

(1) State Bank ...

Financial deputy head of the bank, Ahmad Khusrav Zia, said they are committed to the move to support industrialists. They will also be charged a lower interest rate than that charged by other banks, he said.

AIA officials said the country's industries have been unable to compete with neighboring countries due to the absence of financial support over the past 14 years. But officials believe the initiative will increase Afghanistan's production output and will create job opportunities for hundreds of individuals. (Tolonews)

(2) Future Scope...

ministerial meeting in Brussels would take place over two days beginning on Wednesday, 24 June. The defence ministers will discuss a wide range of issues important to the alliance and its partners.

He said that Afghanistan would be discussed by ministers on the second day of the ministerial and in Resolute Support format - the 28 NATO allies and the 15 partner nations taking part in the Resolute Support Mission.

This will be the first ministerial in Resolute Support format since the launch of the Resolute Support Mission on 1 January, so will provide ministers and stakeholders with a chance to assess the progress of the mission after its first six months, he remarked.

It is expected that acting Minister of Defence, Masoom Stanakzai will represent Afghanistan at the ministerial. The RSM commander, John Campbell, and the NATO SCR, Ismail Aramaz, will both travel to Brussels to update the ministers, he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(3) Senators Warn...

(ANSF) to take decisive steps against militants associated with Daesh and eliminate them.

"Government and the security institutions are obliged to eliminate the enemy wherever they find it," Muslimyar said.

Only last week, local officials of Nangarhar said that hundreds of families have been displaced in the province following clashes between Taliban and Daesh insurgents.

Ahmad Zia Abdouzi, Provincial Governor spokesman confirmed that the families have been displaced in Bati Kot district. He did not have numbers but said there was urgent need for aid for these people.

Officials also said that both sides have sustained massive casualty tolls in the past month.

Recently, former president Hamid Karzai again expressed concerns over the rise of Daesh militants in Afghanistan, blaming their expansion into Afghanistan on foreign support.

He warned in an interview with Russian state-funded television network (RT) that the rise of newly-emerged Daesh extremists in Afghanistan would threaten neighboring Russia and China.

The ex-president believes the expansion of Daesh - which has seized several cities in Iraq and Syria - was impossible "without a foreign backing."

"So, if you hear ever in the coming days, or months, or years that Daesh is on the rise in Afghanistan, and is strong and expanding militarily, it will mean that it is a foreign-backed force intending to destabilize the region, particularly Central Asia, China and Russia," Karzai said. (Tolonews)

(4) Computerized ...

Muhat, head of the project, said the contracts of few employees was not extended due to lack of funds and rejected the dismissal of majority of its workers.

He said 283 employees worked in the centre and 800 worked in the regional offices out of them the contract of 193 were discarded and they had to quit the job. He said the European Union (EU) and other organizations declined their assistance by 60 percent and that was why they had to cancel the contracts of some employees. (Pajhwok)

(5) Poppy Cultivation...

challenge that needs to be addressed. Based on statistics, 3.5 million individuals in Afghanistan are drug users, of which 1.4 million are addicted.

"The Ministry of Public Health is committed to increasing capacity to help addicts and to find ways to prevent addiction," says Ferozuddin Feroz, Minister of Public Health.

However, the Deputy Minister of Interior for Counter Narcotics Baz Muhammad Ahmadi said there had been a decrease in the policing of drug related offences following the withdrawal of foreign troops at the end of last year.

"The exit of foreign troops from Afghanistan, the transition of security responsibilities to Afghanistan National Security Forces, the limited aid in fighting against smuggling, the loss of special units has resulted in limited capacity to fight this phenomenon," says Ahmadi. Meanwhile, the United States and Britain have both pledged their continued support in the fight against drugs in Afghanistan.

