

(1) UNAMA ...

that Afghanistan's broad political consensus was fraying. According to him, a growing number of political factions, some who were formerly part of the National Unity Government as well as a younger generation of political forces, have begun to criticize and demand reforms from government. "The government, on the other hand, claims that opposition groups block important reforms and stoke tension by calling for the government to be replaced. Each side accuses the other of acting against the national interest. It appears to me undeniable that these perceptions have contributed to tensions that characterize today's political environment," he said. "The existence of opposition is natural in any political scene, but the amount of mistrust is growing and there is an increasing resort to uncompromising slogans and statements which can fuel further violent protest. Efforts at inclusiveness and building consensus for political stability are critical," he added.

He said the Afghan vision for peace is premised on the fact that a stable Afghanistan would lead to a stable and more prosperous region. "Achieving this vision will require the strong determination of all states concerned, particularly of the region and the neighbourhood," he said. He said however that the recent series of security incidents has demonstrated the urgent need for reforms in the security sector. He said Afghanistan was facing numerous internal challenges in addition to fighting an insurgency that appears to be gaining ground. "These include deep rooted political tension, the difficulty of integrating socially and economically the thousands of Afghan refugees who return each day, an economy that is only very slowly recovering after the international drawdown in 2014, and pervasive corruption. The economy remains heavily dependent on development assistance and that corruption undermines the legitimacy of the state. "It prevents a real economy from emerging. It contributes to insecurity. Corruption is at the heart of the problem of impunity, which itself is at the heart of the ongoing human rights challenges," he said. He told the Security Council that the attack of 31 May and the events that followed should serve as a clarifying moment. "We are at a point where we need to take conscious decisions to reverse negative trends and seek stability or face far worse. The recent crisis has illustrated the dangers of pushing narrow interests, be they domestic or international, in Afghanistan's fragile context." He said two areas need to be focused on, one, preparations must be accelerated for the next round of elections, parliamentary and presidential. And secondly a genuine peace process with the Taliban is essential and urgent. On the issue of elections, he said decisions must be made regarding the use of technology, and the role and modalities of international electoral assistance, work must start on voter registration and the electoral calendar must be made clear. "We understand that the Independent Elections Commission will make an announcement as early as tomorrow regarding the date for parliamentary elections. I believe that this announcement will contribute to allaying the political tensions I have referred to in this briefing." On the second point, he said Afghans need to begin an internal dialogue on the meaning of peace and reconciliation. "The government and the Taliban need to engage directly with each other to define a political solution." In conclusion he stated that UNAMA is doing all it can to help contain political tensions, "using our long-standing relationships and our experience." "On the eve of the important Muslim holiday of Eid, I wish to again reiterate my call for unity and urge restraint so that families and communities can enjoy a peaceful end of Ramadan." (Tolnews)

(2) MoF Serious ...

government has written and verbally directed organizations, including ministries of interior and defense and the National Directorate of Security (NDSinfo-icon), customs protection unit, and Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) to prevent the smuggling of metal scrap as soon as possible. He said the government supported industrialists, particularly steel millers. Currently 14 iron-melting firms with about \$74 million investment are operational in the country, employing 2,000 people. Sakhi Paiman, AIA head, also spoke on the occasion, thanking the government for its decision to sell scrap steel to local firms, saying Afghanistan could become self-sufficient in iron-melting if the government stoutly supported the industry.

(3) President Signs ...

he said police should be equipped with information about cyber crimes and judges and attorneys who were expert in the field should be involved in the law's implementation. He said the law, if enforced, would help people get rid of negative activities on the social media and would promote the culture of positive use of technology. Political affairs expert and social activist Javed Ghafoor said the law would help prevent political and ethnic differences among the Afghans. He said the law would help preserve the Afghan unity. He said everyone was able to publish content without any evidence but now such things would be monitored. He said the real cause of current differences were the materials published on social media without evidence in support. (Pajhwok)

(4) Pakistan ...

