

(1) Iranian Official ...

flow of illicit drugs from the neighboring country to Iran and the rest of the world.

"Replacing poppy cultivation with a suitable crop, the Afghan people can even benefit from it," Larijani said in a meeting with a group of senior Afghan lawmakers in Tehran.

The Iranian parliament speaker reiterated that Tehran will help Kabul in its efforts to halt poppy cultivation.

Larijani said that restoration of security in Afghanistan will be of much help to the stability of its neighboring countries.

Iran has contributed more than \$50m annually to Afghan anti-narcotics efforts during the last five years.

Eastern Iran borders Afghanistan, which is the world's number one opium and drug producer. Iran's geographical position has made the country a favorite transit corridor for drug traffickers who intend to smuggle their cargoes from Afghanistan to drug dealers in Europe. (FNA)

(2) Natural Gas...

four days. After Turkmenistan's gas arrive at Afghan markets the prices would go down, Minister Rasaw told lawmakers.

He added that there are also difficulties in transportation and gas does not reach to Afghanistan on time but the TAPI gas pipeline would reach to Aqina in a few months which would be another step towards the reduction of gas prices. (KP)

(3) Efforts...

were abducted from Shah Joy District in February.

Later, at least five of them were killed and 25 to 26 of released, including some freed nearly nine months after.

19 of them were released in exchange for some prisoners. (KP)

(4) Efforts Underway

they need to fill the storming position in order to defeat the enemies."

Earlier the investigative members of the committee assigned for Kunduz fall demanded the National Unity Government leaders to grant their suggestions. (ATN)

(5) We Don't...

about incidents happening on the border not just recently but going back to last year on the Afghan-Turkmen border," Rosenblum said. "There was one incident that we have heard about in which some Turkmen border guards were killed. We have discussed this with our partners here in Turkmenistan, representatives of the government as well as other international organizations. And the Turkmenistan government has said that it feels they can guarantee the Turkmen border and doesn't require any additional assistance from outside."

This isn't just interesting in light of CENTCOM's statements to the contrary, but also in light of Ashgabat's sensitivity about public discussion of its border security. Last month, Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev made a fairly innocuous public statement about "incidents on the border with Tajikistan and Turkmenistan," and the Turkmenistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded with an indignant denial: "The Turkmen side expresses its profound concern and bewilderment in relation to this untrue statement by the president of the Republic of Kazakhstan about the situation on the state border of Turkmenistan," the ministry said in a statement.

Rosenblum's statement was more detailed than Nazarbayev's, but Ashgabat doesn't seem to have publicly complained about it. This could be because Rosenblum emphasized Turkmenistan's ability (or at least its belief in its ability) to handle the situation itself, while Nazarbayev was discussing possible regional responses, and was speaking with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Turkmenistan holds strong to its neutrality and wants to minimize the involvement of other states in its security. Turkmenistan's responses to the increasing Taliban presence on its border have been mixed. According to a variety of reports it has carried out incursions in Afghanistan territory in order to drive back Taliban forces. It has shuffled high-ranking security personnel and concentrated its armed forces along the border. In one revealing episode last month, they apparently met some Taliban militants

at the border, fed them and asked them to leave. The militants were later captured, and told Afghanistan television:

"They [Turkmen border guards] said: 'We will not give you a place here. We are neutral,'" the captive said. When asked who said that, the captive militant replied, "Turkmenistanis. They said, 'We will give you bread, eat this bread then go away.'"

It still seems highly unlikely that the Taliban could make any real inroads in Turkmenistan, with its relatively secular population and repressive security forces. But the response by Ashgabat nevertheless suggests confusion about what they need to do to deal with the situation. (Agencies)

(6) Businessmen ...

expanding transit services to Afghan traders and assist in cementing joint trade dealings.

The Afghan businessmen expressed optimism about the outcome of the meeting and hoped transit issues to central Asia will be overcome.

Esmatullah, a local businessman, said: "We hope that from now on our issues will be resolved and that we can expand our trade dealings with Kazakh partners. If our problems are resolved the trade volumes between the two countries could significantly increase in the near future."

This comes after President Ashraf Ghani signed a number of agreements during his one-day visit to Kazakhstan on Friday and stressed the need for Kabul to strengthen economic, cultural and political ties with Astana.

During his trip, Ghani signed agreements on the management of natural disasters, a cultural agreement and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) on agriculture, diplomacy, foreign relations and administrative reforms. Ministers from both countries signed four draft agreements and two agreements.

"A new agreement which was signed on natural disaster management encompasses three parts including technical, financial and other types of cooperation," said Wais Ahmad Barmak, State "Kazakhstan will support us in tackling natural disasters as it has lots of experience in this regard," he added.

It is said that trade volume between Afghanistan and Kazakhstan is at least \$300 million USD per year. This is expected to increase in the coming years.

