

### (1) NATO Urges...

on Stoltenberg's remarks, the Defense Ministry deputy spokesman Mohammad Radmanish said the ministry is committed to fighting corruption in the security institution. "We continue our efforts to appoint talented and professional leaders and we have had better achievements in our campaign against corruption," Radmanish told TOLONews. The Presidential Palace meanwhile admitted that corruption is still endemic in public offices. "We accept that there is corruption in public offices, but we are committed to fighting the phenomenon," said Dawa Khan Minapal, President Ashraf Ghani's deputy spokesman. This comes after leaders of NATO countries met in Brussels on Thursday for a special meeting to discuss the fight against terrorism and the alliance's defense spending. U.S. President Donald Trump also attended the Heads of State meeting, which was his first visit to NATO's headquarters. NATO is expected to commit about 1,500 troops in addition to 3,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan - on the back of a request by NATO commander in Afghanistan Gen John Nicholson earlier this year. The decision however has not yet been made, as mentioned last week by Stoltenberg. Some countries and some senior U.S. officials have questioned whether an increase in troop numbers would change the course of the war in Afghanistan. NATO has been trying to convince its allies that a few thousands more troops will help. (Tolonews)

### (2) Security Forces ...

receive the month of Ramazan at a time when the enemy and terrorists with the support of foreign allies have been fighting in different parts of the country," the statement quoted Sarwar Danish as saying. He said the people of Afghanistan lived in dangerous security situation, but assured that security forces of Afghanistan despite all existing challenges were firm and committed in fight against the enemy forces. Ramazan was blessing month and Muslims tried to be as close to the mercy of Allah as they could, he said in his Ramazan message. He hoped Allah almighty may accept the worship of all Muslims and make the holy month free of violence for Afghanistan. The second vice president added security forces during the month of Ramazan would continue to serve the nation and discharge their duty. He asked the people not to forget security forces of the country from their prayers in this holy month and seek success for them. He also asked the people and media to pay full respect to the holy month of Ramazan and keep distance from activities that may harm the respect of the holy month and feelings of millions of Muslims. (Pajhwok)

### (3) Gen. Nicholson ...

of Kunduz to the people of Kunduz as they are to all of the people in Afghanistan. As we are here today, American Special Forces are with Afghan commandos helping in the defense of Kunduz and taking the fight to the enemy," he said. He assured that Kunduz will not fall to insurgents this year. "Last year, each of these attempts failed and they (militants) failed because of the brave Afghan soldiers especially the commandos and Special Forces who fought very hard to defend Kunduz and our commitment is that this year the same will be the case; Kunduz will not fall and because of the improvements of the Afghan security forces, we expect to see better performance," he stated. At the same event, acting Defense Minister Tariq Shah Bahrami said they have new plans on hand which will help improve security in Kunduz. "We are satisfied about the reports we received from our military operations in the northern parts of the country including Badakhshan, Kunduz, Takhar, Baghlan and Faryab provinces. Afghan forces are capable of defending the country and are going on the right track," Bahrami said. "We have succeeded to thwart all strategic goals which were drafted by the enemy. The Afghan Security and Defense Forces are successful in their battle against insurgents," he added. This comes after Afghan officials on Wednesday, May 24, confirmed that U.S. troops have been sent to Kunduz to help Afghan security

forces in their ongoing battle against the Taliban. "The Afghans own the leadership of the war, the Americans and NATO want to further boost this leadership," Defense Ministry spokesman Mohammad Radmanish said. Military commentators have claimed that corruption and poor leadership of the war appear to be key factors behind the move to send in troops not only to Kunduz but also to other volatile provinces including Helmand and Nangarhar. (Tolonews)

### (4) Some Allies ...

"NATO will become a full member of the Global Coalition, in which all 28 allies already take part," NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters. He said they decided to develop annual national plans, setting out how allies intend to meet the defence investment pledge made together in 2014. "The national plans will cover three major areas: cash, capabilities, and contributions," said Stoltenberg. Belgium handed over to NATO the new headquarters - a 21st century home for a 21st century alliance. German Chancellor Merkel dedicated the Berlin Wall Memorial, a symbol of freedom and President Trump dedicated the 11/9 and Article 5 Memorial. The NATO chief said one of the main issues they discussed was the fight against terrorism, which required a wide range of instruments. He said they agreed an action plan for NATO to step up its efforts in the fight against terrorism. "We reviewed our training mission in Afghanistan, and we agreed that we will continue to sustain our mission."

