

(1) Muscat Meeting to

A few days back, Taliban militants killed five security personnel who had traveled away from their post to fetch drinking water.

Relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan strained after Islamabad failed to implement its pledges made at QCG meetings in 2015. (Pajhwok)

(2) 60 Inmates

Prison warden, Abdul Wali Hisarak, said prisoners were provided all facilities they needed at the jail. He said besides vocational training, facilities in other spheres needed such as sports had been provided to prisoners.

With happiness seen on their faces, the released inmates said they would not indulge in any criminal act in future in order they didn't enter jail again.

Currently, about 1,718 prisoners, 42 of them women, who have been convicted of various crimes, are held at the main jail in Jalalabad, the provincial capital. (Pajhwok)

(3) Four-Way

government and the Taliban insurgency to nudge them to the negotiating table.

But the peace process broke down after a fifth session in May of that year, when a U.S. drone attack killed the Taliban Chief, Mullah Akhtar Mansoor, while he was traveling through the Pakistani province of Baluchistan.

The insurgents' reluctance to engage in peace talks with the Afghan government and Kabul's strained relations with Islamabad also hampered previous QCG sessions from making any significant headway.

While officials have reported a thaw in bilateral relations following recent high-level meetings between Afghan and Pakistani leaders, the Taliban has reiterated its stance of not engaging in peace negotiations with Kabul until all American and NATO forces withdraw from Afghanistan.

A senior insurgent official told VOA his group has "nothing to do" with the QCG process.

"Nobody has contacted us, nor are we participating in this meeting," the official said requesting anonymity as he was not authorized to publicly discuss Taliban political matters.

The Islamist insurgency currently controls or contests more than 40 percent of Afghan territory and continues to make battlefield gains despite intensified ground operations and airstrikes by U.S.-backed Afghan security forces. Pakistani officials blamed Washington for scuttling the four-way process by eliminating Mansoor.

For their part, Afghan and U.S. officials complained Islamabad was not doing enough to prevent the Taliban from using sanctuaries on Pakistani soil to orchestrate insurgent attacks in Afghanistan, charges Pakistan denied.

Diplomatic sources told VOA that participating nations this time have agreed to revive the QCG process with a commitment to maintain secrecy of its proceedings. (VoA)

(4) 900 Tons of

"Really, the government's plans to increase the export of fresh fruit this year has worked well and the addition of the air corridor was not only important to us but it was a good step for farmers" who earned a fair price this year, said ACCI Deputy Head Khan Jan Alkozai. Officials at the ACCI said that due to the increase in exports of fresh fruit and vegetables, the price has doubled in domestic and foreign markets.

In recent years, grape farmers earned very little as they were only able to sell their produce through roadside vendors. Now however, many are packaging their produce and selling to India. "Now when we speak to the farmers they will not sell just 140kg or 150kg of grapes, they say that if we want grapes then we must buy all the grapes otherwise they will be exported to India," said Farhad a fresh fruit vendor.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Commerce and Industries (MoCI) said that more fruit and vegetables will be exported in the next three months.

They say that the demand for fresh fruit and vegetables from India and Pakistan is rising, therefore, efforts are being made to increase the exportation of produce to these countries.

"We are trying to pave the way to deliver fresh fruit to their markets, and thereby improve the economic situation of farmers in the country," MoCI spokesman Musafir Qoqandi said. However, officials at the ACCI said that this year 145,000 tons of fresh fruit has been exported in total by road. (Tolonews)

(5) Not to be

near Kabul in 2012 and kept them in custody for five years.

Pakistani security forces rescued the hostage foreign family with the help of US spy agency from Kurram tribal region.

The Pakistan Army's Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) in a statement said the hostages included a Canadian, his American wife, and their three chil-

dren.

The hostages were recovered "through an intelligence-based operation by Pakistani troops and the ISI [Inter-Services Intelligence]." "They were captured by terrorists from Afghanistan in 2012 and kept as hostages there," the ISPR handout read.

Speaking at Sunday's Senate session, lawmaker Najeba Hussaini said: "The release of Canadian-American family shows more than 20 terrorist groups operate in Pakistan not in Afghanistan. Pakistan can dismantle terrorist outfits in one day and bring peace to Afghanistan without delay if it desires so."

US President Donald Trump thanked the Pakistani leadership for the recovery of the American nationals with their children.

Hussaini, referring to the US president, said besides thanking Pakistan put more pressure on Islamabad and be careful not to be deceived because all the mess was there due to Pakistan. Senate Chairman Fazal Hadi Muslimy acknowledged Hussaini's remarks and said: "The Canadian and US governments should be careful regarding Pakistan."