Ghani's deputy spokesman Sayed Zafar Hashemi said on Saturday that Ghani had also signed an agreement to buy 600,000 tons of wheat from Kazakhstan. Hashemi said Kazakhstan has in addition agreed to provide 400,000 tons of wheat in aid - as Afghanistan is looking for an alternate supplier to Pakistan.

According to him, Kazakhstan has also agreed to the lower the price of exports to Afghanistan. He went on to say that Kazakhstan has shown an interest in purchasing Afghanistan's dried fruit, nuts, saffron and marble. (Tolonews)

(7) Weak Rule...

why women have less access to justice."

Meanwhile, university professor Mohammad Amin Ahmadi said: "Besides other challenges, government's weakness in rule of law is one of the main obstacles in quest to ensure justice for women. The first step should be for government to ensure rule of law, especially in insecure areas, and ensure the rights of citizens."

However, officials from the Interior Ministry and Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs acknowledged the shortcomings in terms of ensuring women's rights. Hekmat Shahi, the head of the human rights department at the MoI, said: "Unfortunately insurgents want to sabotage achievements made over the past 10 years. The government's first step should be to ensure security in order to make sure its citizens rights are upheld."

Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs officials said old beliefs among people are the main reasons for violence against women. Most violence is being carried out by influential people, they said. An increase by Taliban in public executions, executions of women based on local and traditional reasons and the lack of access for women to judicial institutions are key reasons for women not getting fair justice.

Within the past month, two serious cases of violence against women have occurred. The first in-

cident saw Rokhshana, a 19-year-old Ghor resident stoned to death while last week another woman died from her injuries sustained during a public lashing. This incident also took place in Ghor. (Tolonews)

(8) Passengers Blast

disclose the motive behind the kidnappings."

However, tribal elders from Zabul said there were 17 hostages in total and that none had been released. They also said a delegation of elders were in talks with the insurgents in a bid to secure their release.

Meanwhile on Sunday, a number of people who regularly use buses on the Kabul-Kandahar highway called on government to take action over the growing problem. Khair Mohammad, one regular commuter said: "We are very apprehensive when traveling on the highway lest we be captured by Taliban or Daesh."

Another passenger, Nasima, said that she has sleepless nights over the issue of kidnapping.

"The government must secure this highway so we can travel in peace," she said.

Another passenger, Hussain, said: "When we became aware of this kidnapping we were very frightened."

However, Abdul Sabor, who was on one of the buses when gunmen kidnapped the passengers on Saturday, said: "It was about 2:20am when we left Kabul and as we passed Shah Joy district the kidnappers stopped our bus and climbed on board."

"The faces of the kidnappers were covered and they asked everyone what province they come from. Eventually they took the hostages," another eyewitness Noor Ahmad said.

However, when called about security on buses, bus companies would not comment.

This latest incident took place a mere 24 km away from the point where Daesh militants kidnapped 31 bus passengers in February. Following the release of most hostages, the last five were freed a week ago.

However, this comes close on the heels of the Zabul Seven incident, which saw the beheading of seven other hostages early this month after being kidnapped by Daesh almost two months ago.

The seven victims, including three women, were also kidnapped while traveling between Zabul and Ghazni provinces. They were beheaded earlier this month allegedly by Daesh members.

The incident sparked a massive demonstration through the streets of Kabul two weeks ago. About 20,000 demonstrators carried their bodies through the streets of the capital, calling for justice and an end to the kidnappings. (Tolonews)

(9) Mohammadi ...

otherwise it is unlawful."

Meanwhile, the team assigned by Ghani to investigate Mohammadi's involvement in the Smart City project has started its work.

Hussain Fakhri, a member of the task team, said: "We have formally started our work and we have sent letters to relevant government organizations and we expect them to cooperate with us in this regard, based on the president's decree." He said however that the team could not say when they expected to complete their investigation. Meanwhile a number of MPs on Sunday welcomed Ghani's move to suspend Mohammadi and they urged government to take action against other officials involved in the Smart City project.

Sayed Ikram, an MP, said: "The team must also determine who else was involved in this case."

Mohammadi was suspended recently over the controversial Smart City housing agreement he allegedly facilitated between convicted bank defaulter Khalil Frozi and the ministry of urban development. Last week he became embroiled in yet another scandal when a document emerged stating he had instructed the ministry of finance to order all government offices to purchase gas from Frozi's company Gas Group. In that document he allegedly stated that the money made would go towards paying off Frozi's debt with the Kabul Bank. Frozi, who was the former CEO of Kabul Bank, was sentenced to 10 years in prison last November after failing to repay loans, which helped lead to the bank's collapse in 2010. (Tolonews)

(10) Illegal Afghan ...

including Hakeem Abad, Badrashi and Dheri Katti Khel areas and arrested 50 suspects. The police also recovered arms from their possession.