"The United Kingdom is willing to continue to provide support and assistance to the government of Afghanistan to fight illicit drugs, but ultimately it is up to Afghanistan as it requires the political will of the Afghan leadership to tackle corruption, as it requires economic alternatives being made available to farmers who are cultivating poppies," says Karen Pierce, British Ambassador to Kabul.

Based on the statistics of the Ministry of Counter Narcotics, poppies are cultivated in 132 districts of Afghanistan. (Tolonews)

(6) Afghani Loses ...

we are compelled to manage our programs jointly with the International Monetary Fund (IMF)."

However, private bank officials have raised questions about the CBA's approach, pointing to the economic hardships facing daily commercial life around the country. "The Central Bank is responsible for managing the value of the Afghani currency against foreign currencies in the market, and it depends on the management and leadership of the central bank to assess the issues and overcome the challenges," Private Bank Association head Ahmad Seyar Quraishi said.

The CBA has been administered by an acting governor for 10 months, and still the national unity government has been unable to make an appointment of a chairman for the Central Bank of Afghanistan (CBA) has caused a decline in the value of the Afghani currency, according to the Association of Kabul Money Changers. (Tolonews)

(7) Operation Underway ...

Taliban insurgents and clashes still continue in the city. The insurgents are moving forward after taking control of Chahar Dara," head of the Provincial Council in Kunduz, Mohammad Yousuf Ayoubi said earlier in the day.

But the Ministry of Interior Affairs (MoI) officials told TOLONews that a massive joint operation has been launched to retake control of Chahar Dara, which is only four kilometers away from the provincial capital.

"The operation has been launched to retake control of Chahar Dara," MoI spokesman Sediq Sediqiqi said. But the governor of Kunduz, Mohammad Omar Safi, said security forces were making advances on insurgent strongholds.

"The forces have moved forward about 800 meters. We are trying to launch attacks from different angles and we hope to retake the district in one or two days," Safi said.

But Ministry of Defense (MoD) officials blame Kunduz insecurity on regional military agencies. According to officials, some regional spy agencies are providing militants with arms and ammunition.

"They are the regional spies that fund these insurgents," MoD deputy spokesman Dawlat Waziri said.

Meanwhile, the security forces complained of arms shortages and accused the government of not supporting the forces adequately. "We don't have a single tracer bullet," a security force member said. "But the enemy has attacked us with tracer bullets and mortars the whole day."

But some MPs from Kunduz called for radical changes to the provincial leadership in order to restore peace in Kunduz.

"I don't believe the situation will turn unless there is a big change in the Kunduz leadership," Senate Secretary Abdullah Qarluq said. According to Kunduz local officials, foreign militants have also joined local insurgents in launching attacks on Kunduz, which is a route to northern Takhar and Badakhshan provinces. (Tolonews)

(8) Alarm as Taliban ...

of families trapped in a vortex of violence as militancy spreads

across the north, beyond traditional Taliban hotbeds in the south and east.

Fierce battles between insurgents and government forces in Chardarah late Saturday sent terrified residents fleeing towards Kunduz city, carrying babies, livestock and household possessions.

"The Taliban attacked our village and both sides sprayed bullets in all directions," said 60-year-old Bibi Gul, clutching an infant.

"The Taliban are fighting during the fasting month of Ramadan. They are not Muslims," she told AFP.

The militants recently rebuffed requests from senior Afghan clerics to halt attacks during Ramadan despite surging civilian casualties.

The streets of Kunduz city were deserted, with shops closed and local administration officials deserting government buildings, residents said, as fears of a Taliban takeover grew.

This year's Taliban offensive marks the first fighting season in which Afghan forces are battling the insurgents without the full support of US-led foreign combat troops.

Nato's combat mission formally ended in December but a small follow-up foreign force has stayed on to train and support local security personnel. (AFP)

(9) Electricity an...

during the last 14 years. "We are working to create a monitoring unit to exclusively oversee the construction work of dams," he added.

Osmani said the energy master plan of Afghanistan only focused on import of electricity not domestic generation of power.