International media quoted Joshua Boyle as claiming that one of his infant children was killed and his wife Caitlan Coleman -- a US citizen -- raped during captivity.

While backpacking in Afghanistan in 2012, the couple were allegedly kidnapped by the Haqqani network. (Pajhwok)

(6) Afghan Youth

Afghan youth, particularly in the field of cricket.

Sadaat told the global community that the youth in Afghanistan constituted 73 percent of population aged up to 35 years. "This makes Afghanistan important country as far as the youth power is concerned."

He said the youth availed more chances in the current government and some high ranking government officials were youth.

Despite challenges and problems the Afghanistan youth were able to have huge achievements and prove their mettle on various occasions, he said.

He said the Afghan youth had proved their talent in different sport games such as cricket, taekwondo, football, wrestling and other games.

"The Afghan government has been investing on youth and will provide them more chances in areas of education and sports," Sadaat told the event. (Pajhwok)

(7) Taliban Suffer

Lashkargah, Nad-e-Ali, and Kajaki districts.

The anti-government armed militant groups including the Taliban insurgents have not commented regarding the report so far.

Helmand remains one of the most volatile provinces in southern Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001 where terrorist related incidents are frequently reported from its various districts. (KP)

(8) Fate of 14 Ghazni

Rahmani, however, did not provide more details but claimed the Ghazni security personnel were behind the kidnappings.

Nafisa Azimi, another lawmaker from Ghazni, saw the kidnapping of people from a specific tribe as an attempt to create disputes among local people.

"Security organs are responsible for determining the fate of these people -- an issue shared several times with the authorities concerned. However, the issue was paid no attention," she said, asking the government to take decisive steps in the regard.

Wolesi Jirga Speaker Abdur Rauf Ibrahim expressed concern over the kidnappings and asked security forces to take determined measures to rescue the captives. He promising grilling the security officials who would be summoned to the lower house.

Ghazni police spokesman Fahim Amarkhel said four of the victims had been kidnapped by Taliban after a dispute erupted among them over irrigation water. The police district chiefs visited the area but none of the parties came to the negotiation table.

Mohammad Arif Noori, the governor's spokesman, said they had tried to resolve the issue through tribal elders, but only one side expressed its willingness for talks.

He charged some political figures with hampering efforts to resolve the dispute. Ten people had been kidnapped but six of them were released as a result of mediation by influential figures, he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(9) Iranian Economy

between Karbasian and Afghan Minister of Finance Eklil Ahmad Hakimi, both sides underscored the strategic importance of the region and also the role of two countries in removing some economic barriers.

Karbasian stressed on organizing trade exchanges and customs cooperation. Both sides also discussed finalizing railways projects and connecting Af-

ghanistan to western Iran and then to Europe.

Meanwhile, Hakimi pointed to creating joint work groups in different fields. Karbasian attended the joint meeting of World Bank and International Monetary Fund in Washington. He also took part in the meeting of the Intergovernmental Group of Twenty-Four on International Monetary Affairs and Development, also known as G-24, attended by heads and ministers of the member countries.

Iran, Pakistan, The Philippines, Sri Lanka, Syria, and Lebanon (from Asia), Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Guatemala, Trinidad and Tobago (from Latin America and South Africa), Egypt, Algeria, Nigeria, Congo, Ivory Coast and Ghana (from Africa) are members of G-24. China, Saudi Arabia and Morocco participated in the meeting of G-24 as observers. The World Bank's autumn summit is underway in Washington. (IRNA)

(10) 35-Km Water

is supplied," he said.

Mohammad Ajmal Bakhtari, a resident, said the agriculture water project was vital for people living in the city but they needed safe drinking as well. Governor Mualvi Lotfullah Azizi said a strategy was being formulated to execute drinking water supply projects in the city.

He said incomplete drinking water schemes of the municipality would be completed soon in different municipal districts of the city. (Pajhwok)

(11) Afghan Taliban

by the Haqqani network, a semi-independent wing of the Afghan Taliban, before being rescued by Pakistani troops in northwest Pakistan, near the Afghan border, last week.

Boyle told reporters soon after he, his wife and their three children returned to Canada on Friday that their captors had murdered a fourth child had raped his wife.

Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid rejected that as propaganda by the Western governments that helped rescue the family.

"We strongly reject these fake and fabricated allegations of this Canadian family, now in the hands of the enemy," he said in a statement sent to media.

"Whatever statement the enemy wants to put in their mouth, the family is forced to make it."

