.

Waziri, to a question that who would replace Mansour, said it would be a mistake on the part of the Taliban to elect a new leader who would also meet the same fate.

"We welcome the Taliban to join peace process, come to Afghanistan, continue their activities in accordance the Afghanistan Constitution, take part in parliamentary activities, launch social activities here"

He said the Afghan security forces supported the peace process and were ready to face those hell-bent on fighting."

Waziri said the Afghan security forces were recently strengthened and enabled to defend the country. The security forces over the past 24 hours conducted 19 clearing operations and 87 airstrikes in different areas with positive results, he added.

He said Pakistan should not allow Afghan Taliban to reside there and direct attacks in Afghanistan from there. (Pajhwok)

(17) Looted Bowl ...

and the British Museum paid tribute to the couple, emphasizing that they had bought the antique in good faith, reported the Sunday Times.

The copper bowl is a rare survivor from the Kabul museum's collection of Islamic objects. St John Simpson, an assistant keeper at the British Museum, said: "The Islamic collections are totally gone. That's what makes this particular piece significant."

Simpson described it as "beautiful", pointing out its "very well-preserved narrative imagery", including scenes from a Persian tragic romance among fine engravings, as well as its original owner's name and date: "Owned by Mohammad Abū Taleb 1013 [30 May 1604-18 May 1605]." (Tolnews)

(18) Helmand ...

have been killed. Four commanders of the insurgents were also killed in an air strike by Afghan forces this morning (Sunday). Among the commanders killed is the Taliban's former [shadow] district chief for Marjah," he added.

Police in Helmand said that 25 militants, including two military commanders, were killed in two days of fighting in Marjah district. Security forces also recovered a number of weapons and explosive materials during the operation. (Tolnews)

(19) Afghans ...

regions to demonstrate their war morale and military might. Mansour vowed to continue Mullah Omar's doctrine of war until an Islamic government was restored and foreign troops withdrawn. As such, the Taliban carried out a number of coordinated and deadly attacks on Afghan cities including the recent attack on a security compound in Kabul which killed 64 Afghans and wounded hundreds of others.

In northern Afghanistan, the Taliban also managed to seize control of the strategic town of Kunduz in October last year as well as some districts of southern Helmand province, raising concerns among Afghans of the emergence of a more robust and repressive Taliban strategy.

A Pentagon report released earlier shows that thousands of civilian and military personnel were hurt during Mansour's short but bloody era.

What Afghan politicians and ordinary people say about Mansour's death?

Afghan CEO Abdullah Abdullah said early Sunday that if Mullah Akhtar Mansour's death is confirmed, major changes within the

ranks of the Taliban can be expected, predicting that some Taliban factions might join the peace process following their leader's death.

He said that it was possible that Mansour was killed in a targeted drone attack on Saturday in Pakistan. However he said that Mansour was a major obstruction in the way of the peace and reconciliation process, a much awaited process that has hit persistent deadlocks.

The Taliban insurgency saw an unprecedented resurgence under Mansour's leadership - over the past eleven months. Taliban in a sign of showing their military might extended attacks in various parts of Afghanistan and mounted pressure on the hard-pressed Afghan security forces who have been fighting the Taliban on multiple fronts. Mansour also refused face-to-face peace talks with the government, setting preconditions before negotiating.

"If the news (Mansour's death) is 100 percent confirmed, in that case, there will a major change in the situation of the Taliban, it is a huge blow to the Taliban," Abdullah said.

What analysts predict for Taliban leadership in Pakistan:

"All Taliban leaders in the past lived safely in Pakistan, without the U.S. targeting them, there was an assumption that the U.S. will not attack. That assumption is no longer in place," former U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad told TOLNews.

Afghans speak of Mansour's traumatic era of war:

The Taliban insurgency under Mansour once again created fear and chaos when the group announced their so-called spring offensive (Omari) in honor of its slain leader Mullah Omar. Taliban increased attacks on security forces on the battlefields and in cities.

"The people will not forget the repressions imposed on them by the Taliban," a victim of Shah Shahid bombing, Jamshid, told TOLNews, responding to the Taliban insurgency.

Taliban onslaughts against Afghan cities from north to the south and the dramatic fall of Kunduz marked a major victory in the group's fifteen year insurgency since it was toppled from power in 2001.

"Mansour had been trained by the ISI (Pakistan's intelligence service) since he was a youngster. The ISI made huge investments in him, he as a trusted person and was even appointed as Mullah Omar's successor," former deputy minister of interior Mirza Mohammad Yarmand said.

