

(1) Voluntary ...

home country was a top priority for the agency, added Okoth-Obbo, who urged increased global support for the UNHCR. (Pajhwok)

(2) Terrorism...

eliminating this scourge not only requires effective action at national level, but close coordination at regional and global levels.

At this hour of grief, the Government and the people of Pakistan stand by their Afghan brothers. I wish to convey our heartfelt condolences over this tragedy and sympathies and support for the bereaved families, he added. (PR)

(3) Govt. Vows ...

the phenomenon," he said. IDLG spokesman Manija Yousufzada also said the president had asked all governors and local officials to mobilise uprising groups and support security forces. (Pajhwok)

(4) 'Education ...

contest. Only 300 students from the total 100,000 students across the country would be appeared in the second round of the competitions to select the Education Star of the country, he said.

In addition to the selection of education star, 100 top students would be awarded with different gifts including cars, scholarships, residential plots, laptops and others, the organisers of the contests said. (Pajhwok)

(5) Billions of ...

explained around \$4.5 billion was taken out of Afghanistan only through the Kabul International Airport in 2011 and \$70 billion was collected from illegal extraction of mines in 2014.

In addition to \$113 billion US support, hundreds of billions of dollars had been spent in Afghanistan, but no tangible development could be seen, he claimed. Much of the money went back to foreign countries. The international community knew where and by whom the money was taken out, he said, asking for exposing the Afghan politicians involved in the illegal withdrawal of money.

Afzali continued: "The Afghan government has failed to curb the illicit financial flows. If it wants to stabilise the country's economy, then it should decisively deal with the phenomenon."

However, President Ashraf Ghani's deputy spokesman Dawa Khan Minapal said the Ministry of Finance and Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB) were working together on a plan to prevent capital flight from the country. (Pajhwok)

(6) Iran, Afghanistan...

Drug Enforcement Agency. Rahmani Fazli had a trip to New York to take part in the first UN General Assembly special Session to Address Global Drug held on April 19-21.

The meeting aims at periodic investigation of improvements in implementation of diplomatic statement and plan of action like evaluation of achievements and challenges in fighting narcotic drugs in the format trilogy international conventions and the other UN related documents. (IRNA)

(7) Taliban Wanted...

to capture strategic Kunduz province to disrupt security of other provinces, but Afghan security forces gave them a "teeth-breaking" response, he said.

He said Afghan security forces were equipped with modern weapons and the Taliban had been unable to attack any urban centre anymore.

Kunduz Governor Asadullah Omarkhel praised sacrifices of the security forces in Kunduz and asked the central government to send more troops to Kunduz for clearing the province of insurgents. However, a member of the provincial council, Maulvi Khosh Mohammad Nasrat, complained people should not be misled by fake promises. He said urgent and practical measures were required to defeat militants.

He called the Omari offensive of Taliban as successful and said militants had captured many equipment and weapons from security forces and were using them in their operations against the government in Kunduz. (Pajhwok)

(8) National Flag...

past two days nearly three million cc of blood had been donated for the victims of the bombing in 18 provinces of the country.

According to Minapal, the government has commenced the process of assisting the injured and victims' families. All hospitals have been directed to provide the best possible treatment for the wounded.

A delegation has been appointed to investigate the issue and share its findings with the Presidential Palace, he added.

On the basis of a report aired by Tolo News, a Mazda truck loaded with explosives entered the Haji Mohammad Naeem Kochi market before the militants attacked the premier security agency. (Pajhwok)

(9) Dostum Clears...

and then they left," said Noor Mohammad a resident.

"Taliban have not fired a single bullet, they [Taliban] are afraid and fled the area and the forces captured the area," said Rahmatullah Kohistani Jawzjan police chief. (Tolonews)

(10) Paktia Clerics

supporting the national forces through sermons in mosques.

Paktia Governor Nasrat Arsal asked Afghan security forces to reduce the gap between the people and the government by properly behaving with people. (Pajhwok)

(11) A Taliban ...

of Pul-i-Alam.

A motorcycle, two bombs and some documents were recovered from the rebels, he said adding Mullah Rahim had been designated as Taliban commander for Pul-i-Alam.

Taliban fighters have so far issued no comment regarding the death of their commander in Logar. (Pajhwok)

(12) Stay the...

administration. He has served as a US diplomat in Afghanistan, Iraq and the United Nations.

