

(1) Working on...

justice to Osama bin Laden and significantly degraded al-Qaida's core leadership. They helped increase life expectancy, access to education, and opportunities for women and girls," said the NSS running into nearly 35 pages.

"Going forward, we will work with partners to carry out a limited counterterrorism mission against the remnants of core al-Qaida and maintain our support to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF)," it said. "We are working with NATO and our other partners to train, advise, and assist the ANSF as a new government takes responsibility for the security and well-being of Afghanistan's citizens," it said.

The NSS said: "We will also work with the countries of the region, including Pakistan, to mitigate the threat from terrorism and to support a viable peace and reconciliation process to end the violence in Afghanistan and improve regional stability." This is the second National Security Strategy of the Obama Administration. The first one released in May 2010 had focused majorly on the war against terrorism, in which it had described Af-Pak as the epicenter of terrorist organizations. (Pajhwok)

(2) India Furthers...

will organize interactive lectures at the IARI campus in New Delhi which will be uplinked for the participants in Kandahar University campus. From the Afghan side, 32 participants, including 23 Post Graduate students from first batch of M.Sc Agronomy and 9 Assistant Professors will be attending these courses. In these tele-education interactive lectures, the participants will have the opportunity of asking direct questions from Indian professors in real time. For their Post Graduate degree, the Afghan students have already studied five courses in IARI New Delhi and would be studying the remaining six courses at ANASTU in Kandahar.

ANASTU was inaugurated on 15 February 2014 by the former Afghan President H.E. Mr. Hamid Karzai and the then Indian External Affairs Minister H.E. Mr. Salman Khurshid. India has already provided technical books and interactive CDs for library of ANASTU and will soon be providing latest farm equipment and laboratory instruments, valuing more than US \$ 200,000. For specialized subjects, a batch of 20 Afghan faculty members and lab technicians will receive training at IARI campus in New Delhi. Besides, an Indian Company - Telecommunications of India Ltd., will be setting up the node for tele-educational facilities at the ANASTU campus.

India is hopeful that with the augmentation of infrastructure at ANASTU, the professional facilities in the field of agriculture would be better for the entire Afghanistan. Afghan authorities have been duly acknowledging the active role played by India in the field of education over the last 12 years. The establishment and functioning of this University truly symbolizes the friendly relations between the two countries. (PR)

(3) IDLG Agrees ...

councils the right to monitor activities of provincial departments, a decision that sparked protests by PC members in various provinces.

IDLG spokesman Tawab Ghorzang told Pajhwok Afghan News the IDLG acting chief, Matin Baig, held a meeting with provincial council members from all the 34 provinces on Saturday.

The new policy giving PCs the right to oversee the performance of provincial government offices was discussed in detail at the meeting, with both the sides agreeing on most of the contents, Ghorzang said.

He said PC members presented their recommendations, which would be incorporated into the policy to be dispatched to the Presidential Palace tomorrow (Sunday).

He said the PC members also assured they would call off their protests at the earliest and reopen their offices.

Taiba Khawari, the PC head from central Bamyán province, confirmed reaching an agreement with the IDLG on the new policy. She said they also agreed to the formation of a legal committee and conferred and agreed on legal terms.

She said the policy revealed on them that they had many powers about which they had not been informed in the past.

The agreement comes days after President Ghani held talks with provincial council members about their oversight role.

The president said he was in favour of a collective oversight role that ensured transparent accountability. (Pajhwok)

(4) US Deputy ...

said that Higginbottom visited Kabul on February 4-5. The deputy secretary also met with justice, infrastructure, democracy, health, counternarcotics, and education implementing partners to discuss their challenges, achievements, and innovations.

In addition, he held a town hall at Embassy Kabul with Ambassador McKinley to speak directly with embassy staff about the importance of their work to US foreign policy goals in Afghanistan and to thank them for their hard work and sacrifices. (Pajhwok)

(5) Coordination with ...

cooperation" with Afghanistan as the "most effective coordination that did not happen in history before.

