

(1) Tehran and...

is scheduled to meet his Iranian counterpart Dr. Hassan Rouhani and other high officials during his visit. Both countries' foreign ministers are expected to sign a bilateral cooperation deal.

Haji Mohammad Mohaqiq, deputy Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Salahuddin Rabani, foreign minister, Mohammad Hanif Atmar, National Security Adviser, Ekil Hakimi, finance minister, Dawood Shah Sabah, minister of Mines and Petroleum, Sayed Hussain Aleml Bakhki, minister for Refugees and Repatriation and other high officials accompanied the president.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has said that his country and neighboring Afghanistan have agreed on intelligence and security cooperation as part of efforts to combat illicit drugs trafficking and terrorism, Iranian Media reports Sunday.

In a joint press conference with his Afghan counterpart Mohammad Ashraf Ghani in Tehran, Rouhani said: "Concerning the issue of narcotics, which is a menace beleaguering the region, Iran and Afghanistan itself, we agreed to have intelligence and security cooperation to counter drug trafficking rings."

Rouhani said Tehran and Kabul agreed to share intelligence on terrorism, violence and extremism in the region, including in Afghan regions bordering Iran, and conduct joint operations if need be.

He added that talks were also held on the issue of Afghan refugees currently residing in Iran, stressing that an agreement was reached on the adoption of measures to register all Afghans now living in Iran.

Turning to the ongoing crisis in Yemen, Rouhani urged all regional countries to formulate political solutions for issues that have turned violent, and help Yemeni people to solve their own problems at the negotiating table and establish peace and calm in their crisis-hit country. (Pajhwok)

(2) Reforms Needed ...

there is a legal framework in place for such cases, there remain many factors hindering access to justice and redress for such women, in particular the lack of available civil remedies. The report released by the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) identifies the factors that enable or hinder women's access to justice in cases involving violence. It documents the individual experience of 110 Afghan women victims of violence who sought justice through the judicial system and through non-judicial mechanisms, including mediation, across the country between August 2014 and February 2015.

The majority of the cases in the report were brought to mediation, a process to resolve a dispute through mutual agreement and reconciliation between parties, and only five per cent of the resolved cases resulted in criminal prosecution and sanctions against the perpetrators.

"The women interviewed said that they sought protection through mediation to address acts of violence against them," said Ivan Simonović, the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights. "But their experiences also show that mediation needs to be strengthened to make it more consistent and of a higher standard, and above all that its implementation should be closely monitored."

Women's preference for mediation is influenced by several factors, such as perceived deficiencies in the criminal justice system, including allegations of corruption, abuse of power and lack of professionalism, as well as cultural and family pressure. Interviewed women also stressed the value of mediation as a swift means to have their case processed.

The report also found that the majority of women were largely concerned with obtaining redress of a civil nature, such as divorce, custody settlements or living in a safe environment rather than seeking criminal sanctions, fearing the negative economic and social consequences they might generate for them and their families.

The report notes that the existing legal framework and court adjudication process in Afghanistan provides limited options for women facing violence, with its focus on the imposition of criminal penalties on perpetrators and the absence of legal provisions available for obtaining restraint orders and civil remedies.

The report also highlights women's economic dependency and the weak legal protection of their property and other rights as key factors impeding survivors of violence from taking action against abusers. For example, a woman who complains to the authorities about violence and is forced to leave the marital home that is her

husband's property often has nowhere to go.

"The insights and concerns that women have expressed through this report should help to better inform and influence policy and institutional reforms needed to protect them and improve their access to justice in Afghanistan," Simonović said, during an official visit to Afghanistan.

The report recommends that the Government of Afghanistan adopt legal, institutional and policy reforms to better protect Afghan women facing violence. These include expanding the civil remedies available, strengthening the capacity of the criminal justice system to protect survivors, regulating mediation through common standards, and applying the 2009 Law on the Elimination of Violence against Women (the EVAW law). The report also suggests recruiting and training staff - both women and men - to treat survivors of violence with professionalism, dignity, sensitivity and respect.

