

(1) 91 Boys...

dents, the street seller encouraged them to eat the chickpeas. "The seller told us to eat and said he would talk to our teachers to also pass all of us in our tests. He said if we did not have money we could take it tomorrow," a Grade 3 student, Mohammad Qasim, said. Malika Paygham, the acting head of Herat Zone Hospital confirmed that 91 students had been taken to the hospital. They were from Grade One to Grade Eight. Paygham said all boys were in a stable condition. (Tolonews)

(2) Divergence Among...

of battle over distribution of power. "Last night, 30 people were kidnapped in Badakhshan and 10 were beheaded. This was done by Daesh group," he claimed. Pedram warned the government was losing legitimacy since the security situation was deteriorating on a daily basis.

Babur Farahmand, a legislator from Faryab, questioned security forces' performance in thwarting terrorist attack on Balkh province's attorney general office. "The non-professional response of security forces to Balkh attack gave rise to casualties." More than 20 people were killed and 70 more wounded in Balkh attack. Wolesi Jirga Speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahim also expressed concerns about the ongoing law and order situation, asking the administrative board of the house to summon security officials to the house. (Pajhwok)

(3) 3 Cabinet Nominees ...

Counter Narcotics, Salamat Azimi, spoke on the need to cut back on poppy cultivation and to increase efforts to fight drug smuggling. She also spoke on the need for treatment for drug addicts.

The nominee for the Ministry of Higher Education, Fareeda Mohmand, promised to resolve issues around the Kankor, or university entrance, exam and said there was a need to improve the standard of university education by introducing new programs.

The nominees all emphasized the need for reform and efficient planning within the Ministries. They promised to take full responsibility for the management of the ministries in the event of them being successful.

On Saturday, the House of Representative members also showed their concern over increased insecurity issues and over continued political issues plaguing the National Unity Government (NUG) leaders. MP's emphasized that the nominee for the Ministry of Defense was announced after a long delay, but due to political tension between the president and the CEO, the nominee was forced to withdraw his nomination. MP's said that government must speed up the process and finalize cabinet nominations and appointments as soon as possible.

Of the introduced cabinet nominees, four of them are women who have been working in different sectors such as health and education, mostly at Afghan universities.

All three said they would also work closely with MPs.

"Something must be done for the disabled and the families of martyrs. There must be employment for people in society and opportunities must be provided for workers to go abroad and work. We will work to increase the employment opportunities in Afghanistan. We will try to create technical and vocational training centers in the six zones so that our youth can learn technical skills at the centers," says Oryakhail.

Towards the end of their speeches, MPs showed their encouragement by clapping, but the Chairman of the House Abdul Rauf Ibrahim said clapping was against their Code of Conduct.

"Respect MPs, you all decided that based on the Code of Conduct here, there must not be clapping during or after the end of speeches. Why are you acting against your decision then?" asked Ibrahim at the time.

"Please vote for the cabinet nominees instead of clapping, what good will the clapping do?" said Abdul Rauf Inami, Secretary of the House. Nominee for the Ministry of Higher Education called the lack of programs for Kankor, the problems in the hostels and the low standard of education at universities among the major

"The Ministry of Higher Education faces issues which need reform. Kankor has turned in to a major problem. Ending complaints regarding Kankor, better services to students, ending complaints from hostels and improving private higher education are among my programs and I will be working to improve the

education quality at universities," said higher education minister nominee Mohmand, cabinet nominee for the Ministry of Higher Education. Meanwhile, counter narcotics ministry nominee Salamat Azimi said that the increasing number of addicts, the absence of strong commitment for fighting narcotics and the increase in poppy cultivation are among her primary concerns.

"At the policy making level, unless there is a strong political will for fighting narcotics, efforts for fighting it will always result in nothing. Corruption and lack of attention in fighting and preventing smuggling of drugs and absence in implementation of programs in this sector are among the main problems," said Azimi.