The police also confirmed that the search operation against suspects will be widened and continue to clear the provincial capital and adjoining areas of suspects who are serious security threat.

Meanwhile, Swabi police conducted a search and strike operation early on Saturday morning and arrested over 100 suspects. The police searched various areas of the district, including Kalu Khan, Ismailia, Baghicha Camp and Naranji, considered stronghold of criminals and arrested over hundred suspects. The nabbed suspects included wanted criminals, Afghan nationals and drug suppliers.

District Police Officer Javeed Iqbal, while talking to APP, said the search operation would be carried from time-to-time to ensure peace and security in the district. He disclosed that Swabi police on Friday last foiled a big terror attempt by recovering huge quantity of explosive materials and after arresting one suspect. He disclosed that the police also arrested a terrorist and recovered 49kg of explosive material from him in Kalo Khan area of the district. He said the suspect had been shifted for interrogation. He said after the arrest of the terrorist in Swabi, the police have widened up their search and strike operation to other villages as well. (Agencies)

(11) Afghani Falls ...

Kabul, sold one litre of petrol for 51af and the same quantity of diesel for 42af. But four months back, one litre of petrol cost 48af and the same quantity of diesel 41af. Mohammad Sharif, a liquefied gas seller in Kolola Pushta area, sold a kilogram of the commodity for 65af, compared with 30af four months ago.

Officials at the Ministry of Commerce and Industriessay they will shortly import 372,000 tonnes of liquefied gas from Azerbaijan, Russia and Turkmenistan. The gas price will thus fall automatically, they hope.

Food Traders Union head Fazal Rahman says the price of a 49 kilograms bag of Pakistani flour was 1,460af and the same quantity of sugar 2,120af. A 24.5kg bag of rice cost 1,750af, a 16-litre tin of ghee 1,000af, a kilogram of green tea 210af and the same quantity of African black tea 240af.

In July this year, a 49kg of Pakistani flour cost 1,230af, the same quantity of sugar 1,620af, a 24.5kg sack of rice 1,550af, 16 litres of ghee 950af, a kilogram of green tea 180af and the same quantity of black tea 210af.

Dealers tie the increase in commodities' rates to the weakening of the currency. However, a number of Kabul residents grumble rates of daily-use goods have soared uncontrollably. The currency has also been allowed to witness a free fall. Ahmad Khalid, a resident of Dahn-i-Bagh area, said: "Keeping in view the Afghani-dollar equation, prices of food items have gone up immensely. There has to be an organisation to regulate these rates." Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) Khalid, who purchased a bag of flour for 1,550af this morning, said it was difficult for a government servant satisfying all family needs due to the unprecedented price hike. His monthly salary is 8,000 afghanis (116 US dollar).

Shukuria, a resident of Taimani neighbourhood, complained of economic problems and the government's lethargy toward people's plight. "My husband is a teacher with a 9,000 afghanis salary. It is very difficult for him to feed all his seven member family." She called for the government to control the rates of essential commodities and try to stabilise the currency. The ordinary people were the worst-hit by the present situation, she said, accusing market forces of exploiting consumers. But Khair Mohammad Safdari insisted: "The Kabul Municipality has no right to define or control rates based on the cabinet decision in a free market system." Based on Article 10 of the constitution, the government should encourage, protect as well as ensure the safety of capital investment and private enterprises in accordance with the provisions of the law and the market economy.

Saifuddin Saihoo, a Kabul University lecturer, commented: "We don't believe the government will

remain silent on economic issues; it must prove how its policy is benefiting the masses, keeping the afghani and basic item rates stable besides ensuring the just distribution of wealth."

He called the open market a proper system that was being followed in many countries around the world. However, the teacher of economics claimed the system was not being implemented properly in Afghanistan for a variety of reasons.

People often taken a grossly flawed view of the open market, thinking they should do whatever they want but the government will not interfere, according to Saihoo, who proposed a legal framework for carefully monitoring the performance of the private sector.

In the open market system, the private sector could create job opportunities, pave the ground for the availability of high-quality goods through healthy competition and improve people's livelihoods, he explained.

Saihoo alleged the free market in Afghanistan was monopolised by some wealthy businessmen and mafia groups within the government. These powerful individuals could easily manipulate market rates. He linked the currency depreciation to the absence of an effective regulatory mechanism.

Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB) Governor Khalil Seddiq said recently about the free fall of the local currency: "In addition to other problems, businessmen evince little interest in investments due to last year's electoral crisis." He noted a 40 percent decline in investments.

The rise in security forces' operational costs during the current year, falling domestic production, fleeing of 146,000 youth from abroad in a year and capital flight of two billion dollars are cited as key reasons for the afghani depreciation. (Pajhwok)

(12) Anti-Narcotic...

meanwhile arrested a total of 1,876 people - including 20 policemen, 29 soldiers, 26 women and two foreigners - a Kazakhstani and an Iranian - for dealing and smuggling drugs.