This he said while referring to protests in Peshawar by some relatives of 149 students and staff killed in the Dec 16 attack on the army public school over the alleged lack of investigative progress.

Nasir said the cooperation between the two countries came after Army Chief Gen. Raheel Sharif held talks with the new Afghan President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani.

He also cited two anti-militant operations carried out by Afghan and foreign coalition forces near the Pakistani border, where Pakistani Taliban fugitives are believed to be hiding. However, the minister declined to speak more about the situation in order not to let the militants escape. (Pajhwok)

(6) Afghanistan ...

the agenda as the Afghan government has not appointed a new defense minister so far.

The official further added that there was no local minister to provide allies with an update.

The government of national unity introduced Gen. Sher Mohammad Karimi as the new defense minister of Afghanistan. However, he could not obtain enough votes from the lawmakers in the Lower House of parliament.

Gen. Karimi was among 18 nominees who were introduced to the Lower House of Parliament late in the month of January.

According to reports the top US commander Gen. John Campbell who is leading the new NATO non-combat mission in Afghanistan was also missing in the meeting.

It is believed that the war has slid down NATO's priority pole as the alliance formally ended their combat mission in Afghanistan after 13 years in December last year.

More than 12,500 NATO troops are currently stationed in Afghanistan under the NATO-led Resolute Support mission who are mainly focused on building Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) sustainability.

The US defense officials said earlier in December last year that up to 10,800 US troops would remain in Afghanistan for the first few months of 2015 but the drawdown will restart and the number of US troops would be reduced to 5,500 by the end of the same year.

In the meantime the US Defense Secretary nominee Ashton Carter has he would consider changing the current plans for withdrawing all U.S. troops from Afghanistan by the end of next year if security conditions worsen. (KP)

(7) UAE's Central ...

the MoU on behalf of the Central Bank of Afghanistan.

This MoU between the Central Bank of the UAE and the Central Bank of Afghanistan is aimed at enhancing cooperation on providing training and technical assistance to the employees of the Central Bank of Afghanistan as well as putting a mechanism to cooperate on regulatory matters, supervision of banks and other financial institutions operating in both jurisdictions and exchange of supervisory information.

In a statement, the UAE's Central Bank, said that this will be in line with local laws of each jurisdiction and within the Bank for International Settlements, Home-Host country's supervisory authorities and information sharing, which would contribute to the realisation of a sound financial system in the UAE and the Republic of Afghanistan.

In his opening remarks at the signing ceremony, the governor of the Central Bank of the UAE welcomed the Afghan bank's delegation.

In a statement, he emphasised the need for cooperation and coordination with supervisory and monetary authorities to ensure the stability of the financial system.

Hadawal said, "I am delighted to sign this Memorandum of Understanding with the Central Bank of the UAE. It is a very important addition to the ex-

isting MoUs established between the Bank and other regulators around the world and reflects the Bank's commitment to cross-border regulatory co-operation. The UAE has become a hugely important financial centre and an area with which we see increasing levels of financial business being undertaken. Our two institutions have had a developed association for some time and regular cause for dialogue. The MoU will serve to enhance this relationship." The MoU was signed to emphasise the importance that Central Bank of the UAE attaches to the subject of banking cooperation with international supervisory and monetary authorities. (WAM)

(8) No Attorney ...

and refer graft-tainted officials to courts.

He, however, said the AGO had investigated cases of eight people, including four attorneys, before referring them to court for further proceedings.

Azizi also said the AGO had referred cases of seven former ministers to the Supreme Court about two and a half months ago following investigations. To a question about the creation of a special tribunal to hear the cases of the seven ex-ministers, the AGO spokesman said only the president and the Supreme Court had the power to issue such orders.

To another question about the Kabul Bank scandal, he said the case had not been closed and investigations against others accused persons were underway. (Pajhwok)

(9) India Invites...

the virus even though India was officially declared polio free by the World Health Organization (WHO) in March last year.