These statements come amid growing concerns within the government over insecurity issues and over the discordance between the NUG leaders over distribution of power. MPs have said that the ongoing disagreements between the two leaders have resulted in the expansion of Daesh and Taliban in Afghanistan. (Tolonews)

(4) Uzbekistan should...

session of the chambers of Oliy Majlis. Uzbek leader said: "We are living in uneasy, increasingly tense time, when various threats and challenges amplified, which may lead to unpredictable consequences." Islam Karimov said that Uzbekistan should consider as its primary task to further strengthen friendly relations and mutual beneficial cooperation with foreign states to preserve peace and tranquility, well-being and prosperity of our people, protect our borders.

He once again vowed that Uzbekistan will never join military-political blocks and will not allow to place foreign military base in Uzbekistan, or send its troops abroad.

Uzbek leader said that this position is only correct way for Uzbekistan. He stated that Uzbekistan needs peace and tranquility and "we will fight for it". (Monitoring Desk)

(5) Govt. Lacks...

he said, acknowledging problems in the government, which he said would take some time to resolve. He said the chief executive position was newly created and it would reveal later how much power the president bestowed on it.

"I don't defend the unity government for its failure to get done some works because six months were enough time to have done many things what the government did not do."

However, Khan said though little was achieved during the past six months on domestic level, yet many achievements were made during the period on international front.

He said the international community's trust in the Afghanistan government had increased and was on further increase. A new chapter in relations with Arab nations has opened and an atmosphere of trust developed with Pakistan, he said.

The first deputy CEO said problems like incomplete cabinet, running affairs in provinces by acting governors and other departments being headed by acting officials remained. Khan confirmed differences on some issues between the CEO and the Presidential Palace existed. In this regard, he cited disagreement over the leaderships of the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Defence, the army chief and the new-created electoral reforms commission.

He said there were other issues as well, which he said needed to be jointly addressed. "We don't have a clear answer to give it to the masses on these issues," Khan admitted.

Six persons, the president and his two deputies and the CEO and his two deputies, were responsible to manage the country's administration, said Mohammad Khan, urging the two sides to end problems stemming from their differences like incomplete cabinet and others in order to steer the country out of the ambiguous situation.

He suggested the two sides should find experienced persons to be appointed as ministers and on other key posts in consultations with each other.

About budget for the CEO offices, Mohammad Khan said the Wolesi Jirga had not yet approved the budget, but they received some funds in compliance with a presidential decree issued in this regard to cover the expenses.

He said they had been providing salaries to 30 low-ranking staff members like guards, drivers and others from their own pockets for several months.

About complaints from former jihadi veterans like Abdul Rab Ras-

soul Sayyaf and Ismail Khan about not giving mujahideen enough representation in the cabinet, Mohammad Khan said their complaints were only justifiable from security perspective.

He added one million people had sacrificed their lives in the armed resistance against the Russian invasion and the communist regime and now giving security ministries to those having killed mujahideen was not appropriate.

Giving the key ministries to such individuals would not favour the prevailing circumstance, Khan said, but named no one. (Pajhwok)

(6) Militants on ...

der smuggling. He said Pakistan is hosting around three million registered and unregistered Afghan refugees. He said that repatriation of Afghan refugees will be on voluntary basis saying that President Ashraf Ghani has also announced land ownership rights for returning refugees.

"We have to create livelihood activities in their home. We are working jointly with the Afghan government and exchange of allegation is a thing of the past," said the foreign secretary.

He said the militant narrative that they had defeated a super power and can throw out governments in Kabul was a flawed narrative.

He said the Pakistani government had built a national political consensus against terrorism, without which military action in Federally Administered Tribal Areas was not possible. He said the militants lost any sympathy they had after the Peshawar school attack.

"Pakistan is committed to pursuing peace and stability in Afghanistan since it will mean peace in Pakistan and in the region. The government is pursuing this policy at political as well as the economic front," he said and maintained that the political process of reconciliation between the two countries and within Afghanistan was being helped by China and the US.

