

(1) Afghan Goods to...

exports exceeded the volume of one billion dollars and the Ministry of Trade and Commerce had set the target of achieving exports worth \$2 billion.

Referring to foreign trade, the president said no country reached self-reliance through aid and stressed the need for joint work and cooperation to achieve self-economic reliance.

He said one of the main demands of the people of Nimroz was to change the province from the third grade province to a second grade and necessary directions in this regard had been issued to the authorities concerned.

"Afghanistan's revenue saw a 90 percent increase in the past four years and 18 billion afghanis were saved in the procurement of contracts and for the first time 92 percent development budget of the country was spent," he said.

The president added the presidential polls would be held on schedule as it was a constitutional responsibility and demand of the people of Afghanistan.

Khan Jan Alokzai, deputy head of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI), said in the past Afghan traders would offer millions of dollars at ports of other countries, but now Afghanistan was no longer a landlocked country and its goods could be exported to other places.

He said in recent years more work had been done with regard to fighting corruption, bringing reforms and amending laws to support the private sector.

Iranian Ambassador to Afghanistan Reza Bahrani said the transfer of first shipment of Afghanistan's goods via Iran to India was celebrated today thanks to the strong determination of the leaders of the three countries.

"The message of our celebration is regional connectivity, rejection of violence, coordination, stability and advancing industry in the region."

He termed relations between Iran and Afghanistan as cordial and stressed the need for mutually respected state to state ties and cooperation.

Indian Ambassador to Afghanistan Vinay Kumar reiterated his country's support to Afghanistan's development and pledged India would do everything for Afghanistan's development.

"We are interested to support Afghanistan in different areas so that we would be able to bring peace and prosperity to this country," he said. (Pajhwok)

(2) Afghanistan's...

The government of India pledged a fresh aid package of \$1 billion to support the reconstruction projects in Afghanistan during a visit by President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani in late 2016.

The two countries have also developed a high level of cooperation in terms of military and security during the recent years. (KP)

(3) Elevating Some...

to upgrade the district into a new province. Mohammad Arif Noori, the Ghazni governor's spokesman, told Pajhwok Afghan News that the protestors had reopened the road after a week of closure.

He said the demand of Muqor people had been shared with the central government. However, the gubernatorial spokesman said nothing about Kabul's response. (Pajhwok)

(4) Afghan Govt Won't...

"Our friends [oppositions], who had been in the government in the past 17 years, did not stand in defense of Ghani's government against Stanikzai. They were defending their own interests," he said.

In reaction, Former Ambassador of Afghanistan to Pakistan Omar Zakhilwal who was also among the participants of Moscow meeting said that they have not received "lectures" in Moscow but delivered lectures to the Taliban.

He stressed that those who attended the Moscow Talks are "the founders" of the current system in the country. (ATN)

(5) Objective of...

and create job opportunities, be it was Saudi Arabia, Malaysia or even the USA.

He said during the seven decades, the Pak-US ties had witnessed ups and downs as both the countries had been close enough to each other while on the other, Pakistan had also faced sanctions by the US. But despite all, Pakistan had been enjoying good ties with Arab states.

Responding to former President Pervez Musharraf's statement about Israel, the foreign minister said Pakistan had no border or water dispute with Israel rather it was caused by the Palestine issue.

He said in order to achieve a durable peace in Middle East, the Palestine issue would have to be resolved and all the stakeholders would have to join their heads to resolve the situation. (Monitoring Desk)

(6) Baghlan to...

be planted in Baghlan and most of them would be fruit bearing trees."

He did not know the overall cost of all trees

being planted but said a seedling grown by the agriculture department cost 300 afghanis which would be given free of cost to government organs and against a fair price to gardeners.

Local agriculture officials said 500 acres of land in Baghlan has been allocated for establishing fruit orchards for next solar year. (Pajhwok)

(7) Countdown Begins...

who joined Ghani in his trip to Nimroz, said peace in Afghanistan is in favor of the entire region.

