

### (1) Govt. Seals ....

transparency, getting corruption out of the system and establishing the processes that will lead this nation to success in the future," said Daniel Hughes deputy commanding general, support for Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan. The Afghan government and international institutions have meanwhile sealed more than 600 contracts worth over 100 billion Af\$ since the start of 2015.

"Forty two NPC sessions over 600 contracts have been approved and at the ministry of defense and the ministry of interior alone last year we saved \$1.4 billion USD," said Dr. Beth Rairigh, deputy director of Contracting Enabler Cel.

This comes at a time that President Ashraf Ghani announced the termination of all ministry of defense fuel contracts last year after reports surfaced over large scale corruption in the procurement process.

"There was a special team designated to investigate the case, I think SIGAR was also helping them, they prepared the report, I think it is submitted to the president's office and they are still reviewing the report," NPA advisor Sohail Kakar said.

After assuming office as president, Ghani pledged to stamp out corruption in the country, something analysts believe has not been done, arguing that the culture of impunity has further increased corruption. (Tolonews)

### (2) It is War....

peaceful next generation too. We have to build the country together," Ghani addressed the spy personnel. The war in Afghanistan was the war between right and wrong, so the NDS officials should try for recognition of geography, tradition and culture of Afghans, the statement added.

"Your accurate intelligence increases the efficiency of your bullets by hundreds of times, but your wrong intelligence wastes your hundreds of bullets with no result," president concluded. (Pajhwok)

### (3) Pakistan Should ...

this group," Votel added. Pakistan had a way of communicating with the Haqqani network and a way of highlighting to them the disruptive role they were playing in Afghanistan, the general said.

He asked Pakistan to look at conducting security operations to keep them from coming across the border and having an impact in Afghanistan.

Votel believed Pakistan's involvement in the peace process was critical, as Islamabad continued to support ongoing reconciliation efforts and desired an enduring relationship with Kabul.

"Stronger ties between the two nations would help reinforce efforts for peace and development in the region. Terrorism is a common enemy of both countries that need to work together to counter it. A negotiated peace is the most viable option to establish lasting stability in Afghanistan," he said.

China has asserted its commitment to the nascent peace process as a member of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG). The Afghans hope China will exert greater influence on Pakistan.

The insurgency's capacity and capability was largely unchanged, the commander said, adding small pockets of core Al Qaeda (Arabs who served with the group to 9/11) remained anchored in the Af-Pak region.

"Although likely numbering less than 50 individuals, these remaining AQ members are committed to plotting against the US homeland and Western regional interests. The group has ... reduced its operational tempo, choosing to focus on self-preservation," Votel observed.

He said Al Qaeda was optimistic of outlasting counterterrorism pressure and reemerging after a US withdrawal from Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

### (4) Envoys Ask ....

Afghanistan Jean Michel Marlaud also called on Afghan citizens to stay, suggesting that the refugees will not be able to find a better life in Europe.

Although the French diplomats admit that violence and an economic recession have overshadowed the lives of Afghans, they urge those on their way to Europe to return.

"Between the people who flee their country because they are threatened, because they need political asylum and the people who just go because they are looking for a better life and honestly I don't think that an Afghan migrant will have a better life living illegally in Europe than

here in Afghanistan. By saying that I don't deny the fact that there is violence in Afghanistan, I don't deny the fact that there is also an economic crisis in Afghanistan, but to go through all those hardships with the danger of being exploited by ... people who are just human traffickers, who are ready to say anything to attract people and to get \$5,000, \$10,000; people have to sell all their belongings and once they arrive in Europe, they don't speak the language, they don't find the job and sometimes they just expelled back to Afghanistan," he said.

This comes after 150,000 Afghan asylum seekers reached Germany in 2015 with only a small number of them having been granted the status of a refugee. (Tolonews)

### (5) Major Taliban ...

with the Afghan government, Shoffner said, or it may provide a chance for Islamic State-Khorasan fighters to try to infiltrate the different Taliban groups.

"That is a potential outcome, [but] we're seeing that primarily more in the east than we are in Helmand," the general said.

