

(1) \$1.5b ...

role in promotion of environment protection culture and raising awareness.

Ghani said the government planned to spend \$1.5 billion over the next five years on construction of infrastructure, irrigation networks and dams to protect the environment.

In another part of his message, the president said the government planned to revive forests and establish a green belt on 10,000 hectares of land around Kabul city. Ghani urged the citizens to take part in protection of the natural environment as their human and ethical duty. (Pajhwok)

(2) Women Hold...

saying. The report continued that the talks, which were being held behind closed doors, were aimed at achieving peace and at ensuring women's rights and their freedom.

However, there are no reports on details of the talks, but the HPC members are optimistic about the outcome of the process, though they are informal.

"We welcome any efforts toward achieving peace," HPC foreign advisor Mohammad Qasim Ismail Qasimyar told TOLONews. "Such rounds of talks can help develop a better understanding of negotiations with the Taliban." This comes after representatives from the Taliban, HPC and mediators from Pugwash, an international organization of peace initiators, held preliminary but informal talks in Doha, Qatar last month.

But some other commentators speculate that the peace process is facing new challenges.

"We have more challenges now in the peace process," leader of the National Solidarity Movement of Afghanistan, Sayed Ishaq Gilani said. "In the past only the government and a single group were the decision makers in peace talks, but now the decision making process has become more challenging."

Reports suggest that another preliminary meeting to hold a second round of these talks is expected to be held on Saturday in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). (Tolonews)

(3) Moscow Worried ...

r government is trying to prevent these activities, which we strongly support."

The government of Afghanistan has reportedly requested military aid from Moscow, especially in the form of ammunition and helicopters.

Pending a new wave of conventional military support from Russia or other allies, the Afghan government has chosen to leverage local police and mujahideen networks to combat the militant offensives that have gained ground in various parts of the country. The move is a controversial one, despite it obviously not being the first choice of leaders in Kabul.

The International Crisis Group has been perhaps the most vocal critic of the plan to arm, organize and support groups of irregulars in order to help stem the tide of militants in northern Afghanistan. In a recent report, the Crisis Group said the government has relied on 30,000 local police and armed groups. The report accuses the local police and armed groups of killing civilians, fraud, theft, rape, robbery, drug smuggling and bribery.

Security officials have stood their ground on the issue, while also remaining coy about the extent to which mujahideen networks are being tapped for operations against insurgents. That said, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) has acknowledged some abuses by local police.

"Local police play a very important role on all the battle fields, but there have been some misconduct issues that have been reported," MoI deputy spokesman Najeeb Danesh said. "In the current year, there have been 108 complaints against them."

The cost of the local police forces is estimated to be around 120 million USD every year. These local forces often fight on the front lines, which is reflect in their casualty figures, estimated to be three to six times more than the average for the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP). (Tolonews)

(4) MPs Discuss...

groups and civil society activists gathered to discuss the present situation - how to interpret the

Afghan Constitution, how to ensure prompt elections and how to maintain the trust of the Afghan public.

According to legislators, Article 83 of the Afghan Constitution is the relevant guide for how to approach the current dilemma. Article 83 says that June 22 is the last day of the term for MPs, following the announcement of election results.

"Lucky, I must say that people of Afghanistan are very alert and are not happy with the current parliament," MP Abdul Qader Zazai said on Thursday. "Oversight by the House, and the actions that it needed to take in accordance with the Constitution, have not taken place," he added.

MP Nasrullah Sadeqzada Neeli pointed blame at the national unity government for the looming political crisis. After all, it is disagreements among leaders of the government over how to pursue electoral reform that has delayed the scheduling of parliamentary elections.

Neeli argued that, given the present situation, MPs should be able to continue on with legal protections until an election can be held. "When we call the Parliament 'illegal', who can make it legal then?" he asked.

Based on the current election laws, an Election Day must be announced at least 120 days before it is held.

"The election time is very close, and we are also getting closer to other problems and miseries," Lower House Deputy Speaker Muhammad Nazeer Ahmadzai said. "The best way is for foreign governments and the Afghan government to bring changes to the electoral system in order to gain trust and then we can have transparent elections." (Tolonews)

(5) NDS Appoints ...

graduated from Nangarhar Medical College, and has defended the country during the resistance era. He has also served as Director General of Central Audit Office of Afghan National Army. He has served as provincial director of National Directorate of Security in Ghazni. (Tolonews)

(6) NDS-ISI ...

officials first said the intelligence-sharing agreement had been signed with Pakistan but later, following a serious public backlash, officials backtracked and denied having signed the final version of the accord. But on Friday, Danish, set the record straight.