"The engagement of anti-government groups and improvement of stability will ensure a better future for Afghanistan and the region," Bahrami added.

Preserving the past 18 years' achievements, including women's rights and press freedom, have been other main topics under discussion by civil society and women's rights activists over the past few months. As part of these debates, a group of women activists at a gathering in Kabul on Sunday called for a meaningful role for women in the peace process.

"Taliban's mindset and Afghan women are the two contradicting sides which require talks and negotiations," said Fawzia Kofi, an MP, who attended the Moscow talks earlier this month.

"A peace with dignity is a peace in which different ethnic groups will be able to see their dignity in it," said Farkhunda Zahra Naderi, a former MP.

Despite the efforts by government and its international allies on Afghan peace, critics still remain skeptical and concerned about the price which the people of Afghanistan would have to pay for a sustainable peace in the war-weary country. (Tolo news)

(8) Grand Jirga...

it is necessary to invite those people who are not happy [with government] or those who have lost trust and have been distanced, especially Jihadi leaders as well as political parties and movements," said Qaraloq.

Humayun Jarir, a spokesman for Hizb-e-Islami party led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, said the Jirga will not help the peace process because the delegates in the assembly will only provide consultations and cannot do anything more than that.

He said government has consulted them on the Jirga.

"A strong and authorized board should be formed in which the members should be the President, the Chief Executive, influential political parties' leaders and speakers of the parliament and the senate," said Jarir. According to the High Peace Council, efforts have been accelerated for holding the Jirga.

"People from different layers of the society will be invited in this Jirga and it will be held similarly to the emergency Loya Jirga," said Rahim Beg Yaqubi, member of the council.

President Ghani on February 11 called for the Jirga in order to hear the views and opinions of people about peace talks with the Taliban and to determine the redlines that should be respected in the talks. (Tolo news)

(9) Civilian Deaths from...

on civilians in Afghanistan is deeply disturbing and wholly unacceptable," said Tadamichi Yamamoto, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan. "All parties need to take immediate and additional concrete steps to stop a further escalation in the number of civilians harmed and lives destroyed."

Yamamoto, who also heads UNAMA added, "This is the UN's tenth annual report documenting the plight of civilians in the Afghan conflict - more than 32,000 civilians killed and around 60,000 injured in a decade. It is time to put an end to this human misery and tragedy. The best way to halt the killings and maiming of civilians is to stop the fighting. That is why there is all the more need now to use all our efforts to bring about peace. I urge all parties to seize every opportunity to do so."

"The conflict in Afghanistan continues to kill far too many civilians and has caused long-lasting suffering, both physical and psychological, to countless others," said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet. "The fact that the number of children killed this year is the highest on record, is particularly shocking. In addition to the lives lost, the dire security situation is preventing many Afghans from enjoying their economic, social and cultural rights, with thousands of children already handicapped for life because of attacks on schools and medical facilities," Bachelet added. "So I call on all parties to the conflict to fully respect international humanitarian and international human rights law to protect the lives of all civilians."

Anti-Government Elements were responsible for 6,980 civilian casualties (2,243 deaths and 4,737 injured), a three per cent increase on 2017, which mainly resulted from the indiscriminate use of suicide improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and the deliberate targeting of civilians with these devices. Taliban caused 4,072 civilian casualties (1,348 deaths and 2,724 injured), sev-

en per cent down on 2017, while Daesh/ISKP caused 2,181 civilian casualties (681 deaths and 1,500 injured), an increase of 118 per cent. UNAMA attributed a further 678 civilian casualties (196 deaths and 482 injured) to undetermined AGEs.

