

(1) Kabul-Delhi ...

Ghani thanked India for assistance, saying Kabul-Delhi relations would never come under strain as they remained committed to working for peace, stability, counter-terrorism and extremism.

He said it was the historic responsibility of governments to work for the peace stability of their countries, end violence and conflicts and strive for the development and happiness of their people.

The president said those defying nature believed in bias and prejudice, and fuelled violence. But they would find no way out of people's wrath, Ghani remarked.

Ghani said: "We [Afghanistan and India] have decided to make our friendship abiding and utilise all our resources for the development and prosperity of our two nations."

About the rehabilitation work, the president said Afghanistan's history of diplomacy and foreign relations had been revived with the reconstruction of the magnificent facility.

The Storai Palace had been constructed during the government of Amir Habibullah Khan. Its walls developed cracks with the passage of time and as a result of decades of war.

Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani said: "We have witnessed the historic inauguration of this building after its rehabilitation." He called the structure a symbol of Afghanistan's foreign policy objectives.

"The building was damaged in recent decades due the lack of proper maintenance. It has been rehabilitated with the assistance of the Indian government," the minister said. (Pajhwok)

(2) Afghan-Pakistan ...

for the drop in trade. A reduction in buying power on Pakistan markets and low quality products were also cited as reasons.

"There are problems and one of the reasons that our trade has decreased is that there is no interest from the private sector to do business with Pakistan and therefore we think that this year the level of our business with Pakistan will not reach (the projected) \$1 billion USD," said ACCI deputy Khan Jan Alokozai.

Meanwhile Mosafer Qoqandi, spokesperson for the ministry for commerce and industry, acknowledged there had been a decrease in trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan and added that by utilizing the Lajaward (Lapis) routes, which connects Afghanistan with Europe, Afghanistan's dependence on Pakistan will end.

"Without a doubt our imports from Pakistan have decreased because we are looking for alternate import and export routes," said Qoqandi.

On the other hand a number of owners of Afghan industries said that if government provides the necessary support, a large quantity of imported goods can be produced in the country. "There are lots of problems and if our problems are solved we are able to increase our products and if we get enough support we would be able to meet the country's requirements," said head of Industries Association Sakhi Paiman.

These comments come after Pakistan once again closed the border at Chaman in Spin Boldak in Kandahar Province of Afghanistan.

According to ACCI officials hundreds of trucks have been stuck at the border crossing for the past four days. (Tolonews)

(3) Ghani, Abdullah ...

The Abdullah-Ghani issue emerged at a critical juncture for Afghanistan – while battle-weary Afghan security forces continue to fight a resurgent Taliban on multiple fronts across the nation.

He added: "Our soldiers will never lose our support. They have the full support of the nation."

Military experts last week warned that the rift could undermine the fight against the insurgents.

Political commentators have constantly said that there would be repercussions for the country unless the two officials step up efforts to resolve their disputes swiftly amid the ongoing battles.

"They don't [NUG leaders] have the right to have rift between each other, because this system has been established by the sacrifice of thousands of people," said political commentator Mohammad Omar Ayar. (Tolonews)

(4) CEO Meets...

government appointed a special commission to tackle the problem but to date no outcome has been achieved, said businessmen.

"Our first demand from government leaders is to put aside their disputes and focus on security. If they continue their dispute, they will not be able to provide us with sufficient security," said Haji Zeerak, spokesman for the Kabul International Market.

This comes amid growing concern among the business community over the sharp increase in crime, particularly that of kidnappings.

Two weeks ago, unknown armed men abducted two foreign professors who are employed by the American University of Afghanistan. They were kidnapped in Darul Aman road.

In addition dozens of Afghan businessmen and or their family members have been kidnapped in recent months – the latest being the son of a Kabul businessman who was abducted on Monday.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) has directed Kabul police headquarters to prioritize its war against crime in the capital.

"We need to boost our capacity in order to combat criminal cases or prevent them," said Sediq Sediqqi, spokesman for the MoI.

Earlier this month, the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI) said that in the past two months, 45 investors and businessmen had been either murdered, kidnapped or robbed around the country.

