

(1) New Water ...

and regional countries including Iran and Pakistan had been accurately studied in the new strategy, he said. The new water resources strategy suggested construction of 40 dams across the country, Usmani added.

"The Ministry of Energy and Water is faced with serious procurement problems, our water resources may be lost if this problem is not resolved, no investor in such a situation shows interest in construction of dams," he said. The minister said he had no authority in executive affairs and this gave birth to challenges the water resources faced.

Water diplomacy has also been prepared in the new strategy in light of environmental studies in Afghanistan and neighboring countries, Usmani said.

The minister said Afghanistan shared one basin with Pakistan and four with Iran. "Our neighbors say they are faced with a lack of water, but it is also the fact that Afghanistan is too faced with the same problem, improper usage of water by our neighbors also create environmental issues in our country," he added.

"Iran has six basins with 600 dams built on them, tens of its dams are built on shared basins with Afghanistan, Iran has completely blocked the flow of water into Afghanistan from shared basins by building large number of dams on them, while Afghanistan has built only Salma Dam on Harirod Basin," he said.

He said studies of his ministry showed environmental problems in Iran and Afghanistan resulted from shortage of water and unhealthy management of water by the Iranian government.

Usmani said he was ready to discuss the issues with Iranian authorities. An active diplomacy for solving water related problems with neighboring countries was the need of the hour, he said.

He continued the country's water resources should be controlled and red lines cleared with neighboring countries before discussing the problems.

Wolesi Jirga speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahim said: "We support the demands of the Ministry of Energy and Water for protection of national interests and national water management."

The water management issue is raised after Iranian president's recent remarks on Afghanistan's efforts to build dams.

Iranian leader Hassan Rouhani has criticized construction of several dams in Afghanistan like Salma dam, Kamal Khan Dam and Kajaki dam and said his government could not stay silent on construction of the dams because the structures blocked water flow in rivers.

However, the Afghan government maintains water issues between Afghanistan and Iran have been solved based on agreements of international principles and Afghanistan uses its own rights. (Pajhwok)

(2) Release of Suspects ...

not allow MPs to speculate about their colleagues.

Speaking in the Wolesi Jirga today, Hazrat Ali said he had no personal enmity with the Meshrano Jirga chairman, but the release of the suspects should be investigated.

"It should be made public as to who guaranteed the release of these men, what was the motive behind their attempt to enter the parliament building and why they used my name," he said. Ali asked the administrative board of the lower house to thoroughly investigate the issue pertaining to the security of all parliament members.

Speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahim said: "The release of the suspects is unacceptable to us. The National Directorate of Security (NDS) should explain it to us why these men were freed." He asked the internal security commission of the Wolesi Jirga to summon the NDS chief to provide information about the case. "The suspects should be recaptured as soon as possible; they should be investigated," he ruled. (Pajhwok)

(3) Georgian...

Ministry of Defence of Georgia said exercise was part of an ongoing series of drills serving to improve personnel performance for evacuation, quick reaction and "other security elements". The battalion departed for their planned rotation in the Resolute Support mission earlier this year.

They replaced the 32nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Brigade as part of the periodic rotation system adopted by the Georgian military for its units serving in

Afghanistan.

Before their send-off to Afghanistan the battalion troops underwent mission preparation in Georgia and a final exercise at Unites States Army's Joint Multinational Readiness Centre in Hohenfels, Germany.

The 23rd Battalion unit is tasked with providing outer and inner security for the Bagram Air Base, the largest US military base in Afghanistan. (Agencies)

(4) Study Finds...

meanwhile rejected the New Line Research Center's findings and said the figures were unsubstantiated.

"We have destroyed more than 300 acres of poppy cultivated lands and it is possible that more fields were cultivated with poppies. No one has yet proved the exact amount of opium products," Balkh governor's spokesman Ahmad Munir Farhad said.

The Khat-e-Naw Research Institute however said government's negligence in building cold storage facilities for farmers, the lack of agricultural markets and the increase in insecurity are the reasons behind the rise in poppy cultivation in Balkh. (Tolnews)

(5) Afghanistan...

captained by test batsman Usman Khawaja, were scheduled to play two four-day matches and a 50-over tri-series against India and South Africa on the tour.

