

### (1) Hekmatyar Urges ...

been insisting that Pakistan harbors the anti-government armed militants, specifically the Taliban and Haqqani network leaders who are planning and coordinating attacks in Afghanistan.

Pakistan has long feared regarding the role of its arch rival India in Afghanistan and often blames the country for using the Afghan soil to plan attacks inside the Pakistani soil. (KP)

### (2) Ghani Exempts...

strengthening them.

The decree says: "In accordance with the Article 12th of the Income Tax Law, media outlets that have so far not paid their taxes, should pay the charges in monthly installments during a maximum time of seven years."

Based on the order, previous tax fines and tax installments of such institutes have been written off.

Sidiqullah Tawhidi, the Afghan Journalists Safety Committee (AJSC) representative, thanked the president for resolving a huge problem of media outlets.

Tawhidi said currently 672 cases of violence against journalists were under investigation and of the cases 172 belonged to the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the rest to the Attorney General's Office (AGO). From the first day of January this year, about 75 cases of violence against journalists had been recorded till date, he added.

"We pay taxes to the government, but we don't receive benefits of retirement and insurance. While our work at government organizations is not counted as experience or job career for journalists."

President Ghani after listening the demands and suggestions of media representatives said: "We and you have changed the negative discussion into a constructive debate."

Ghani said the freedom of expression was more valuable than money and added: "If there is a need for amendments to the Income Tax Law, I'm ready to sign it."

He said the current freedom of expression in Afghanistan was not a gift from anyone but it was achieved with efforts spanning one hundred years.

He said the unity government paid serious attention to investigative journalism. He directed the Ministry of Information and Culture (MoIC) to consider two to four awards for investigative journalism in order to pave the way for a fair competition. He said the unity government had the political will to investigate cases of violence against journalists, saying investigations would be carried out fundamentally and in accordance with the law. "No one is above the law."

He ordered government officials, especially governors, to avoid misbehaving with journalists, adding they should be respected and their threatening was 'unacceptable'.

He also asked the media to act 'conscientiously'. About hiring female reporters at government institutions, the president said the Presidential Palace and all ministries should provide proper job opportunities to them.

The president directed the minister of finance, who was present at the meeting, to gather up suggestions offered by the present media outlets and convert them into an appropriate scheme. (Pajhwok)

### (3) Chinese Special ...

In this regard, he said Pakistan's efforts towards eliminating the scourge of terrorism should be fully recognized by the international community.

The Foreign Secretary, while underlining the importance of Pakistan-China strategic partnership, emphasized the need of close cooperation and coordination between the two countries for promoting the shared objective of peace and stability in the region. In this regard, she expressed satisfaction at the productive deliberations held between the two sides during her recent visit to Beijing from 21-23 August 2017.

They agreed to strengthen cooperation in the ongoing efforts for facilitating peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan as well as promoting meaningful engagement between the three neighbouring countries. (PR)

### (4) Taliban Suicide

At the site of the blast, debris and twisted metal lay scattered on the pavement. The front side of the bank was completely shattered and there was much damage to the fronts of several adjacent businesses. A charred motorcycle with its parts mangled lay on the street.

Along with the five killed, the attack also wounded nine, said Mohammad Salim Rasouli, chief of Kabul hospitals at the Health Ministry. He warned that those were only initial reports and that the casualty toll could rise further.

The bomber had walked up to the bank and was about to go through the security check and enter the bank, an Afghan official told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media. Apparently realizing he would not pass the body check, he detonated his explosives vest just outside the door, the official added. Sayed Jan, a government employee who

was waiting in line with colleagues to get his salary said he didn't realize immediately what was happening.

"When I came out (of the bank), I suddenly saw police opening fire, I was confused about what was happening," he said. "I saw my friends running away."

Two of his friends were among the nine wounded in the attack, he added.

Zabihullah Mujahid, a Taliban spokesman, posted the insurgents' claim of responsibility on his twitter account, saying that a Taliban suicide bomber targeted military personnel who had gathered at the Kabul Bank to collect their salaries ahead of the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha.

The Taliban often target banks, especially at the end of the month when civil servants and military personnel line up to receive their salaries, or ahead of major Muslim holidays.

This week, the Kabul banks have been especially crowded as Muslims prepare for Eid al-Adha or 'feast of the sacrifice.' It's the most important Islamic holiday that commemorates the willingness of the Prophet Ibrahim - also known as Abraham to Christians and Jews - to sacrifice his son before God stayed his hand.

During the holiday, Muslims slaughter livestock, distributing part of the meat to the poor. The holiday begins on the 10th day of the Islamic lunar month of Dhul-Hijja, during the hajj pilgrimage.

