

(1) Afghanistan, Switzerland...

during a press conference in Khyber Hall of the Ministry of Finance. Hakimi thanked Switzerland, the country to be hosting Ministerial Conference in Geneva 2018- and for its support to Afghanistan.

"Our assistance to Afghanistan has been long lasting and we have been active in Afghanistan since 1970s," said Thomas Kolly.

He said their assistance with Afghanistan was mainly concentrated civilian sector including agriculture, education, and civil society, and public health, economic and social development. "The agreement forms a legal platform for our joint cooperation" he added.

The agreement is intended to facilitate realization of technical, humanitarian and financial assistance projects in Afghanistan by ensuring that all projects are aligned with the ANPDF and the NPPs.

Supporting the transformation and reform process in Afghanistan and contributing to sustainable socio-economic development, inclusive growth and respect for human rights are other parts of the accord.

The agreement will cover technical assistance in the form of training and consulting, financial cooperation in the form of supporting Afghan government's projects and priorities programs and humanitarian assistance including emergency and financial aid. (Pajwok)

(2) Germany to...

will enable NRC to provide education support, information, counselling and legal assistance as well as income generating activities such as vocational training and business grants to 6,808 Afghans in the provinces of Kerman and Khorasan Razavi.

"The support we are receiving from the government and the people of Germany is built on the partnership we developed previously and which enabled us in 2017 to reach over 13,000 Afghan girls, boys, women and men and members of the host communities," said Olivier Vandecasteele, NRC Country Director in Iran. "Thanks to this new contribution, we will be able to scale up a response that has already had a proven impact".

NRC will implement a holistic approach and use the funds to deliver accelerated learning programs for out-of-school children to enable them to catch-up and reintegrate into public schools at a grade level suitable for their age. These children will also benefit from hygiene promotion training, access to safe communal water facilities and will be able to study in rehabilitated and equipped classrooms. Improving opportunities for learning new skills and establishing small businesses will help improve vulnerable Afghans' access to livelihoods. In addition, NRC will continue to offer counselling and unconditional cash assistance to most vulnerable families.

"As there are now over 65 million refugees in the world, giving support to countries that take in particularly large numbers of refugees is an important aspect of Germany's international endeavors to actively steer and shape migration movements," said Michael Klor-Berchtold, German Ambassador to Iran. "That is why Germany decided to continue its support for the protection, care and access to rights and opportunities of Afghan refugees in Iran by again contributing one million Euros to the Norwegian Refugee Council throughout 2018".

"After over one million asylum seekers and migrants reached the European Union in 2015," Mr. Klor-Berchtold stated, "Germany is fully aware that protection, care and investing in equal rights and opportunities for newcomers is a big challenge for every country."

An estimated 3.6 million Afghans and over 28,000 Iraqis currently reside in Iran.

NRC is an independent humanitarian organization helping people forced to flee. It has been operating in Iran since 2012. In 2017, NRC has provided humanitarian assistance to 54,076 beneficiaries in the provinces of Tehran, Semnan, Qom, Alborz, Khorasan Razavi, Kerman and Kermanshah. (Agencies)

(3) Two Pakistanis...

Chief Abdul Rahman Rahimi said the two Pakistanis and dozens of others were arrested in connection

with criminal and terrorist activities in the past month in different parts of the province especially in Jalalabad city.

This comes after a number of residents raised concerns over the increase in criminal and terrorist activities in the province.

"Two Pakistani citizens who were preparing suicide vests were arrested with suicide vests and dozens of other suspects who wanted to conduct terrorist activities in different parts of the province were arrested before they were able to reach their targets. They are now under investigation," said Rahimi.

Meanwhile, the two Pakistanis who were arrested said that they had been deceived and were not supposed to conduct suicide attacks.

"I am a resident of Peshawar from Pakistan and got training in Pakistan and they told me to go to Afghanistan because Americans are there and we came to Afghanistan and when the police stopped us and asked us then I told them the whole story that someone had deceived me and brought me to Afghanistan and now that guy is has gone underground but we did not come here for suicide attacks," said Abdul Rahman one of the suspects.

"A person name Osman told me that we will go to the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan because Americans are there. We came to Afghanistan and in Afghanistan we were stopped by the police and we told the police that we have been deceived by Osman," said Ahmad another Pakistani suspect.

Meanwhile in a separate incident, two people died in a fire early Tuesday in Jalalabad city. Three others were injured.

Local officials said that the fire broke out in the Behsood district of Nangarhar province when a magnetic mine was placed in a fuel tanker. Forty shops in the area caught fire.

"Early today around 06:30 am a fuel tanker in Behsood district belonging to a private company caught fire when a magnetic mine went off and as a result 40 shops in the area caught fire and two people were killed and three others were injured," said Khoyani.

Two of them are in critical condition, Khoyani added. (Tolo news)

(4) Contracts for...

would invest 175\$ million in the project that would be implemented under the public-private partnership to contemporary standards and put into service.

The government hopes to gain 93\$ million in revenue from the project, which will provide job opportunities, enhance electricity supply to consumers and attract more private sector investment.