Islamic State has designated Afghanistan, Pakistan and parts of Iran as its so-called "Khorasan" province. The U.S. continues to watch the different Taliban groups in Helmand "closely."

"It will be very interesting to see where the revenue goes amongst those three groups and where their loyalties lie," the general said.

A recent spike in fighting is expected to decrease later this month because of the start of the poppy harvesting season. The U.S. military estimates that more than half of the Taliban's income comes from poppies, which produce the highly addictive opium narcotic.

IS weakening in Afghanistan Islamic State-Khorasan attempted to recruit and spread propaganda in Helmand in 2015, but the Taliban successfully stopped most of those attempts, according to Shoffner.

The group is contained in one district in eastern Afghanistan's Nangarhar province. Last month, Islamic State-Khorasan was in four or five districts in the province.

Nangarhar province is on the border with Pakistan, and many pledging allegiance to Islamic State-Khorasan are former members of the Pakistani Taliban, or TTP.

Shoffner estimated that current numbers of Islamic State fighters in Afghanistan are "probably on the lower end" of between 1,000 and 3,000.

Reasons for the decrease include a "substantially increased" number of U.S. airstrikes against the group and conflicts with the Taliban over revenue streams and ideology.

The White House gave the U.S. military legal authority to target Islamic State in Afghanistan in January.

Shoffner added that the group's brutal tactics have "backfired on them" and are seen as extremely unpopular with citizens in Nangarhar. (VoA)

### (6) Every Afghan...

over the next few years, he announced.

The president also insisted on reviving the country's forests, saying their aim from environment point of view was rehabilitate Kabul to which King Babar was hopeful.

Ghani extended his new solar year's wishes to the people of the country and hoped all the countrymen would actively take part in increasing the homeland's greenery. (Pajhwok)

### (7) We are ...

"I urge the Taliban to free themselves from slavery of others. If they [the Taliban] are truly Afghans, then they should join the peace process and refrain from fighting against the government," he said.

In a message passed on by President Ashraf Ghani, he bestowed the title of 'martyr of national unity' on Mazari.

The main focus by speakers at the event was on peace talks with the Taliban.

The Deputy Chairman of the High Peace Council (HPC), Mohammad Karim Khalili, said that the talks should bring peace with dignity to Afghanistan and should put an end to wars.

"We emphasize on intra-Afghan peace talks. We urge foreigners to put their differences aside and not to make Afghanistan a battleground for their proxy wars," he added.

Participants at the event once again called for an end to wars in Afghanistan and said all people should stand united in front of the existing challenges in the country. (Tolonews)

### (8) Scores of ....

among Taliban militants, saying

government forces will not intervene unless the lives of civilians are in danger.

Locals in talks with media have also confirmed the infighting, saying Mullah Samad, a commander of Mullah Mansoor, attacked the positions of Mullah Nangiali who is loyal to Mullah Rasoul in Zirkoh area four days ago and so far scores of people from both sides have been killed.

According to the locals, Mullah Samad has been injured after capturing several villages from rival group and Mullah Nangiali fled the area.

Fighting between supporters of Mullah Mansoor and backers of his opponent Mullah Rasoul have occurred several times in parts of the conflict-ridden country since confirmation of the death of Taliban former leader Mullah Mohammad Omar in July last year.

Afghan and U.S. forces have reported fragmentation among Taliban ranks in the southern Helmand province and according to the military officials, presently three Taliban groups have been operating in Taliban former stronghold of the troubled Helmand province.

Meanwhile, government forces in crackdown on Taliban have surrounded Taliban fighters in Darqad district of the northern Takhar province over the past three days, attempting to eliminate the insurgents there, provincial government spokesman Sunatullah Timor told Xinhua on Friday. (Xinhua)

### (9) 65 Policemen....

Meanwhile, the Khas Uruzgan district chief, Abdul Karim said 65 policemen went missing on Thursday when they were traveling from the district to the provincial capital of Uruzgan.