"It is very clear that the agreement proposed is in the initial and preliminary stages and but it is not in a stage that we can say it is finalized or signed," Danish said.

This comes only hours after former president Hamid Karzai called the issue of the MoU "embarrassing and contrary to the country's national sovereignty." In an interview with the Voice of America, Karzai blasted the National Unity Government on how it had dealt with the Pakistan issue and said he was distancing himself from the leaders.

Based on the original agreement - which was exposed by TOLONews - ISI would train and equip the NDS. In addition, Afghanistan and Pakistan would each fight terrorism, and both institutions would investigate accused individuals behind any terror incident within their respective countries.

However, a public outcry ensued following reports of the agreement.

Even some unconfirmed reports suggested that the NDS chief, Rahmatullah Nabil, also opposed inking the agreement.

"It is said in a part of this document that NDS and ISI will jointly work on building mindsets. It means that the people should be informed in a way to easily deceive them. And the other part of this document states that any party that refrains from cooperation will be identified as destroyer, which means suffocating a party," Karzai said in the interview. Soon after reports of the deal emerged, Karzai warned that the MoU was unacceptable to the people of Afghanistan. He asked the government to terminate the agreement. (Tolonews)

(7) Rezayee Casts...

Border Guards, Brigadier General Qassem Rezayee, was on a working visit to Tajikistan this week.

On June 1, he held talks with Tajik Interior Minister Ramazon Rahimzoda. They reportedly discussed bilateral cooperation between Tajikistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran in fighting international terrorism and drug trafficking. The two sides also discussed issues related to exchange of information.

Islamic Republic of Iran Border Guard Command, commonly known as NAJA Border Guard, is a subdivision of Law Enforcement Force of Islamic Republic of Iran (NAJA) and Iran's sole agency that performs border guard and control in land borders, and coast guard in maritime borders. The unit was founded in 2000, and from 1991 to 2000, the unit's duties was done by Security deputy of NAJA. Before 1991, border control was Gendarmerie's duty. (Asia-Plus)

(8) Mamnoon Cites ...

in bilateral relations with Afghanistan's new government.

The president added: "We are pleased to note that Mr. Ashraf Ghani and the new Afghan leadership have warmly reciprocated to Pakistan's sincere initiative."

Hussain went on to assert that "based on the mutual trust, the relationship between the countries will not only promote regional peace and stability but will also determine new avenues for bilateral cooperation."

Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have traditionally been marred by mutual suspicions and distrust. The tensions stemmed primarily from allegations the Pakistan military did not cut links to the Taliban even after becoming an ally in the U.S.-led war against the Islamist insurgency.

However, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has attempted to put old differences aside since assuming office last September and both sides now appear in agreement that they are fighting the same enemy.

On Wednesday, while speaking via video to a gathering in Qatar of American and leaders from across the Islamic world, Mr. Ghani suggested there is still room for improvement in relations with Pakistan.

"Pakistan, we have argued and Pakistani leaders have accepted, has been in undeclared state of war with Afghanistan during the past 14 years," said Ghani. "In light of the threat posed by terrorists to our citizens and states, we need to reach peace and then strive for normal and cooperative relations between the states, sovereign states of Afghanistan and Pakistan." (VoA)

(9) Bamyan Celebrates..

the shadow of peace talks." Second speaker of the day was Haji Mohammad Mohaqiq, Second Deputy to Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah. He simply stated that the once prized Buddha statues "were destroyed by ignorant people" adding that they had been one of the Wonders of the World.

Mohaqiq emphasized the importance of marking such an important day despite the issues faced by Afghanistan. But at the same time he called on the world to help curb the actions by extremists in the region.

He said: "Extremism is a threat to the historical values of human civilization," adding that Afghanistan was indeed having to deal with extremists. (Tolonews)

(10) Afghanistan Not ...

groups but they had regional and international targets, with Afghan forces sacrificing their lives on a daily basis to prevent their advance.

Rabbani said Afghan security forces were not sacrificing their lives to protect only the Afghan people but to protect lives and peace at regional and international levels. "Afghanistan can't stand alone against terrorism and it is high time to stand and cooperate against terrorism together," he added.

Meanwhile, Rabbani held talks with his Tajik counterpart Sirojiddin Aslov and Iranian counterpart on the sidelines of the SCO meeting, according to Tajikistan's Foreign Ministry.