Most of the cases were recorded in Kabul, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif and Kandahar. (Tolonews)

(5) ERC Skeptical ...

some problems," ERC chief Shah Sultan Akefi said.

Based on the government's draft plan, all provinces will be divided into several constituencies, however only one candidate will make his way to parliament from amongst these constituencies.

"It is a good plan and it can help overcome issues we witnessed during the previous parliamentary elections in Ghazni, but holding elections in a single-seat method will create tumult; the election commission is not prepared and it is not implementable with the current capacity of the election commission," said Jan Dad Spinghar, head of Afghanistan Civil Society Election Network (ACSEN).

"Single-seat elections will isolate elections in the country, monopolizing the elections will not benefit anyone," MP Fatima Aziz said.

Currently there are 249 seats in parliament. Undertaking systematic reforms in Afghanistan's election law remains an important part of the political agreement between President Ashraf Ghani and his Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah. However the demands of the Afghan people and international community regarding the election reforms are yet to be met by government. (Tolonews)

(6) Fierce Fighting... area, told Pajhwok Afghan News the Taliban and security forces were engaged in fighting in Aurozbachara. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, claiming the district's capture, said a large number of security officials had been killed and wounded and dozens of vehicles snatched.

Earlier, Taimur had said the Taliban captured the police headquarters, main bazaar and other government building as a result of a coordinated group attack on Sunday night. He added the militants in Humvees attacked the district with heavy weapons captured from security forces in the Dasht-i-Archi district of neighbouring Kunduz province. (Pajhwok)

(7) Taliban Suffers ... troops in the area and said they have driven insurgents back from the district, especially in the Pul-e-Kokcha area. He said security forces are advancing and that "currently the clash is ongoing in Qoroq village between the Taliban and security forces."

"The forces will move forward until (they get to) Dasht-e-Archi of Kunduz [province which borders Takhar]," he said.

The insurgents suffered heavy casualties but so far the exact number of casualties is not clear but bodies of six insurgents remain on the ground (in Pul-e-Kokcha)," he said.

Four security force members were however also killed including two of Zia's bodyguards. Seven other security force members, including another two of Zia's bodyguards, were wounded, he added.

However officials have confirmed that reinforcement troops have arrived from the provincial capital Taloqan.

This comes amid the Taliban's upswing in violence in neighboring Kunduz province in the past week. (Tolonews)

(8) Helmand, ... more areas and they would probably increase their attacks in the coming months, he said.

Cleveland, however, said the Resolute Support mission was trying to improve leadership abilities of the Afghan forces for better performance.

About the Islamic State (IS) or Daesh group, he said, the had previously

3,000 affiliates whose strength had now reduced to 1,500 as a result of massive operation by Afghan forces. (Pajhwok)

(9) Economic....

proper infrastructure in rural areas. However, unemployment and security threats are said to be the main reasons for the economic downturn in villages.

Unconfirmed statistics show that currently nearly 80 percent of villagers have little or no income.

"The situation is not good, our economy is very weak, we do not harvest good crops these days due to certain reasons," said Bulbul Shah, a villager in Paghman.

"Our agricultural lands were destroyed after the invasion of the Russians, also there is not enough water for irrigation," another farmer Ekramuddin said.

The low income, nonexistent economic development projects, few health facilities, poor education facilities and the lack of power and clean drinking water are among their challenges, say villagers.

Earlier this month, the Afghan Ministry of Urban Development and Rural Rehabilitation said it is undertaking new programs that aim to create job opportunities for villagers.

The ministry said that on the basis of the plan, \$1 billion USD will be invested in various sectors in the provinces.

"The citizen consolidation program will help to create short term and long term job opportunities for villagers; one of the specialties of the program is that it will help provide social services to the people in villages," said deputy minister of urban development and rural rehabilitation Ahmad Shaheer Shahriar. (Tolonews)

(10) No Projects...

of Laghman. The provincial public health director and representatives of donor organizations presented their reports about the polio vaccination and shared their suggestions on how to make the vaccination drive more effective.

