

(1) Our Goal is to...

said that every Afghan is responsible for protecting national programs and initiatives.

"Fortunately, over 220 thousand tons of steel have been produced by six industries during the current year," Ghani said adding that Afghanistan currently has Afghanistan two billion tons of iron in storage.

The president said that as businessmen invest in various industries, they contribute to creating job opportunities for the people.

Ghani said the National Unity Government will support in finding solutions to any problem and they might have.

At the end of the ceremony, the President suggested that the name of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry be changed to the Industry and Trade Ministry.

Khan Steele is one of the most successful investments in the iron smelting sector in the country. However, raw materials are now needed for the plant.

Currently, the plant relies on waist iron supplies. What is needed is the extraction of iron from the country's mines. Such factories would then be considered important for the processing of the country's iron and steel products.

During the ceremony, a Khan Steel official said that seven hundred of people will be employed at the plant. Currently, 500 workers are employed directly and 1500 indirectly.

The factory officials said that they have considered a system aimed at environmental protection. (Tolonews)

(2) Week Long ...

and work with the Ministry of Finance" said Mohammad Hassan Sepahi, chairman of National Union of Afghan craftsmen/ traders. "By running such programs, we will make tax-payers aware of tax laws and raise their level of compliance" he added.

Mr. Abdul Habib Zadrani, General Director of Revenue, Mr. Ajmal Hameed Abdulrahimzai, public relation director and spokesperson for the Ministry of Finance and other authorities, provided information to the participants regarding the purpose, importance and value of the public awareness on tax week.

At the end, an informative presentation was delivered.

The program would continue for a week all over the country, where awareness about tax laws will be given to taxpayers, the private sector, students of economics, accounting and public administration of public and private universities, employees of ministry of finance and other government departments through seminars, radio programs and Television in various media and sports events.

It is worth mentioning that, the purpose of celebrating and inaugurating tax week is to raise taxpayers' awareness, promote culture of taxation, train and enable taxpayers, raise level of compliance, reform and amend procedures of revenue, provide on-time professional services to the taxpayers preventing tax crimes in one hand and to collect domestic revenue in accurately on the other hand. (Pajhwok)

(3) MPs Lament..

not the FPP draft has landed in the house. If it has, why has the draft not been placed before house commissions?"

Other legislators held similar views. Speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahim said the FPP draft had reached the Wolesi Jirga and the Commission on International Relations had launched practical work on it.

The speaker did not give date of the draft landing in the house but asked the commission concerned to promptly distribute the draft's copies to other panels. After its scrutiny, the draft will be included in the agenda. He called the FPP vital to maintaining relations with different countries.

"Once a country approves clear foreign policy principles it could establish external relation in the best national interest."

In recent years, public representatives have been asking the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to submit policy principles to the house for approval. (Pajhwok)

(4) European...

a tool that can actively foster the overall international trade. The European Union started this project and we definitely committed to foster this policy. The development of Afghanistan depends on private sector and the private sector depends on festively trading; importing and exporting," he said.

Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries meanwhile called on government to resolve the issue of goods smugglings in borders and expand trade ties with other countries in the world.

"Many foreign organizations have tried so far to enhance business sector in Afghanistan, but now it is a need that government should have a clear approach to receive the international community's assistance in this sector," economic affairs analyst Azera-khsh Hafizi said.

Ministry of Commerce and Industries says the institution is working to enhance trade and transit, and prevent smuggling of goods to and from the country.

"Government is trying to increase the number of customs offices in bordering areas to prevent the smuggling of goods. Also we have plans to boost Afghanistan's trade neighboring countries," the head of transit department of the ministry, Mohammad Yahya Akhlaqi, said. (Tolonews)

(5) AAF Makes ...

"professional, capable, and sustainable" military branch.

The report went on to say that TAAC-air did not have the ability to track the afghan air force's progress because they had not "defined the intended end state and related metrics for determining the capabilities and capacities of the afghan air force."

Additionally, TAAC-air did not effectively plan with other support agencies, with the inspector general warning that the gap in planning could result in the "inefficient and ineffective use of US and coalition adviser train, advise, and assist efforts." Recommendations in the report included improving contract awards and tracking mechanisms for both logistical and maintenance operations in order to aid the progression for eventual turning over to afghan air force maintainers. (Pajhwok)

(6) Committee..

say some former and incumbent government officials have applied for the IEC membership. The selection committee did not elaborate on the details or the names.

The IEC spokesman Abdulbadi Sayyad said the chairman and head of the secretariat of the institution would be elected once the new member of the commission is introduced.