Aslov and Rabbani discussed state and prospects of further expansion of bilateral cooperation between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. They also exchanged views on a number of regional issues being of mutual interest. (Pajhwok)

(11) ICG Warns...

witnessed since 2001, said the organization.

According to the ICG these local militia groups "are cheap but dangerous". Too often, the ALP preys on those it is meant to guard and "some members are outright bandits, exacerbating conflict", said ICG.

As such, they urge Kabul to resist calls for their expansion.

The organization states that instead reforms are needed to strengthen oversight, dismiss ALP in many locations where they worsen security and incorporate the remaining units into the Afghan National Security Forces.

Following initial moves by the US to use the militias in areas resistant to outsiders, former president Hamid Karzai eventually accepted the ALP concept in 2009 but insisted the armed villagers would at least be loosely categorized as police and report to the interior ministry.

At the time, Karzai approved a 10,000-strong unit as a two-to-five-year plan. However, according to the ICG, the unit expanded rapidly. Five years later, under President Ashraf Ghani's government, officials are now thinking of expanding this unit to 45,000, stated the ICG. (Tolonews)

(12) Tajik FM...

on the latest developments in the region.

Iranian news agency IRNA reported that Mohammad Javad Zarif voiced concern about menaces of terrorism, citing the bloodshed and crimes against humanity perpetrated by Daesh (the Arabic acronym for the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant - ISIL), calling for international cooperation to counter terrorism in the Middle East.

Zarif referred to longstanding relations between Iran and Tajikistan, calling for enhanced ties between the two nations. He noted that that peace and security in Tajikistan is of pivotal significance to Tehran.

Aslov, for his part, hailed Iran's position in regard to stability and development in Tajikistan, IRNA reported.

Aslov said that terrorist groups, drug traffickers and Daesh terrorist group are the prime sources of instability in the Central Asian countries. He reportedly called on regional countries to further cooperate to counter the threats. (Avesta.tj)

(13) Karzai Says...

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Soon after reports of the deal emerged, Karzai warned that the MoU was unacceptable to the people of Afghanistan. He asked the government to terminate the agreement.

"In fact they [Pakistan] always want to have Afghans give up their rights to Pakistan, therefore, this document should be invalidated," Karzai stressed.

He rejected the term "Pak-Afghan friendship" and called the so-called friendly relations with Pakistan as meaningless. "Friendship builds when attacks against us are stopped," Karzai maintained.

In addition, he welcomed government's efforts to begin peace talks with the Taliban but strongly criticized the NUG's approach towards Pakistan. (Tolonews)

(14) Peace Agenda...

Stanikzai, a source added. Taliban have not officially confirmed taking part in the meeting so far.

One of the participants, who would attend Dubai meeting,

told Pajhwok Afghan News that Pugwash had planned second round of Qatar talks after the holy month of Ramadan.

The first round of the non-officials talks were organised in Doha by the Pugwash Council early May. An eight-member Taliban delegation had taken part in the talks and discussed issues relating to peace and stability in Afghanistan with a 20-member delegation of Afghan government.

Representatives at the informal talks in Qatar "wholeheartedly supported the idea of peace and ending the conflict in Afghanistan," but disagreement over foreign troops clouded the prospects of a ceasefire, Pugwash Council had said in a statement. (Pajhwok)

(15) Partnership ...

and investment. There is a lot that remain to be done!" Chaudhry said.

He said Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif government was striving to make progress on the external front especially expanding relationship with its key neighbors. "The most encouraging story that I can share with you is our growing partnership with the new Afghan government."

"We were privileged to receive President Ghani in Pakistan and our leadership has also maintained close contacts with President Ghani and the CEO Abdullah Abdullah," he said.

Pakistan, he reiterated, supported an Afghan-led reconciliation that could lead to enduring peace. "A successful reconciliation in Afghanistan can provide stimulus for managing other intractable issues that directly or indirectly contribute to instability such as return of millions of Afghan refugees, narcotics and cross-border terrorist networks," he said. He hoped the international community would continue undertaking its responsibilities in Afghanistan and not turn a page as it did in the past. "Repeating history risks repeating all of it!" Chaudhry said.

The official said Pakistan was determined to exercise zero tolerance for violent extremism as demonstrated by the ISIL. "We are equally determined to work with our Afghan brothers to ensure that our region is safe from this phenomenon," the Pakistani official said. (Pajhwok)

(16) New Helmand ...

officials and create job opportunities for the youth.