Two months ago, ahead of the Eid al-Fitr Muslim holiday, a Taliban suicide bomber targeted a Kabul Bank branch in southern Helmand province, killing at least 29 people, mostly civilians. At the time, the Taliban claimed there were no civilian deaths and said they had only targeted members of the Afghan security forces who had gone to the bank to collect their salaries.

Kabul has also seen a sharp increase in attacks lately.

Last week, 28 people, including women and children, were killed when Islamic State militants attacked a Shiite mosque during Friday prayers. In that attack, which went on for hours, more than 50 people were also wounded after two assailants blew themselves up. Another two attackers were shot dead by Afghan security forces. In the Herat airstrike, at least 13 civilians, including women and children, were killed as Afghan security forces targeted the Taliban in western province, according to Gelani Farhad, spokesman for the provincial governor.

Farhad told The Associated Press that the Monday night strike in Shindand district also wounded seven civilians. A Taliban base and a prison run by the insurgents were targeted, he said. The prison was destroyed and 19 prisoners - both military and civilians escaped. The civilians who were killed died in their homes just next to the Taliban base, he added.

According to the spokesman, the airstrikes also killed 16 Taliban militants. The Taliban have not commented on the Herat attack and Farhad's information could not be independently verified. (AP)

### (5) Allies will be..

NATO forces would be in Afghanistan, but indicated that the 16-year war, America's longest, was set to last.

"This is not the fight of a decade, much less a few years," he said. "We are engaged in a generational struggle. That is why we need sustained commitments that are sustainable. I believe that this is a sustainable sustained commitment," he said.

Petraeus declined to say whether President Donald Trump or members of the administration, including General HR McMaster, the national security adviser, had sought his opinion in devising their new strategy for Afghanistan and the rest of south Asia, The Times stated.

However, he was supportive of the policy, which is expected to mean that an additional 3,900 American forces would be deployed.

This would take the total number of troops in the country to 12,300.

Petraeus meanwhile welcomed the absence of an "artificial deadline" for the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, The Times reported adding that he directed veiled criticism towards the former Obama administration for constraining commanders by setting exit timelines. "I applaud the commitment to conditions-based decision-making," he said. (Tolnews)

### (6) Kabul Firm on ...

corruption monitoring groups argue that the government has failed to take solid action against graft.

Based on the assessments, the anti-corruption campaign in Afghanistan has faced setbacks, an official from the Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA) said.

"We are witnessing a dramatic surge in corruption in the lower levels, for instance corruption at a province level, corruption in the ministry of education, ministry of health and ministry of interior, our assessment shows a 40 percent increase in graft in these areas," said IWA researcher Naser Taimori.

In July 2016, President Ashraf Ghani signed a decree establishing the Anti-corruption Criminal Justice Center (ACJC) in Kabul to tackle high-level corruption cases. The center includes specialized police, prosecution units and courts that are designed

to be independent from political and other pressure in detecting, investigating and prosecuting corruption.

Although the establishment of the anti-corruption justice center raised hopes among Afghans that corrupt officials would be brought to justice and the stolen wealth of the nation would be recuperated, little has been done.

Corruption monitoring groups say that the new center does not have the capacity to fight the trend from a wider national platform.

"War against corruption remains a top program of the Afghan government," said AGO spokesman Jamshid Rasuli.

Trump's new war strategy for Afghanistan was widely welcomed by the Afghan political leadership.

In a message after the announcement, Ghani said that the new strategy removes all kinds of doubt and confusion regarding Afghanistan and a clear path has been mapped out for the future, but keeping in mind that Afghanistan has also a number of responsibilities to act upon within the framework of the new strategy.

On August 22 Trump outlined a revised vision for the US war in Afghanistan, pledging to end a strategy of "nation-building" and instead announced a policy aimed more squarely at addressing the terrorist threat that emanates from the region.

In the new strategy the Trump administration calls for the Afghan government to work on areas that includes good governance, war against corruption, nation-building process and strengthening democracy and democratic institutions. (Tolnews)

### (7) HIA Reacts at ...

against the latest upheavals, mainly involving the heated exchange of words between the two prominent political parties.

Speaking during a gathering in northern Samangan province, Noor called on Hekmatyar to return to the original place from where he has returned, pointing towards the caves once used by the militants and militant leaders to hide during the conflict. (KP)

### (8) 319 Police...

He promised early solution to issues at the police training centre, saying: "The MoI is making efforts to increase the number of policewomen and providing them facilities."

Jamila, who graduated from the training centre's health sector, said she was content with good behavior of her teachers at the training centre. However, she complained about lack of accommodation facilities at the centre.

Jamila, who held a midwifery degree, said: "There is no housing facility at the centre to stay for night; I was obliged to come from Paghman district every day."

