

(1) Progress on ..

Progress on promote human rights in the country, particularly that of women's rights. "I hope that the situation of women and other vulnerable people in Afghanistan improves in a few years," said Rula Ghani.

The remarks were made during the 3rd Session of the Afghan Government and the European Union's High-ranking Officials on Human Rights in Kabul.

"Unfortunately the fact is that there are still serious challenges that remain when it comes to the human rights situation in Afghanistan; the situation remains difficult and in some areas progress is fragile, the key remaining areas of concern for the European Union and member states are issues within women's rights," said Mellbin.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), meetings such as this would be helpful in promoting the human rights situation in Afghanistan. Rabbani called on the EU officials to take notice of human rights violations by the Taliban and other terrorist groups in Afghanistan.

"The Taliban and other terrorist groups have been committing various war crimes in different parts of Afghanistan. Their inhumane acts of violence have been in direct violation of international human rights and humanitarian laws. Their war crimes and crimes against humanity includes unlawful punishments, persecution of identifiable groups, attacks against civilians, and destruction of places of worship and public establishments," Rabbani stated.

Rabbani went on to say that the institutionalization of human rights and women's rights in government's overall system has been one of the country's main goals. We have been striving to achieve this goal untiringly together with our national and international partners, he said.

At the gathering, Afghan and EU officials focused on a number of key issues relating to human rights such as women's rights, children's rights, imposing restrictions on Bacha Bazi, women harassment, demonstration laws, access to justice, freedom of speech, the right of living, torture law and mistreatment. (Tolonews)

(2) Chinese Companies ..

economic recovery and rapid development. He said that Afghanistan is our neighbouring country and it will be our pleasure to work on more projects there beneficial for the local public and economy.

There have been enormous business opportunities in Afghanistan and great potential which needs to be utilized, headed.

"We have been looking forward to get chance for more working on more projects for their better and prosperous future. Chinese Company keen to investing in Afghanistan, Said Donglei. (Pajhwok)

(3) 7,000 Badakhshan ...

convince the Taliban through local elders and Islamic scholars to allow the children to be vaccinated. "But there has been no response."

The public health director said another some 2,000 children under five years of age had not been administered polio drops in Raghistan and Kohistan districts in the previous campaigns. "The public health department is also trying to ensure security of vaccinators through local elders to vaccinate children in the two district."

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) on Sunday launched the third phase of the nationwide anti-polio campaign targeting 9.9 million children, including 90,000 children who were missed in previous rounds.

The ministry says two positive polio cases were recorded in Kandahar, two in Helmand, one case in Kunduz and one case in Zabul since the beginning of 2017. Last year, 13 positive cases were registered in Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(4) Number of ...

workers and volunteers to vaccinate 700,000 children under the age of five years.

Deputy Governor Mohammad Alam Ishaqzai during the campaign's launch ceremony urged religious scholars, tribal leaders and family members to cooperate with polio workers in vaccinating the children against the crippling disease.

Kamawal said children under five years of age would receive anti-polio drops and under six months would receive Vitamin-A drops during the three day drive.

He said about 700,000 children would be vaccinated by 4500 workers and volunteers. No positive polio case had been recorded in the province so far, but new cases were feared about the return of refugees.

The public health director expressed satisfaction with the expanded coverage of

the vaccination campaign in Nangarhar province.

However, the drive would not be implemented in Pankzio area of Pachiragarm, Loyi Payeen of Haska Mena district, Awghaz and Nazian district, depriving at least 10,000 children of the vaccine in these areas.

However, Kamawal said earlier up to 50,000 children were missed out in previous rounds, but their number had reduced to 10,000.

Six positive cases have been recorded in Afghanistan mostly in the east and south since the beginning of 2017. (Pajhwok)

(5) MP Warns of ...

hostile attempts are aimed at undermining the relations between Tehran and Kabul.

He also stressed the need for close cooperation between Iran and Afghanistan to counter the plots, noting that an escalation of tensions would only benefit terrorist groups and foreign powers.

As regards a surge in terrorist attacks in Afghanistan, Naqavi Hosseini called for concerted action by regional countries to combat terrorism.

He also deplored the muted response by the international community, the UN Security Council, EU, and UN Human Rights Council to a recent attack by insurgents on a village in north of Afghanistan in which a large number of civilians were slaughtered.