Anti-Government Elements' use of IEDs in both suicide and non-suicide attacks reached extreme levels and remained the leading cause of civilian casualties in 2018, accounting for 42 per cent of the total. Suicide IED attacks caused 2,809 civilian casualties (886 deaths and 1,923 injured), almost 26 per cent of all civilian casualties, while non-suicide IEDs caused more than 16 per cent, resulting in a combined total of 4,627 civilian casualties (1,361 deaths and 3,266 injured).

UNAMA notes continued concern with the Taliban's use of indirect weapons systems and IEDs, particularly targeting civilians and civilian objects during election-related attacks, as well as using the weapons against Pro-Government Forces in civilian areas, which has indiscriminate effects. The increase in deliberate targeting of civilians by Taliban, which nearly doubled from 865 civilian casualties in 2017 to 1,688 in 2018, resulted largely from the 27 January suicide ambulance attack in Kabul (the deadliest single incident ever recorded by UNAMA) and from election-related attacks on the 20 October polling day, when UNAMA recorded the highest number of civilian casualties in any single day in 2018. Civilian casualties resulting from deliberate targeting of civilians by Daesh/ISKP, which included attacks against the Shi'a Muslim population, more than doubled.

Anti-Government Elements carried out 65 suicide and complex attacks in 2018. UNAMA attributed 21 of the attacks to Taliban, which caused 642 civilian casualties. Taliban claimed responsibility for 15 of these attacks, from which UNAMA verified 542 civilian casualties. UNAMA attributed 36 suicide and complex attacks to Daesh/ISKP, causing 1,892 civilian casualties. The group claimed responsibility for 33 of these incidents, which caused 1,631 civilian casualties. Seven incidents claimed by Daesh/ISKP caused more than 100 civilian casualties as compared to three in 2017. UNAMA documented disproportionate and extreme harm to Kabul residents from suicide and complex attacks. Almost half of the AGE suicide and complex attacks in 2018 occurred in Kabul, with 28 such incidents causing 1,686 civilian casualties (481 deaths and 1,150 injuries), a five per cent increase in the number of casualties from 2017.

UNAMA documented a 24 per cent increase in civilian casualties attributed to Pro-Government Forces in 2018 as compared to 2017, which mainly resulted from aerial operations by international military forces, as well as from search operations conducted by Afghan national security forces and pro-Government armed groups. Between 1 January and 31 December 2018, UNAMA documented 2,612 civilian casualties (1,185 deaths and 1,427 injured) from operations conducted by Pro-Government Forces. Civilian casualties attributed to Pro-Government Forces accounted for 24 per cent of all civilian casualties in Afghanistan in 2018.

For the first time since 2009 when it began systematically documenting civilian casualty figures, UNAMA recorded more than 1,000 civilian casualties from aerial operations. 2018 also witnessed more than 500 civilians killed by aerial operations for the first time on record. UNAMA documented 1,015 civilian casualties (536 deaths and 479 injured) from aerial operations. Of these, UNAMA attributed responsibility to international military forces for 632 civilian casualties (393 deaths and 239 injured), to the Afghan Air Force for 304 civilian casualties (118 deaths and 186 injured) and the remaining casualties to unidentified Pro-Government forces.

Search operations caused 353 civilian casualties (284 deaths and 69 injured) with the majority caused by National Directorate of Security Special Forces and the Khost Protection Force, both of whom are supported by international military forces.

In 2018, approximately the same number of civilians were killed from airstrikes as in 2014, 2015 and 2016 combined. Women and children continued to comprise almost two-thirds of all civilian casualties from aerial operations, amounting to 648 civilian casualties (320 deaths and 328 injured). In 2018, international military forces were responsible for 674 civilian casualties (406 deaths and 268 injured), 94 per cent of which resulted from aerial operations.

Aerial operations and ground engagements caused the same number of civilian casualties, tied as the two leading causes of civilian casualties attributed to Pro-Government Forces in 2018.