"As demands for justice through mediation in Afghanistan increase, the Government should ensure mediation practices fully protect the rights of victims," said Nicholas Haysom, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan and head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

"Mediation of violence against women cases require support and monitoring so they are guided by principles of consent, safety, impartiality and inclusivity."

He stressed that major crimes of violence against women must be prosecuted and adjudicated through the criminal justice process and not mediated, in accordance with Afghan laws and the country's international human rights obligations. (PR)

(3) UN Investigation ...

the report, did not show it to senior UN officials after it was submitted in January.

It is the latest in a series of questions about LOTFA, which has received around \$3.6 billion (Dh13 billion) from international donors since 2002 to pay Afghan police force salaries and other expenses.

LOTFA commissioned the report late last year to find out why the main system for filing complaints about police misconduct, a 24-hour phone line, rarely led to prosecutions.

It found that only nine out of more than 2,000 complaints referred to the inspector general's office in the Afghan interior ministry over a year were forwarded for prosecution. It concluded the chief of the agency, Hakim Nejrabi, and his senior staff were ignoring or blocking complaints.

"Systemic corruption is endemic to the organisation because the leadership has not only tolerated corruption, they have facilitated it and, in many instances, participated in it," the report said, recommending the removal of Nejrabi and all of his senior staff.

Nejrabi denied all allegations made in the report, calling the findings "a political character assassination". He said more than 50 interior ministry officials had been investigated since he took office 13 months ago, and 22 cases had been forwarded for prosecution.

The UNDP said it learnt of the report only when Reuters asked about it earlier this month and is now conducting a review of internal processes "to improve efficiency, oversight and accountability to prevent this from happening again." It also said a copy was then immediately provided to Afghanistan's anticorruption body, the Independent Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (MEC). Officials at the committee confirmed they had received the report.

UNDP did not say why submission of the report was delayed and LOTFA's manager, Basil Massey, declined to comment.

Last year, the US special inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction criticised LOTFA for allegedly losing track of millions of dollars in payments to ghost employees. In 2012, it was investigated for procurement fraud.

Yama Torabi, a member of the MEC, said the report "shows that for years they've done nothing to solve the problem - not LOTFA, the Afghan government or previous ministers." (Reuters)

(4) Ghani to ...

closely and I will get reports about your actions from each and every province," Ghani said. The minister of interior said the newly appointed police officials were experienced and they would leave no stone unturned to serve masses. Police chiefs of Herat, Ghazni, Farah, Zabul, Parwan, Kapisa, Ghor and Nuristan attended the meeting. (Pajhwok)

(5) Gen. Abdullah...

vote of confidence." A source in the MoD wishing to go unnamed said he did not know about Gen. Abdullah Khan's nomination but said the general had been an MoD official for the past 40 years. He added Abdullah Khan hails from Kunar province and has studied in Russia.

Javed Faisal, a spokesperson for the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has tweeted that the leaders have evolved consensus on a nominee. (Pajhwok)

(6) Iran Visit will...

obstacles in trade with Pakistan and Iran so that he would negotiate with the Iranian officials during his visit. Khan Jan Alkozai, deputy Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI), said Afghan businessmen did not have obstacles from Iran but they were facing with serious problems in business with Pakistan. (Pajhwok)

(7) 'New University ...

work delayed due to election disputes.

Several businessmen contributed for the construction of university and the construction had been started this year.

Khogyani said that 130 students have been enrolled in agriculture and their studies would start soon. (Pajhwok)

(8) Unity Government...

Sufi Habib, another elder, stated that the government had many shortcomings, which caused obstacles on the way to develop the country. (Pajhwok)

(9) New Minister

women's rights activists had demanded one-thirds of cabinet portfolios to be given to women.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs has welcomed the approval of four women as ministers by parliament, but urged more representation for females in other public sector departments.

Syed Muzgan Mustafavi, the Women's Affairs Ministry secretary, said woman ministers should not play a symbolic role, but a complete and independent role exercising powers bestowed on them.