Afghanistan was quite an orderly place, unlike the impression that the country and its tribes were always fighting among each other, he said.

"During the course of war, the US assumed that Soviets would prevail in Afghanistan and the American objective was to inflict a huge cost on the Russians so that they are not able to repeat this in any other part of the world," he added. The US achieved more than that in Afghanistan, he claimed, insisting that such an American assumption was wrong. As a result, the US had to make necessary adjustment in its policies. "We achieved the big objective of Soviet suffering. Maybe Afghanistan played a role in the Soviet disintegration. One lesson is that at some places we are good in counter-punching."

"From 1987 we have should begin to adjust. We needed to appoint someone who worked directly with the Afghans and not solely leave it to the US Ambassador in Islamabad," he observed.

In the book, Khalilzad gives a first-hand account of his travel from Kabul to the high echelons of White House, including an in-depth account of the war against the Soviets, the Taliban, post 9/11, formation of the Karzai government and the role of Pakistan. (Pajhwok)

(13) Attack on ...

"I was baking bread, when the incident happened and a piece of glass fell on my head and then I was in hospital," he added.

Mohammad Shoaib, is from the intelligence unit that was targeted. He said that he was in his office when the heavy explosion took place but said he doesn't remember anything else about the incident.

Popal, is a driver. He said that he only remembers dropping off his passenger and then parking his car.

"I parked my vehicle and then I was here," he said from his hospital bed.

Shah Mohammad is a staffer of National Bank, who also sustained injuries in the attack.

"I came out of the office for official work. I wanted to buy an Afghan Telecom card, I was near Foroshgah, when the blast took place. Glass fell over me," Shah Mohammad said.

At least 64 people lost their lives and 347 others sustained injuries in Tuesday's attack in Kabul. (Tolonews)

(14) NAO Wants ...

principles," he said.

Naderi urged the European countries to respect Afghan asylum seekers and not to treat them differently from Syrians or Iraqis.

Another member of the organisation, Najia Najwa, urged the UNHCR, charitable organisations, Human Rights Watch and Human Rights Commission of EU to pressure the countries to correct their discriminatory behaviour.

NAO also called on the Afghan government to prevent youths from mass immigration by providing them work opportunities and improving the security situation in the country. (Pajhwok)

(15) Operation ...

Nematullah Ahmadi, TOLONews reporter who visited the district said the insurgents have come in from different parts of the province and are trying to prevent troops from moving forward.

But security officials said they are able to advance and insurgents have been driven back from parts of the district although clashes are ongoing close to the governor's compound.

"We are slowly moving forward.

It is war and sometimes we move forward and sometimes we retreat. However, you can see a military and defense commitment among all our security troops," Ghafoori said.

Meanwhile, Janat Gul Karokhil, a military commander in Badakhshan said that military forces are busy clearing Warduj of insurgents and are being supported by the air force.

"Those who are resisting against us are Tajik [militants] and suicide attackers. They don't care about their life and we are trying not to receive casualties," Karokhil said.

Warduj collapsed to the Taliban more than a year ago. It is one of 29 districts in Badakhshan and has about 17,000 residents. (Tolonews)

(16) Pakistan had indicated Abdullah would visit Pakistan on May 2-3," a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said.

"The visit has been postponed. The new dates would be worked out through diplomatic channels," Nafees Zikria told a weekly briefing.

The spokesman said the terrorist attack in Kabul has been strongly condemned by the Pakistani leadership and the entire nation.

"We believe that violence and bloodshed is not the way to achieve peace. We have therefore, strongly condemned the terrorist incident in Kabul," Zikria said.

To a question about the peace process in Afghanistan, he said Pakistan has been engaged in sincere and consistent efforts to facilitate an Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace process to bring lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The peace process has not yet started after the Taliban refused to take part in the talks under the Quadrilateral Coordination Group of Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the United States.

The QCG had invited the Taliban groups to direct talks with the Afghan government by the first week of March in Pakistan.

The spokesman said the next meeting of the QCG would take place when the four countries are ready.

"I think there is a common desire on the part of all QCG members to see peace in Afghanistan and there is a desire that all those who are supposed to be on the negotiation table are there," Zikria said. (Xinhua)

(17) Tajikistan, ...

Somon Air is the first private airline in Tajikistan with an office headquartered in Dushanbe. The airline operations are based at Dushanbe International Airport. The airline started operating on February 5, 2008 with regular flights to Moscow and Dubai.