Afghanistan will now join South Africa and India for the series starting later this month.

"We are delighted that Afghanistan have accepted our invitation and look forward to welcoming them to our country for the very first time," Cricket South Africa chief executive Haroon Lorgat said in a statement.

"They are a passionate cricket nation and I expect the Afghanistan A team to compete strongly against our A team and India A in the upcoming tri-series."

The International Cricket Council (ICC) voted in London last month to make Afghanistan, along with Ireland, full members of the organisation, allowing those countries to become part of the elite 12 nations who play test matches.

"We are very pleased to accept Cricket South Africa's invitation to participate in the upcoming triangular series," Afghanistan Cricket Board chief executive Shafiqullah Stanikzai said.

"This will be our first-ever visit to South Africa and I am certain that this will give Afghanistan 'A' team very good exposure to competitive cricket." (Reuters)

(6) 3 Projects ...

mountainous areas and the third one is construction of a retaining wall.

Sharifal said the first road, 12km lengthy and six meters wide, would cost 34 million afs. The second project, repairing of a 19km-long road, would 34 million afs.

The official said the projects would help resolve issues hundreds of people faced, thanks to lawmaker Saleh Mohammad Saleh for his efforts at approving the projects.

Wolesi Jirga member from Kunar, Saleh, said people of the province faced a lot of issues which needed serious attention.

Advisor to the CEO and Manogi district resident, Pinda Hikmat, expressed happiness over the launch of the projects, saying they would resolve many big issues of people.

He asked the central government to give more attention to the eastern province because it was a mountainous province where people were deprived of basic facilities and needs. (Pajhwok)

(7) Extreme Harm...

(IEDs), such as suicide bombs and pressure-plate devices, which were responsible for the deaths of 596 civilians and injured 1,483. These figures include civilian casualties from suicide and complex attacks -involving more than one perpetrator and two or more forms of weaponry, including suicide IEDs- which killed 259 civilians and injured 892, a 15 per cent increase on comparable figures for the first six months of 2016.

Many of those casualties occurred in a single attack in Kabul city on 31 May, when a truck bomb killed at least 92 civilians and injured nearly 500, the deadliest incident documented by UNAMA since 2001.

The report makes a series of recommendations, including calling on anti-government forces to stop targeting civilians and to enforce directives from the Taliban leadership calling for an

end to such attacks.

Government forces are urged to stop using weapons including mortars and rockets in civilian populated areas, and to disband pro-government militias and similar groups. The report also recommends ongoing support from international military forces to support and train the Afghan national army.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, said: "The statistics in this report, horrifying though they are, can never fully convey the sheer human suffering of the people of Afghanistan. Each one of these casualty figures reflects a broken family, unimaginable trauma and suffering, and the brutal violation of people's human rights."

"Many Afghan civilians are suffering psychological trauma, having lost family and friends, and are living in fear knowing the risks they face as they go about their daily lives. Many more have been forced from their homes and suffered lasting damage to their health, education and livelihoods. The continuing national tragedy of Afghanistan must not be overlooked."

The figures show a rise in the number of women and children killed and injured, reversing a decline documented in 2016. A total of 174 women were confirmed as killed and 462 injured, an overall rise in casualty figures of 23 per cent on the same period last year.

Child casualties increased by one per cent, with 436 deaths and 1,141 injuries recorded, although the number of child deaths was up by nine per cent. UNAMA noted that the use of pressure-plate IEDs and aerial operations in civilian-populated areas substantially contributed to the increases in both women and child casualties.

Anti-government forces caused the deaths of 1,141 civilians and injury of 2,348, a 12 per cent increase on the first six months of last year. These deaths and injuries represent 67 per cent of the total number of civilian casualties, with 43 per cent attributed to the Taliban, five per cent to Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP), and the rest to unidentified attackers.

The report commends Afghan security forces for their continued efforts to reduce civilian casualties resulting from ground engagements, which represent the second leading cause of deaths and injuries.