Addressing a conference on women's socio-economic rights, she said four women as ministers could not resolve challenges women faced in society.

She urged women to utilise their capacity on leadership level, asking the government to appoint females as governors, mayors, district chiefs and judges.

Muzgan said women had been contributing to the country's economic development and separate markets should be established for them so that they could contribute in more effective way.

The ouster of despotic Taliban regime in 2001 enabled many women to work on various key government posts during the past 13 years.

They include Sairah Shikaib, the Faizabad district chief in northern Jawzjan province, Habiba Surabi, a former governor of central Bamyan province, Tayaba Khawari, a provincial council head.

Uzra Jafari had worked as the mayor of central Daikundi province and Marya Bashir as the attorney general in Herat. (Pajhwok)

(10) Anomaly Unearthed...

the image of the country. Some members of parliament had also been found using political passports which should be cancelled, he said, adding that all political passports distributed illegally needed to be collected to prevent its illegal use.

The fact that common people possess political passport unearthed when Azerbaijan conveyed to the government of Afghanistan that a large number Afghans possessed political passports.

Hikmat Khalil Karzai, the foreign ministry secretary earlier confirmed that 4,650 political passports had illegally distributed among individuals in the previous years.

Sirajul Haq Siraj, deputy spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), said more than 4,000 political passports had been distributed in the last few years and pledged to cancel them with immediate effect. (Pajhwok)

(11) Civil Society ...

identified himself as the spokesman for ISIS in the region claimed responsibility for it. (KP)

(12) Jalalabad Bombing...

being implemented its nefarious agenda in Syria and Iraq. Deputy Governor Mohammad Hanif Gardiwal, Wolesi Jirga Deputy Speaker Haji Mohammad Zahir and High Peace Council Member Qazi Amin Waqad were also present on

the occasion.

Haji Qadir said the purpose of his visit was to share their grief with the bereaved families. He said on the behalf of lower house members, he condemned the suicide bombing in strongest words.

He termed such incidents as part of the international game and said that it was high time to show unity against the nefarious designs of the enemy of Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(13) Daesh Benefited ...

governor, when I went there, I found out that Daesh families benefited from the assistance," Mateen said. The National Security Council has yet to comment in this regard.

The alleged recent emergence of Daesh has sharply raised security concerns among the people. The extremist group Saturday claimed responsibility for the deadly Jalalabad suicide attack that left 34 civilians dead and 125 wounded. President Ashraf Ghani said on Saturday - during his visit to insurgent-hit Badakhshan province - that Daesh had claimed responsibility for the Jalalabad bombing.

"Who claimed responsibility for the horrific attack in Nangarhar today? The Taliban did not claim responsibility for the attack, Daesh claimed responsibility for the attack," Ghani said.

But Interior Minister Noor-ul-Haq Olomi while briefing the Meshrano Jirga (Upper House of Parliament) said the insurgents, who were calling themselves Daesh, were the same Taliban insurgents who had changed their flags.

"I have repeatedly said that only black flags have been raised and they are the same Taliban who have rebranded themselves," Olomi said. (Tolonews)

(14) Pak-Afghan ...

"The virus is travelling between the two countries because of the porous border as Pakistan is hosting 1.6 million Afghan refugees," he said.

"Because of the refugees poliovirus travels between the countries. Moreover, many times it happens that refugees enter Afghanistan before start of an anti-polio campaign in Pakistan and come back before start of a campaign in Afghanistan," he said.

"Those persons are a major source of transfer of poliovirus and polio cases are reported in their children or because of them," he said.

"So it was suggested that anti-polio campaigns should start simultaneously on both sides of the border to ensure that not a single child is missed," he said.

The official said all arrangements had been finalised and a delegation led by the Prime Minister's Focal Person on Polio Eradication, Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq, was scheduled to go to Kabul on Thursday to attend the meeting that was to begin in the evening.