More than 60 per cent of Afghanistan's electricity is being imported from neighboring states of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Iran. People usually complain about high electricity bills.

"The electricity sector in Afghanistan is an ailing sector. With the management that currently exists the problems would not only be resolved, but it would increase," he noted.

According to Osmani, there was a negative competition between ministry of energy and water and Da Afghanistan Brishna Sherkat (DABS) and the problem was currently fading away.

He did not rule out corruption in some major projects, saying because of problems major domestic and international companies had lost trust over governmental agencies.

He said the ministry had many challenges and in order to meet them they had developed short and long-term plans including the first 100-day plans. (Pajhwok)

(10) Badghis PC ...

our problems for solutions; we are pleased with how it is working," he adds.

Mohammad Shoaib, who belongs to the Pahlawanan village of Aab-i-Kamari district, confirms some tribal dispute have been settled by the council, which has been trying to prevent future differences cropping up among the people over a pistachio forest in the area.

However, Shoaib explains the council has not been successful in implementation of reconstruction projects, including asphalt-ing roads. Aab-i-Kamari has been a stable and peaceful district, but it has lately been hit by insecurity. He asks the council members to resolve the problem with the cooperation of security organs.

On the other hand, civil society activist Saifuddin claims the council has done nothing for the people of Badghis. "The members of this council only work for their own interests," he alleges. Residents and members of civil society have raised the issue of potable water shortage in some parts of the province with the council several times.

Completion of the Herat-Badghis highway has also been an important problem that has been shared with the council, parliament and several government officials, but no one has paid attention to people's plight, the activist complains. He calls for the provincial council to go beyond verbal assurances and directly raise people's problems with the authorities concerned.

Saifuddin, however, acknowledges the panel is trying to be of some service to the people but its approach needs to be reformed. Residents of Maqur and Aab-i-Kamari districts are faced with a severe shortage of drinking water. Consumption of unfit water has caused people some health prob-

lems. Around 200,000 people in the province do not have access to clean potable water.

Saifuddin says work on the Herat-Badghis ring road came to a halt a year ago and a 35 kilometers stretch that had been graveled was washed away by floods. The project was launched in 2012 when the public works minister said the road would take three years to complete.

Asian Development Bank is funding the \$456 million project that connects western provinces with the northern region and links Afghanistan with Central Asian countries. However, the slow pace of work has been a nuisance that has prompted people to move the council for resolving the issue.

Another important project for importing power from Turkmenistan to Qala-I-Naw has also come to a standstill, Saifuddin adds. The people and civil society activists have raised their voice through the media for completing the scheme, but the government has paid no heed to their calls.

For his part, Badghis provincial council head Bahauddin Qadsi insists they have addressed some problems, including tribal disputes in Jawand, Qadis, Aab-i-Kamari and Maqur districts. But he admits lack of potable water, electricity and implementation of the ring road are issues that linger on.

But Qadsi says they have shared the problems with the officials concerned but remedial steps have not been initiated yet. "The provincial council is overseeing the performance of local departments and share the result of its discussions with the public," he concludes. (Pajhwok)

(11) ANSF Re...

and took control of the district. Clashes between them and security officials have continued for almost three weeks. However, after reinforcement troops were deployed to the area on Saturday, troops were able to regain control. After clashes with the security forces but early today the security forces re-taken the control of the district after more security forces deployed to support the local security forces. (Tolonews)

(12) Nimroz PC...

people's transportation problems would be resolved. The Zaranj airport project has been stymied by lack of funds. About 70 per cent work on the airport has been completed and the facility may be inaugurated in four months.

An amount of 300 million afghanis has been spent on the airport so far, while another 350 million is required to complete it. Residents complain that travelling by road is time-consuming and dangerous while air travel is costly. With the construction of the airport, they hope, the airfare will come down. The provincial council head says the CEO has also promised completion of other ongoing projects such as Kamal Khan dam and the ring road. But residents lament the snail-paced work on the dam, blaming government for the delay.