He said that President Ashraf Ghani was a visionary leader who along with Pakistan had decided to no longer allow the terrorists to operate on either side of the border.

Ambassador Mahmoud Saikal said that there was a wind of change in Afghanistan with the unity government, withdrawal of foreign troops, and other constructive steps by President Ashraf Ghani including his visit to Pakistan after his election. He said that the Peshawar school attack had not only united Pakistan but had also brought the two countries together.

"Afghan land is not being used by India for its proxy war against Pakistan," said Saikal, "they are rumours only. Kabul cannot be used as a launching pad for proxy wars."

The seminar was organised by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Pakistan in collaboration with the Government and Policy Advisors (GPA). (Monitoring Desk)

(7) HPC Useless ...

would be effective only when it shunned its inactiveness, he believed.

The first deputy CEO said experienced individuals existed in the council and the government should take benefit from them in other fields. He said peace needed a trustworthy body unlike the current one. About Pakistan's role in the ongoing peace efforts and its sincerity, Mohammad Khan said: "The time will prove how much Pakistan is sincere."

He said though Pakistan's civil and military leaderships had repeatedly claimed their sincerity this time, some border issues and security incidents in Afghanistan brought under question Islamabad's claims.

"President Ghani has made it clear on Pakistan that if violence in Afghanistan increased this spring, it will show Pakistan is not sincere about peace and relations."

Khan claimed the insurgency in Afghanistan was supported by regional spy networks because the insurgents could not fight for so many years without such backing. (Pajhwok)

(8) Nimroz IDPs...

acting governor, said these families have been identified by the development councils in the province. He said the aid worth \$220,000 was provided by Al-Nahyan organization. Parween, who had returned from Iran, told Pajhwok Afghan News she had three children and had nothing at home to feed them.

Noor Mohammad said it had been over a year since they left Farah due to conflicts. "I can't find a job. My three children sell plastic bags in the city to earn a livelihood."

The government, he said should have clear programmes for them since the aid was not enough for the long-term.

Niamatullah Sediqi, provincial council secretary, said the aid was not enough. "We want more organization to contribute to assist these families." (Pajhwok)

(9) Cultural Centre ...

activities," he added. Kabir Dadras, director of information and culture department, welcomed the construction of the centre, saying those working in the centre are highly experienced in areas of arts, theatre and cinema.

He said since the province would officially be announced as the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) cultural centre, it was necessary to have such centres. (Pajhwok)

(10) Protesters Want ...

did nothing to recover them, he lamented.

Another protester Gulab Saedi said it was the government responsibility to ensure safety of citizens. She demanded authorities arrest and punish the killers of Hussain Nazari, the provincial nominee, who was kidnapped and killed by the Taliban last year.

Meanwhile, Acting Governor Abdul Ghafoor Dastyar said government was aware about the grievances of people about security situation. He pledged all measures were being adopted to improve law and order in the province. (Pajhwok)

(11) Khost Local Khanabad district, said the creation of local councils had helped improve the education system by enabling student to have access to bookstores, labs and other extra-curriculum activities.

According to provincial education department officials, as many as 30,000 students are enrolled in 450 schools in Kunduz. (Pajhwok)

(12) Nangarhar Residents ...

a tribal elder from Behsud district, said insecurity and corruption were serious problems in the province.

Another tribal elder Maulvi Ansarullah said: "We discussed the issues with lawmakers and briefed them on the prevailing situation in the province.

Nangarhar is a border province and any kind of situation in the province could directly impact other cities of the country, he said, demanding the government to appoint an efficient governor to ameliorate the situation. (Pajhwok)

(13) Czech Airborne

we are an important partner, and thanks to us the ability of the Air Force in Afghanistan face a difficult situation has been strengthened," he said.

Thirty experts from the 14th Aviation Unit Advisory Team served four months at a base in Kabul. (Monitoring Desk)

(14) ANA Soldier ...