He welcomed some allies who forward with new troop contributions, saying on the basis of their review further decisions would be taken in the coming weeks. The NATO chief said they would continue training Iraqi forces NATO's relationship with Russia was another topic of discussion and the allies reaffirmed their dual-track approach --- strong defence, combined with meaningful dialogue.

"We are delivering on both tracks. Allies stand strong together not to provoke a conflict, but to prevent a conflict and to preserve peace." The NATO chief said they agreed at the meeting that the leaders would meet again at a Summit in 2018. To a question about a possible surge in troop level in Afghanistan, said they had not decided exact troop levels for 2018. He said some allies also announced that they're willing to increase their force contributions. "But the exact force or troop levels will be decided later on this year," he said, explaining the purpose was to strengthen the capabilities and the capacities of the Afghan National Security Forces.

"We are helping them (Afghans) to develop their own air forces - they are key in the fight in Afghanistan - and we are also helping them to improve command and control." Stoltenberg said the situation in Afghanistan was difficult and there would be more violence and more challenges amid many unsolved problems in Afghanistan. "But we have made progress especially in building a strong national Afghan army and security force which has proven capable, professional and able to take over responsibility for the security in Afghanistan, without NATO forces conducting combat operations, but with our support." (Pajhwok)

### (5) Residents ...

the Sabz Rang village and other areas and instill fear in the locals. "In the past there were no problems and security was good and people could walk around until 11 or 12 at night," said Hamayoun, one local resident. "Only Allah knows where they (Taliban) are from, but they are here," said Abdul Jamil another resident. But some residents said they are not aware of Taliban activities in the district. "I live here but no one has ever disturbed me," said Malang, one resident. Sabz Rang village is in the Istalif district on the Kabul-North highway. Residents however warned that the presence of Taliban in the area could pose a big threat to the highway. Motorists and shopkeepers are also concerned about the increase of insecurity in the area. "They (Taliban) are coming from other areas and are active here," said one motorist, Najib.

"There are people along with Taliban from the area and some others are from other parts of the country that are active in the district," said Abdul Hamid a shopkeeper. Qara Bagh police would not comment on any Taliban activity but the district governor said there was a chance they were in the area. "Taliban have some local associates especially in Sabz Rang village as they had in the past, so it may be possible they would have now too," said Sharifi, the district governor. Qara Bagh district is just 30km outside of Kabul city and military experts believe that the Taliban's presence in the district is a serious cause for concern and that it poses a threat to the security of Kabul city. (Tolonews)

### (6) Terrorists ...

our people," the president remarked. Stressing the need for a unified definition of terrorism, he also underlined the importance of creating a mechanism and team work to halt terrorist funding. A war was going on, not a media war, but Pakistan was unaware of it, he said, adding: "We want peace between the two countries." He also referred to the killing of al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad.

He blamed the Taliban for the terrorist attack on a mosque on a military base Mazar-i-Sharif, where 140 Afghani soldiers were killed. "Taliban are settled in Pakistan and are gathering money there." Ghani hoped Pakistan would give his administration the names of the terrorists involved in the attack that killed the ambassador of the UAE and others in Kandahar City. The reconciliation drive was making headway, the president claimed, saying Gulbadin Hekmatyar had returned and accepted Afghan laws and more than a million Afghans had come back from Pakistan and Iran. President Ghani addressed Taliban saying if they choose to make peace, they will achieve what they want through politics and law. He hoped Taliban would distance itself from terrorists. (Pajhwok)

### (7) Trade Volume ...

substantially, resulting in Afghanistan becoming one of Tajikistan's key trade partners. Khudoyor headed a ten-member Tajik delegation to Afghanistan and was optimistic about a further increase in trade between the two countries.