"We will hold the administrative board election and will elect the (IEC) chairman and two deputies. Another issue which has slowed down our activities is the appointment process, but we will resolve this as soon as possible," he said.

Last year in November, President Ashraf Ghani fired his own hand-picked Independent Election Commission Chairman, Najibullah Ahmadzai. The IEC last year announced it would hold the upcoming parliamentary and district councils' elections this year in July. However, a few days ago, the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission said in a letter that the date has been changed to September this year. (Tolonews)

(7) Gailani Moves...

stabilize Afghanistan.

"This is not an alternative for any process nor a competition. It is a move under the guidance of Allah," Gailani said.

Gailani, addressing the gathering, said most of Taliban leaders are in Afghanistan, not in any other country. He added that he won't believe reports that Taliban leaders are outside Afghanistan's borders.

"I do not accept the rumors that say Taliban leaders are in other places. They (the government) say this because they cannot do anything else and they use this as an excuse. Most of Taliban leaders are in their own country. I say to the Taliban this is your country and also to the government that this is your country," Gailani added.

Participants of the gathering said they are ready to work toward bringing peace in the country.

"If it is possible to bring peace to Afghanistan in any way, please bring peace," Mohammad Salem Rahmani, a religious scholar said.

"Peace is fundamental, stability is fundamental, guidance is fundamental, and Allah's blessing is fundamental," Mohammad Mutiullah Nahar Karizi, a religious scholar said.

The Afghan peace process has been a tough topic for many years and many meetings have been held in this regard, even outside of Afghanistan. In some of the meetings, the Afghan government had not played a role. However, so far none of those meetings have resulted in bringing peace and stability to the war-torn country. (Tolonews)

(8) MPs Dub ...

others wounded. Later, dozens of retailers held a protest.

In the operation, 1,770 grams of heroin, 53 grams of shisha, more than 2,8 kilograms of opium, over 43 kgs of hashish, 163 bottles of alcoholic drinks and some cash in afghanis, Indian and Pakistani rupees, five pistols, two AK-47s, two hand grenades were confiscated by police.

The issue came up for discussion at Wolesi Jirga's Saturday session. Lower house member from Kabul Haji Allah Gul Mujahid: "The Thursday's suicide attack needs more investigation." He believed it was a pre-planned attack as drugs, weapons and ammunition were being sold in the area. He said drugs and terrorism had a direct link and that it should be investigated how a suicide bombing occurred after a crackdown on drugs in the area.

Mohammad Sarwar Usmani, a lawmaker from western Farah province, also termed as questionable the attack. "This shows incompetency of detective and intelligence organs. It should be specified whose hands were behind the attack."

"This is an example of liaison between terrorist networks and drugs' producers and sellers."

A number of other legislators also held similar views, demanding a probe into the bombing in a serious manner.

Speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahim, condemning the attack, ordered the security and internal affairs panel of the lower house to investigate the incident jointly with security organs and report back to the house. He also called the suicide bombing soon after searching of shops in Banayi and shopkeepers' protest as 'questionable', saying security and intelligence organs should respond to public in this regard.

According to him, drugs have a direct link with terrorism and it should be investigated which group was behind the incident.

This comes as a police official had earlier said a terrorist group was behind Thursday's attack and the protest by shopkeepers paved the ground for the attack.

Meanwhile, Kabul police commander Salim Ehsas, while acknowledging a close and direct link between terrorism and drugs, said he wouldn't deny possible relations between alcoholic

drinks' sellers and terrorist organizations. "Security and detective teams are busy investigating the issue." (Pajhwok)

(9) No 'Considerable..

of Balkh by President Ashraf Ghani, has opened an office in Kabul where he meets with people daily.

Dawood's spokesman, Rahmatullah Fitrat, told TOLONews that Dawood is awaiting the end of the rift between the government and Jamiat.

"We meet with jihadi elders and influential figures, but we have not started administrative affairs so far," Fitrat said. (Tolonews)

(10) Kandahar Girls ...

families are not ready to let their daughters attend schools and complete their education.

"There are families that do not allow their daughters to have higher education, maybe because of ugly customs or because of the demands of society. Serious attention should be given to addressing the need for the education of girls in our society," said Nargis one the students.

"In Kandahar province, there are girls that only attend lower grades. They then have to stop their education because their families do not allow them to go to schools. We have fewer girls that have permission to attend schools," said Palwasha another student.

Despite all challenges in Kandahar province, there are girls that are getting a modern education. In one the private university in Kandahar city, girls are receiving higher education online.