The provincial council head assured they had good coordination with local departments and were working to improve people's lives in the province. With the help of provincial council, he said, the second phase of transferring water from Qala-i-Fateh to Zaranj city has started and it would provide potable water to residents.

Nimroz is a sandy province, having salty water. The Helmand River that passes through Zaranj cannot meet people's demands for water because of drying up during summer seasons. The extended water pipes from Iran also do not satisfy the demands.

Zaranj has around 300,000 population. Based on reports 90 per cent of the city's population do not have access to potable water. They consume the well and salty water that is accessible.

Provincial council head said during his recent visit to Kabul, he also held meetings with several cabinet ministers, urging them to visit the province and see people's problems first hand. Some of the ministers promised to visit Nimroz soon.

Fareshta, a civil society activist in Nimroz, commented achievements of the council were still invisible. "People had a lot of expectations of the elective body which hasn't delivered much." She alleged the council could not do anything tangible regarding improvement of women's rights.

Abdul Hadi, a resident of Zaranj, said the incumbent council had

better programmes than the previous one and he was satisfied with its performance. He was of the opinion the council had resolved legal issues and implemented infrastructure projects. "But when it comes to rooting out administrative corruption, it doesn't have many programmes."

Mullah Ahmad, a religious scholar, compared the provincial council members to employees of the government, saying they were not acting as true representatives of the people.

"Whatever expectations officials have, the council members measure up to them. On many projects instead of supporting people, they have vindicated the officials," he added. For instance, a 20-kilometre road worth 20 million afghanis was graveled in Chakhansor district. Despite people's complaints, the council chose to keep quiet. Instead of combating corruption, the council members have hired their relatives in many departments, he claimed.

But Mullah Gul Ahmad Ahmadi, a public representative, said the level of graft had declined in the province, compared with previous years. Without doubt, he remarked, graft is rampant across the country and Nimroz is no exception.

"We have summoned the customs department officials many times because we know there is graft in the department. We warned them of exposing corrupt officials if we found evidence against them," he added. (Pajhwok)

(13) UNHCR Chief ...

leadership of the country, the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as the largest refugee hosting province, donors and UN and NGO partners.

Guterres wpi;d be discussing the way forward on lasting solutions and the management for Afghan refugees, in particular prospects for their sustainable return and reintegration; an issue that is inevitably linked to Afghanistan's absorption capacity and broader development.

On Tuesday, he will travel to Peshawar, where he will meet refugees returning to Afghanistan.

Guterres' visit comes at a time when fresh emergencies in the Middle East and Africa continue to engage global attention while the future of some 2.6 million Afghan refugees who have been living outside their country for over three decades still hangs in the balance.

Up to 92 countries have provided for Afghans in need of refuge, but around 95 per cent of the Afghan refugees worldwide are hosted by just two countries: Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Pakistan is hosting 1.5 million registered Afghan refugees; 67 per cent live in urban or rural areas, while 33 per cent reside in 76 refugee villages. In addition, there are an estimated 1 million undocumented. (Pajhwok)

(14) Nangarhar PC ...

acts in future."

He said the government should question officials why they had passed the power lines through the insecure Ozbin area instead of ERECTING power pylons along the Kabul Jalalabad highway.

Member of the provincial council, Israrullah Murad, said they had got the news that electricity officials had launched fixing the broken lines in the Ozbin area.

However, he stressed a permanent solution to the problem in order to avoid such incidents in future.

Civil society activist, Asadullah Khaliz, said the people of Ozbin area had been promised electricity long ago, but the government was yet to deliver on the promise. He said residents had cut the power cables in reaction.

He said the government should extend power supply to the Ozbin area and urged residents of the area not to cut power cables to Nangarhar as a lever to press for their demands.