Mohammad Ashraf, who graduated from the Islamic Shariah department of the training centre, asked the Afghan youth to join police and protect the countrymen. He also asked the government to take serious security measures for their dispatch to insecure provinces. (Pajhwok)

### (9) Security Tightened...

environment. He urged the people to cooperate with the security forces in their respective areas.

Mohammad Rahim, a resident of Kunduz City, the provincial capital, said it was a pleasure that the security forces had taken serious steps ahead of Eid.

All vehicles were being checked as part of the security measures, he said, urging the people to cooperate with the security forces during Eid holidays.

But Sharif, another resident of Kunduz, recalled after the Eid last year, the security situation has sharply deteriorated. "The Taliban had launched attacks on the city, which led to its fall. I hope this won't happen again."

On the other hand, the police chief said the militants were unable to attack the city again. The security organs were fully alert to deal with any eventuality, he claimed. (Pajhwok)

### (10) Civilians Among...

and three injured people had been delivered at the hospital from Bakhtabad locality.

He said two girls and a 26-year-old woman were among the injured. (Pajhwok)

### (11) Most Private...

another lab one hour after the first test. There my cholesterol level was shown 220."

Another resident of Kabul City, Zamari, said unprofessional individuals run medical laboratories amid a lack of proper environment.

Zamari visited a lab in Kart-i-Parwan area to know his blood group and after the test, he was told his blood group name 'BRH'.

"After a month, I had to give blood to my ailing sister at Rabia Balkhi Maternity Hospital, where I tested my blood group again and they said it was 'AB Rh D positive'.

Then to confirm it, Zamari went to the 400-bed Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan Hospital, where his blood group was tested 'AB Rh D positive'.

"This unprofessional behavior could have led to the loss of my sister because I considered his blood to be 'BRH' based on the

first test."

Another Kabul inhabitant, Jamila, said she had been suffering from severe body ache and swelling of fingers and toes and a doctor prescribed her a rheumatism test.

"But I was tested negative for the illness at a lab near Baharistan Cinema and the doctor gave me medicines based on the diagnosis, however, I did not recover."

Due to no impact of the medicines, she went to another lab where her rheumatoid factor was tested above 400. "So when I used medicines for the correct test, my sickness was treated."

Another resident, Qiyamuddin, who had suffered from the consequences of a wrong diagnosis, asked the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) to increase its monitoring on local labs.

He said a huge amount of money was annually spent by the Afghans on their treatment abroad and this issue should be paid a serious heed.

Doctors at laboratories and diagnosis centers also acknowledge complaints about misdiagnosing and cite many reasons behind the problem.

An official at the 'City Laboratory, Dr. Farid Ahmad Ahmadzai, said the MoPH didn't monitor most of the private labs.

He said another problem was unfamiliarity of a number of Afghan doctors with new and advanced lab machines.

Machinery used at many labs in Afghanistan were imported from abroad despite the lack of technical personnel to teach doctors how to use the machines, he added.

Ahmadzai blamed private universities and institutes for the issues in labs, saying these organizations issued degrees to students blindly and without merit. "When the ignorant graduates don't know about labs and technology, how can you expect accurate diagnosis from them?"

"A 10 to 30 percent difference in a test result is normal, but above that is worrisome."

A health expert, Dr. Mohammad Hashim Wahaj, while pointing to issues at labs, criticized MoPH.

He said the health ministry had failed to properly oversee and investigate private labs' functioning.

He said a low quality 'reagent' (A chemical substance used to create a reaction in combination with some other substance) was used at local labs, which had a bad effect on the diagnoses.

Wahaj cited recruitment of unprofessional people and functioning on other individuals' licenses as other main issues, asking the MoPH to prevent the phenomenon.

He said large and prominent medical laboratories had established small agencies which lacked modern machinery and professional workforce.

He alleged 30 to 50 percent of labs offered a specific amount of commission to doctors for referring patients to them.

A representative from Herat at the Wolosi Jirga and health panel in-charge at the house, Dr. Saleh Mohammad Saljoqi, claimed they had many times summoned MoPH officials over the issues and concerns about labs.

The lawmaker confirmed complaints regarding laboratories had increased, blaming both the labs and the MoPH for the situation.

A law governing the private health sector had been passed, he said, adding if the law wasn't being implemented, then the problem lied in the MoPH itself.

He said the lack of scientific cadres, specialists and technologists had eroded people's trust in the private health sector.

The Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI) said the Afghans spent a huge capital on their treatment abroad due to the shortage of standard health services in the country.

Deputy ACCI head Khan Jan Alokozay asked the private sector entrepreneurs to ensure they offered quality and standard health services.

He said the private sector health institutes should give more attention to having technical equipment.

MoPH diagnosis services general in-charge, Ashiqullah Saadati, said they continuously monitored labs and diagnosis centres. He also didn't deny the issues.