Similarly, the statement said, contracts for the Zameen Dawar canal and the Musa Qala dam construction were also signed between Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Nasser Ahmad Durrani and the director of the 77 Company.

The scheme would help resolve many problems of residents such as floods, electricity, irrigation and potable water in addition to generating job opportunities for people. (Pajhwok)

(5) 'Deceived and...

three months Dr. Anesa and her husband went back to Pakistan, but they did not return. The local doctor visited Pakistan and again brought Anesa to Helmand, but this time without her husband consistently

The local doctor told Anesa he would give her 70,000 Pakistani rupees per month in return for treating patients at his clinic, but it was only a fraud. Anesa in prison:

"I lived in the clinic. He (the clinic owner) proposed me marriage but I was already married so I refused. He did not allow me to have or use phone and did not pay my salary for the seven months I spent there. He did whatever he wanted and curtailed my freedom," she said.

Anesa said during the period she endured different kinds of torture and she always tried to find a way out.

"I tried my best to hand over myself to police and free myself from torture and violence end all this deceive. Finally, a girl guided me to a vehicle and I got on that and handed over myself to police," she said.

She is currently in the central prison in Lashkargah, the provincial capital, fighting her case to return to Pakistan and reunite with her family.

While going to the court, Anesa narrated her story to Pajhwok Afghan News. She recalled that she left her husband and a seven-year-old daughter in Pakistan and came to Helmand to serve people as well as earn money.

But the local doctor who brought her to Helmand through irregular routes and on fake documents broke all his promises. He denied her the promised 70,000 rupees monthly salary and used her for sexual satisfaction and earned money through her services at his clinic.

The Pakistani doctor worked for seven months at the local doctor's private clinic situated near his home. "I told the entire story to the police and the same day the doctor came and told the police that she is my wife and had escaped from home." She said as there was no safe home in Helmand, she was spending her days and nights in the jail to get justice. She asked the authorities concerned to resolve her problem soon, so she could go back to her home in Pakistan.

Anesa had connection with the local doctor: villager a local resident, who wished to go unnamed, said the Pakistani doctor had a connection with the local doctor, who has already a wife.

He said: "After their marriage, Anesa asked the local doctor to divorce his first wife but he refused and thus the dispute erupted."

Meanwhile, Helmand Prosecutor Esa Khan Umar Khel told Pajhwok Afghan News the Pakistani woman's case had been earlier registered under the adultery law but the court rejected that and suggested filing a human trafficking case.

He said the National Directorate of Security (NDS) prosecutor had been tasked with investigation of the case. A source said the local doctor has also been arrested. The doctor insists Anesa is his wife and they have tied the knot but the woman claims she is a victim of adultery and she has rejected the marriage. The source said the issue would become clear after the investigation.

The forensic department, however, said the Pakistani woman had been sexually assaulted as they found no sign of mutual consent.

We are unaware of the case: Justice Department head Mohammad Tayyib Atal, head of the human and migrant trafficking commission and justice department, said the case of Pakistani female doctor has not yet reached them but they will follow the case.

Fatema Abidi, head of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), said they had followed the case from A to Z.

She said the Pakistani doctor had been deceived, denied her salary and access to mobile phone. She, however, said Anesa was not totally right and the dispute had erupted over money.

We are unaware: Akher Mohammad Akher Mohammad, deputy Pakistani Consul General in the south, said they had received no such complaint and they were unaware about the case. He assured of following the case.

Deceit is illegal in Islam: religious scholar Religious scholar Mufti Hujatullah told Pajhwok Afghan News that deceit and fraud was against human and Islamic principles. He stressed no one should use fraud and deceit for success and promotion in life.

Incidents of fraud have recently increased not only in Afghanistan but in the whole of the world, with most of the victims happen to be women.

Article three, clause first of the Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants 2017 Law says, "To recruit, transfer, transport, harbor or receive a person for the purpose of exploitation, using the means of deceit is human trafficking".

Article 10 of the Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants 2017 Law says, if the trafficked person is woman or child, the accused could be sentenced to eight years in jail. (Pajhwok)

(6) DarulAman...

The palace is located eight kilometers southwest of Kabul city. It was built during King Amanullah Khan era in the solar year 1300. The palace has 150 small and big rooms, which initially served as the king's abode

before housing the Ministry of Defense.

The palace has damaged as a result of the civil strife in the 1990s. Most walls of the building had damaged or collapsed and its rooms turned into ruins. Like other key buildings, the majestic structure was pockmarked and blackened by rockets and bullets. The Cabinet in March 2016 approved the reconstruction plan for the palace and it was expected the construction process would take five years.

However, cleaning, retaining and mapping processes of DarulAman Palace was started in June 2016.

Nilofar Langar, MoUD spokeswoman, told reporters in Kabul today that the cleaning, retaining and mapping process of the place were completed at a cost of 3\$ million.

She said fundamental construction process of the palace which would cost 17\$ million would start in the beginning of next solar year.

Construction companies could take part for the bidding process of this project, Langar added.