Boyle called on the Taliban to "provide my family with the justice we deserve". Mujahid said the couple was intentionally never separated in order to protect their safety.

He also denied that their child had been murdered, but acknowledged that one child became sick and died.

"We were in a remote areas without access to a doctor and medications that led the loss of the child," he said.

Three children, all born in captivity, were rescued along with Boyle and Coleman.

The U.S. government calls the Haqqani network "the most lethal and sophisticated insurgent group" in Afghanistan. Its operational chief, Sirajuddin Haqqani, was named deputy to the Taliban's newly appointed leader Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour in 2015, cementing the ties between the groups.

The Haqqanis previously held U.S. Army Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl, who was freed in a swap for Taliban prisoners in 2014, and are suspected of holding two professors, an American and an Australian, who were kidnapped outside their university in Kabul in 2016.

A senior Afghan government official told Reuters that American and Afghan special forces launched two unsuccessful raids to try to rescue the professors in Afghanistan, but officials now believe the pair has been taken to Haqqani hideouts over the border in Pakistan. (Reuters)

(12) Taliban Member,

Afghan News Shafiullah was allegedly involved in terrorist attacks in Darai-Souf Payen district and he had confessed to these crimes.

The car-lifter was detained separately in Aibak and a fielder car he had stolen from Kabul was recovered from him, Rahim said. (Pajhwok)

(13) Pakistan Has

of tax at Torkham border crossing. "Pakistan demands 100 rupees on each kilogram of pine nut in tax. People cannot pay 10,000 rupees for a 100-kg bag of pine nut. Our vehicles full of the fruit have to wait long for the border opening in Angor Ada," he noted.

According to official statistics, Afghanistan exported 3,500 tonnes of pine nut worth \$77 million to Pakistan and China. Traders say a tonne of the fruit cost \$22,000 in 2016 but its price fluctuate this year as its transportation was blocked.

Banizar Khan, a pine nut merchant, said they had collected higher amounts of the fruit this year. But the pine nut could decay if the transit routes were not reopened soon.

"Our president says all routes are open, but no route is open for us. We should be facilitated in transferring the fruit directly to China," he demanded.

Meanwhile, Nawab Amirzai, head of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) for Khost, accused the government of having failed to find international market for fresh and dry fruits including pine nut.

He asked the government to present Afghanistan's fruits in the international market under its own trademarks.

The governor's spokesman, Mubarez Zadran, expressed concern over the blockade of transit routes. He said the Afghan government was struggling to reopen the roads.

He said Khost officials had talked to the Chinese ambassador about the pine nut business. "Efforts are underway and a plan has been prepared to gain access to the international market for our pine nuts. The issue also discussed with the Chinese ambassador. Some Chinese traders have also visited Khost province," he said.

Traders demanded fruits be prevented from going rotten and the government should provide standard facilities of processing and packaging of pine nuts. Khan Jan Alokozay, deputy head of ACCI, acknowledged problems of Khost traders and said Afghanistan pine nut was exported to Pakistan, where it was processed and packaged under Pakistani trademark before being sent to China, Taiwan and other countries.

Pakistan had hiked tax and created many problems for Afghan traders, he alleged, saying the issue had been shared with senior officials but no solution had been found so far.

He asked traders to process and package pine nuts inside Afghanistan and directly export the fruit to foreign countries. (Pajhwok)

Work on Kunar Health Department building begins

ASADABAD - Construction work of building for Public Health Department in eastern Kunar province kicked off on Sunday, an official said.

Public Health Director Dr. Aziz-ur-Rahman said the 3-storey building would be constructed at a cost of 20 million Afghanis.

Money for the project would be provided from the uplift budget of Public Health Ministry and the work would be completed in nine months.

Governor Waheedullah Kalemzai while inaugurating the construction work asked the company to fulfill all commitments and complete the work according to the contract. (Pajhwok)

Onion price skyrockets as harvest down in Samangan

AIBAK - Due to decreased harvest, the price of onion has increased by more than 10 times compared to its last year's rate in Hazrat Sultan district of northern Samangan province.

Humayoon Habib, Samangan agriculture director, said farmers cultivated onion on 750 acres of land last year, but this year they cultivated the vegetable on 600 acres.

The farmers collected 5,500 tons this season compared to 6,800 tons last year. Habib said the price of onion was 10 times higher than last year's for being exported to Pakistan.

Khan Sherin, a resident of the area, said he sold seven kilos of onion for 150 afghanis and the same quantity was sold for 20 afghanis last year.