He said that in the first quarter of the current year Tajikistan exported 74\$ million USD in goods to Afghanistan, of which 11\$million USD was in cement. "Without a doubt the expansion of trade between Afghanistan and Tajikistan has paved the way for us to increase our income and this will increase transit of goods from both countries," said Khudoyor.

After recent closures of the Afghanistan crossing with Pakistan, Afghan traders started looking for alternative trade partners, and have since increased trade volumes from Turkey, Iran and India. Other Central Asian countries are also looking to increase their exports to Afghanistan. Meanwhile the Afghan Minister of Economy Abdul Sattar Murad said that the expansion of economic cooperation and trade between Afghanistan and Tajikistan is to the benefit of both countries.

Murad said that at this week's 6th Economic and Trade Cooperation meeting between Afghanistan and Tajikistan both countries agreed on expanding cooperation in the transport infrastructure sector and increase exports and improve economic growth in both countries. "The agreement can provide more opportunities for improving cultural, economic and trade relations in both countries and we are trying to implement more development projects to provide economic improvement for both countries" said Murad.

Meanwhile the Tajik minister said his country is committed to providing better opportunities and improving transit of Afghan goods through his country to Europe and China. The Tajik minister said that at the moment Afghanistan provides good opportunities for transit of Tajikistan goods to India, Iran and Turkey's markets. (Tolonews)

### (8) Moscow,...

US, Iran, India and China in boosting stability in the region and fighting against terrorism. Atmar called for enhanced cooperation between Russia and Afghanistan in fighting against

terrorism and called Moscow's role important. Both sides discussed consequences of propaganda campaigns between the two countries and agreed to carefully study the nature of issues and prevent spreading disinformation against each other. (Pajhwok)

### (9) IMF Approves ...

completion enables the release of SDR 4.5 million (about US\$6.25 million), bringing total disbursements under the arrangement to SDR 9 million (about US\$12.45 million). IMF also added that a pickup of 3 percent growth in GDP is projected in 2017 but added that the growth is contingent on improvement in confidence, implementation of reforms, and continued strong donor support. Consumer price inflation remains moderate. "Continued strong program ownership by the government remains vital to the success of the program. Reforms in the financial sector (turning the page on the Kabul Bank crisis), corruption and economic governance, and revenue mobilization combined with improved public financial management will all be critical," IMF added.

However, the organization said sustained reform implementation will be difficult in the context of fragile security and political uncertainty.

"In this challenging environment, the backing of donors remains key to success, together with the determination and commitment of the authorities. The IMF remains committed to playing its role in the collective international effort to help Afghanistan," IMF said. (KP)

### (10) Ghani Calls...

residents said they are tired of war and violence and that they urge insurgents to embark on ceasefire during Ramadan. "I call on militants to stop violence during Ramadan," said Zain-ul-Abuddin, a resident of Kabul. "My message to those who commit violence is to stop war and join peace," said Khalid, another resident of Kabul.

Few hours after the president's message on Ramadan, Taliban responded the message with a car bombing in Khost province, killing at least 18 people. President Ghani condemned the attack in a message posted by the Presidential Palace. "President Ashraf Ghani condemns terrorist attack on civilians in the south-eastern Khost province," the Presidential Palace tweeted. (Tolonews)

### (11) Taliban ...

while another eight were captured. It was not possible to independently verify the insurgent toll.