The figures demonstrate a 10 per cent reduction in civilian casualties from ground engagements the first six months of 2017 compared to the same period last year, with 434 confirmed deaths and 1,375 injuries. The decrease is attributed to a reduction in casualties caused by indirect and/or explosive weapons, mostly mortars, used by pro-government forces.

UNAMA attributed a total of 327 civilian deaths and 618 injuries to pro-government forces, a 21 per cent decrease compared with the same period last year, although UNAMA noted a 43 per cent rise in civilian casualties during aerial operations (95 deaths and 137 injuries).

Nineteen per cent of the casualties occurred in the capital, Kabul, as a result of suicide and complex attacks. Civilian casualties increased in 15 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, mainly due to increased attacks by anti-government forces. The highest numbers of casualties occurred in Kabul, Helmand, Kandahar, Nangarhar, Uruzgan, Faryab, Herat, Laghman, Kunduz and Farah provinces.

The UN report includes only incidents which have been confirmed after a thorough verification process. This strict documentation process, which requires multiple steps of confirmation in each case, means that the overall figures are probably conservative.

UN figures show that since January 2009 more than 26,500 civilians have died and just under 49,000 have been injured as a result of armed conflict in Afghanistan. (PR)

(8) NPA Rejects

leaders, Atta Mohammad Noor and Mohammad Mohaqiq, claimed that large-scale corruption was ongoing with the NPA.

Noor and Mohaqiq are also among the founding leaders of the recently established Coalition to Rescue Afghanistan.

"Everyone knows that every ministry which has signed the agreement including the special procurement commission that all of them are partners and contracts are sealed here and in Dubai and they get their share, everyone knows this," said Noor.

"Everything has been centralized in the National Procurement Authority, whenever the budget is delayed, it

happens in the procurement authority, corruption also takes place there," said Mohaqiq.

NPA officials argue however that since its establishment in 2015, the authority has dealt with over 2,500 projects and has notched up savings totaling almost 18 billion Afs.

"If a citizen of Afghanistan has any kind of claim or allegations, it is better that they prove their allegations on the basis of credible evidence, otherwise on the basis of the law of Afghanistan, making false allegations should be tackled by Afghanistan's legal and judicial institutions," said Najman.

"When agreements are signed by a single institution, it means that there is corruption, but it is not important where and when corruption happens, secondly bidding with a limited number of companies indicates corruption, because these limited companies get the chance to come to an agreement," said political analyst Sediq Patman.

"Bidding process is carried out collectively and decisions are taken together; it means that his excellency the president, his excellency the chief executive, his excellency second vice president, the minister of economy, minister of finance, minister of justice and advisor to the president on basic infrastructure monitor the meetings of the commission alongside national and international monitors," added Najman.

The NPA since its establishment has convened more than 114 sessions. Currently it is working on 4,300 projects of which are 900 major projects. The NPA has also cancelled the licenses of 130 companies that reportedly violated the procurement law. (Tolnews)

(9) 5 Kidnappers...

rich people from various areas. But the residents of Nangarhar viewed the arrests as insufficient, demanding more concrete efforts to curb target killings. In the past two weeks, the NDS personnel have arrested 11 kidnappers. (Pajhwok)

(10) Daesh Still

would take to the streets and block the Kabul-Jalalabad Highway, Qadir told Monday's session of the lower house.

With each passing day, he said, Daesh was expanding its foothold in Nangarhar, rendering people prone to be sacrificed everyday.

He called as his children security personnel currently fighting in frontlines against Daesh in different parts of the province.

"We do not allow anyone to martyr our soldiers; more than 2,000 military troops are stationed in Tora Bora, but the operation is halted and the move has allowed the terrorists to kill innocent people."

According to him, currently 70 percent of Tora Bora area was under Daesh control and the government, availing public uprising forces, should clear the area of IS militants and give Tora Bora's protection responsibility to area people. He said residents were ready to protect their area.

He said Daesh existence had a negative impact on people's morale and the government should take steps for clearing the area as soon as possible.

"If the government does take action against the militant group in a few days, the Nangarhar people will block the Kabul-Jalalabad Highway for traffic until Tora Bora is completely cleansed of Daesh."