extremist groups — such as the Taliban and the Haqqani Network — were able to relocate and continue to operate in and from Pakistan." The Pentagon said the United States continued to convey to Pakistan at all levels the importance of taking action against all terrorist and extremist groups. The existence of up to 20 terrorist or insurgent groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan required a US presence in the region. In its report, the Pentagon pushed for increased collaboration between Afghanistan and Pakistan to maintain pressure on militant and terrorist groups and for meeting the enduring security requirements on both sides of the shared border. The report said the trust deficit resulting from Pakistan's support of and inaction against Afghan-oriented extremists was hampering the bilateral military collaboration required to achieve enduring security. Since the beginning of President Ghani's tenure, leaders from both countries have made several attempts to improve relations and to address mutual security interests more effectively, such as the threat from various extremist groups that reside in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region, it said. These efforts have largely ceased following major high-profile terrorist attacks in both Afghanistan and Pakistan and public statements by each government disparaging one another. Each country publicly claims that the other provides sanctuary to certain militant groups and lacks the will to combat them, it said. The Pentagon said Afghanistan continued to face an externally enabled and resilient insurgency, adding that, Afghan forces have shown determination and continued capability growth in their fight against the Taliban-led insurgency. "The Afghan government retains control of Kabul, major population centers, most key transit routes, provincial capitals, and a majority of district centers." Meanwhile, the Taliban continued to contest district centers, threaten provincial capitals, and temporarily seize main lines of communication throughout the country, especially in high-priority areas like Kunduz and Helmand Provinces. "As of February 2017, RS assessed that the Afghan Government maintained control or influence over 65 percent of the population, while the Taliban had control or influence over approximately 11 percent of the population, with the remainder being contested," it said. (Pajhwok)

(5) Afghan Govt ...

Border guards of the two countries clashed over an installation at the Torkham border crossing in June last year and again clashed at the Spin Boldak border crossing in May. The deputy presidential spokesman said the European Parliament had

recently said the Europe in general and the British in particular had committed a mistake by dividing one tribe into two parts and the mistake should be corrected. "Pakistan wants to show it is curbing terrorism by fencing the border. Pakistan, Afghanistan and the entire worldinfo-icon know where the terrorists are. If Pakistan is sincere in the war against terrorism, it should stand with Afghanistan and take action and deny safe havens to terrorists," Azad said.

He said the Pakistani forces had previously also faced resistance from the people and the government of Afghanistan over the border fencing and they would again face the same if they continued the project. He said the government would soon initiate talks with the Pakistani side about the border fencing. (Pajhwok)

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(6) Foreigners ...

Pajhwok Afghan News Iranians cited to enter Afghanistan and obtain citizenship due to the lack of security on the border. Naser Ahmad, a resident of Shindad district, said getting Tazkera was an easy job as the applicant needed to bring along two or three witnesses. "The applicant offers bribe to the district officer and finds two witnesses and obtains Tazkera no matter from which country he is." Syed Abdul Karim, the administrative chief of Ghoryan district, said he two persons who tried to make fake Tazkera arrested by police last year. He cited two reasons why foreigners obtained Afghan NIC — to promote insurgency or get citizenship in European countries. A local official, who wished to go unnamed, said some members of the Provincial Council (PC) had approved Tazkera applications for some people who were not Afghans. But the PC rejected the allegation. PC member Mehdi Hadid said: "No foreigner has been approved by the local council as eligible for Tazkera. Some Afghans who live in Iran since a long time may be helping the Iranians in obtaining the Afghan NIC." Farhad Jilani, the governor's spokesman, he could not rule out issuance of ID cards to foreigners but they had not yet received any complaints in this regard. He said issuing Tazkera to foreigners was against the law and anybody found guilty of doing so would be punished. The Population Registration Department Head, Khawaja Hekmatullah Habibi, said he daily handled two or three cases of fake Tazkera. He said: "Some people who had made duplicate stamps for fake Tazkeras were arrested and referred to the judiciary." He said it was disappointing that some Afghans helped foreigners obtain Tazkeras. "If an Afghan brings a foreigner and introduce him as his son or brother, then we can do nothing and should give them the Tazkera," said Habibi. He said distribution of electronic identity cards would help resolve fraud in Tazkera issuance to a great extent. In eastern Nangarhar province, Hafee Pahlawan, head of the Population Registration Department, said fake Tazkeras were distributed in the past but now the issue had been overcome. He said they introduced more strict measures for applicants who were obliged to obtain Tazkera in the presence of a family elder. He said the authority of NIC distribution officers' authority had been increased in Jalalabad city and districts and the move helped resolve the problem to most extent. Pahlawan said he held meetings with NIC distribution officers in districts every month and advised them against issuing NIC in absentia. Officials of Wadan organization in Nangarhar also said their supervision helped reduce corruption in the province's population registration department. Wadan has also installed a complaint box in the Population Registration Department enabling people to share their complaints with the organization. Shamsul Haq Hashamzai, a representative of the organization, said they visited the department every week to help reduce problems there. Noor Agha, 25, a resident of Kama district of Nangarhar, who was waiting in front of the department, told Pajhwok that he had submitted his ID card for confirmation to the department, but his ID card went missing in the department. "I gave my ID card three weeks ago for confirmation, but the officers there told me today that my ID card has gone missing," he said. Agha said a number of middlemen were active fleecing applicants and creating problems for the population