During the overnight attack on an Afghan village in the Mirza Olang area of Saaad district in Sar-e Pul Province last week, militants torched 30 houses and killed as many as 50 people, including children, women and elderly men, most of them members of the largely Shiite Hazara community. (Agencies)

(6) Some IEC ...

He did not provide information about the individuals, but said FEFA had requested for credentials to supervise the IEC performance about two months ago, but failed to obtain permission. That was why FEFA was unable to oversee the IEC's review of polling stations.

More than two months after the announcement of the election date, the IEC was yet to prepare the poll calendar, he said. The commission has announced holding Wolesi Jirga and district council elections on July 7, 2018.

Rashid insisted announcement of election calendar was important for political parties, civil society institutes and all people to make preparation for the upcoming democratic exercise.

Some figures had launched illegal election campaigns, but the commission had not yet prepared any procedure, he said, without giving details. He asked the IEC to launch the voters registration process using technology so all eligible people could obtain voter cards.

Insecurity is a major challenge to the smooth conduct of elections, which could be cancelled because of chaos, Rashid warned.

The IEC shared a plan for minimising electoral districts with the government about six months ago, but the authorities have yet to take a decision on it, according to the FEFA executive chief.

Mohammad Farid Afghanzai, another senior member of FEFA, accused the IEC of failing to take steps so far for building public trust and provincial offices of the commission were still inactive.

He asked the government not to interfere in IEC's internal issues. The official believed such moves would also pave the ground for meddling from others.

Meanwhile, IEC Commissioner Malihah Hassan, who was also present at the event, confirmed the commission members were being sidelined and the decisions were made by only two or three members outside the election body. But she did not provide details.

She said steps had been taken toward structural and administrative reforms of the commission. As many as 1,000 officers were employed for reviewing polling stations.

The voter list of would be prepared in October, with the commission waiting for the purchase of needed materials and technology, she added. An agreement was signed between the IEC and relevant institutions on maintaining election security. (Pajhwok)

(7) Ghani Appoints

According to the president, appointing Barmak to the post is part of the Four Year Security Plan that has been mapped out by government.

Ghani said if the new acting minister does not bring reforms to the ministry, he will not pay over the allotted budget to the ministry.

"If reforms are not made, I will not pay the budget. All those who create problems in bringing reforms in the interior ministry should hear my message clearly," said Ghani.

The president said some generals in the ministry have received their rank by putting political pressure on the ministry and emphasized that this will no

longer happen.

"It is not acceptable that an officer becomes a general within five years by exerting political pressure," Ghani added. Meanwhile, the interior ministry nominee urged the president to prevent interference in the affairs of the interior ministry so that he can fight corruption. Barmak said he will start fighting corruption by reviewing food quality, clothing and weapons for the soldiers.

"Is the food that is on the menu reaching the soldiers? Are their uniforms complete? Are there available bullets and ammunition that Afghanistan police need?" said Barmak.

Meanwhile the former interior minister, Taj Mohammad Jahid, insists on the need to bring reforms to the ministry. "Police should be professional and accountable to Afghanistan's people. The police should have counter terrorism abilities, especially in implementing the law," said Jahid.

In the past 16 years this is the first time that a person without any military background has been nominated as interior minister.

In the Four Year Security Plan, government has shifted the police mission from fighting to maintaining security.

As part of the new plan, the border and public protection police forces will join the army which means the army has to handle the war alone in the country. (Tolonews)

(8) Mirza Olang ...

cleared the area of insurgents up to here," said Mohammad, a special forces member of the police.

According to local officials, 22 Taliban and Daesh fighters have been killed in the valley in air strikes since Sunday night.

Sar-e-Pul governor, Mohammad Zahir Wahdat, said security threats in the province are very serious.

"I hope that by more forces coming in to Sar-e-Pul, government and Sar-e-Pul people will be successful," said Wahdat. Houses vacated by civilians following last week's massacre have meanwhile been turned in to military strongholds.

The Public Uprising Forces are also fighting alongside security forces to eliminate the insurgents.

Among the public uprising forces is a 65-year-old man who has taken up arms to fight the insurgents. He is bent on avenging the death of his son who was killed by insurgents following the collapse of the valley last week.

"We are with the security forces all the time and fighting alongside them against the insurgents," said Nik Mohammad, a commander of the public uprising forces.