He said people were fed up with cruel activities of Daesh and a sincere and serious combat mission was needed to crush the group.

However, Maj. Shirin Aqa, spokesman for 201st Military Corps in the east, said joint security forces backed by NATO counterparts had launched an operation in Tora Bora area of Chaprahar district and the operation was successfully ongoing.

He told Pajhwok Afghan News the entire Chaprahar district was cleared of Daesh in 24 hours, but some areas it took three days to be completely cleared. "As Tora Bora is a mountainous area, the operation has been slow going. (Pajhwok)

(11) 80 Taliban ...

the offensive.

He said foreign forces also cooperated with the Afghan forces in the battles. Only one policeman was killed and seven others wounded, Ahmadzai added.

He said a combing operation was currently underway in Nawa district and plans to recapture other districts of Helmand were on the table.

Governor Hayatullah Hayat, who spoke at the press conference, said

that civil services would be restored in Nawa district.

The Taliban would be no longer able to stay ground against the Afghan forces after suffering huge losses in the recent past, he said.

Agha Mohammad Takra, Nawa administrative chief, told Pajhwok Afghan News that all buildings of the police headquarters, the district administrative office and others had been destroyed by the Taliban during their nine months old siege.

"We will try to reconstruct these buildings as our first steps towards good governance," he said, adding Nawa people remained disconnected from the government for several months and now they were in urgent need of public services.

Second Lt. Mohammad Jan Khpalwak, a commander of the 4th Border Brigade, said: "I am tasked with collecting Taliban flags. I will carefully collect the flags and bury them in river."

Haji Atiqullah, a member of Nawa Social Council, also said that the Afghan forces had wrested control of their district.

He said Nawa residents took to the streets to celebrate the security forces' victory. The Taliban have so far not commented on the situation so far. (Pajhwok)

(12) Afghan Disabled...

picture symbolizing the Turkish people's resistance to the coup attempt by clenching a pencil between her teeth.

At an event organized by the National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan, she asked party officials to make sure the picture reaches Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The drawing shows a hand with the Turkish star and crescent on its cuff protecting a peaceful street scene below from bullets.

The July 15 defeated coup, which was commemorated on Saturday and Sunday, saw 250 people martyred and nearly 2,200 injured. (AA)

(13) 3 Herat Port ...

No one has so far arrested in connection with the incident, which was confirmed by Herat police spokesman Abdul Ahad Walizada.

Local officials accused the Taliban of killing the officials, but the group's spokesman, Qari Yousaf Ahmadi, said they had no link with the killings. He said the officials might be killed by robbers. (Pajhwok)

Robotics Team Introduced First at Opening Ceremony

KABUL - Waving the national flag, the all-girl team was given a resounding welcome as they made their appearance at the inauguration ceremony of the competition

Afghanistan's robotics team on Monday stood shoulder-to-shoulder with teams from 163 countries at the inauguration ceremony of the FIRST Global international robotics competition in Washington DC.

Waving the national flag, the girls received a loud ovation from the crowd at the opening ceremony on Sunday.

The teams were introduced alphabetically, which meant the Afghan team - which are all girls - were the first of 163 countries to enter. The three-day international robotics competition in Washington DC aims to promote science and technology among youths worldwide.

Members of the Afghan robotics team said they hope to do well in the competition. "We hope that our robot works as we have designed to get a position in this competition," said Lida Azizi, a member of the robotics team.

"We have worked hard and we wanted to see our robot working and we were not disappointed. Our families believed in us and helped us a lot and we managed to get here and to one day be our country's future engineers," said Fatima Qaderiyani, another member of the team.

The girls, from Herat, are between the ages of 15 and 18. Initially their visa applications for the U.S were rejected and only after President Donald Trump reportedly intervened was the decision overturned. The announcement however came at the last minute which meant the girls immediately flew to Kabul to get visas.

With little time to spare the girls landed in Washington DC on Saturday, just in time for the opening ceremony on Sunday. "I am happy that we got the chance to attend this competition to show Afghan women's abilities and to show that women can also build robots," said Kawsar Roshan, another member of the team. (Tolnews)