

(1) New Hospital...

will be a role model for health facilities in Afghanistan and will provide essential healthcare to the people of Bamyan and the neighbouring provinces."

The Aga Khan Health Services (AKHS) began operating the Bamyan Hospital in 2004. At that time, the Hospital had only 35 beds - 15 of which were housed in a tent. Medical staff struggled to meet the needs of the population.

As part of a public-private partnership with the Government of Afghanistan, AKHS undertook the challenge of upgrading the hospital. The old facility was expanded to 100 beds, and new equipment was installed. Training was provided to staff and a steady supply of medicines was stocked.

The impact was remarkable: admissions rose from 1,900 in 2004 to more than 11,000 in 2016; outpatient attendances increased from 43,000 to 175,000; deliveries from 100 to more than 3,000 and the number of major operations from 150 to more than 600.

"I also am very supportive of the innovative approach for the country that Aga Khan Health Services will implement in the not too distant future in Bamyan and other hospitals that it supports," said Afghanistan's Minister of Public Health, His Excellency Dr Feruzuddin Feruz. "The innovation is setting a fee for non-essential health services - that is, those not in the basic package of health services and the essential package of hospital services. The fee will be ploughed back into the hospitals to help pay for the running costs."

In response to the clear need for a purpose-built facility, the Bamyan Provincial Government allocated 6.4 acres of land on the outskirts of the town. The new hospital was built by the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat, which specialises in ecologically friendly and seismic resistant construction. Over half of the facility's power is supplied by solar panels located on a hilltop behind the hospital.

The Governor of Bamyan Province, His Excellency Mohammad Tahir zohair, remarked that AKHS has been upgrading the Hospital since 2004 and that it was now "a state of the art hospital". He continued with the proposal "to make this hospital a regional one that serves five more provinces."

The construction of the new facility was funded by the Government of Canada (US \$17 million), the Aga Khan Foundation Canada (US \$3.2 million) and the Government of France (US \$2.3 million). The hospital's operations continue to be principally funded by the Aga Khan Health Services; since 2004, this funding has amounted to over US\$15 million.

"I know that all of you share Canada's deep belief that access to quality health care for all the citizens of this vast country of Afghanistan is one of the most important building blocks for a better future," said Canadian Ambassador His Excellency Kenneth Neufeld. "We can see here in front of us a model of quality sustainable health care which can offer first-class health solutions to remote areas and under-served segments of the population. I know too that you share Canada's deep commitment to ensuring that the rights of women and children to equal access to health care are achieved."

"France is proud of being a partner in such an achievement," said His Excellency the Ambassador of France, Mr. François Richier. "I am convinced that the Bamyan Provincial Hospital will bring a major contribution in the well-being and future of the people of the city and the province."

The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) has been active in Bamyan since 2003. The upgrading of the hospital is part of the AKDN's broad contribution to the improvement of health services in Afghanistan, which include the upgrading of health facilities, the training of nurses, midwives and doctors, and wider support for the delivery of quality health services and the rebuilding of the country's health infrastructure.

The Bamyan Provincial Hospital and the Faizabad Provincial Hospital in Badakhshan (also operated by AKHS), are the only provincial hospitals in the country to have received ISO-9001 certification. The French Medical Institute for Mothers and Children in Kabul is managed by the Aga Khan University, having been established through a public-private partnership with the governments of France and Afghanistan, the Aga Khan Development Network and the French NGO La Chaîne de L'Espoir.

Earlier in the day, Princess Zahra Aga Khan met with His Excellency President Ashraf Ghani and Her Excellency First Lady Rula Ghani, His Excellency Chief Executive Dr Abdullah Abdullah, His Excellency Second Vice President Sarwar Danesh, and His Excellency Governor of Bamyan Mohammad Tahir Zahir.

The Aga Khan Development Network

has been committed to the reconstruction of Afghanistan since the beginning of this century, having channelled close to a billion dollars towards the country's development.