The armed conflict continues to have a severe impact on children and women, who made up 38 per cent of all civilian casualties. Child casualties represented 28 per cent of all killed and injured. UNAMA recorded 3,062 child casualties (927 deaths and 2,135 injured). While this was a slight decrease compared to 2017, child deaths reached record high levels in 2018, mainly due to the more than doubling of child deaths from

aerial operations, as well as an increase in child deaths from suicide attacks.

Anti-Government Elements caused 1,343 child casualties (324 deaths and 1,019 injured), comprising 44 per cent of all child casualties in 2018. Pro-Government Forces caused 1,051 child casualties (414 deaths and 637 injured), comprising 34 per cent of overall child casualties.

Overall child casualty figures showed AGEs continued to cause most child casualties in 2018, although it decreased by three per cent compared to 2017, while there was a 15 per cent increase in child casualties attributed to Pro-Government Forces. UNAMA documented that Pro-Government Forces were responsible for the deaths of 414 children in 2018, while Anti-Government Elements were responsible for the deaths of 324 children in 2018. Women casualties reduced by six per cent to 1,152 (350 deaths and 802 injured), resulting mainly from the eight per cent decrease in women casualties from ground engagements. Women comprised 10 per cent of conflict-related civilian casualties in 2018.

In the report, UNAMA acknowledges the efforts taken by the Afghan national security forces, international military forces, and Taliban to protect civilians from harm caused. However, given the scale and scope of civilian casualties that has continued at very high levels for years, it emphasizes that more needs to be done.

Among its recommendations, the report urges Anti-Government Elements to cease the deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian objects, as well as the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of all IEDs. It calls on the Government of Afghanistan and international military forces to strengthen their review of incidents involving allegations of civilian casualties and ensure that effective reparations are provided for harm suffered. Beyond this, a halt in the fighting by all parties is the only effective way to protect civilians. (PR)

(10) Ghani Lays...

I assure the youth of Nimroz of a modern and well-equipped accommodation facility within one year," the statement quoted Ghani as saying.

Ghani said he had created a special operating unit at the Presidential Palace to pay serious heed to provinces and address their issues.

Historical palaces, including the Darul Aman Palace and hostels, were being built by the unit, the president added.

Ghani told the project head: "Thanks for your services and strengthening oversight. Nimroz is a developed province in terms of economy and we have also planned major projects here," Ghani concluded. (Pajhwok)

(11) Taliban's Shadow...

in the Alishang district of neighbouring Laghman province.

The Taliban stormed security check-posts in the Injil locality of the district late on Saturday night, 201st Selab Military Corps spokesman Haroon Yousufzai said.

The Taliban have not yet commented on the incidents. (Pajhwok)

(12) 5,000 Urdu...

confirmed the issue in a statement which said the books were for students of refugees from Pakistan's South Waziristan region, who had migrated to the province as a result of the Pakistani army operations. (Pajhwok)

(13) New Commissioners...

Big, a civil society activist.

The Transparent Election Foundation of Afghanistan (TEFA), meanwhile, said the process through which they selected the candidates was transparent and in line with the law.

"From at least 140 people, 15 of them have been selected and they have good abilities on electoral issues," said Lal Mohammad Amiri, member of TEFA.

This comes after all commissioners from the two electoral commissions - the Independent Election Commission (IEC) and the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC) - were dismissed from their posts, including the two chiefs, after President Ashraf Ghani signed off on an amendment to the electoral law.

Ghani approved the amendment on February 20, which resulted in the instant dismissal of the commissioners - including IEC chief Abdul Badi Sayyad and IECC Aziz Azizullah Aryayee.

Discussions and consultations over the draft amendment started earlier this month and was unanimously endorsed by all groups - before being approved by Ghani's cabinet.

According to the Presidential Palace, the two secretariat heads, Ahmad Shah Zamanzai from the IEC, and Mohammad Setigh, from the IECC secretariat, will run the commissions.

The election law has 109 articles and 17 chapters and according to sources, a number of these articles have been amended.