The electricity director, Eng. Mollah Rahman Momand, told Pajhwok Afghan News tribal elders from Nangarhar, Laghman and Sarobi district held successful talks with the Ozbin residents, allowing electricity officials to start fixing the lines. (Pajhwok)

(15) UNAMA Condemns..

of Helmand, killed 11 women, three children and two men, with an additional four children and three men sustaining injuries.

IEDs were the second leading cause of civilian casualties in Afghanistan in 2014. Next month, UNAMA will release its 2015 Mid-

year report on the Protection of Civilians, including detailed reporting on civilian casualties.

UNAMA emphasizes that international humanitarian law explicitly prohibits the use of weapons whose effects may not be limited, and obliges parties to the conflict to ensure the safety of civilians fleeing violence.

UNAMA extends its condolences to the families of all of those killed in the explosion and wishes a speedy recovery to those who were injured. (PR)

(16) Nabil Apologises ...

chief Rahmatullah Nabil met the two teachers on Sunday and expressed sorrow over what happened to them in detention, an NDS statement said. It said the two teachers had been mistreated in an unknown manner and two low-ranking NDS officials were indirectly involved in the incident. The two NDS officials had been detained and were currently being questioned, the statement said.

The statement quoted Nabil as apologising to the two teachers and all respected teachers of Afghanistan on behalf of the National Directorate of Security over the incident.

Nabil said the NDS officials regarded protection of the rights of Afghanistan's citizens as their primary duty. The NDS officials embraced all kinds of threats and challenges posed by the enemy to the Afghanistan's constitution, but they would never accept insult and intimidation of their countrymen, he said.

Nabil promised to the two university teachers that the incident would be thoroughly investigated and justice would be served.

Meanwhile, the Higher Education Ministry also condemned the incident and expressed its grave concern.

In a statement, the ministry said the "illegal act" was against the country's laws and an insult to the entire teaching community.

It added misusing membership of the parliament and supporting unintelligent and absent students by illegally harassing teachers tantamount to poisoning the higher education.

The Higher Education Ministry urged the government, the national assembly, security and judicial organs to investigate the incident and bring to justice those involved.

Earlier, the Afghanistan University Teachers Association called shaving heads of the two teachers as a plot and insult and warned to take to the streets if the incident was not investigated. (Pajhwok)

(17) Taliban Splinters...

commander told NBC News on condition of anonymity.

"The Afghan Taliban who want to continue to fight are led by Mullah Omar," he said, referring to the shadowy figure who ran the organization throughout its time in government. "Those who don't want to have joined [ISIS] ranks, and the protests elements could be seen in Kabul on the side of the government." (Agencies)

(18) Pentagon Chief...

Ukraine, despite Moscow's denials. U.S. officials say Ukraine has illustrated the importance of being able to counter "hybrid warfare," the blend of unidentified troops, propaganda and economic pressure that the west says Russia has used there. NATO's historic focus had been the conventional threats of the Cold War, which ended in 1991. "Carter ... will really push the alliance to think about new threats, new techniques, urge them to kind of dispose of the Cold War playbook and think about new ways to counter new threats," the official said. (Reuters)

(19) Syria Accuses...

said that it was readying to receive Druze refugees, who would escape the battles in Hadar, a matter that has sparked scoffing from members of the Druze community over Israel's "double standards." (Xinhua)

(20) Iraqi Army...

north of Baghdad, and set up a defense line to protect the highway just west of the city, the source said. The IS militants frequently attacked the highway in west of Samarra with the aim of cutting off the city's main supply routes, the source added. (Xinhua)

(21) Air Strikes...

city of Dhalea on Sunday, in clashes which left 17 Houthi fighters and two local militiamen dead.

In Aden, four local fighters were killed in a Houthi attack, militia sources said.

Residents said Arab forces air-dropped artillery equipment including mortar batteries to the anti-Houthi fighters over the weekend. (Reuters)