Azim was living in his village and did not study in school, Rahim recalled.

Azim had no links with any militants' group and had joined the army based on his love to serve his country.

Earlier, Zubair Sediqi, a self-proclaimed spokesman of the Hizbe-Islami Afghanistan (HIA) had claimed the responsibility and stated that Azim had links with his group. (Pajhwok)

(15) Taliban ...

"These incidents highlight once again the tragic reality that it is Afghan civilians who bear the brunt of the reckless use of violence," said the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan and head of UNAMA, Nicholas Haysom. "The killing of civilians and the indiscriminate use of IEDs must cease immediately."

Improvised explosive devices were the second largest cause of civilian casualties in Afghanistan during 2014, according to a statement released by UNAMA.

The statement further added that the International humanitarian law explicitly prohibits the use of weapons whose effects may not be limited and attacks which are not directed at a specific military objective and requires all parties to uphold their legal obligations to at all times avoid harm to civilians. (KP)

(16) Six Suspects ..

According to the statement the suicide attacker who carried out the explosion among civilians in Matun, provincial capital of Khost province was Atallah alias Shah Ghulam a resident of Panjab province of Pakistan. The statement states that the group

had brought Atallah to Khost's Alisher District through the instruction from Haqani terrorist network and had handed him over to a Haqani's local commander Anwaruddin.

The statement adds that the suicide attacker them was brought to the city for carrying out the attack among the protesters.

The attack left 20 civilians killed and at least 62 others wounded on April 2. (KP)

(17) 11 Civilian ..

attack," he said. As yet no group including the Taliban has claimed responsibility for the blast.

Sayagerd is one of the insecure districts in the province and Taliban insurgents frequently target the Afghan security forces in the area, said Sediqi. (Tolonews)

(18) Damascus Gives...

during a press conference after talks between representatives of the Syrian government and the opposition in Moscow, on January 30, 2015.

On Friday, Qadri Jamil, the leader of the opposition Popular Front of Change and Liberation, also described the Moscow talks as positive, but stressed that there still remain differences to overcome. "Overall, we can say that the conclusion is positive.... We can say that we have completed more than 50 percent of the tasks," Jamil said, adding that the negotiating sides were "closer than ever" to reaching an agreement on major sticking points.

The second round of the inter-Syrian negotiations aimed at finding a solution to a four-year conflict in the Arab country were held in Moscow on April 6-9. The city hosted a previous round of negotiations from January 26 to 29 in which the parties agreed on the general outlines of a political framework to settle the disputes.

Syrian sources revealed after the talks on Thursday that the two sides have agreed on a six-point plan proposed by Vitaly Naumkin, a Russian official mediating the negotiations. Syria has been grappling with a deadly crisis since March 2011. The violence, which has been fueled by Takfiri groups, has so far claimed the lives of over 215,000 people, according to reports.

Takfiri terrorist groups, with members from several Western countries, control swathes of land in Syria and Iraq, and have been carrying out horrific acts of violence such as public decapitations and crucifixions against all communities such as Shias, Sunnis, Kurds and Christians. (Monitoring Desk)

(19) India Orders 36...

over a decade.

But after his landslide victory in a general election last year, and with India's economy now growing faster than even China's, France is rolling out the red carpet for the one-time outcast.

"France has always been a reliable supplier for India from jet fighters to submarines," Modi said, pointing to cooperation in a number of sectors such as space, nuclear energy and defence.

Hollande said he was "deeply moved" by the announcements and said they took the partnership between the two countries "into a new gear."

French nuclear giant Areva is still awaiting the go-ahead to install six reactors in India's western state of Maharashtra, five years after a bilateral civil nuclear accord.

Nothing was announced on this particular accord, but India and France signed agreements in a raft of other sectors such as space and transport. They also discussed cooperation in the fight against extremism.

Hollande expressed his "indignation" after Pakistani authorities on Thursday freed the alleged mastermind of the 2008 Mumbai attacks on bail.