Before traveling on the road under the Taliban control, the police had asked the security officials to shift them to Uruzgan by military helicopters, but the officials did not positively respond to their request, he said.

Meanwhile, local Taliban told media that the policemen surrendered to the militant group. (Pajhwok)

### (10) Lawmakers,....

this big loss," he added. The niches where the sculptures stood are considered valuable heritage sites.

"They were wonders of the world, because constructing such great sculptures in the fifth century was not easy. The only things that attracted foreigners and brought fame to Afghanistan were these sculptures in Bamyán," said Mohammad Fahim Rahimi, acting head of the Afghanistan National Museum.

Abdul Ahad Abasi, head of historical monuments department at the Ministry of Information and Culture, said a large number of tourists used to come to Afghanistan to see the sculptures and the scenery in Bamyán. "The destruction of the sculptures, indeed, had a negative impact," he added.

Salsal and Shamama, the two Buddha sculptures, were 1,600 years old and were considered a master piece of Buddhism art.

Recently a Chinese team used 3D laser light projections to revive the Buddhas. However, Afghans believe that it was a short term step. They said practical steps should be taken for the reconstruction of the sculptures. (Tolonews)

### (11) Raisin Exports ...

demand is low," said Asadullah Azizi, head of a raisin processing company.

Reports say that at least four containers carrying Afghanistan raisins were recently returned after a delay on their way to Europe.

According to reports, raisins in Afghanistan are processed in traditional ways which has affected the quality of the products.

Experts urge government to build standard processing and drying houses for Afghanistan's raisins - and in different parts of the country in order to increase the output and quality. (Tolonews)

### (12) Govt. Asked...

agenda for a long period and slow laws' approval were areas where the lawmakers had failed.

"We hope the absent lawmakers will be exposed to the people so they realize how much their representatives are responsible," the statement said. The lawmakers were requested to develop a mechanism in order to control absenteeism so that sessions could be proceeded legally.

The civil society members expressed their concern over the delay in approval of legislative decrees, saying such decrees should not be delayed for a long time.

Shah Mahmood Mal, member of the

IWA, said the current term of the Wolesi Jiga was illegal and in the most previous sessions 115 to 125 lawmakers had been present from among the total 250 MPs.

He said the 12-member panel sessions had been attended by only three members and had approved decisions.

Mal called a challenge the rejection of presidential decrees on electoral reforms by the lower house, demanding implementation of electoral reforms within a month. He said if the electoral reforms were not implemented, the coming parliamentary elections would be just a show and nothing else.

Sadiqullah Tawhidi, NAI head, said the country's election system could be reformed through the two packages the Election Reform Commission (ERC) had submitted to the government.

He claimed some figures within the government did not want free, fair and transparent future elections in the country.

He said the president had issued his second legislative decree on electoral reform, but a copy of the decree was yet to reach the media. (Pajhwok)

### (13) Karzai Denounces ...

Such attacks could only create dispute between Afghanistan and Pakistan and badly affect on the relations of the two countries, the statement said.

Although Karzai praised the assistance of Pakistan with Afghans during Jihad period against soviet invasion, he said the tolerance of Afghans against such attacks should not be considered as the weakness of Afghans.

He firmly demanded Pakistan to stop attacking on Afghan territory, otherwise such acts would destroy the links between the two countries, the statement said. (Pajhwok)

### (14) Ghani Reopens ...

the reduced sentences on March 8, the International Women's Day.

The 27-year-old Malikzada was attacked and lynched on March 19 last year outside a shrine in the Afghan capital after one of the men in the group shouted that she had burned a Quran, the Muslim holy book - an accusation that was later found to be false.

The brutal slaying stunned the country and led to calls for reform of the judicial system, long plagued by corruption, partisanship and incompetence, and stronger protection for women from violence.

A spokesman for Ghani, Zafar Hashemi, said the newly-appointed attorney general had been instructed by the president to "make justice for Farkhunda his top priority and reopen the case."