"Officials of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas were also part of the delegation. Moreover, representatives of UN agencies also had to go to Kabul," he said.

"Members of the delegation were in Islamabad and ready to leave but they were informed by their Afghan counterparts that because of some intelligence information they had to wait till a security clearance," he said. (Agencies)

(15) Commuters ...

pernicious activities of militants. Sher Ahmed, another local resident, voiced same reservations by saying that insurgents wanted to control the main high ways.

It merits mention that 31 passengers were kidnapped in the province two months back who were still missing. But security officials pledged they were capable to ensure security on main highways from insurgents.

Brig. Gen. Ghulam Sakhi Rogh Lewana, Zabul police chief, acknowledged that militants had increased their activities recently but he said that commuters should travel without any sense of fear. (Pajhwok)

(16) Family Grieves...

his brother Hazrat Omer was there to get some food for his family, both not realizing they would die a Daesh suicide attack.

"The children of our nephews have been orphaned, and these kids do not have a home," the men's uncle told TOLONews. "We want government to support these kids who have lost their fathers."

Gul Omer is survived by two boys and two girls. Hazrat Omer is survived by four girls and two sons. With both breadwinners gone, the grandmother of the 10 children has taken on the challenge of helping to support them.

"My son-in-law had gone to get his salary and told his brother to go with

him and take his salary and bring it to his children," their mother-in-law said. "He said that he was going to Maidan Wardak himself, but I saw that, in the afternoon, both their dead bodies were brought home."

Many of the brothers' family members and friends in their village voiced harsh criticism of the government and begged for action. "In order to prevent civilian casualties, the government must choose national interest over their private interests," a family member named Amir Muhammad Daraye said.

"People are burning in the fire of war, and the condition of people is bad; there is sorrow in every family, and every day, someone is losing a family member."

Gul Omer and Hazrat Omer have four other brothers and eight sisters. The two brothers were both married on the same day and killed on the same day.

The attack on Saturday took place out front of the New Kabul Bank branch in Jalalabad, killing and wounding over 150 individuals. The Daesh group claimed responsibility for the attack.

No less than five of the people killed in the bombing were from the Dar-e-Noor district of Nangarhar province. (Tolonews)

(17) New AM ...

The radio has 23 staff members, nine of them journalists, and the remaining are technical staff.

Qalandar Malang, who heads the Paktika youth unity union, said the radio's launch was an achievement and extended complete support to it on behalf of his union.

He said the channel could help people convey their problems to the authorities concerned and make their voices heard. (Pajhwok)

(18) Doctors in...

more than 700 people visited their various sections on a daily basis.

Dr. Mohammad Samadi, another official at the hospital, said the reason three of his colleagues resigned was that they were working more than 20 hours and that was beyond their capacity.

"I was on duty on Thursday and Friday and we had more than 300 patients. It was really difficult to reach to them all," he noted.

He said the strength of doctors was less, their wages were minimal and some of them couldn't visit their families for months. He said their salary was 22,000 afghanis that were being spent either on rents or travel expenses.

Fazel Haq Ehsan, provincial council head, said the doctors did not resign because the provincial council members and civil society organizations promised to take their grievances to authorities in Kabul. "If the doctors resign, we will lose a lot of emergency patients." (Pajhwok)

(19) Slow-Paced ...

highway and was supposed to be built by the ministry of commerce and industries.

Mohammad Nazir Kalantar, a carpet seller in Andkhoy, told Pajhwok Afghan News the government promised to build the project but now they have asked local traders to build it.

"As you can see the government has not considered construction of this park in their budget. The businesses are going down. How can people construct the park by themselves," he asked, adding the area where the park is located was also not safe.

He said when there is no security then people would also not dare to invest and bring their capital there. Mohammad Anwar, a carpet seller, said he lived in Pakistan for 15 years but after coming to Faryab he had to leave carpet weaving and start a shop to make ends meet.

Two weeks back, carpet sellers and carpet-weavers said the industry had alarmingly declined by 40 per cent in the province. They said a major reason for this was the import of low-quality and inexpensive foreign carpets that have found way in Afghan markets.

