

### (1) Afghan Govt ...

development and economic challenges faced by our people," said Afghan finance minister Eklil Hakimi.

He said better service delivery, improved living conditions and more job opportunities would be created with the assistance which would benefit people in both rural and urban areas. "All this assistance will be channeled through the national budget and will be spent with full transparency and effectiveness."

The new funding package aims to support efforts of the government of Afghanistan to stimulate growth and ensure service delivery during a time of uncertainty when risks to the economy are significant.

The international troop withdrawal, begun in 2011, coupled with political uncertainties, have resulted in a slowdown of economic growth, while government budget pressures are increasing as security threats mount and drive people from their homes.

"Today's signing of the new financing reaffirms the World Bank Group's commitment to the Afghan people as they strive to overcome daunting development challenges compounded by a difficult security environment," said Shubham Chaudhuri, World Bank Country Director for Afghanistan.

"We are encouraged by the government's determination to build upon progress to date in several areas, including institutional reforms, revenue generation, and provision of basic services in health, education, and rural access sectors."

The \$482.3 million financing package consists of seven grants: \$172 million in additional financing from IDA (\$127.7 million) and the ARIF (\$44.3 million) to the Citizens' Charter Afghanistan Project to support communities with internally displaced persons and returnees from Pakistan;

A \$100 million from IDA will go to the Inclusive Growth Development Policy Grant to support reforms that expand access to economic opportunities for the vulnerable and promote private sector development;

A \$20 million from IDA will be injected to the Urban Development Support Project to strengthen urban policy-making in national agencies, and reinforce urban management and service delivery in five provincial capital cities.

Another \$60 million from IDA will go to the Herat Electrification Project to provide access to electricity to households, institutions, and businesses in selected areas of the western province.

Some \$20.3 million from IDA will be allocated to the Afghanistan Strategic Grain Reserve Project to finance establishing strategic wheat reserves and improve the efficiency of grain storage management;

A \$105 million in additional financing from ARTF to the Afghanistan Rural Access Project is part of the grants, which aims to benefit rural communities through access to all-season roads.

A \$5 million project preparation grant from the ARTF to support the establishment of a Women's Economic Empowerment National Priority Programme (WEE-NPP) Support Project, which aims to advance women's access to economic assets and opportunities. (Pajhwok)

### (2) Takhar Residents ...

"They affect our people. Civilians are being killed. The security forces have the ability to send them to the court," said Sayed Jahangir Keramat, head of security of Takhar Police Headquarters.

The conflict between Hizb-e-Islami member Bashir Qanet and Afzal Shamil, a senator from Takhar erupted one week ago.

"The battle is for their interests. It is a conflict within one family. Both are from one family and it is personal enmity," said Sunnatullah Timor, spokesman for the Takhar governor. Hizb-e-Islami meanwhile said Qanet was one of their prominent commanders.

"Commander Bashir Qanet is a prominent and trustworthy commander of the Hizb-e-Islami. Recently, a number of circles have been trying to destabilize Chah Ab (district) and in turn the Takhar residents and commander Bashir made a number of movements," Hizb-e-Islami spokesman Hashmatullah Arshad said.

However, Qanet - in a leaked sound clip - named a number of people and appeared to have voiced death threats against them.

"I know my enemies. They are from this house - the house of Faizullah, the house of Hakimullah Chah Abi, the house of Mohamadullah, (and) the house of Mohammad Osman. It is an already done action. I have enemies. I will be killed or I will eliminate them," Qanet said in the voice clip. Among those who are named by Qanet is Faizullah - who is a supporter of senator Afzal.

"Bashir has claimed he is a member of Hizb-e-Islami. He is neither a member of Hizb-e-Islami or Jamiat; he is a smuggler," Afzal said on phone. (Tolonews)

### (3) Afghan-American...

things," Waiz said at the ceremony. Meanwhile, the head of Kabul's Education Department said Shaesta was a role model for Afghan girls.