Both sides are known for releasing inflated figures. Thursday's raid was the second on the military base this week. A nighttime Taliban attack Monday killed 20 security forces and wounded 15 more. Late on Wednesday, insurgents staged a surprise assault on an army base in the province's Maiwand district and killed 13 soldiers. The insurgents have repeatedly targeted major Afghan army bases during this year's fighting, inflicting heavy casualties on government forces. Their campaign started with last month's attack on the main regional military base located outside the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif. The deadliest-ever Taliban raid killed more than 150 soldiers, although multiple independent sources gave a much higher death toll. Increased casualties have fueled concerns about the capacity of Afghan forces. Corruption, desertion and "ghost soldiers" - those who exist on the payroll but whose salaries are usurped by corrupt commanders - are cited as the primary causes for battlefield setbacks. Around 300 soldiers have been killed since March in militant attacks on Afghan military installations, including a deadly gun-and-bomb raid on the largest military hospital in Kabul, claimed by Islamic State loyalists. The attack killed 50 people. (VoA)

### (12) 'Some Groups...

Security Council conspired against the first vice president and curtailed his legal powers. He alleged the government was now trying to weaken the Jumbesh-i-Islami party by highlighting controversial individuals like Akbar Bai, former Jawzjan governor and Ahmad Eschi. He alleged some biased people used the assistance of international community by arming militants

and isolating ethnic groups in the country.

Atta Mohammad Faizi, provincial head of Jumbesh-i-Islami, said Afghanistan was the home of every Afghan and Dostum had full right being vice president to travel abroad.

In the past one year, Gen. Dostum often complained his constitutional powers being vice president not given to him and accused the president for all the mess. Relation between President Ashraf Ghani and Dostum further deteriorated after the issue Ahmad Eschi surfaced and security forces surrounded Dostum's residence to take him and his men to the attorney office for investigation. (Pajhwok)

### (13) India Could ...

said, could be willing to send its troops to Afghanistan only under a UN peacekeeping mission if it feels that this war-torn country is headed to a civil war and that would hit its strategic national interest.

Kanwal described this move as in India's vital national interest. Pakistani sensitivities, in this case could be addressed by ensuring that the Indian troops are stationed in the western part of Afghanistan and far away from Af-Pak border. In that case the Afghan National Security Forces could concentrate itself in fighting against insurgents along the border with Pakistan, he said.

However, at present the mood in New Delhi, he said, is against it. The consensus is no, he said. But then, if India wants to enhance its role globally then it cannot shy away from supporting and helping a friendly government when they ask for help," Kanwal said.

Noting that the Taliban are showing signs of gaining momentum, he said this could lead to a civil war. India, he said, supports the elimination of terrorism from Afghanistan, destruction of the sanctuary that the Taliban and Al Qaeda have been given an end to the export of terrorism. (Pajhwok)

### (14) Britain Planning...

NATO countries are asked by the US to send 3,000 to 5,000 more soldiers to Afghanistan, as Washington is also planning to send up to 5,000 additional troops, including hundreds of Special Operations forces, to the war-torn country.

The United States -- under Republican George W. Bush's presidency -- and its allies invaded Afghanistan on October 2001, as part of Washington's so-called war on terror. The offensive removed the Taliban regime from power, but after more than one and-a-half-decade, the foreign troops are still deployed to the country. US President Donald Trump, who has spoken against the Afghan war, has dubbed the 2001 invasion and following occupation of Afghanistan as "Obama's war", but now his administration is sending thousands of more troops to the war-torn country, signaling a policy shift. (Press TV)

### (15) Nangarhar...

of the time I take the charge and control the situation, it very difficult to intervene in everything, there are a lot of employees and it is usual that some people may be corrupt," he said. He assured the system had been computerised and the costume duty is deposited in banks the employees had discharge the official work.

Economic experts believed if the country revenue surged Afghanistan may attain self-sufficiency soon. (Pajhwok)

### (16) Pakistan

ceasefire in the border town of Chaman, where nine Pakistanis and six Afghans were killed on May 5. Pakistan says the violence began when Afghan forces opened fire on census workers and troops escorting them. Kabul blames Pakistan for initiating the gunfire. Mohammad Sharif Gharzi, an official from the Afghan passport department at Spin Boldak, said after negotiations between officials from Afghanistan and Pakistan the border reopened around 4 p.m. local time on Saturday. "We welcome the opening of the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan at Spin Boldak," said Gharzi.