Zwak said most of the children in Alingar district had been denied polio drops. He quoted Naemi as warning elders and other influential individuals of depriving their areas of development projects if they did not cooperate with polio workers.

The governor tasked the public health director and his team with ensuring health services' provision across Laghman and administering polio drops to children. Naemi said those creating problems for vaccination campaigns were in fact endangering lives of their children who were future builders of the country. (Pajhwok)

(11) Kunduz City ... He said: "US troops also launched air operations on Sunday night in Anwar Tapa village of Aliabad districts in which four insurgents were killed and two others were injured."

"The air forces also bombed Koch-e-Qazaq and Marzaq villages of Aliabad in which 22 insurgents were killed. Among those dead are Qari Nasir and Qari Omar, two Taliban commanders," he added.

Tariq Majidi, another TOLONews reporter who is also close to Kunduz city, said reports indicate that Taliban insurgents have again blown up the remaining 300-meter Alchin Bridge which connects Kunduz city with Imam Sahib and Dasht-e-Archi districts as well as with the Sher Khan Port.

The insurgents blew up one section of the bridge on Saturday. Majidi said the Taliban detonated explosives on the bridge to prevent reinforcement troops from entering the besieged area.

He also said that local residents are trapped on the battle fields as highways out of the area have been cut off by insurgents.

The Taliban increased their attacks on Saturday when they stormed Khanabad and took control of the district for a few hours early in the day. However security forces regained control later in the day once reinforcements arrived.

On Sunday, Deputy Chief of Army Staff Gen. Murad Ali Murad, who is leading operations in Kunduz against the Taliban, said that eliminating and suppressing the insurgent group in the province is their top priority.

He said operations in Kunduz have been launched on a number of fronts. But local security officials said early Monday, on condition of anonymity, that "so far there is no plan for the Kunduz war and security forces are still in a defensive role."

Meanwhile, on Sunday numerous soldiers said the lack of coordination between security forces was the main reason for Khanabad falling to the Taliban.

According to them, they have been

fighting Taliban for days – with no coordination among themselves.

The soldiers blasted government for not providing them with enough ammunition and food and said the lack of coordination among the different security branches was the reason for the growing problem.

On Sunday, the Defense Minister, Abdullah Khan Habibi also visited Kunduz and said a large-scale operation would soon be launched in the province. (Tolonews)

(12) AIA Warns

all the workers would lose their jobs if their problem was not resolved. The association in a resolution letter said: "If the 25 percent increase in the power tariff is not reversed, industrialists would not pay their bills. We also want tax fines of the previous year to be written off."

The AIA said industrialists would stage protests if their demands were paid no attention and close their factories if their protests were ignored by the government. The government would then be responsible for any consequences stemming from the factories' closure.

The AIA head said DABS had started cutting power connections of defaulting factories. Electricity to most of the factories would probably be cut off over the next few days, Payman said. DABS spokesman Wahidullah Tawhidi told Pajhwok Afghan News the 25 percent increase in power price would not be withdrawn until the value of the afgani increased again.

"DABS purchase electricity in US dollars, we cannot afford losses, the increase in power price is applied on all people equally," he said.

Tawhidi confirmed DABS had started cutting off electricity to consumers refusing to clear their arrears of the current and previous years. (Pajhwok)

(13) Unregistered ... In the last four weeks, around 60,000 unregistered refugees have returned from Pakistan to Afghanistan, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) – a sudden increase in repatriation. The returnees do not receive the same support as registered refugees do upon return.

"It is heart-breaking to see the situation some of the families are living in. Children appear visibly malnourished and families are lacking clean drinking water, shelter and sanitation facilities," said NRC's Protection and Advocacy Adviser Will Carter, after visiting areas in eastern Afghanistan.

A grandfather he spoke with in Behsud district had just returned with his family: "My family arrived four days ago with nowhere to go, but found this compound that we share with three other families. There are 35 of us together, sleeping mostly in the open, with no drinking water close by. We don't know what to do, and have no money."