"Through investments in the private sector - telecommunications, hospitality, tourism and microfinance - as well as concurrent investments in the social and cultural sector, including health systems strengthening, health professionals training including post-graduate medical education and diploma level nursing through the Aga Khan University; primary, secondary education and adult literacy programmes; facilitating village community organisations; the restoration of the Baghe-Babur gardens and the urban environment around it," noted Princess Zahra, "the AKDN seeks to harness and influence the various dimensions of human life such that, together, they chart a course for growth while building social protection." (PR)

(2) 'Geopolitical ...

Hamid Karzai.

"Unfortunately, geopolitical games are unfolding around Afghanistan, which have nothing to do with concern for the destiny of the Afghan people," Lavrov said.

He added that there are attempts to use Russophobic tendencies in those games.

Afghanistan is in a state of political and social turmoil, with government forces fighting the continuing Taliban insurgency. The instability has persisted in the country since the 2001 US-led invasion to defeat the Taliban and al-Qaeda in the wake of the 9/11 attacks in the United States.

The lack of control and instability turned the country into home to the largest opium poppy production and distribution network in the world. (Sputnik)

(3) Afghanistan's...

Water in Kunduz and Takhar, survey and study for the master plan of the capital commercial center in the 1st police district of Kabul city, procurement of food items for some of the directorates of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Martyred.

The NPC was established after the formation of the National Unity Government with the aim to root corruption and provide better services through an effective, efficient and transparent procurement system.

President Ghani issued decree No.16, dated 20/7/1393 for establishment of the National Procurement Authority within the structure of Administrative Office of the President. The duties and responsibilities of former Procurement Policy Unit (PPU), Contract Management Office (CMO) and the Afghanistan Reconstruction and Development Services (ARDS) have been entitled to National Procurement Authority. (Wadsam)

(4) Third Business ...

barriers for investment-The Business Tendency and the Business Bottleneck- served as the basis for discussion.

They provide information on the business climate in Kabul, Balkh, Kandahar, Nangarhar, and Herat and cover five economic sectors; manufacturing, construction, trade, services, and agriculture. The documents describe the lack of infrastructure, complex tax system, insecurity, customs problems, lack of skilled labor and the under-representation of women as main challenges for Afghan businesses. However, businesses identified recent developments such as the establishment of a one stop shop for business registration, the government's approval to issue visas on arrival for investors, and the promotion of a dispute resolution center for Afghanistan as positive steps.

The ACCI uses the surveys' results to inform the Afghan government about necessary steps and reforms for an improved business climate in Afghanistan. This way, the Afghan government can include the private sector's input in its policy making. The ACCI devised both surveys, with technical support from Germany's Sustainable Economic Development and Employment (SEDEP) program.

Over 150 participants including high-ranking officials from various Afghan ministries, such as the Ministry of Commerce and Industries (MoCI), the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation & Livestock (MAIL), the Ministry of Economy (MoEc), the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the Ministry of Interior (MoI) attended the conference. The project "Sustainable Economic Development and Employment Promotion" (SEDEP) is financed by the German government and supports various activities to strengthen businesses and create jobs in Afghanistan in the following five value chains: nuts, dairy, poultry, wheat and vegetables.

Apart from training and infrastructure development initiatives, the project also helps to establish dialogues be-

tween public and private sector actors. Farmers and government can address concerns and draft policy recommendations to improve economic opportunities. (Wadsam)

(5) Problems in...

investment in this sector.

The practice of giving contracts to relatives of government officials and the lack of details contained within articles of the law regarding contracts are some of the problems, said the network.

According to the network, currently a big chunk of revenue from the sector goes in to the pockets of a few powerful men and armed anti-government groups.

"I think the law should be amended and also it should be implemented properly. In addition to this, special attention should be paid to the executive structures and the monitoring of natural resources," Ibrahim Jafari, a member of NRMN said.

The Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA) meanwhile said the law needs to be reviewed.

"Afghanistan has lost its reputation in managing the mining sector and it can be regained through amending the law and assuring transparency in this sector," Nasir Timori, a senior researcher of IWA said.

The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum (MoMP) meanwhile said they are trying to resolve the problems and if needed, they will amend the law.

"The mining law has been amended many times and it can be amended again. If it is needed, considering the national interest, the ministry leadership team will think about the amendments," Zabilullah Sarwari, a spokesman of the ministry said.