He added that given the pressure on locals of fasting during Ramadan, this was "great news for all". Pakistan shares a -2,200kilometer-(1,375 mile-) long porous border with Afghanistan. (AP)

### (17) Aircraft Sag...

official from Bamiyan police. A number of MPs and analysts urged government to arrest Abdul Rahman Shaheedani, an MP from Bamiyan, who is "the main suspect of the case".

"The law has not been ruled on powerful figures and leaders even from the far pasts in Afghanistan. This is the reason which motivated him (Shaheedani) to add his name to the list of powerful figures. This act by him could have taken dozens of lives; therefore, law must be ruled on him," said Sayed Ekram, an MP.

"Our demand from the parliament and from our President (Ashraf Ghani) is to punish those who are behind the incident in order to inform others about the rule of law on everyone," said Hekmatullah Shahbaz, a university lecturer.

This comes after two Bamiyan MPs, including Shaheedani, reportedly missed their flight in Kabul last week on Tuesday. On approach at the Bamiyan airport, the Kam Air plane, the MPs were booked on, was prevented from landing and forced to return to Kabul.

According to reports, relatives of the MPs converged on the runway blocking the plane, which was carrying 30 passengers, from landing. Kam Air officials have said the relatives of the MPs also threw stones on the runway when the plane tried to land.

Once back in the capital, the plane refueled and again took off for Bamiyan - this time with the two MPs on board.

Footage obtained by TOLONews of the return flight to Bamiyan shows that MP Abdul Rahman Shaheedani, who was on board with another MP Ghulam Husain Naseri, argued that he made the move to "break the taboo" and to make people realize his "position" and his "place".

"It should not be like this anymore - that I am not known (by the people). Today I broke the taboo," Shaheedani told passengers in the video. Kam Air officials have said that its staff no longer wants to fly in to Bamiyan. However, the governor of Bamiyan, Tahir Zaeher, has assured Kam Air that they need not worry as no threats will be posed against any future flights. (Tolonews)

### (18) Iranian ISIS ...

against the terrorists operating in some of the restive districts of Nangarhar.

Several foreigners including Pakistanis have been arrested for having links with the ISIS terrorist group in this province but this is the first time the local officials are informing regarding the arrest of an Iranian national fighting for the terror group in Afghanistan. (KP)

### (19) Dozens ...

of the Afghan security forces. A Reuters witness at the scene did not observe any military or police vehicles among those destroyed in the blast. In the north-western province of Badghis, militants attacked security forces in Qadis district, sparking fighting that killed 22 insurgents, six security forces, and eight civilians, said Zahir Bahand a spokesman for the provincial governor. The fighting also left 33 militants and 17 civilians wounded, he said.

In Nangarhar province on Friday, some residents of Achin district rebelled against Islamic State fighters who have occupied much of that district, resulting in fighting that left 15 militants and six civilians dead, provincial governor Gulab Mangar said in a statement.

The Western-backed Afghan government is battling both Taliban and Islamic State militants around the country. Taliban forces have increased their attacks in the weeks before Ramadan, with a string of strikes in Kandahar, Paktia, and Helmand, among other provinces. (Reuters)

### (20) Raziq Accuses ...

south west provinces," said Hamdullah Nazik, a former NDS director for Helmand province. "All girl's schools are closed in the province, our health sector situation is very bad, no construction is being done in the province and the reason behind all this is the central government," said Daoud Gulzar, a presidential adviser. The participants warned that if the central government does not pay serious attention to the threats raised by the Taliban in Helmand, Uruzgan and Zabul the security situation will get worse and people's trust in government will diminish. (Tolonews)