However, some civilians are still living in the valley and are refusing to leave their homes.

"Life is going on, sometimes in war and sometimes in misery," said Assadullah, a resident of the area.

Last week Taliban and Daesh attacked the valley and killed around 50 civilians. (Tolonews)

(9) President to ...

for the returning and displaced families, according to Khogyani.

The president also authorized the governor to expedite his administrative affairs and resolve most of the issues inside the province. (Pajhwok)

(10) Agriculture Safe

managed the water resources, it would change Afghanistan into agriculture products exporting country.

He further said Afghanistan's annual water quantity reached up to 57 billion m3 besides 18 billion m3 underground water, but only 30 percent of this was utilized.

"Existence of suitable climate, plenty of water and 21 million hectares of arable lands can attract billions of dollars of investment in agriculture, but government spends only four percent of development budget on the sector."

He asked the Afghan government to increase spending on agriculture sector, improve quality and quantity of products and services and find international selling market for local products.

Muhomediev backed the construction of 21 small and medium water dams, as decided by the government. Preliminary surveys of the dams have been concluded and will be constructed in the next seven years. The dams will bring under irrigation 500,000 hectares of land will cost \$2.1 billion

"For strengthening national economy and investment in agriculture in Afghanistan, the government should prioritize the sector and try to attract national and international investors' attention." Muhomediev said UNFOA organized a day-long workshop in Kabul a few weeks ago, with 54 people from 45 companies in attendance, to draw the government's attention to the private sector's investment in agriculture.

He said the participants were mainly heads or executives of Afghanistan based companies already registered with FAO Afghanistan. But the compa-

nies were not registered with the United Nations Global Marketplace (UNGM). Muhomediev added the event in Kabul was attended by heads of companies or executives from provinces including Kabul, Kandahar, Baghlan, Jawzjan, Nangarhar, Bamyan, Paktia, Balkh and Badghis.

The FAO official said only one female attended the workshop in Kabul and but FAO would focus more on women's participation in doing business.

According to Muhomediev, through the workshop, 45 local companies will be able to do business in more effective way and believed they will improve their capacities to better operate and serve clients from other countries.

"The purpose of this workshop was to draw attention of national and international investors to invest in agriculture sector." (Pajhwok)

(11) Pakistan 70th ...

of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, Iqbal Zafar Jhagra, who was the chief guest of the ceremony, and Ambassador Zahid Nasrullah Khan.

Pakistan envoy Zahid Nasrullah Khan welcoming the Special Guest, Governor Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, Iqbal Zafar Jhagra, impressed upon the Embassy officials and members of the armed forces that Pakistan has made unprecedented progress in a short span of 70 years and a bright future awaits the country. The Ambassador read out the messages of the President and Prime Minister which were received with applause by the audience.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, said that Pakistan had made remarkable progress during the last seventy years in the fields of education, defence and science and technology. He congratulated the participants and the people of Pakistan on the 70th Independence Day Anniversary of Pakistan. He underlined the need for closer cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan, saying that Afghanistan is very important neighbor of Pakistan. He paid rich tribute to the security forces of Pakistan who have offered immense sacrifices against the war on terrorism. (PR)

(12) 'US Campaign...

since the US Army [campaign] there has come to nothing, let them leave Afghanistan," Kabulov said.

"The American campaign in Afghanistan has failed. Afghanistan risks becoming a global incubator of international terrorism. It has, in fact, already partially grown to become it," Kabulov added.

Russia strongly opposes the American idea to replace the regular US Army in Afghanistan with military contractors.

"The US is in despair, and plans to replace the professional armed forces with mercenaries are stupid. It will not lead to anything good: mercenaries will simply break into a run. They recruit them from around the world, offering cash. How are they going to fight against the Taliban?" the diplomat wondered.

The US Department of Defense has spent more than \$76 billion on weapons and equipment for the Afghan security forces since 2002, the US Government Accountability Office said last week.

Washington has paid for 600,000 weapons, including rifles and pistols, for the Afghan Army and police, the GAO report, released on Thursday, said.

The key equipment provided included 163,000 tactical and non-tactical radios; 76,000 vehicles, such as Humvees; 30,000 equipment items for disposing of explosives, such as bomb disposal robots; and 16,000 equipment items for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, such as unmanned surveillance drones, just to name a handful.