According to WHO data, only three countries - Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan - remain polio-endemic in 2014. Polio cases decreased by over 99% since 1988, from an estimated 3,500,000 cases then, to 416 reported cases in 2013.

While India has tightened surveillance against polio on its borders and entry points, officials say eradicating polio from the region would ensure a complete safety.

India has offered technical support, knowledge sharing as well as assistance in supply of vaccines to the two countries to fight the disease. (Agencies)

(10) Ghani, Aliyev...

cargo transportation, investment making and other areas, as well as prospects for the expansion of cooperation in arranging trainings. (Agencies)

(11) Watchdogs Doubt ...

new commission on electoral reforms will be created through a presidential decree.

President Ghani has called election reforms one of his primary goals. The president last week ordered his first vice-president to identify problems in the electoral system in coordination with civil society and the election commissions.

The Presidential Palace has confirmed receiving suggestions about electoral reforms from civil society institutes and the proposals would be reviewed by political parties and experts.

But Abdullah's office has stressed the creation of a special commission to bring reforms to the electoral system. Transparent Election Foundation of Afghanistan (TEFA) chief Naeem Ayubzada told Pajhwok Afghan News his organisation appreciated every effort of the government at reforming the electoral system, but said entrusting the first vice-president with the job alone was not enough.

"Problems in previous elections had been unusual because we have not witnessed them in other countries. The creation of a commission is needed for reforms," he said. He said the president's plan of tasking his VP Sarwar Danish with identifying electoral problems and finding solutions to them was against the unity government deal.

He claimed the president lacked a clear plan to improve the electoral system and it seemed future elections would not be credible and transparent.

He warned if the government failed to bring reforms to the system, the upcoming parliamentary elections would face many challenges.

Ayubzada said relevant authorities in the proposed commission would jointly work to avoid irregularities that plagued the April 5 elections.

Meanwhile, Free and Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan (FFEA) chief Mohammad Yousuf Rashid hailed leaders' plan to reform the electoral system.

He said reforms in the system should ensure transparency. "We request

the government to create a commission for election reforms, which are free from political influential and corruption," Yousuf said.

He said the commission should have enough powers so that it could independently review problems in the previous elections and introduce effective reforms to the system.

But Yousuf said he was concerned about differences between the president and the CEO over the election reforms issue and said the reform process would fail if any side tried to influence it. (Pajhwok)

(12) 5 ANA Martyred,...

most of their attacks which claim lives of hundreds of civilians every year.

UNAMA has expressed concern over civilian casualties due to IEDs explosions beside ground engagements in the country.

UNAMA says that the civilian casualty recorded last year was higher than ever recorded by the UN agencies in Afghanistan.

UNAMA demanded all sides engaged in Afghanistan war to reduce civilian casualties.

Taliban insurgents in an apparent response to UNAMA's call asked fighters to put maximum efforts in reducing civilian casualties but still civilians are losing lives in Taliban planted IEDs.

Yesterday an IED explosion claimed the lives of two civilians and injured three others in Washir District of southern Helmand province.

Usually when government officials die in IED explosion, Taliban claim responsibility for it but when civilians die the reject hand in the explosion.

Responsibility for yesterday's explosion is not claimed by Taliban but officials blamed Taliban for it as the district has been the scene of several Taliban-claimed explosions. (KP)

(13) 12 Police ...

but 12 had so far arrested while the rests were still at large and would be detained. He said that raids were being conducted to arrest 20 others involved in creating law and order in the province.

Some days back, the governor sacked crime branch chief, the 3rd police district chief, urban chief for National Directorate of Security (NDS) and another NDS officer and introduced them to judicial organs due to negligence in their duties.

Provincial police chief Sayyed Jahangir Kiramat also confirmed some police officers were involved in insecurity, corruption, supporting rebels and kidnapers but said that investigations were underway to settle the issue.

He said that 12 police officers involved in different crimes were detained last week and a number of other officers involved in the cases would also be arrested.