He said MoPH had created a law for operation and activity of private sector institutes and the law was being persistently enforced by the Observation and Investigation Department of the ministry.

Saadati said some labs had hired university students who possessed no work permit from the MoPH. "In 1394 solar year, we studied 55 hospitals in Kabul and provinces. Of them, 28 hospitals having low quality were recommended to be standardized and nine others were closed down."

"A private hospital that used using low quality 'reagent' was shut down by MoPH." He said the ministry was mulling over the closure of laboratories not up to standard.

He also acknowledged illegal use of others' work permits by laboratories, saying such act challenged the accuracy and reliability of diagnosis results and professionalism of lab workers.

He said the Observation and Investigation Department was considering a long-term monitoring policy for private laboratories and work permits of substandard labs would be cancelled.

A recent survey by the Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA) last week showed despite spending hundreds of millions of dollars by the donor community on Afghanistan's public health sector, these facilities across the country face major deficiencies, including poor management, corruption, lack of power and potable water.

IWA inspected 184 public clinics and hospitals in eight provinces built or operated with donor money.

Four out of 10 health facilities lacked potable water system while one in every five facilities had no electricity at all. It claimed two-thirds of the health facilities did not have ambulances, adding to difficulties in accessing clinics and hospitals.

In spite of spending hundreds of millions of dollars of foreign aid on private public health sector, still issues existed, including lack of maintenance, inaccessible medical staff, lack of female health-care staff, and poor management and others.

However, MoPH's plan and police director, Dr. Abdul Qadeer Qadeer, said the public health minister and his working team were seriously observing all the sectors of MoPH and there was zero tolerance for administrative corruption. (Pajhwok)

### (12) Interior Kabul ...

area of Dehmazang, a journey that usually took five minutes.

The driver said he earned 300 afghanis between 6:00am and 10:30am but consumed fuel worth 300 afghanis due to rush and traffic jams in the city.

Reza Mohammad, another driver, also complained about the growing number of vendors and stalls on roadsides which he said made it difficult for traffic to normally proceed.

Naseer Ahmad, a dweller, who arrived in the city for Eid shopping, said the surge in number of street vendors and stalls in the city caused traffic jams.

Kabul police spokesman Baseer Mujahid said officials who acted against the law would be punished. He rejected claims that police accepted bribes from vendors and stall owners to allow them encroach upon roads.

He said the issue of vendors and stall owners would be resolved after Eid and a joint meeting of police and attorney officials had decided to allocate a separate place for vendors and stall owners so they may not create inconvenience. (Pajhwok)

### (13) Suspects in...

past one month alone at least 395 crime suspects were referred to judicial organs in connection with 235 different crimes, including murder, theft, mugging, carrying guns illegally and others.

According to him, the detainees included four would-be suicide bombers, on one who had been intending to attack security posts on the Kabul-Kandahar highway, and 75 others were drug smugglers.

He said the seizures during the past one month included 26 different kinds of weapons and eight vehicles.

Drugs seized during the period included 1.5 kg of heroin, three kilograms of opium, 63 kg of hashish, 293 kg of methamphetamine, 237kgs of methamphetamine and ecstasy containing pills also known as (Tablet K), 150 litres of alcoholic drinks, 2,160 bottles of beer.

The police commander also informed about throwing a multi-layer security blanket around Kabul City for the upcoming Eid Festival.

He said police along with other defence and security sectors would keep security for religious places, recreational and other areas. (Pajhwok)

### (14) HIA, JIA ...

differences among Afghan tribes.

The organization asked political parties to refrain from statements that could spark tension and may harm national interests.

It asked politicians, ulema, youth and all the Afghans to stand united against the enemy of Afghanistan and frustrate their designs. (Pajhwok)

### (15) Afghan Football...

The match, on Wednesday, will be held at the Sultan Qaboos Muscat stadium, which has the capacity to hold 34,000 football fans.

"It is two days that we have been practicing. We have a competition on Wednesday, but our main goal is to be prepared to face Jordan," Anooosh Dastagir, the national team's deputy coach said. From Oman, Afghanistan will head to Jordan for their Asia Cup qualifying match which is scheduled to take place next Tuesday. (Tolnews)

### (16) Jawzjan: ...

Arsalan, a resident of Andkhoi. The rest of the dead are yet to be identified. Sultan Mohammad Sanjar, the district's administrative chief, confirmed the accident and said the security personnel had been sent to the site to transfer the bodies to their relatives. (Pajhwok)

### (17) Arms Cache ...

launchers, three mortar shells, landmines, thousands of bullets; one vehicle and some other ammunition. He said the recovery prevented a major terrorist attack in the province. Dand-i-Pathan is a border district where Taliban control most of its parts. (Pajhwok)