On the other hand, she said four wastewater purification centers would be also built in capital Kabul. Construction work on one of these centers would begin in early 1397 solar year and would complete by the end of the same year, she said.

Langar said three other centers would be built over the next three years. "These four wastewater centers are sufficient for Kabul city." She said wastewater would be collected and then filtered in the centers before being used for irrigation, electricity production and liquefied gas. The cost of this project is still not clear. (Pajhwok)

(7) Spring Trees...

a resident of Doshi district, said: "I have a small fruit garden inside my home. I have been told keep the environment clean. I, therefore, plan to buy more plants..."

He added his village residents had a lot of interest in planting pistachio trees and all of them want to do this spring.

Abdul Momin, another gardener from Ghorji district, said: "All trees in my garden are original, provided by the national horticulture process. Each tree produces three times more fruits."

Governor Abdul Hahi Niamati, attending the plantation campaign, said: Baghlan's soil is suitable for all kinds of trees. We want farmers to grow and protect trees." (Pajhwok)

(8) 'Foreign-Backed...

create divisions among them in the name of tribe, religion and language and destroy the hard-won system.

He said one of the main goals of foreign countries was to control Afghanistan's natural resources, but they would never achieve such goals. "Natural resources are national asset of people who would defend their wealth."

Arghandiwal said the current situation was turning in the interest of Afghanistan as the view of the international community about Afghanistan had changed. Some countries supporting terrorism were isolated and it was good for the country, he added.

A number of security officials, who attended the meeting, also talked in support of the Afghan security forces. (Pajwok)

(9) Govt's Peace...

York Times, said that besides the peace offer, the government also promised granting peace provinces to the rebels.

However, Dawa Khan Minapal, a spokesman for the president, said it was personal views of politicians to comment on the peace offer.

He told Pajhwok Afghan News that the government had presented a specific and clear peace proposal to the Taliban.

"Everything is clear in this proposal and people were informed about it in the Kabul Process conference", he said. (Pajwok)

(10) Political Parties...

The source said votes of political parties and coalitions should be transferable and political parties should be given a special observation room in the IEC in order to ensure transparency in the election process. They stressed all people of Afghanistan should be facilitated to cast their votes. "We are in negotiations with relevant sources for implementing our demands for electoral reforms, the political

parties may review their cooperation with the IEC if the commission's uncalculated stances continue about our legitimate demands," the statement added.

The IEC in a statement on February 26 said it was ready to hold elections on schedule on the condition it received the required budget on time and security was ensured.

The commission had said political parties' role in democratic systems was important and the commission has always tried to hear their suggestions about the election process. (Pajwok)

(11) For Now, No...

The US was not a substitute for the Afghan people and the Afghan government, she added.

The top American diplomat the Afghans had to be able to talk to one another. As last week's Kabul Process underscored, the international community would be supportive of the negotiation effort," she remarked.

According to her, the Taliban control about 12 percent of the population and the government control 56 percent, while other areas are contested.

"Over the last year, the Taliban have not succeeded in threatening major urban centers. So already there's been an erosion in what they hoped to achieve on the battlefield, and that erosion will continue, with increased assets being brought to bear under the South Asia strategy.

"We will see the battlefield conditions change, but at the same time, the door has been opened quite significantly to a political process. And so to try to characterise the South Asia Strategy as a military plan is simply wrong. There are two parts to this strategy, each is equally thought out and invested in."

She thought President Ghani had done an extremely effective job in laying out a vision for his country, the Taliban and fellow Afghans," Wells said.

Referring to Ghani's remarks at conference, she said it was quite significant that he suggested there could be constitutional amendments so that the constitution was owned by all Afghan people.

"What we've encouraged the government of Afghanistan to undertake a series of reforms that have been enshrined in the Afghanistan Compact that look at improvements in governance and economics and reconciliation and security," Wells concluded. (Pajwok)

UK Counterterror Help Inquiry After Ex-Russian Spy Collapses

SALISBURY, England — British counterterror specialists offered expertise to police in southern England on Tuesday as they sought to unravel the mystery of why a former Russian spy collapsed and became critically ill following exposure to an «unknown substance.»

Authorities maintained a cordon near the spot — a bench near a shopping mall — where former double agent Sergei Skripal and an unidentified woman collapsed Sunday in Salisbury, 90 miles (145 kilometers) southwest of London. A 33-year-old woman was with him and British media reported that the woman was Skripal's daughter.

Though authorities were trying to keep an open mind, the incident drew parallels to the death of former Russian agent Alexander Litvinenko, who was poisoned with radioactive polonium 11 years ago in London.

«I think we have to remember that Russian exiles are not immortal, they do all die and there can be a tendency for some conspiracy theories,» Metropolitan Police assistant commissioner Mark Rowley told the BBC.

«But likewise we have to be alive to the fact of state threats as illustrated by the Litvinenko case.»

Skripal, 66, who was convicted in Russia on charges of spying for Britain and sentenced in 2006 to 13 years in prison. He was freed in 2010 as part of a spy swap, which followed the exposure of a ring of Russian sleeper agents in the United States. (AP)