According to the Natural Resources Monitoring Network, the Ministry of Mines in addition to amending the law, should also promote the management of mines and enhance capacity. (Tolnews)

(6) India be ...

"There are no good or bad terrorists. There should be no differentiation between Taliban and Daesh," Shaida Ahmad Abdali said in his address at the 1st Ambassadorial Lecture at Brookings, India.

He said Daesh in Afghanistan was not the same active in Iraq and Syria as the group here was of a bunch of splinter groups like the TTP and others.

"We hope we will be able to nip Daesh in the bud," the Afghan envoy said.

In the midst of the new great game being played out, he suggested, India and Afghanistan should conduct a strategic review of their bilateral regional and global partnerships to deal with the evolving uncertainties.

"The Great Game is being played again in an even more dangerous manner- one terrorist group against another."

"If one seeks solutions, sanctuaries of terrorists should be targeted," he believed.

The envoy said the US, India, Afghanistan could deal with the issue of terrorism through a trilateral initiative.

He said the Afghans were awaiting the new US administration's strategy on Afghanistan. "If we continue to use one terrorist group against another, the future is very dark."

He said state sponsorship of terrorism had become an old fact and hoped the ground reality would change

"We want India to be party to peace talks in Afghanistan," Abdali said, adding it was time for the US, India and Afghanistan to revive their trilateral dialogue.

"Asia suffers most in the great game being played out in this world. We hope that countries around the world will help Afghanistan in dealing with Daesh."

He said Afghanistan's biggest challenge was terrorism and India had contributed to every achievement Afghanistan had gained in the past 15 years. (Pajhwok)

(7) Ghani, Mattis...

"Both sides talked over bilateral relations and cooperation. They also discussed fighting terrorism, narcotics and corruption," a statement from the Presidential Palace said after the overnight meeting.

Ghani called terrorism, narcotics and corruption critical challenges to the security, stability and development of Afghanistan. Joint regional and global efforts were needed to fight terrorism, he said.

"The Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) are in the first line against terrorism and continue earnest counter-terrorism efforts with full might to ensure stability in the country, region and the world," Ghani noted.

For his part, the Pentagon chief promised that US would continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Afghan. Around 8000 US troops are part of 13,000 foreign soldiers training and assisting Afghan security forces.

At a news conference in Kabul, the visiting secretary said. "We discussed his initiative to make the government ... more responsive to all of the Afghan people, and we recognise the challenges to this government of that effort presented by enemies of the Afghan people who refused to renounce violence."

President Donald J. Trump had directed a review of US policy in Afghanistan, he said, adding "This dictates an ongoing dialogue with Afghanistan's leadership."

"And that's why I came here: to get with President Ghani and his ministers and hear directly and at length from ... General Nicholson to provide my best assessment and advice as we go forward." (Pajhwok)

(8) Kabul Makes ...

a key component of Afghanistan's fight against corruption.

The report indicated that Afghanistan was showing progress in restoring institutional control over the delivery of essential public services and management of public finances.

The report made several recommendations, recognizing that the government's ongoing anti-corruption efforts had yet to impact the lives of most Afghans.

It concludes that, notwithstanding the many legal and policy reforms that have been undertaken, corruption remains a substantial obstacle to Afghanistan's long-term peace and prosperity.

"The report serves as a stark reminder that the fight against corruption cannot be won in the short term, and that the battle requires the sustained commitment on the part of the government and the general public, and full support from the international community," said Yamamoto. (Pajhwok)

(9) Wardak Takes...

he would perform duties assigned to him with sincerity and would leave no effort at executing his duties. Wardak said even a slightest negligence in duty could bear harmful results for the nation and the government.

Wardak said his ministry was the only communication body between the government and the National Assembly for achieving big national goals and addressing the ministry's legitimate concerns.

The former education minister was appointed as the state minister for parliamentary affairs in compliance with a presidential decree and he officially took charge today.

Wardak has also served as Director of Constitutional Commission Secretariat, Director General of Office of Administrative Affairs, Cabinet secretary. He succeeded Ghulam Nabi Farahi, who held the position for two and a half years.