"The president has assigned a senior and dedicated adviser from his legal team to follow up and provide support to Farkhunda's family lawyers," Hashemi told The Associated Press. "He asks for regular reporting on her case and puts significant pressure on law enforcement authorities to make sure that justice is delivered."

Four men were originally sentenced to death for Malikzada's murder and another nine were handed long prison sentences. However, the Supreme Court this week upheld a lower court's decision to reduce the sentences for all convicted.

Three of the death sentences were commuted to 20 years in prison and the fourth to 10 years. The other nine men convicted in the case also had their prison terms slashed. Initially, 30 men were charged with Malikzada's murder.

Footage taken on cell phones of the attack showed Malikzada being punched, kicked and beaten with wooden planks, after which the crowd threw her from a roof, ran over her with a car and crushed her with a block of concrete. They then set her body ablaze on the bank of the Kabul River.

The incident triggered widespread demonstrations, across Afghanistan and internationally, demanding justice for women in a country where they are widely treated with contempt and where they have their constitutional right to protection from violence routinely breached. An Afghan civil rights group has erected a memorial to her on the river bank. (AP)

### (15) US Names...

reward of up to \$3 million for information on Saboor and up to \$2 million on Nowbahar.

Noting that Abdullah Nowbahar and Abdul Saboor are explosive experts for Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin, the State Department said both participated in the September 18, 2012 attack on a bus carrying foreign employees of Kabul International Air-

port that killed 12 people.

Saboor was also responsible for a May 2013 suicide attack in Kabul that destroyed a US armored vehicle, killing two soldiers and four US civilian contractors; eight Afghans - including two children - were also killed and another 37 were wounded. (Pajhwok)

### (16) Daikundi ...

Kajran residents feared a possible spillover of insecurity to their area from the Baghran district of Helmand and Charchino town of Uruzgan province.

Mohammad Hussain Mahmoodi, head of the Kajran Ulema Council, told Pajhwok Afghan News the district was faced with a serious security threat from the two neighbouring districts.

He said the Taliban planned to spread their activities to central Afghanistan through Kajran as part of their spring offensive. He added Mullah Janan, the Taliban's governor for Daikundi, had recently met militants in Kajran on their plans. (Pajhwok)

### (17) Mojaddedi Calls...

Hamid Karzai on Friday slammed Pakistan's cross Durand Line rocket attacks.

He strongly denounced Pakistan's rocket attacks on Danganam district of eastern Kunar province.

Meanwhile, the Chairman of Kunar provincial council, Ahmad Ali, said the rocket attacks are aimed at putting pressure on Afghanistan to recognize Durand Line as an international frontier. (Tolonews)

### (18) Afghans ...

national Zabi says he's lucky to be alive. After surviving an explosion at home, he and his two children were nearly drowned when crossing from Turkey to Greece, before the EU closed the border to all Afghans in February.

"I'm not a terrorist, I'm Afghan," he said.

Mohammed, also from Afghanistan, has been camped out at a gas station for more than 20 days.

"Why do they not let Afghan people go to the other countries? Syria now has five years of war. But Afghanistan people have been through three decades of war. Now in Afghanistan [there is] war. Who says Afghanistan security is now good?" he said.

These refugees said they are afraid that they will be sent back to Afghanistan under the current negotiations.

The UN has also expressed concerns about the blanket return of people from one country to another without individual processing. (AP)

### (19) Bamyán Resident...

Bamyán's people's council has also given him the use of several rooms in their building where he has been able to establish a Children's Foundation.

"We should have an inclusive definition for Afghan children. Afghan children suffer from economic poverty at home, cultural poverty in society and educational poverty in school. I believe that reading books can help them build a better future," said Hussaini. (Tolonews)

### (20) 14 Alleged ...

housing a large number of Afghan refugees, who have lived there for more than three decades.