"The arrival of Shaesta Waiz in Afghanistan is giving hope for the young generation in the country. Her decision to build a school here is worth appreciation," said Sayed Mansour, director of Kabul Education Department of

the Ministry of Education.

Shaesta left Kabul for Dubai on Wednesday. Waiz said her flight around the world is not only an attempt to break a record but added that it is aimed at generating hope among the younger generation.

Waiz started her solo flight two months ago in Florida in the U.S and has travelled to nine countries so far including Afghanistan. On Wednesday she left for Dubai to retrieve her plane before continuing her journey. (Tolonews)

### (4) U.S Congressmen ...

have said numerous times, vigorous diplomacy complements and strengthens our military efforts around the world - including our longstanding operations in Afghanistan. Save for a legitimate security threat, we urge you in the strongest terms to reverse this decision and welcome these young women to the United States," the letter added.

The girls said not one of them posed a security threat to the U.S. (Tolonews)

### (5) Violations Along ...

The Pakistani military informed regarding the commencement of the fencing work along the line on last month, saying the step has been taken with an aim to improve security.

The Inter Services Public Relations, media wing of the Pakistani military, in a statement said "Measures to improve the security situation along the Pak-Afghan border continue and phase fencing of Pak-Afghan border has commenced."

The statement further added the work will be done in two phases, with the first phase to focus on high infiltration prone border areas in Bajaur, Mohmand and Khyber agencies where fencing has started. (KP)

### (6) New Claims ...

killing and an indifference to Afghan life had developed among a minority of influential special operations task group personnel.

Much happens in the fog of war that is not always predictable or explainable. Yet the latest allegations to be investigated raise questions about the competency of special forces personnel's combat judgment, or their inclination to operate executively resulting in reckless and unavoidable deaths. And these allegations illuminate a code of secrecy, and practices of cover-up and deceit in the theatre of war.

This secrecy itself is not new. In 2003 an inquiry was held into the brutal defacement of the corpse of a Timor-Leste militia by a special forces soldier in 1999. After the initial reports were made, the investigation hit a brick wall. Even the complainants, three New Zealand special forces soldiers, withdrew or "forgot" their statements. A further 19 allegations of misconduct were made against Australian troops. After a three-year closed-door investigation, which included the exhumation of two militiamen's corpses from a mass grave outside Dili, none of the allegations resulted in charges. Except the kicking claim. It was a case marked by delays and obfuscation.

In 2006 special forces soldiers were involved in the indiscriminate shooting of an Afghan family near Tarin Kowt. The case was marked by divergent accounts by the then chief of defence, Air Marshall Angus Houston, and local investigators. The then Greens leader, Bob Brown, called on the ADF to launch an independent inquiry, claiming a cover-up.

Then in 2013 a unit of special forces soldiers were investigated for cutting off the hands of dead insurgents after a battle in southern Afghanistan, allegedly to facilitate their biometric identification. (Agencies)

### (7) Reforms Body...

even before the order - and is still doing so; the processing of other affairs was conducted by two departments in the past, but now this is done by the reforms commission according to its legal responsibility," said one commission member, Sayed Hashmatullah Hashimi.

Critics however speculate that members of the reforms commission could face serious challenges - citing incompetency as a reason. An Integrity Watch Afghanistan researcher, Nasir Taimoori, said the commission, which has been in place for ten years, has failed and has not benefited the people of Afghanistan.

However, as calls for reforms continue, a number of government institutions have said they believe in the commission and feel it could make a difference to ministries in future.

"Changes brought to the civil services commission will not [negatively] affect our work, but it will help us with our efforts to bring about reforms and to appoint qualified and committed people," said Ajmal Hamid Abdul Rahimzai, a ministry of finance spokesman.

But, critics argue that the commission could face challenges over power sharing issues between political factions within government.