"Any police officer including me if found involved in insecurity would be brought to justice," Kiramat said. (Pajhwok)

(14) Thousands of ...

whole of 2014.

In January this year nearly 24,000 undocumented Afghans entered Afghanistan's Nangarhar province through Pakistan's Torkham border crossing. This was nearly 93 per cent of the total number of undocumented Afghans who returned through Torkham during all of 2014. Roughly 94 per cent of Afghans returning in recent weeks did so spontaneously, while the rest were deported.

Currently there are approximately three million Afghans living in Pakistan - one of the world's largest, if not the largest, single host country of displaced persons. Of these, more than one million are estimated to be undocumented and lacking the legal protections afforded to documented refugees.

The Afghan government, IOM and its humanitarian partners are closely monitoring the return situation in Afghanistan. In coordination with the Afghan Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, IOM has deployed additional field monitors to Torkham to interview returning families and further assess the situation.

Recent security incidents in Pakistan, the statement said raised tensions in the country, with calls for mass deportations of undocumented Afghans from some sections of the population. Although there have been no large-scale arrests, deportations or evictions, the substantial increase in returns reflect the concerns of undocumented Afghans living in Pakistan. The majority of returning Afghan families are coming from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Kashmir provinces in Pakistan. Most of the families had lived in Pakistan for an average of 20 years, the statement added. (Pajhwok)

(15) Balkh Depts. ...

and Hajj department along with mayor's office presented their last year's performance reports, he added.

The aim of the process, he said, was to bridge the gap between the public and government officials and to raise awareness about the local departments' performance.

Mirza Ali, head of attorney general's office, while presenting his report, said based on the instructions of the government they did not have the authority to oversight the local departments.

Their only responsibility was to pursue cases referred to them by the security organs.

Sayyed Mohammad Misbah, the head of justice department, said 2,320 cases have been sent to courts by his department, 85 cases to the police department and 236 cases have been cleared in the last one year. (Pajhwok)

(16) Forces Capture

shadowy governor of Band-e-Timor, have been killed and 10 others injured during the operations," the official said, adding operations would continue till establishing law and order in the area.

Commenting on security forces casualties, Sultan Mohammad said one Afghan soldier has been killed. Three heroin labs and 10 weapon caches have also been discovered and destroyed during the operations, the official further said.

Taliban militants have yet to make comment. (Xinhua)

(17) Smuggler Held

foiling drugs smuggler bid for the third time this year in Ghazni province. (Pajhwok)

(18) 1 Dead, 14 Hurt

two cars occurred in the Qara Mard locality on Kabul-Baghlan Highway, the District Chief Shamsuddin Sarhadi told Pajhwok Afghan News.

Soon after the accident, the injured were rushed to a local hospital, he said, adding some of the wounded were in critical condition.

Elsewhere, police detained an alleged smuggler with 58 kilogram of heroin in northern Samangan province, Police Chief Mohammad Akram Baigzad said.

The contraband, he said was concealed in secret compartments of a truck but recovered by police. The heroin was being smuggled to northern Balkh province. (Pajhwok)

(19) Insecurity,

stay home after evening, he added. Another resident, Yahya, said besides illegal gunmen, insurgents had also increased their activities in the town.

He said there had been clashes between militants and security forces, with both the sides suffering casualties.

Yahya said the fewer number of police in the district could not deal with the increasing number of illegal gunmen and insurgents.

Some time ago, another resident Samiullah, recalled unknown gunmen shot dead a former jihadi commander in broad daylight.

He said residents were fed up with the growing insecurity and wanted the police strength to be increased. Kohistan-II administrative head, Mohammad Usman Haqyar, said although some problems had been resolved, the insufficient number of police could not control all parts of the district.

He told Pajhwok Afghan News: "We urge high-ranking officials to increase the strength of our police because our area is large."

He believed if the number of police was increased, they would be able to maintain security in all parts of the town.