The report came as President Donald Trump said he is "very close" to announcing a new strategy on Afghanistan.

"It's a very big decision for me," he told reporters in Bedminster on Thursday. "I took over a mess," Trump said, "and we're going to make it a lot less messy," he added. (RT)

(13) Operation Launched...

in the district but are still three kilometers from the district center.

Local officials said that one of the biggest challenges for security forces was the number of IEDs that were planted by the Taliban.

Provincial police chief Toryalai Abdiyani said he requested airstrikes on a number of occasions but nothing was forthcoming.

Local officials said that casualties have been sustained by both security forces and the Taliban but they did not give details.

Provincial governor Shamim Katawazai said that the operation will continue until the district has been cleared of Taliban.

Last week, local officials said the lack of sufficient security forces led to the collapse of the strategic district. They called on the central government, particularly

the Ministry of Interior (MoI), to address the shortage of police in the volatile region.

Janikhail district is located 150 kilometers to the west of the provincial capital Gardez City. It shares a border with Kurram Agency and Parachinar regions across the Durand Line - the disputed border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. (Tolonews)

(14) Kabul Girls ..

complexity of the game and the Iranian team was also unable to obtain enough scores for their victory.

At the end, Rabia and Nadia, members of Team No (1) of Kabul won first position and Team No (1) of Nangarhar and Team No (2) of Kabul won second position.

Hamid said the winner team would also compete in international juggling competitions to be held in 2020.

Juggling came into practice in Afghanistan in 2002 and was registered as a formal sport with the Afghanistan Olympic Committee earlier this solar year.

Nadia, 15, told Pajhwok she was happy for winning the first position in the tournament.

She said she had been exercising juggling for three years in the lead-up to the tournament. Nadia would also play in international games to win laurels for her country. (Pajhwok)

(15) Ministry under ..

roads," said a Kandahar resident, Hamid.

Public works ministry argues however that work will start soon, once the surveyors are finished and procurement has been completed.

"The passengers are complaining hugely about the road condition along the Kabul-Kandahar highway," said Salim, a motorist.

Statistics show that Kabul-Kandahar, Salang and Kabul-Jalalabad highways are among the key transport routes in the country, and at least 30 percent of these roads are badly damaged.

"The climate also affects road construction; we always said that the previous leadership of public works failed to address the issue, but now this has become a reality," said Nazir Nejrabi, a road construction expert.

"With consideration of time, we have three or four months to do this, we have received our budget and repairs have started on the Kabul-Jalalabad highway; 70 percent of work has been completed on the 50 km stretch of road there. We in our department at the ministry of public works have done what we were asked to do," said Mahdi Rohani, spokesman for the MoPW. (Tolonews)

(16) Hundreds of ...

"There is no rich or poor among them, they are all left with only the clothes on their bodies and they left everything behind," said Mohammad Zahir Wahdat, the provincial governor.

He noted that all the displaced people are in dire need of help, and that assistance given so far has not been enough.

The resident's only request at the moment is that government must identify and arrest those who neglected to defend Mirza Olang valley which led to the killing of villagers.

Mirza Olang valley fell to militants earlier on Saturday.

The Sar-e-Pul governor said the Taliban and Daesh have committed crimes against humanity following the collapse of the valley.

According to Wahdat, the insurgents shot dead 52 civilians and 471 families were forced to leave their houses in the valley.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack but the Taliban in a statement rejected killing the civilians.

The attack in Mirza Olang sparked an outcry among Afghans over the brutality of the insurgents against the innocent villagers. (Tolonews)

(17) Gunmen Attack ...

frequently sparked outrage among residents.

"They attacked the check post at night and killed three people, security threats have increased," said Haroon, an eyewitness.

"We were stuck inside the shop, the security situation was critical as it was dark," said a resident of Qargha Romal. "We confirm the incident, we lost three officers in the incident," said Mohammad Salim Ehas, commander of Kabul police headquarter.

Kabul as the capital of Afghanistan has been grappling with a wave of attacks over recent years.

Residents in the city have always accused security officials of failing to fix the security situations.

"We want security from the government, there are few businesses and jobs due to insecurity," said Kabul resident Abdul Hadi. "Government should step up efforts to ensure security in the city, because people and their families come here on picnic," said another resident Amir. (Tolonews)