Meanwhile, the 2nd VP also introduced the acting defence minister and chief of army staff. A statement from the 2nd VP's office said Danish introduced Tariq Shah Bahrami as acting defence minister and Sharif Yaftali as chief of army staff.

The VP said the perpetrators of the deadly attack on the military base would be crushed. He said the Ministry of Defence should prioritize revision of defense strategy, capacity building and equipping of security forces, combating corruption, prevention of political interference in the army and nationalizing the forces.

Danish said the Afghanistan nation had always been a real supporter and advocate of security forces and the structure of security forces should also formed of tribes in all levels.

The acting defence minister and the chief of army staff also pledged to perform their responsibilities honestly towards the nation of Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(10) Noor Says...

films display in their country. Pakistan and some other countries besides refusing to recognize the Mujahideen government also made efforts to defeat them, a scenario that gave birth to the Taliban who sheltered Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups, the governor said.

"They first raised Taliban, now they have changed the white flag into a black and established fraudulent ISIS or Daesh."

He said Daesh and Taliban were the name of two brutalities and regional intelligence had imposed them on the Afghans.

"We are caught in a situation where if we fight against Taliban, some countries get up-set and if we fight against Daesh, several other states become unhappy."

"If we remain silent more people will be killed like the soldiers who were praying when they were martyred last Friday."

Noor said the Afghans were independent and they should not remain silent and combat both the terrorist groups and ensure security in their country.

He said the government should be more attentive and should come out from defensive strategy and chase the enemy and eliminate them on their motherland. (Pajhwok)

(11) Groundwater ...

endorsed the Kakar's view, saying that 95 percent of karez wells had gone dry due to the deep digging.

He said people - without permission and without any assessment - dug up deep wells in districts, where most of karez systems had dried up, damaging crops.

Saeedi urged the people to dig up the wells professionally and not to waste the precious resource. If every single person saved one litre, three million liters of water could be saved a daily, he estimated.

Arghandab Canalization Director Eng. Sher Mohammad Attaee also believed digging of deep wells had led to an acute shortage of water in districts.

Arghandab's Delhi Dam irrigated agricultural lands in seven districts of the province while the rest of farms and orchards were watered by the karez systems.

However, karez wells have gone dry because of illegitimate drilling, according to the official, who vowed to curb the practice. All drill machines would be registered with the agriculture department.

Niaz Mohammad, a grower of the Emirate village, the digging of deep wells by residents of another nearby area had pushed down the groundwater in their locality and they could not irrigate their farms.

He added the problem was shared with local officials, who promised to resolve it as soon as possible.

Abdullah Khan, an inhabitant of Maiwand district, said with the introduction of the solar energy system, the digging of deep wells had increased in the province. Farmers are irrigating their farms, using the solar power system.

The provincial police chief recently started assisting poor farmers with irrigating their lands through solar power and deep wells in Daman and Dand districts. Local officials say the wells are being dug up in a way that the groundwater level and reserves are not harmed.

Some days back, the Indian consul-general told the Kandahar governor that his country wanted to establish 300 deep wells equipped with solar power supply for the people and farmer of the province. (Pajhwok)

(12) EU, UN ...

over 37 years and for the first time it would be providing assistance in the area of counter terrorism by working closely with the relevant stakeholders at both provincial and federal levels in partnership with the European Union." (Xinhua)

(13) Some Badakhshan ...

said last year about 2070 hectares of land in 11 districts was cleared of poppy despite insecurity.

Afandi said poppy cultivation had been zero in Badakhshan in 1391-92 solar years, but farmers started growing the plant in areas ruled by Taliban.

"Security situation is good compared to past years and we plan to eradicate poppy with the help of people, religious scholars, districts heads and security forces." Sadullah Abuaman, head of Ulema Council, said poppy has no place in Islam and was not allowed and people who used drugs were burden on their families and society. "I call on all religious scholars to fight against cultivation and smuggling of drugs in Badakhshan and express the harm of drugs."

Jamal-u-Din Jahid, deputy civil police chief, said counternarcotics police seized tons of narcotics and intoxicants and destroyed eight heroin producing factories in different parts of the province last solar year.