Between 8 and 14 August, an average of more than 2,600 undocumented Afghans returned daily, according to figures from the Afghan Directorate of Refugees and Repatriation and IOM. More than two thirds of the people coming are children. There are estimated to be over a million unregistered Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

"The number of people returning has increased rapidly during the last weeks, and we fear that the crisis we are currently witnessing could only be the tip of the iceberg," said Carter. (Pajhwok)

(14) Baghlan-Kunduz ... area, said insurgents have created check posts along the key route and are stopping everyone travelling through the area.

He said the insurgents searching motorists, passengers and pedestrians in order to make sure no security force members get through their blockade to Kunduz city.

Local officials have confirmed the Taliban has created check posts in the Aliabad district, which is close to Kunduz city, and are searching all vehicles and people.

In addition to this, the Taliban also destroyed the key Alchin Bridge which links Kunduz city with Shir Khan Bandar, Imam Sahib, Dasht-e-Archi and Qala-e-Zal districts of the province.

But Shirzai Hamid, TOLONews' reporter in Baghlan, said people are now avoiding the highway and using informal tracks to get in and out of Kunduz city.

He said insurgents are searching "all motorists, all people, (and even checking) their shoes and IDs to prevent government employees, especially security forces, from entering the city."

Highways, including the Kunduz-Baghlan route and the Khanabad road have seen a sharp drop in security in the past week after the Taliban increased their attacks in the surrounding areas.

Early Saturday, the insurgents attacked Khanabad and took control of

the district for several hours but were eventually driven back by security forces.

TOLONews correspondents report that currently security forces are in clashes with Taliban insurgents in Aliabad, Khanabad districts and on the outskirts of Kunduz city.

Sediqqi Sediqqi, a spokesman for the Interior Ministry, on Monday confirmed clashes were ongoing and but said "there are enough troops in Kunduz city and (in districts) fighting the insurgents."

Sediqqi also said the US air force carried out strikes in some parts of Aliabad in which 22 insurgents were killed. Among those dead are Qari Nasir and Qari Omar, two Taliban commanders. (Tolonews)

(15) Special Forces... insurgents, including the Taliban's financial head for Baghlan, were arrested.

The operation was conducted by special forces in Ahmadzayeha area of Dand-e-Ghori. No civilian or security force casualties were recorded during the raid, said Provincial Governor Abdul Star Barez.

"The operation was launched in an area which was a key center for the Taliban," he said adding that the insurgents were using this base to carry out threats in other parts of the province.

He said that special forces also destroyed six Ranger vehicles stolen off security forces by insurgents recently – along with a weapons cache. (Tolonews)

(16) Insurgents ... Afghanistan. He believed the loss had prompted Pakistan to damage the Alchin Bridge through Taliban.

Another cement trader in Kunduz, Sher Ahmad, said he was selling around 2,000 bags of cement imported from Tajikistan on a daily basis. He said Pakistani cements would once again be imported if the bridge was not reconstructed immediately.

On the other hand, the Taliban militants claimed three of their associates had been killed in a US airstrike on a hideout at the Alchin Bridge. (Pajhwok)

(17) Family ... education in order to do service to the country in future."

He said his father was a local Taliban commander who spearheaded a 10-member group. After the killing of his father, no one extended them support, he said, adding he and his brothers used to study half day and work the remaining half.

In a bid to mitigate their economic problems, Ahmad tried to get a martyrdom car in his father name, but failed.

"Someone informed the government that I am the son of a Talib so the government did not issue me a card," he said.

To a question, he said his father supported education for both boys and girls and had never created hurdles to reconstruction projects.

Nisar Ahmad said they were still in dire straits and the government should provide them assistance.

He said their father was with the Taliban, but they wanted to get education and serve the country.

His mother, Sakina, told Pajhwok Afghan News that her husband had a carpentry shop in Pul-i-Alam's Porak bazaar.

She said her husband had enough income from the shop and they lived a comfortable life. "I did not know my husband was a Taliban commander as well beside a carpenter."

"It was 10th of Ramadan. After breaking the fast, my husband would go to the mosque for Tarawih prayers. On that night at about 10pm, an armed clash erupted. We could hear heavy and light weapons fire, I thought my spouse is stranded inside the mosque, I did not know he was engaged in the battle."