The commissioners - 12 in total - were

appointed to the posts in November 2016 as part of government's efforts to ensure transparent and fair parliamentary elections.

However, the elections - held in October - were allegedly riddled with fraud and mismanagement.

This move comes amid ongoing criticism leveled at the commissioners who have still not released the final results for October's elections for 15 provinces. (Tolo news)

(14) Traders Call Off...

parked in Herat.

He said similar spare part containers were allowed to move in Spin Boldak and Nimroz ports, but not in Herat.

Governor Miakhel said it was his responsibility to protect all rights of traders of the province as their counterparts enjoyed in other provinces.

He assured the traders of sharing their problems with the Presidential Palace for solution and the traders then ended their protest and allowed traffic to pass through the border.

The traders said they ended their protest conditionally as if their problem was not solved, they would again hold protests even larger. (Pajhwok)

(15) Teacher Training...

was planning to construct 3,300 school buildings next year, he said, without giving further details.

Balkhi said schools in Kabul and provinces currently required 50,000 professional teachers and competitive tests for employing new instructors were underway in the capital and provinces.

"We are looking for new plans to improve our teachers' capacity and our schools' standards. A 14-year education is no longer fruitful and training of teachers would not belong to the Ministry of Education in future," he said.

Balkhi said teacher training institutes should be either converted to universities or professional schools.

He said 17,000 students graduated from the Kabul Educational and Training University alone in different subjects in a year while the ministry could employ only 10,000 of them and the rest remained jobless. (Pajhwok)

(16) Afghanistan...

India in Lauderhill and India's 21 sixes against Sri Lanka in Indore, both on 2017. However, after opting to bat first, two openers Hazratullah Zazai and Usman Ghani gave a solid start to Afghanistan. Zazai knocked his unbeaten 162 including 11 fours and 16 sixes (which is the highest individual sixes in an innings) while Ghani scored 73 with 7 fours and 3 sixes. After building the record-partnership of 236 in the opening stand, Ghani was dismissed by Rankin. Among the others, Shafiqullah Shafiq scored 7, Mohammad Nabi 17 and Najibullah Zadran remained unbeaten with Zazai at 1.

Chasing of 279, openers Paul Stirling and Kevin O'Brien handed a good start for Ireland. The pair added 126 off 71 balls which is the highest opening stand for Ireland. Stirling scored 91 off 50 while Kevin O'Brien scored 37 off 25 deliveries. The pair was broken by Fareed Malik who dismissed Kevin O'Brien. After that, Rashid Khan bowled Andrew Balbirnie out for 1 and Mujeeb Ur Rahman sent back Paul Stirling. Among the others, Lorcan Tucker scored 2, Shane Getkate 24, and George Dockrell 0. Simi Singh and Stuart Poynter were unbeaten on 17 and 15 runs respectively. Rashid Khan picked up 4 for 25. Afghanistan clinched the series 2-0. The third and final ODI scheduled to be held at the same venue on February 24. (Agencies)

(17) Health Centres Being...

said the hospital would be constructed in one year.

Public Health Director Dr. Najibullah Kamawal said residents frequently complained of a lack of health facilities and demanded the construction of new hospitals. He added the health facilities would be constructed and fully equipped to meet demands of the people. (Pajhwok)

(18) Notorious Taliban...

Province and responsible for developing sophisticated devices to kill NATO coalition members, ANDSF and innocent Afghan civilians.

The death of these two influential commanders will degrade the militant group's ability to command Taliban fighters who commit violence against Afghans.

Afghans Special Security Forces have increased operations in Uruzgan Province against Taliban members who insist on countering a peaceful solution.

This month, 69 fighters have been removed from Taliban ranks in this province alone. Taliban members who insist on countering a peaceful solution by committing violence against Afghan civilians will be defeated.

ASSF is committed in removing Taliban leadership who continually plan, coordinate and carry out attacks against the Afghan people. (Pajhwok)