"Whether you accept it or not, it is a type of monopolization of power; it leads to disputes between two people who share power 50-50, so there is a need to focus on the matter," said senator Jummadin Gianwal.

"The reform commission, besides reviewing organizational and personal affairs of high level government officials in sectors, [including] educational and academic sectors, will also review the appointments in the ministry of foreign affairs, ministry of higher education, academy of science and the appoint-

ments in Afghanistan's diplomatic missions, attaches of the ministry of foreign affairs and civil institutions and then results of the review will be sent to the president for final approval," the president's order reads in part. (Tolonews)

### (8) Trump to Unveil ...

in any conversation. Look, we've used contractors extensively over the last 16 years. Currently, there are tens of thousands of contractors that are bravely serving alongside a lot of the U.S. military and coalition forces. And we're finalizing the review fully of the Afghanistan policy, and it only makes sense to consult those leaders in the field, as well. And that's simply just part of the review process."

This comes after reports emerged on Tuesday that Trump's advisers recruited two businessmen, who reportedly profited from military contracting, to draw up alternate plans to that of sending in thousands of additional troops to Afghanistan.

According to a New York Times report, Erik D. Prince, a founder of private security firm Blackwater Worldwide, and Stephen A. Feinberg, who owns the giant military contractor DynCorp International, reportedly discussed the issue of relying on contractors instead of U.S. troops with Trump's chief strategist Stephen Bannon and his son-in-law Jared Kushner.

According to the article, U.S. Defense Secretary James Mattis listened to their outline but declined to include their strategies in his review of the Afghanistan policy.

In June, Trump authorized the Pentagon to draw up a new war strategy and to send in additional troops. However, no announcement has yet been made regarding the final tally. (Tolonews)

### (9) Women's ...

spending billions of dollars since 2001 on eradication of poppy and drug trafficking in Afghanistan, the issue could not be controlled.

A UNODC report shows poppy cultivation jumped by 25 percent and the illicit crop was grown on more areas in 2014, 2013 and 2016 respectively. Afghanistan currently produces 73 percent of the world's drugs. (Pajhwok)

### (10) RSF's ...

and Islamic State killed scores of people at a "Movement of Light" protest in Kabul on 23 July 2016 against the re-routing of a proposed power transmission line away from Bamiyan province.

The police used force to disperse a demonstration on 3 June 2017 by the "Uprising for Change" protest movement, which is demanding security reforms and the resignation of senior security officials. One-sided coverage of these three events by certain media outlets has helped to fuel tension in Afghanistan.

The right to demonstrate peacefully is enshrined in both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, of which Afghanistan is a signatory. The right is also guaranteed in article 37 of Afghanistan's own constitution.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights also states that journalists have the right to "seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds." This obviously includes the right to cover a demonstration.

In its Resolution 25/38 of March 2014, the UN Human Rights Council recognized the "important role" that journalists play in "documenting human rights violations or abuses committed in the context of peaceful protests." The resolution also urged governments "to pay particular attention to the safety of journalists and media workers covering peaceful protests, taking into account their specific role, exposure and vulnerability."

Article 20 of the Covenant stresses the importance of news coverage by distinguishing it from "propaganda for war" and by prohibiting "any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence."

The "important role" played by the media and journalists also requires universal and effective respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

RSF stresses that the freedom to inform must not be used irresponsibly. Journalists are not ordinary members of the public, inasmuch as other people listen to and pay attention to what they say. (RSF)

### (11) Turkmenistan...

project, Afghan businessmen will be able to purchase the gas from Afghanistan borders not from Turkmenistan markets. The project will have good impacts on gas prices in local markets until the TAPI pipeline project is completed," Kargar said.

Meanwhile, the Oil and Gas Importers Union welcomed the move, saying that the project will help the country to control fuel and gas shortage during winters.

"The pipeline is for preventing from fluctuation of gas prices in local markets during winters. By this, government can have a better look at the liquid gas purchase and its arrival in local markets," said Azraksh Hafizi, head of the union.