In Pakistan there are several armed organizations such as the Taliban, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Jundullah, the Haqqani network, as well as Baloch separatists. The Islamic State joined them in recent months.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations, since June 2014 the army has carried out an offensive against the remnants of those groups, which allowed to kill over 3,400 insurgents. (Prensa Latina)

### (21) 10 Attackers,

office of National Directorate of Security and the district headquarters. The operative commander of Helmand, Abdul Jabar Qahraman told Pajhwok Afghan News the gunbattle ended on Friday early morning at around 3am. (Pajhwok)

### (22) 'Abducted' Girl ...

kidnappers sold her to a family for 300,000 afghanis and the family forced her into marrying one of its male members, the governor said.

Four kidnappers and as many members of the accused family, including the father, son and two daughters, were detained on Wednesday by security forces, he said, adding the girl had been tortured by the family for refusing to marry their boy.

The rescued girl said she fell unconscious after her brother's brother-in-law offered her a cake to eat.

When she came to senses, she found

herself in a house where she was told that she had been sold to them by her kidnappers against 300,000 afghanis and she would have to marry a man in the family. (Pajhwok)

### (23) Women Farmers' ...

vate companies and NGOs were in attendance.

Agriculture Director Kateb Shams praised women farmers for their valuable contributions toward the development of agricultural value chains. "On this special occasion, I would like to congratulate women on their continued hard work and achievements. (Pajhwok)

### (24) Syrian Opposition ...

has been holding over the past 10 days with no notable violations, something that could be built on for the upcoming talks in Geneva.

The main thorny point in the negotiation is the HNC desire to establish a transitional body to rule the country, not a national unity government, as demanded by the Syrian leadership. (Xinhua)

### (25) Obama Hits ...

"extraordinary." In the extensive interview, Obama discussed the conditions surrounding the British and French-led bombing campaign that led to the fall of Moamer Kadhafi's regime.

Obama said when he considered what went wrong in Libya, "there's room for criticism because I had more faith in the Europeans, given Libya's proximity, being invested in the follow-up. (AFP)

### (26) Sanctions Against...

a press conference here following talks with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi.

Criticizing Washington's intention to deploy the sophisticated Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense system in South Korea to "deter the DPRK's missile threats," he said the sanctions should not be used as a pretext for "a dangerous and destabilizing stockpiling of armaments in the region, including plans to create a system of missile defense there."

The U.N. Security Council approved unanimously a new package of sanctions against the DPRK last Wednesday, which included a ban on all exports of coal, iron, gold, titanium and rare earth from the country, in a bid to curb its nuclear and missile programs. (Xinhua)

### (27) N. Korean ...

tests to assess the power of newly developed nuclear warheads and tests to improve nuclear attack capability," KCNA said. The North Korean leader was quoted in state media this week as saying his country had miniaturized nuclear warheads to mount on ballistic missiles. (Reuters)

### (28) UN Blasts ...

in Libya, "there's room for criticism because I had more faith in the Europeans, given Libya's proximity, being invested in the follow-up."

Cameron stopped paying attention soon after the military operation, he said, becoming "distracted by a range of other things. (AFP)

### (29) China Reaffirms....

recently for an arms sale nor did it issue any relevant statement. "I want to stress that China has always been against the arms sale to Taiwan. The stance is consistent, firm and clear," Hong noted.

According to the Joint Communiqué signed by the two countries in August 17, 1982, the United States will gradually reduce arms sales to Taiwan. (Xinhua)

### (30) Iran FM

counterpart Don Pramudwinai over ways to enhance cooperation on issues of bilateral and regional significance. Zarif visited Thailand to attend the 14th Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Ministerial Meeting. (PressTV)

### (31) Pak Senate

prison and a fine of Rs0.7 million. The country was rocked last August by a major paedophilia scandal when it was revealed that hundreds of pornographic videos of children from the village of Hussain Khanwala in Kasur district had been created and were being circulated. (Agencies)

### (32) Turkmenistan...

\$1.7 million in legal fees and expenses. "The claimants claims are dismissed in their entirety for lack of merit," the arbitration panel wrote.

The dispute stemmed from 13 construction contracts that Ickale, which bills itself as one of the leading civil construction companies in Turkey, entered into with various entities of the Turkmenistan government between 2004 and 2009. The contracted projects included a canal, a hotel, schools and a cinema. (AKIpress)