Senator Muhiuddin Munsif from Kapisa province also acknowledged insecurity had increased in the Kohistan-II district. He accused some government officials of negligence in duty.

He said not only the number of police was insufficient, but the existing force faced many problems in logistic supplies.

The lawmaker said he had initiated talks with the central government on increasing the number of police in the district. (Pajhwok)

(20) Armed Robbery

shopkeeper, said: "What worries us is that the government has no writ. Instead of punishing these people they release them."

Mohammad Saleh, another resident, was of the opinion that lack of regular contact between people, religious scholars and security forces was a major reason for spike in insecurities.

"If the officials establish contact with local people then problems

will easily be resolved," he added. Col. Abdul Aziz Ghairat, Panjshir police chief, said in order to resolve the issues they were planning to have a session with Rokha officials. (Pajhwok)

(21) Police Killed,

the police and immediately detonated his explosive," Durani said. This comes while, three other policemen were injured in another suicide attack at about 8 p.m. local time in the city when the bomber detonated his explosive near a police check post, he said.

Durani added that this attacker also wanted to enter the building, but was unsuccessful and detonated his bomb before reaching his target.

No group including the Taliban has claimed responsibility for the attack so far. (Tolonews)

(22) Europe Urged

Germany, insisted that Europe is assuming responsibility and "more steps need to follow".

"We need a reconstruction and economic program," Mueller said. Lebanese Prime Minister Tammam Salam described the flood of refugees as unprecedented at a panel discussion. He also said a sudden increase in the total population has generated a chain of economic, social and most importantly security consequences. (Xinhua)

(23) Europe and U.S.

week would succeed. But she flatly rejected the idea that sending weapons to Kiev, an idea being considered by U.S. President Barack Obama, would help resolve the conflict.

"I understand the debate but I believe that more weapons will not lead to the progress Ukraine needs. I really doubt that," said the conservative German leader, who has led a W

Western initiative to resolve the crisis through negotiations.

"The problem is that I can't envision any situation in which a better-equipped Ukraine military would convince President Putin that he could lose militarily," Merkel added.

Speaking after Merkel, U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham, a Republican hawk, praised the chancellor for her engagement in the crisis but said it was time for her to wake up to the reality of what he called Moscow's aggressions.

"At the end of the day, to our European friends, this is not working. You can go to Moscow until you turn blue in the face. Stand up to what is clearly a lie and a danger," Graham said.

He accused Merkel of turning her back on a struggling democracy by rejecting down Kiev's request for arms. "That is exactly what you are doing," he said.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, also in Munich, said there were "good grounds for optimism" that the talks between Merkel, Putin and Hollande could yield a deal.

But Lavrov also delivered a diatribe against the West. He accused Europe and the United States of supporting a "coup d'etat" against deposed Ukrainian leader Viktor Yanukovich, a Moscow ally, a year ago and turning a blind eye to nationalists he said were intent on ethnic cleansing in eastern Ukraine.

"There are growing appeals in the West to support the Kiev policy of militarization, to pump Ukraine full with lethal weapons and to bring it into NATO," Lavrov said. "This position will only exacerbate the tragedy of Ukraine."

Hollande, speaking to reporters in the city of Tulle in central France, cast the talks with Putin as a last-ditch effort to avert full-blown war.

"If we don't manage to find not just a compromise but a lasting peace agreement, we know perfectly well what the scenario will be. It has a name, it's called war," he said.

In a further sign of cracks in the Western approach towards Russia, NATO's top military commander, U.S. Air Force General Philip Breedlove signaled that he now wants the alliance to consider sending weapons to Ukraine.

"I don't think we should preclude out of hand the possibility of the military option," Breedlove told reporters, adding that he was referring to weapons or capabilities and that there was "no conversation about boots on the ground".

After her speech, Merkel held three-way talks with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko and U.S. Vice President Joe Biden. She is due to fly to Washington on Sunday to meet Obama. (Reuters)