registration department. Sediqullah, a resident of Sayed Karam district of southeastern Paktia province, said he along with his family had recently returned from Pakistan. "We need ID cards for school, we are wandering around here for the last four days but no one is helping us," he said. Similarly, people in the capital Kabul also say they face huge problems in obtaining NIC. Large crowds of people gather in front of Kabul population registration department to correct their names, obtain NIC or just confirm their NICs are valid. A resident of Bagrami district of Kabul, Javid getting the ID card was a difficult job. He complained about the presence of middlemen and people having connections in the office and said: "A lot of deals are done here, there are many people who have relations with officers, some people pay money in bribe to get their work done fast."

Kabul population registration department head Hamayon Mohtat did not reject foreign nationals were issued Afghan NIC, but said there was no clear evidence to prove it. "Our detective organs strictly watch the dangers coming from our border provinces, but we have not received any evidence to prove a foreign national is given Afghan ID card," he added. He said many government and non-government offices in Herat confirmed identity of a person before he was issued an ID card. About fake NICs, he said: "There are too many fake NICs, we recover many of them on a daily basis and we have introduced many people in such cases to the judicial organs." A number of the population registration department officers were also among those introduced to the judicial organs, said Mohtat, adding 400 fake NICs had been seized over the past eight months. About slowness in their work, he said too much applicants, shortage of personnel and incomplete information provided by the applicants were reasons behind the slow process. "Around 64,000 people daily visit this department from different provinces. We have 90 workers in the center, around 6,000 people visit the office for obtaining and confirming their NICs or other related services," Mohtat said. He blamed people for using middlemen and relatives or following illegal ways in order to get their work finished earlier. Distribution of e-NIC would help prevent fake ID cards, he said. Government officials earlier had said distribution of e-NIC would reduce many criminal activities. However, years have passed but the e-ID cards are yet to be distributed. (Pajhwok)

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(7) Ghani Stresses ...

Maiwand Rahyab, and Sayed Hashmatullah Hashimi were introduced as new commissioners on the IARCSC. Ghani's two-article presidential order on hiring process and group examination for civil services positions at ministries and government departments was read out at the ceremony. Under the decree, the Presidential Palace would monitor the examination process for hiring eligible persons on vacant positions. In addition, the order reads that vacant positions at all organizations should be specified and filled with qualified people through an open competition. Ghani said the inability of the young generation to find their way to government organizations was catastrophic for the country. He said administrative reforms were needed to prevent appointments to government posts through favoritism and pave the way for eligible people to hold the posts. Ghani said: "When our employees are committed, talented and enjoyed high capacity, it results in development and strengthening of our organizations." He emphasized on strengthening government organizations, adding if institutions were strengthened they would be able to be successfully respond to clients. "I am the president and want to reduce my authorities. I don't give authorities to individuals but to institutions. The more the institutions are strong, the more your trust in them." "This year our attention is focused on 10 ministries—five whose expenses are high and five others which have a lot of revenue." He said IARCSC should be trusted because it was not a platform to hatch conspiracies but to play an effective role in future building. The president said 5,000 more vacant posts would be managed by IARCSC following a new presidential order. The families of intelligence and se-

curity forces martyrs should be prioritized in recruitment for the mentioned posts, he said. Ghani asked those having passed the test to become electronic ID cards distributors to remain committed to their people as they were leading a national and important process. "Observe the Constitution, the country would be more stable if the constitution is enforced, it is responsibility of all of us to enforce the Constitution," he said, while talking to the newly appointed e-ID cards distribution employees. The attorney general office and the Supreme Court have agreed that their administrative posts would be announced for a free competition through IARCSC, the president added.