Currently, Afghan businessman import liquid gas from Turkmenistan with a higher price. The issue poses financial burdens on

consumers. (Tolonews)

### (12) Frequent Flight ...

Jan Alkozai, deputy head of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI), said he traveled on AAA flight FG-331 in late June to Urumqi. The flight was delayed for two hours just because of the pilot's anger.

He added passengers were made to wait inside the bus under the wings of the China-bound plane for an hour, as the pilot got angry for some reason. Passengers were brought back to the airport lounge as efforts were made to resolve the issue.

Wahidullah Khanzada, a resident of Kabul who traveled on FG-332 flight on July 6 to Urumqi, alleged passengers had to wait inside the airport for one and half hour for boarding the plane.

He explained the flight departure time was 6:05 but it took off at 7:35. Khanzada said one flight attendant told him the departure had been delayed for 10 people and the plane would take off after their arrival.

Via its Facebook page, Pajhwok asked people about flight delays. In response, Malena Kausar wrote her AAA flight from Ankara to Kabul was delayed for 24 hours.

Nisar Ahmad Barak, hailing from Kandahar province, also griped he regularly traveled between Kandahar City and New Delhi on AAA flights and had to face delays more often than not.

With regard to the grouse of a passenger about the pilot's wrath, AAA Chief Commercial Officer Abdul Ali Frogh said: "A pilot cannot get angry. There is a system and pilots cannot get angry without a reasonable cause."

He added if a pilot lost his temper, he would not be allowed to fly a plane as passenger safety relied to his performance and professionalism.

Kam Air Abdullah Hameed, who travels on Kam Air flights between Herat and Kabul, wrote on social media account its flights were usually behind schedule.

"There has to be someone we should register our complaints with over delayed flights," he said, without going into details.

On the other hand, Naqib Haroonkhel wrote his Facebook wall: "I had to board a Kam Air flight scheduled for 6pm. I arrived three hours before the departure time."

"However, the plane had taken off three hours ahead of my arrival, because a parliamentarian had an urgent piece of work. Many other passengers also missed the flight!"

Suleman Omar, commercial director of Kam Air, confirmed some flights were delayed. He said flights were delayed or left earlier if a senior government official had any urgency. No alternative flights are operated in such cases.

"Kam Air is the only company that informs customers over the telephone if a flight is delayed even for half an hour. We notify customers one day before a passenger comes to the airport," he insisted.

Safi Airways Syed Abbas Sadat, an Afghan studying in India, said: "I had a flight from Kabul to Delhi on June 17. The plane was expected to take off at 1:30pm, but the flight was delayed to 6pm, three and half hours."

He has travelled on flights of different airlines between Kabul and Delhi over the past two years, but most of them fail to stick to their schedules.

An official of the Safi Airways, who wished to go unnamed, said their flights were frequently delayed in the past. But the problem has now been resolved, according to the official.

Safi Airways flights were set back for an hour and 15 minutes due to technical problems, shortage of planes and other issues, he admitted.

Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority (ACAA) spokesman Qasim Rahimi acknowledged receiving complaints about domestic flight delays. He said they had met representatives of Ariana, Kam Air and Safi Airways on Tuesday on the issue.

The airlines would present their plans for resolving the problem to the ACAA within a week. Rahimi added ACAA placed emphasis on the delivery of satisfactory air transportation services, considering problems of airlines and people's economic situation.

Any kind of violations of set procedures and laws would be investigated, he promised. Flights delays represent a type of violation and the ACAA would try to resolve the problem. (Pajhwok)

### (13) Only Baghlan ...

"We ask the government not to destroy recreational areas and instead create more," he added.

Provincial environment protection authority head Norullah Amini said he was unaware about distribution of the park's land to shopkeepers.

"We act in accordance with the law whenever a threat is posed to environment. Building market in Bagh-i-Qahwa Khana clearly means destruction of green area, we will not let such an attempt succeed by any organ or person," he concluded.