What message does Mansour's death convey to Islamabad?

Pakistan's Taliban policy has been a source of tension between Islamabad and Kabul with Afghan officials constantly accusing the Pakistani government of harboring Taliban leaders and using them as tools to wage war against Afghanistan, something Pakistan has always denied.

"The more important issue than this issue is the policies of Pakistan. Does ISI of Pakistan and Pakistani military leadership realize that the game is becoming more dangerous, because some key issues are under consideration or under discussion, therefore Pakistan needs to decide to take action against the Taliban inside Pakistan soil," Khalilzad said.

There is a perception however that Mansour preferred war to peace. Mansour's appointment to the Taliban's top position also sparked a power struggle within the group and several factions distanced themselves from the Mansour clan.

"Akhtar Mansour's death could have major and positive implications for the peace process and for appointing of a successor to him, because they (Mansour's new successor) will risk their life. Militarily the Taliban will be weakened," political commentator Jawed Kohistani said.

Both U.S and Afghan officials believe that Mansour was a major hurdle in the way of the peace negotiation process. But now many believe that with the likely death of Mansour, Taliban will be weakened and they will finally endorse peace talks with the Afghan government. However there are reservations that the Taliban will face more defections and this could complicate matters. (Tolnews)

(20) Hiroshima Visit ...

having been necessary to end the war and save U.S. and Japanese lives, although many historians

question that view. Most Japanese believe they were unjustified. (Reuters)

(21) Syria's...

For Turkey, hosting more than 3 million refugees has not been an easy task. "Not only an economic burden, but also political and cultural burden," said Corabatir, noting that the country is divided on whether it should embrace the Syrian refugees. (Xinhua)

(22) Progress Being ...

to Yemen Ismail OuldCheikh Ahmed said that the drop in violence has been crucial in ensuring much-needed aid can make its way to areas affected by the fighting.

"The cessation of hostilities is holding around 80 to 90 percent," he said, even as he acknowledged that pockets of violence continue. "The people of Yemen feel there is a cessation of hostilities."

The fighting in Yemen pits Shiite rebels known as Houthis and supporters of a former president against Yemen's internationally recognized government. The Houthis seized the capital, Sanaa, in September 2014, forcing Hadi to flee to Saudi Arabia. (AP)

(23) New Turkish ...

traditionally ceremonial role. "The most important mission we have today is to legalize the de facto situation, to bring to an end this confusion by changing the constitution," he said. "The new constitution will be on an executive presidential system."

A total of 1,411 delegates voted, with 1,405 of those votes declared valid. Yildirim won all of the valid votes. (Reuters)

(24) Ankara Ready...

Having spent some 10 billion dollars on refugees since 2011, Ankara has long complained about the lack of robust financial support from global community to ease Turkey's burden. (Xinhua)

(25) U.S. to Keep...

funded over 12 million U.S. dollars to the civil society organizations for the sake of peace and national reconciliation.

At the joint press conference, Aung San Suu Kyi reiterated that Myanmar does not fear U.S. sanctions which was imposed previously under certain status, believing that these sanctions would one day be totally lifted in the future. (Xinhua)

(26) UNEA to ...

of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

UNEA provides a platform for leadership on global environmental policy to build a sustainable future, protect the environment, and safeguard human health.

UNEA is a result of the call made by world leaders at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Brazil in June 2012 to strengthen and upgrade the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as the leading global environmental authority.

In 2013, member States recommended to the UN General Assembly that the UNEP Governing Council, the 58-member governing body of UNEP in place since 1972, be renamed the UNEA with universal membership. (Xinhua)

(27) Iraqi Forces ...

facilitate withdrawal of civilians from the besieged city, which has been continuously under shelling and airstrikes by the security forces, but the extremist militants prevent the people from leaving their residents in the city to use them as human shields.

Government troops and allied militias have been fighting for months to retake control of key cities and towns in Anbar, Iraq's largest province, from IS militants, who previously seized most of Anbar and tried to advance toward Baghdad. (Xinhua)

(28) Yemeni Army...

bomber detonated his explosive vest among scores of recruits who had gathered to meet a government committee for registration with local police forces in Mukalla city.

More than 30 people were killed and nearly 70 others injured in the attack, according to local Yemeni medics.

The Yemen-based affiliate of the Islamic State group has officially claimed credit for the suicide bombing that targeted police recruits in Hadramout. (Xinhua)