He said the governor should focus on stability, health services, education and reconstruction programmes.

Governor Rahimi, while speaking at the conference, said improving security, combating corruption and bringing peace would be his priorities.

"There is no forced end to the war but we have to focus on ensuring peace. We will identify reasons behind violence and will try to find solutions," he added.

Rahimi added he would strengthen cooperation among security forces and discuss with tribal elders and influential individuals how to better implement his programmes.

"Those parties who don't want peace and continue fighting, the government would take action against and defeat them," he added. (Pajhwok)

(17) More ...

slogans of helping teachers. They stated that the candidates betrayed them during their election campaigns.

According to the teachers, the strike is aimed at teaching the National Unity Government (NUG) leaders how to fulfill their promises. "We are ready to be fired from our position but not ready to give up our rights," a teacher Mir Abdul Latif said. (Tolonews)

(18) President ...

thanked the president, the statement said. The Ministry of Education had organised the essay competition among 12 high schools students of grade 10th, 11th, and 12th. Two students got equal marks for the third position. First lady, minister of education and principals of Pamir Town High schools participated in the prize distribution ceremony at the Presidential Palace. (Pajhwok)

(19) Kyrgyzstan to...

ministers of the Central Asian regional security, rule of law, human rights and freedoms, com-

bating drug trafficking, and others. (AKIpress)

(20) Kandahar ...

that was the major reason for lack of achievements. "I don't think if the provincial council could achieve anything in the future also because good work happens when the administrative board has good plans and ability to bring good discipline to the council. Unfortunately these traits could not be found in the council's leadership," he added.

Despite all the problems he added members of the council once travelled to Kabul and held meetings with several ministers regarding the prevalent challenges in Kandahar. Dastgiri said the members met with officials of education, public health, water and energy and some other ministries and presented suggestions regarding improvement of people's lives.

Haji Nematullah Sherdeli, another member of the council, rejected allegation regarding a weak administrative board. (Pajhwok)

(21) Some Plots...

land plots had been grabbed or given to ineligible people in some provinces. Citing an example, he said, land plots in some areas of Balkh and Helmand provinces had been distributed to irrelevant people. He said some land plots in Carpet Weaving Refugees' Township had been distributed to disqualified individuals. "One of the aims of my visit to the northern zone is to evaluate the situation of all returning refugees and provide them with their rights through legal channels," he said. The minister said Afghan refugees in foreign countries were interested in homecoming but there were no proper livelihood facilities in their homeland. (Pajhwok)

(22) PIN Suspends...

Presidential Palace, United States embassy in Kabul, United Nations and Amnesty International has also condemned the massacre of social welfare workers. The responsibility of the attack is not yet claimed by anyone but security agencies have launched an investigation into the incident to arrest those behind it. (KP)

(23) Minor Girl ...

He said Taliban militants intercepted a vehicle and pulled off its occupants, beat them and then shot them dead. The dead persons included a policeman, he added. A driver, giving an eyewitness account, told Pajhwok Afghan News the militants stopped the car and asked the people inside to come out. (Pajhwok)

(24) Yemen Rebels...

cepted the invitation of the United Nations to go to the negotiating table in Geneva without preconditions," said Daifallah al-Shami, a senior member of the rebels' political wing. Speaking to AFP, he added that the rebels "will not accept conditions" from other parties. Ezzedine al-Isbahi, information minister of the Yemeni government exiled in the Saudi capital, said it would also send a delegation to Switzerland. (AFP)

(25) US Might...

is unclear whether Russia has actually deployed the suspect missile or whether Washington would make any military move if the Russians stopped short of deployment. For now, administration officials say they prefer to continue trying to talk Moscow into treaty compliance. (AP)

(26) UN Holds...

killed and three adults were wounded as a result of shelling of Telmanove, a village south of Donetsk, late Thursday, Basurin added. Ukraine has accused pro-Moscow rebels of going on the offensive to probe for weak spots in the army's defences, while separatist forces say they are merely defending themselves. (AFP)

(27) S. Korea...

checks. Seoul city officials said late on Thursday that they were asking 1,565 people who attended a May 30 meeting for a redevelopment project to undergo voluntary quarantine after learning that a doctor initially diagnosed with MERS on June 1 had attended the event in the wealthy Gangnam district. "We are taking actions ... to prevent spread of the disease. But I don't think citizens should be excessively fearful," Seoul Mayor Park Won-soon told a news conference just before midnight. (Reuters)