Somon Air also serves as the official carrier of President of the Republic of Tajikistan and other Tajikistan high-ranking officials.

Since formation, Somon Air has been primarily focused on passenger service and transportation to Eastern Europe and other locations. Most flights to international destinations operate from Dushanbe.

The airline uses the Boeing 737 in its fleet. Somon Air now operates 2 Boeing 737-300s, 2 Boeing 737-800s and 2 Boeing 737-900ERs.

Somon Air now operates to the following destinations: China (Urumqi); Germany (Frankfurt am Main); Kazakhstan (Almaty); Russia (Irkutsk, Khanty-Mansysk, Kazan, Krasnodar, Krasnoyarsk, Moscow, Orenburg, St. Petersburg, Sochi, Nizhnevartovsk, Novosibirsk, Tuymen and Yekaterinburg); Saudi Arabia (Jeddah); Tajikistan (Khujand); Turkey (Istanbul); Ukraine (Simferopol); and the United Arab Emirates (Dubai). (Asia-Plus)

(18) Rebels Block ...

of the road, saying they had already informed provincial police chief and governor, but they were yet to take any measures in this regard.

The provincial police chief, Brig. Gen. Mohammad Baqir Massoud, said it was not a serious issue, but the security forces would be sent to the district in a few days. (Pajhwok)

(19) Militants ...

local Taliban commander, Ghorzang Safi, said the person would share their information with security personnel, so the commission of the group decided to execute him.

The governor's spokesman, Qais-Qadari, confirmed the death, saying the person has so far shared no information with Afghan forces. (Pajhwok)

(20) Ghee up, ...

of African black tea cost 240afis and the same amount of Madena green tea 220afis, showing no change.

But wholesale prices varied from retail rates in some parts of the city. Ahmad Javed, a retailer in Dahan-I-Bagh area, sold a 24-kg sack of rice for 1,800afis and a 49-kg bag of flour for 1,300afis.

Similarly, he sold a 16-kg tin of Momin ghee for 1,150afis, a kilo of black African tea for 260afis and the same quantity of Indonesian green tea for 250afis.

Mohammad Fawad, a jeweller, said the price of one gram of Arabian gold was 2,250afis and the same quantity of Russian gold 1,850afis. Moneychanger Ahmad Shah said one US dollar accounted for 68.38afis and 1,000 Pakistani rupees for 644 afis, registering no change. (Pajhwok)

(21) Farmers ...

in making heroin to the world.

The former Taliban strongholds in the militancy-hit southern Kandahar and Helmand provinces, are reportedly major production hubs of the illicit drugs in Afghanistan.

"I am ready to give up poppy cultivation and replace it with legal crops, such as wheat, rice, watermelon and saffron. If the government supports me to buy saffron, to find a market for my agricultural products, or find a job for my sons," a deflated Assadullah said. In the militancy-plagued provinces of Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul and Farah, where security remains an issue, the Taliban fighters, according to locals, encourage villagers to cultivate poppies. Poppy production and drug trafficking in Afghanistan, according to locals and officials, have become the main source of income for the Taliban and like-minded groups to finance their subversive activities in the

war-ravaged country.

Cutting poppy bulbs to extract the raw opium in his poppy farm, another farmer in Kandahar, Baz Mohammad, 45, said that he would abandon poppy cultivation if he could find an alternative way to provide for his family.

"I dislike cultivating poppies but poverty has left me with no choice," the farmer told Xinhua.

"I would prefer to replace growing poppies with saffron if the government provided help," Mohammad explained.

The price of 1 sir (7 kg) of wheat ranges from 250 to 300 afghani (up to 4.39 U.S. dollars) while 1 kg of opium sells for 11,000 to 15,000 afghani locally in Kandahar, Afghanistan's second city.

Afghanistan is among the world's poorest countries with poverty particularly concentrated in the country's countryside. Around 36 percent of a population of nearly 30 million live below the poverty line in Afghanistan.

The economically impoverished nation as a major producer of illegal drugs, harvested 3,300 tons of opium poppies in 2015, according to a report of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) released in last December.

Commensurate with the production of illegal drugs in Afghanistan, the number of drug addicts have also increased.

According to officials, more than 1.5 million Afghans are addicted to drugs, however, the number of drug users in Afghanistan, according to unofficial sources, is around 3 million including women and children, a figure doubled since 2010.