Girls in the private education center said that to have a bright future and to exercise their rights, they are fighting all the challenges.

"The main challenge is the people's views because some of the fathers are now allowing their daughters to go outside the houses. Those girls are now receiving education and have a completely different environment to study," said Sonia another student of the private university.

Girls who challenge the threats are becoming students at universities or private education centers.

"Teachers in these centers are experienced and are professional educators with high standards. Therefore, most of the students can learn from them," said Ehsanullah Ehsan head of a private education center. (Tolonews)

(11) Edu Minister's ...

director, Khalil Ahmad Mubariz, told Pajhwok Afghan News that five education officers in the provincial capital and in some districts were either changed or removed for improving the education process.

Some of these officers with links to mafia groups and powerful figures had been creating problems for the enforcement of the minister's order, he said.

Despite these obstacles, he said, the order was finally enforced today and the officers were changed and replaced.

He said employment of new officers in the education department would improve the education process and stop interferences of mafia groups.

Mubariz did not name those newly employed and the powerful figures who interfered in the education affairs. Meanwhile, Ghor civil society activists and residents hailed changes in the education sector and stressed on improving education quality in the area. Ghor education director had in the past also complained about interferences of lawmakers and powerful individuals in the education affairs. (Pajhwok)

(12) MoJ Foils Efforts ..

land, 34,874 square metres of agriculture land, 21 shops, 10 plots, 3 apartments, over 306 million afghanis, more than \$14 million and 13,000 euros.

Based on the law, all government institutions are bound to refer to the MoJ in case their assets are grabbed.

(Pajhwok)

(13) In Nuristan, Cases..

referred to judicial organs. However, it has not been resolved yet.

Faizan said Alina, a resident of the provincial capital Paroo, was traded for 13 cows by his father -- a drug addict -- to another young junkie. "Alina, however, was divorced before marriage."

The 23-year-old was engaged six years back. But when she found that her husband was a drug addict, she complained to the Women's Affairs Department.

Later on, she asked the department to make her husband hand over the 13 cows she had been pledged in dowry. The department summoned Alina's husband to resolve the issue. However, he divorced her on the spot and repeated the word 'divorce' several times.

A regretful husband of Alina denied divorcing her and said he had uttered the words in anger. But Alina refused to marry him, saying she had been divorced.

The issue was then sent to the appellate court, where judge issued a verdict in favour of Alina's husband.

Asked why such cases are not tried by courts, Faizan responded: "Nuristan is a traditional province, with many religious scholars.

"No one wants their women to go to court. Local elders decide cases in light of Islamic teachings. Thus women's rights aren't trampled on. There is relatively low public confidence in courts."

With regard to Alina's case, she said: "It has been sent to the court long ago and its disposal has taken so long. The judge's verdict is one-sided on the one hand and unjust on the other."

Meanwhile, Nuristan inhabitants and lawmakers also criticised handling of the matter, alleging court decisions were really one-sided.

As a result, they argued, people had lost trust in courts and preferred to get such issues resolved through local jirgas and tribal mediation.

A tribal elder, Maulvi Amanullah Enayat, told Pajhwok lack of courts in districts and satisfactory decisions by jirgas attracted people's attention towards jirgas, which gave people their rights.

But Provincial Council Chairman Sadullah Payandazoy acknowledging issues were somewhat resolved by tribal jirgas. But he explained the trend was not linked to lack of confidence in courts; instead it was because of custom in the province.

The Nuristan governor's spokesman, Saeed Momand, said inhabitants of the province took their issues to tribal jirgas as part of their traditions and it had nothing to do with courts.

"This is not because of lack of trust in the judicial organs." He alleged prosecutors, courts and legal institutions were operational in all districts except Kamdesh. Meanwhile, Nuristan Appellate Court Judge Mohammad Hakim Kunari also expressed similar views. He insisted they were addressing every matter as part of their religious and national obligations. About Alina's case, he said: "This issue has been on hold because the girl herself is culpable in the application." In addition to incidents of violence, subjecting women to hard labour is widespread in the province. (Pajhwok)

(14) Militants Kidnap ...

take suspected individuals hostage. The Taliban have blocked this route three times over the past two weeks, seizing 36 passengers. Some of the hostages were killed and others released, with a number still in captivity. (Pajhwok)

(15) Security Forces ..

conflict in Tirinkot began two years ago and both sides since have sustained casualties. As many as 13,000 families have also been forced to flee their homes and face harsh conditions during the period. (Pajhwok)