Zaman-u-Din, a resident of Argo district, said one acre of land produced 420 to 500kg of wheat and the same land produced 14 to 28kg of opium which was not comparable to the wheat in price.

He called on the government to improve living standard of farmers and provide them alternative crops that could give enough yield. (Pajhwok)

(14) US to Engage...

we're going to have to confront Russia where what they're doing is contrary to international law."

Russia was giving machine guns and other medium-weight weapons to the Taliban, who were using the arms in Helmand, Kandahar and Uruzgan, an unnamed US official was quoted as saying on Monday

The top US military bosses leveled the allegation Russia days after a deadly Taliban attack on the Shaheen Military Corps killed more than 100 Afghan soldiers in Balkh province. (Pajhwok)

(15) Senators...

province, welcomed Hekmatyar's re-

turn and said: "The people of Afghanistan have been in search of peace and waiting for Hekmatyar's arrival since long."

He praised government efforts towards peace and stability in the country and demanded both the government and the HIA implement the peace deal in its true spirit.

Nazar Mohammad Faqiri, upper house member, also welcomed Hekmatyar's arrival in Nangarhar, and said the presence of Hekmatyar was made possible after the HIA-government deal. He asked HIA to play its role in bringing durable peace and stability to the country.

Senate's deputy chairman Mohammad Alem Ezedyar, without going into details about Hekmatyar's presence in Nangarhar, asked the government to fully implement the peace agreement with his party. (Pajhwok)

(16) US Military ...

leadership, Taliban infiltration in the ranks and high attrition and desertion rates.

Moreover, Monday's attack on a base near the northern Afghan city of Mazar-e-Sharif, which occurred as US Department of Defense Secretary James Mattis visited the country, illustrates that the central Afghan government remains ill-prepared to fight a determined and growing enemy, Soufan said.

The Defense Department has asked for 3,000 additional troops in the most recent attempt to turn around a quagmire that will only get worse in the years ahead, the report concluded. (Sputnik)

(17) 250 Policewomen...

National Police and said the academy has stepped up efforts more than any other time to provide professional training to the police cadets.

Gen. Pardeli further added that the newly graduates have already been trained for a period of six months in Turkey and the two months courses will further help to improve their grading.

According to Gen. Pardeli, the Ministry of Interior has considered promotion to those policewomen who are having Bachelors degree. (KP)

(18) Shaheen ...

one military official, who asked not to be named, said that six soldiers should have been on duty at each check point at the time. However, both check points were manned by only three soldiers each.

The attackers then reportedly drew up outside the mosque where dozens of soldiers were praying. One insurgent detonated his explosives outside the mosque.

Following the explosion, the attackers then opened fire on the soldiers inside the mosque - causing total carnage.

The attackers realized that many soldiers had taken cover inside the bathrooms, which were close to the mosque. They proceeded to the area and again opened fire on them.

According to Amiry, the shooting spree inside the mosque lasted for almost half an hour.

However, one of the attackers then detonated his explosives close to the bathrooms while other attackers started shooting soldiers hiding in nearby rooms.

The Imam's personal room in the mosque complex was also targeted and footage shows the level of destruction - so much so that part of the ceiling had caved in. (Tolnews)

(19) U.S. President...

respondents, however, approve of the president pressuring companies to keep jobs in the country and a majority views Trump as a strong leader. (Xinhua)

(20) UN Voices ...

camp in Ar-Raqqa governorate where four out of five people are staying in the open air without appropriate shelter, he said. (Xinhua)

(21) UNHCR Returns...

areas," it said. However, UNHCR said flights to Mogadishu currently facilitate the voluntary return of those willing to travel by air as well as flights to Kismayu in southern Somalia. (Xinhua)

(22) Australian Prime...

to smooth over any lingering hard feelings after the prime minister's contentious phone call with Trump on Jan. 28 over a refugee resettlement deal struck by the previous Obama administration. (AP)

(23) U.S. Imposes...

chemical weapon arsenal. U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said that with Monday's sanctions, the U.S. is sending a strong message that it would "hold the entire Assad regime accountable for these blatant human rights violations in order to deter the spread of these types of barbaric chemical weapons." (Xinhua)