Her husband did not arrive home until morning when it appeared he had been killed along with 10 others in last night clash, Sakina said.

"God may save everyone from hardships, poverty and problems I went through after my husband's death." Sakina said all her children went to school and she was hopeful one day her children would be able to serve the country.

"I have two cows that give milk which I convert into yogurt for sale in the bazaar by my children. The income from yogurt enables us to have a hand-to-mouth living. (Pajhwok)

(18) Taliban's ... restive Kunduz province.

The group briefly captured the control of key Khanabad district two days ago while the control of Qala-e-Zal was taken by the group on Sunday.

Heavy clashes still continue in parts of Kunduz province as well as the north-eastern Takhar province where the group overrun Khwajah Ghar district

in the early hours of Monday morning. (KP)

(19) ANA Casualties...

were martyred during counter-terrorism operations against the internal and foreign terrorists.

According to a statement by MoD, the soldiers lost their lives as they clashed with the militants in northern, eastern, and southern parts of the country.

This comes as MoD said Sunday at least 13 Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers lost their lives in fight against the terrorist groups in the past 24 hours.

The Afghan force are facing a resurgent Taliban and deteriorating security situation since they assumed full charge of the security responsibilities at the start of last year. (KP)

(20) Rebels Behead ... official, who wished to go unnamed, named the beheaded student as Khair Mohammad and working for the Afghan National Army (ANA)

Separately, four people, including a minor girl, were wounded when mortar shells landed in Sherin Tagabdistrict centre. Gharik confirmed the incident. The shells were fired at around 10:00am, a security official said. (Pajhwok)

(21) 1 Child Killed... and a Kalashnikov in Qush Tapa district on Sunday night.

However, a Taliban spokesman said only one ALP member along with a ranger pick-up and three Kalashnikovs had joined them. He identified the defecting ALP member as Salim. (Pajhwok)

(22) 4 Prominent... launched a coordinated attack on Hesarak district earlier this week but the security officials said the attack was repulsed by the Afghan forces. (KP)

(23) Kerry Says ... Iranian lawmakers.

Last week long-range Russian Tu-polev-22M3 bombers and Sukhoi-34 fighter bombers used Nojeh air base, near the city of Hamadan, in north-west Iran to launch air strikes against armed groups in Syria.

In his first comments on Russia's use of the base, Kerry said: "You'll have to ask the Iranians and the Russians why they made whatever decision they made to something I'm not sure anybody had admitted previously was in fact going on." (Reuters)

(24) Putin Ready... Moscow to carry out direct talks to find a solution and solve the issue," Sisi said.

"I see that the conviction of the importance of peace is rising among the Israeli side, and the conviction about finding an exit to the issue is a positive sign. (AFP)

(25) Germans will... year – has sparked fears among many Germans that terrorists have entered the country under the guise of seeking asylum.

Further details about Germany's civil-defense strategy will be released on Wednesday, DW says, adding that its release comes amid "a raft of new security measures in the country." (Agencies)

(26) Japan to ... by the cabinet on Wednesday before submitted to an extraordinary Diet session to be convened next month.

The supplementary budget comes following Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's cabinet approved earlier this month a stimulus package worth about 28 trillion yen in a bid to shore up the world's third-largest economy that has been flagging. (Xinhua)

(27) Japan Wants ... The East African nation is also expected to push for direct flights between Tokyo and Nairobi to boost its exports to the Asian nation. (Xinhua)

(28) S.Korea and ... come just days after Seoul announced that Thae Yong Ho, No. 2 at the North's embassy in London, had recently defected to South Korea because he was disillusioned with the North's leadership. Pyongyang's state media called him "human scum" and a criminal who had been ordered home for a series of alleged criminal acts, including sexually assaulting a minor. (Agencies)

(29) France Destroys... latest strikes "contribute to preparing fighting to take back Mosul in Iraq and Raqqa in Syria," the ministry said.

In a previous interview with French radio, the Defense Minister Jean Yves Le Drian said the international coalition fighting IS insurgents aimed to retake Mosul in Iraq and Raqqa in Syria by end of the year. (Xinhua)