Of the total, 227 were king-pin drug smugglers, 49 were middlemen and 1,600 were dealers.

The latest operation netted them 45 tons of hashish. He said they also uncovered a number of drug factories, especially in insecure provinces

Ahmadi says 12.5 tons of different types of drugs were seized in Kabul alone - in 569 operations. In addition a number of weapons were also seized.

Ahmadi says over the next four months however, insecurity will lessen and the department hopes to increase anti-drug operations. (Tolonews)

(13) EU Grants ...

the training projects effectively and efficiently, using approaches that will have a sustained, and quality impact on the quality of life of those with mental health problems and those with some form of disability. I also sincerely thank the European Union for deciding to address these two important subjects with substantial amount of money. Your contribution is much valued by the Government and my ministry." said H.E Dr Ferozuddin Feroz, Minister of Public Health of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

"There is an urgent need to build the skills and capacities to be used now and in the future for the treatment and care of disability, mental illness and psychosocial distress. This partnership between the European Union and the Ministry of Public Health of Afghanistan responds to critical needs and will bring about positive results" said Maurizio Cian, Head of Cooperation of the European Union Delegation to Afghanistan. The EU has invested more than 25 million EUR from the start of its support to these two priority areas. These funds contributed to providing institutional support, developing human resources and delivering of disability and mental health services. (PR)

(14) Foreigners ...

Foreign Affairs Salahuddin Rabani told members of the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of Parliament) that over the past year, 146,000 Afghans fled to Europe seeking asylum. Over 80,000 of them went to Germany alone.

According to reports, the documents of almost 47 percent of Afghani refugees in Germany have not yet been processed by the gov-

ernment. (Tolonews)

(15) Taliban ...

Jangal Bagh said Rohullah was arrested by the security forces from an area close to a security check post in the 1st police district of Kunduz city.

It is yet not clear if the child was due to carry out a suicide attack with the Taliban militants group yet to comment regarding the report.

This is not the first time the anti-government armed militant groups have recruited children including young girls as child soldiers who are frequently used for suicide attack missions.

The Afghan Intelligence - National Directorate of Security (NDS) earlier arrested two children aged 9 and 12 from the southern Helmand province.

The children were originally residents of the southern Kandahar province and were transferred to their families after they were captured by the security forces. (KP)

(16) NDS Detains...

District, Zikria nickname Amirullah S/O Rana Gul who was providing information about government employees and Din Mohammad nickname Mohammadi S/O Lal Mohammad. Several home-made and anti-tank landmines were recovered from the possession of the terrorists.

A footage released by NDs with the statement on Saturday shows the three suspects confessing to their crimes. (KP)

(17) World Leaders...

and we beat them; we don't change our institutions and our culture and our values because of them."

Much of the discussion at the recent G20 and APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) talks, as well as at ASEAN, had been on the need for a strong Paris deal on climate change.

Obama said he was optimistic that they could get a strong deal as 160 countries and regions, accounting for about 90 percent of the world's emitters, had put forward their targets for how they can reduce emissions. (Xinhua)

(18) Kenyan ...

based militant group, Al-Shabaab," remarked Richard Tuta, a Nairobi-based security analyst.

He challenged the international community to re-organize existing counter-terrorism measures as terrorists become more sophisticated in their modus operandi.

"Terrorists are not only networking well but are also sharing new information and tactics. We should therefore upscale our security arrangement, and learn from loopholes exploited by terrorists in Paris and Mali," Tuta told Xinhua, adding that modern terrorists are young, highly educated and agile, hence their ability to escape security dragnet and cause mayhem. (Xinhua)

(19) Turkish ...

morning, though the restrictions stayed in place in other parts of the city. The PKK's 31-year-old conflict with the state erupted anew in July, with Turkey launching air strikes on militant camps in response to attacks on its security forces, ending a March 2013 ceasefire. Hundreds have been killed in the latest fighting. (Reuters)

(20) Russian PM ...

Wat Temple in Siem Reap province on Monday before flying to the capital of Phnom Penh, where he will hold official talks with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen on Tuesday.

After the talks, the two prime ministers will witness a signing ceremony of six cooperation documents between the two countries, according to a statement from the Foreign Ministry.

The documents will include a cooperation agreement between the ruling Cambodian People's Party and the ruling United Russia party, a deal in information exchange on money laundering and terrorism financing, two deals relevant to investment cooperation, and two memorandums of understanding between Cambodian news agency and national radio and Russian news agency.

Cambodian National Police chief Gen. Neth Savoeun said on Friday that more than 10,000 security personnel would be deployed in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap province during Medvedev's visit. (Xinhua)