"Growing poppies and making heroin is killing our people, including our family members, but we have no other choice than to grow poppies to make drugs," Rahimullah, a 35-year-old farmer, told Xinhua.

"We cannot give up poppy cultivation unless the government provide alternative crops and find a market for our agricultural products," the frustrated farmer exclaimed, while extracting opium from a poppy bulb.

"Poverty leads to misery and the embracing of evil and sin. I have endured extreme poverty since my childhood and the only way for my family and I to escape this predicament is to produce poppies for drugs," Rahimullah reiterated. "Unless the government intervenes to help." (Xinhua)

(22) Afghan ...

were thinking that they were robbers and encountered with the troops.

He quoted the officials of National Directorate of Security (NDS), saying two or three soldiers were also eliminated in exchange of fire and they have been investigating the case.

The governor's spokesman, Mubarez Ahmad Zadran confirmed the raid but had no information about the casualties.

A small girl was also injured during the overnight operation supported by air force, a resident of the village, Abdul Wali, said. (Pajhwok)

(23) 2 Killed...

insurgency, staging ambushes and suicide attacks, killing combatants as well as civilians. In northern Balkh province, four civilians were injured after an IED was detonated in a local bazaar in Dawlat Abad district at around mid-day, Shir Jan Durrani, a provincial police spokesman, told Xinhua.

Among those injured were one woman and a child, he said.

About 600 civilians were killed and more than 1,340 others wounded in conflict-related violence in first quarter of the year, said the UN mission in the country on Sunday.

The UN has attributed 60 percent of the casualties to the Taliban and other insurgent groups, 19 percent were attributed to security forces while the rest 21 percent of civilian casualties were unattributed or caused by explosive remnants of war. (Xinhua)

(24) Obama ...

decision on EU membership was to be made by the British people, he pulled no punches in offering his own friendly advice. (Xinhua)

(25) Concerns ...

Brussels also pledged to provide six billion euros until 2018 to help ease burden Turkey shoulders for hosting three million refugees as well as granting visa-free travel to Europe for Turkish citizens as of June. (Xinhua)

(26) Chief of ...

aid in these hotspots," he added. While talks have not completely stalled, ongoing negotiations have been marred by the departure of the bulk of the Saudi-backed High Negotiations Committee (HNC) delegation after it accused the government of avoiding the issue of political transition amid a concerning humanitarian and security situation on the ground.

To date, talks have failed to delve into the crux of the problem as proximity negotiations have yet to reach a common framework of understanding on what a political transition could look like. (Xinhua)

(27) Vershbow...

product within a decade, he said. Along with spending more money on defense, allies needed to ensure the highest levels of interoperability: the ability of their militaries to cooperate against common threats, Vershbow said.

"Cooperation between allies, especially between our Black Sea allies Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, and involving the United States, will be key to the security challenges we face," he said.

NATO was good at sharing intelligence and situational awareness but "we can do better," he said. (Xinhua)

(28) Russia ...

plan to host an international conference in a bid to resume talks between Palestine and Israel, which Abbas welcomed, while Israel has not publicly expressed its attitude. "Probably after these visits, Moscow will determine more specifically how actively it would support this proposal of France," Yelena Suponina, advisor to the Director of the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies, an expert on Middle East issues, told Xinhua.

During his talks with Putin on Monday, Abbas urged the international community to define the principles on which the Middle East settlement could be reached, and to formulate a timetable for negotiations. Putin, in response, voiced his country's support, saying that Russia would provide support to Palestinian efforts "aimed at activating everything that is necessary for a constructive dialogue." On Thursday, Netanyahu said that the Golan Heights would remain under Israel's control before and during talks with Putin, seeking Russia's support in Israel's claim on the region. (Xinhua)

(29) Nepalese ...

headquarters said in a press statement that the visit is aimed at strengthening friendly ties between the U.S. Army and the Nepalese Army. During the visit, Chhetri will visit the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth in Kansas city and U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barrack in Pennsylvania to take part in the International Fellows Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony (IHOF). (Xinhua)

(30) Changes ...

month between the Ukrainian army and independence-seeking insurgents in the country's eastern regions, with heavy weapons being used again by both warring parties. On Wednesday, OSCE Special Representative Martin Sajdik blamed both parties for violating the ceasefire regime introduced by international mediators in late February 2015, urging them to give respite to civilians in the region at least during the Easter holiday period. (Xinhua)