Modi made no comment on the issue.

India has described the release of Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, accused over the terror siege that left 166 dead, as an "insult" to the victims of the three-day onslaught on its financial capital, which was blamed on the banned Pakistani militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

Hollande also thanked the Indian prime minister for his "solidarity" over the Islamist attacks in the French capital in January which left 17 people dead.

After a two-day whistlestop tour that will take him from northern to southern France -- with a short breather to take in the Paris sights from a boat ride on the Seine -- Modi will jet off to Germany. Modi is seeking to attract investors

as he tries to rewrite India's reputation as a tricky place to do business, beset by bureaucracy, corruption and a stringent tax regime.

The government has already relaxed rules for foreign investors, eager to create work for the millions who enter India's job market each year.

"Our main challenge is to create jobs for the young -- 800 million Indians are less than 35 years old," he told Le Figaro daily.

While Modi was quick to meet US President Barack Obama and Asia's top leaders after his election last May, it has taken him nearly a year to travel to Europe.

Still, trade between India and the EU as a whole has grown from 28.6 billion euros (\$30.5 billion) in 2003 to 72.7 billion euros in 2013, and both sides are keen for the upswing to continue. (AFP)

(20) UAE Warns ...

Gargash went to symbolise Pakistan's resolution as equivalent of siding up with Iran instead of the Gulf. "Teheran seems to be more important to Islamabad and Ankara than the Gulf countries," Gargash said.

"Though our economic and investment assets are inevitable, political support is missing at critical moments," he added.

The statement comes a day after the Parliament passed a unanimous resolution vowing to defend Saudi Arabia's territorial integrity and the holy places of Makkah and Madinah. None of these locations appear to have so far been threatened by the conflict.

"Pakistan should play a mediating role and not get involved in the fighting in Yemen," the resolution stated, adding that "the Parliament of Pakistan ... underscores the need for continued efforts by the government of Pakistan to find a peaceful resolution of the crisis".

"[Parliament] desires that Pakistan should maintain neutrality in the Yemen conflict so as to be able to play a proactive diplomatic role to end the crisis," it stated.

The Saudi-led coalition launched air strikes against Houthi rebels on March 26 in support of Yemeni President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi after they seized the capital and forced him to flee to Aden. The government of Pakistan has so far not announced a decision on Saudi Arabia's request for Islamabad to join a coalition fighting Houthi rebels by contributing jets, navy ships and ground troops. (Monitoring Desk)

(21) AIIB to be Lean...

"Everything has two sides. It would pose some difficulty to the coordination of the positions and interests of all the member countries, especially many of which are at different economic level of development. But it is definitely not good news if the AIIB earned little response."

"AIIB is not the first multi-lateral financial institution, and we have a lot of experiences to borrow," Long added.

His words were also echoed by Jin. "World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) have been operating for decades, and they have gained a lot of experiences in supporting the investment in other countries," he said.

But he also pointed out the difference between the AIIB and the existing institutions.

"China itself benefits enormously from the contribution by World Bank and the ADB. Now it's time for China to do something more for this region. And the difference between AIIB and World Bank and ADB is that this bank focuses exclusively on infrastructure development."

Talking about the operation of the bank, Jin said the bank would not be operated politically, but professionally.

"AIIB is a bank, not a political organization or political alliance. This guaranteed that it would be impossible to operate it in an untransparent way," he said. "AIIB is not China's bank. Many people have put too much emphasis on politics; this is a misunderstanding towards AIIB," said Long. (Xinhua)

(22) Seoul Strengthens...

countries based on the priorities of their socio-economic development will be specified," newspaper Neutral Turkmenistan reported Apr.11. The state news agency Turkmen Dowlat Khabarlary said that strategic vectors of development and the actual content of interstate relations have been identified at the previous summit last summer, when South Korean President Park Geun-hye was in Ashgabat on a state visit. (Reuters)