Baghlan mayor refused to comment on the issue. (Pajhwok)

### (14) USAID Hosts...

recent achievements and challenges at the

universities and discussed strategic approaches the various institutions can take over the next year to work with USWDP on improving the quality of the higher education system. The participants also reviewed planned activities for 2018.

The United States Special Chargé d'Affaires for Afghanistan Ambassador Hugo Llorens noted the importance of bringing together the university chancellors to help reach consensus on a joint strategy.

"The group of people gathered here at this Forum has the potential to generate ideas that will revolutionize higher education in Afghanistan for decades to come. I think it is an excellent opportunity, which is only possible through your hard work, commitment, and creativity."

Through the University Support and Workforce Program, USAID supports efforts to improve the administrative capacity of the Ministry of Education and universities and provides technical assistance to establish new market-oriented degree programs. (PR)

### (15) Afghanistan ...

The ministry said Afghanistan believed negotiation was the only local and reasonable way to solve conflict and achieve peace in the Korean peninsula. (Pajhwok)

### (16) Kandaharis Say ...

of female health specialists was another serious problem.

"Only two among the 17 female staff at the maternity ward are specialist doctors and the rest are pursuing their specializations," he said.

But 15 of the female staff would leave for other provinces after completing their specialization, said

Zmaryal, who said the medical staff shortage would be filled with upcoming graduates from local public and private sector universities in near future.

He said many midwives had recently been appointed at various Kandahar hospitals, attending women during their deliveries, but they could not treat complicated cases.

Except Spin Boldak district, there was not even a single female doctor in other districts of Kandahar, he added.

"Women who travel long distances from districts to the provincial capital, Kandahar City, for child delivery die on roads due to the bad road conditions and lack of health facilities in their own areas."

Zmaryal said the problem could be overcome if a hospital on the southern zone level was established exclusively for maternity and other women's health related services.

Dr. Fareshta Bawar, the maternity ward head at the Mirwais Hospital, said they were in great trouble due to the shortage of resources, personnel and a proper working environment.

She echoed the idea of a special maternity hospital in Kandahar on the zonal level.

"Despite huge problems, more than 50 deliveries are attended at the ward on a daily basis. On average, five cesarean deliveries happen in the maternity every day," she added. Provincial women's affairs director Rucija Achakzai said women in Kandahar were deprived of many facilities and rights including health services.

They faced issues like domestic violence, illiteracy and many others and their health had also been ignored, complained the official.

"The mother mortality rate is high due to the absence of healthcare services. Many women die on the way to Kandahar City from remote districts before reaching hospital," she said.

Achakzai asked the central government to increase healthcare services for women, particularly maternity services, in Kandahar.

A provincial council member, Sarina Faizi, also said mothers from the entire southern zone came to the maternity ward of Mirwais Hospital that could not handle all the patients.

She said the provincial council had also demanded of the central government to provide a maternity hospital in Kandahar on the zonal level.

There are a total of 97 healthcare centers, including 14 privately-run, in Kandahar. District residents also complain about lack of health services in their regions.

Not a single healthcare center is available in two Kandahar districts --Shurawak and Registan -- due to insecurity and other problems.

According to Kandahar public health department, 94 areas in districts of the province are without any healthcare facilities. (Pajhwok)

### (17) Afghan Intelligence...

other side of the Durand Line.

The anti-government armed militant groups have not commented regarding the report so far.

This comes as the Afghan officials have long been insisting that the leadership councils of the Taliban group and the notorious Haqqani terrorist network are based in Peshawar, Quetta, and other parts of Pakistan from where they plan and coordinate attacks in Afghanistan.

The Afghan officials earlier said that the deadly explosion near the embassy of Germany in Kabul was plotted by the Haqqani network in Pakistan, although the leaders of the network and the Taliban have rejected their role in the devastating attack that killed over one hundred and fifty people. (KP)