His one acre of land produced 7,700 kilos which he sold for 120,000 afghanis. Ali Mohammad, another farmer, said he collected 16 tons of onion from his two and a half acres of land. he sold seven kilos of onion for 140 afghanis a few days ago. He said the increased price would meet his family's needs.

Reports suggest the price of onion increased after the product was exported to Pakistan. The prices of water melon, melon, almond and pistachio have also increased, compared to last year's. (Pajhwok)

Clash among ISIS and Afghan forces leaves 12 dead, wounded in Kunar

ASAD ABAD - At least twelve people were killed or wounded during a clash between the Afghan security forces and the ISIS militants in eastern Kunar province of Afghanistan.

The 201st Silab Corps of the Afghan National Army (ANA) forces in the East said the incident took place late on Saturday night in the vicinity of Kunar Bain area.

A statement by the Silab Corps said at least eight ISIS militants were killed and four others were wounded during the clashes.

The statement further added that two

weapons, eight magazines of ammunition, 2 rocket launcher missiles, 1 communication device set, and 3 mobile phones together with the dead bodies of the two militants were left in the area in the aftermath of the clashes.

The anti-government armed militant groups including the ISIS militants have not commented regarding the report so far.

Kunar, located in eastern parts of Afghanistan, borders the tribal regions of Pakistan and is home to several terrorist groups.

The Afghan Taliban insurgents as well as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group's offshoot, ISIS Khorasan, operate in some of the restive districts of the province. (KP)

Policemen who foiled terror bid promoted, prized

KABUL - The Ministry of Interior on Sunday honored 19 policemen with certificates for preventing a deadly attack in capital Kabul.

Brig. Gen. Mohammad Salim Almas, crime branch chief, said police recovered 30 jerry cans full of explosives, two bombs and a huge amount of ammonium nitrate from a mazda vehicle. He said: "The vehicle was to be used in a suicide attack in Kabul on Saturday night but police seized the vehicle and defused the explosives."

The explosives-laden truck had entered Kabul from central Logar province and was seized in Merwais Maidan area of Kota-i-Sangai. A central part of Kabul was the target.

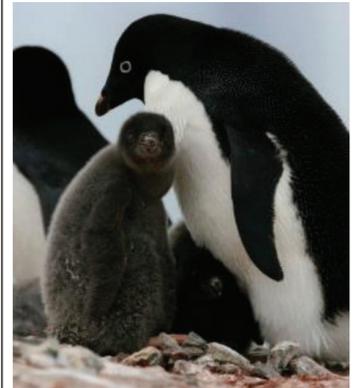
Interior Minister Wais Ahmad Baramak said: "These policemen thwarted a huge bombing which could have resulted in the killing of many innocent people."

"You are the pride of police force and the ministry of interior hopes that you will show the same performance in future by foiling major devastating incidents," the minister said.

He added officials of the firth police district saved many innocent lives by detecting the motor bomb.

The policemen were awarded a higher rank and cash prize amounting to 20,000 and 30,000 each. (Pajhwok)

Thousands Of Baby Penguins Starve To Death In Antarctica



WASHINGTON - A penguin colony in Antarctica that's home to over 18,000 pairs of Adélie penguins has suffered a massive breeding failure, with all but two of the babies starving to death.

According to CNN, the World Wildlife Fund said unseasonably extensive amounts of sea ice around the colony forced the adult penguins to travel further than normal to forage for food. The babies did not survive the parents' journeys.

"This devastating event contrasts with the image that many people might have of penguins," said Rod Downie, Head of Polar Programmes at WWF. "It's more like 'Tarantino does Happy Feet', with dead penguin chicks strewn across a beach in Adélie Land."

Downie continued: "The impact of this catastrophic event is confined to this specific colony of Adélie penguins, predictions are that the Antarctic will get warmer and this may pose different challenges in the longer term."

Though Adélie penguins are generally doing well in East Antarctica, where they mostly eat krill, a small shrimp like crustacean. But they are declining in the peninsula, where the effects of climate change are already being felt.

According to the UK's The Independent, four years ago, the same colony had another, similar catastrophic shock. It consisted of 20,196 pairs then - and not a single one was able to produce a chick.

That time around, unusual amounts of sea ice combined with warm weather and rain, before a rapid drop in temperature. Many of the chicks became saturated and froze to death.

Meanwhile, scientists, environmental groups, and officials will meet next week in Australia to discuss the creation of a new Marine Protected Area (MPA) for the waters off eastern Antarctica, which would help protect the penguins. (Tolonews)