More than 90% of the residents in Andkhoy district were employed in carpet-weaving industry, but recently majority of them had to change profession because of a lack of market for their products.

Mohammad Saleh, a carpet weaver, said the only hope for them was the construction of the industrial park in the province that would boost their businesses again.

Sayed Zabihullah, Afghanistan Investment Support Agency (AISA) head in Faryab, acknowledged funds were not allocated for the construction of the park. He was not sure whether any funds would also be allocated next year. Earlier, Khan Jan Alkozai, deputy head of Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI),

said after the formation of the new government a lot of funds came to Afghanistan and some of them should have been spent on such industrial parks.

Three years ago, Anwar-ul-Haq Ahadi former commerce minister had promised Andkhoy officials around \$6 million for the development of the park. (Pajhwok)

(20) 3 Detained...

investigation. Meanwhile, two children, collecting firewood, were injured when a landmine exploded on them in Kamar Gulagh area of Herat City. They were taken to the provincial civil hospital, Ahmad said.

Dr. Muhammad Rafiq Shirzai, the hospital head, told Pajhwok Afghan News one of the children had one of his hands severed. (Pajhwok)

(21) Jalalabad Presents ...

were gradually returning to normalcy and people were coming back to work.

Separately, civil society activists have also condemned the Jalalabad suicide bombing and urged warring parties to prevent civilian casualties.

Some civil society activists held peaceful protest and offered prayers for the departed souls. Head of the National Movement Party Ismail Yun recited the condemnation letter. He said: "We denounce the yesterday's bombing and want the government to take tangible steps to stop such attacks in future. We pray to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace." (Pajhwok)

(22) Israel Pledges...

of their wages since December. The deficit will also be paid "as soon as possible", the prime minister said.

Under an economic agreement signed in 1994, Israel transfers to the PA tens of millions of dollars each month in customs duties levied on goods destined for Palestinian markets that transit through Israeli ports.

Although transfer freezes have been imposed many times, they have rarely lasted more than one or two months, except in 2006 when the Islamist movement Hamas won a landslide victory in Palestinian legislative polls and Israel withheld the funds for six months. (Agencies)

(23) Euro Working...

zone finance ministers at their meeting in Riga on Friday as progress has been painfully slow.

Shut out of bond markets and running out of cash to meet debt repayments and pay civil servants and pensions, Athens may get more aid from both the IMF and euro zone governments if there is agreement on reforms to make its finances sustainable and the economy more competitive. (Reuters)

(24) Wartime Climate

selling traditional swords in an open-air Riyadh market, the royal family is the glue that keeps the country together.

"From the day that (King) Abdulaziz unified the country there's been security, until the final hour," he said. Saudi Arabia was largely spared from the popular uprisings that swept the region starting in 2011, but has been alarmed by the expansion of Iranian influence and the rise of radical groups like the Islamic State. It is taking part in U.S.-led airstrikes against the IS group in Syria and is a leading backer of Syrian rebels fighting to overthrow President Bashar Assad, a close ally of Iran. Riyadh says its aim in Yemen is to restore the internationally recognized president, who fled to Saudi Arabia last month, and to halt the power grab by the Houthis. Iran has provided political and humanitarian support to the rebels, but denies arming them. (AP)

(25) France Provides...

ernisation programme. It is being entirely funded by Saudi Arabia, which is keen to see Lebanon's army defend its borders against jihadist groups, particularly the Islamic State group and Al-Qaeda-linked Al-Nusra, instead of leaving the job to Hezbollah militants, who are backed by its regional rival, Iran. (AFP)

(26) Uzbekistan to ...

sets 4.6-fold (up to 635 thousand), mobile phones 3.9-fold (up to a million), and refrigerators 2.5-fold (up to 600 thousand).

In general, Uzbekistan's electro-technical industry will spend more than \$153 million for building new productions of home appliances by 2019. (Agencies)