"Yesterday approved the suggestion of 8,000 new teacher positions, the budget for these positions would be allocated in the next six months, their recruitment process must be very transparent," he said. IARCSC head Nader Naderi said the recruitment process was full of problems and needed essential reforms. About the appointment of new 500 employees for e-ID cards distribution, he said the employees were hired without any favoritism and political influence. "I ask the newly appointed employees not to meet with representatives or influential figures, but display talent in their duties," he said. Naderi said he had brought essential reforms to the IARCSC over the past few months and a five-year policy of the commission would be prepared in the future. He asked the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) to prioritize employment of those who had higher education and were more aware of their community in districts' administration. The president signed contracts of four out of 496 successful candidates for e-ID cards distribution process at today's meeting. (Pajhwok)

(8) Rights Groups ...

forces tried to disperse the protesters and dismantle their tent in Shar-e-Now. "The government's approach is totally illegal; the human rights commission is very distressed about it. The government should have dealt with the protesters through peaceful means, but not by using guns," said AIHRC commissioner Musa Mahmudi. There has however been speculation that a number of political leaders backed the protesters. However, there has been no reaction by political leaders over the death on Tuesday of the protesters. Meanwhile, the office of the CEO has said that government asked on a few occasions to hold talks with the protesters, but they failed to respond. "We tried to settle the problems through negotiations. We negotiated several times with the help of parliament as people also wanted the same, but what has happened on the ground is not acceptable and a delegation will investigate the issue and legal action will be taken against the officials," said deputy CEO spokesman Jawed Faisal. Protesters have been holding a sit-in demonstration in the city since early this month after protesting against the lack of security in the country following the May 31 truck bombing in Kabul that killed over 150 people. (Tolnews)

(9) A Good ...

crop in Farah will total 578,000 tons which shows an increase of five percent compared to last year. The ministry said that due to favorable climate conditions and high yielding farms in Farah it is estimated that crops will average 34 tons per hectare. The ministry said this year farmers will earn a total of four billion AFs through the sale of watermelons in the province. (Tolnews)

(10) More Refugees...

site office in Afghanistan. Amid a surge in return refugees, the EU ambassador to Afghanistan Franz-Michael Skjold Mellbin said the EU was committed to helping Afghan refugees. The EU has announced \$100 million USD in aid to facilitate Afghan refugees. "The European Union member states continue to be very strong partner with Afghanistan in confronting the continued challenges here, let me mention that last year we initiated a program for almost a hundred million dollars," said Mellbin. Based on UNHCR statistics, Afghanistan has the second highest number of refugees outside the country - totaling over seven million - after Syria. Afghan refugees live in about 79 countries around the world. (Tolnews)

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(11) Pentagon Wasted...

pink uniforms for soldiers and not ask questions? That's insane. This is just simply stupid on its face. We wasted \$28 million of taxpayers' money in the name of fashion, because the defense minister thought that that pattern was pretty. So if he thought pink or chartreuse was it, would we have done that?" For years, Sopko's office has scalded the Pentagon for squandering tens of millions of dollars of the \$66 billion Congress has appropriated to train, equip and house Afghan security forces. Wednesday's installment on uniforms was particularly pungent, noting that special tailoring — zippers instead of buttons — boosted the cost of uniforms of already dubious value. The report's release comes as Defense Secretary Jim Mattis considers sending thousands more U.S. troops to bolster beleaguered Afghan forces in what has become America's longest war. Afghan troops face a resurgent Taliban insurgency, an offshoot of the Islamic State (ISIS), and other terrorist groups. The Pentagon has spent \$93 million on the uniforms since 2007. Switching to a camouflage pattern owned by the U.S. military could save taxpayers as much as \$71 million over the next decade, the inspector general found. The Pentagon, in its written response, didn't quibble with the findings. Instead, in a letter to Sopko, the military acknowledged the need for a cost-benefit analysis "to determine whether there is a more effective alternative, considering both operational environment and cost." (CMBC)

grade one in a school run by Pakistan. When my family was returning back to Afghanistan, I was very sad and missing my school and studies. I have brought my books too." "I never know if I will be enrolled in a school here in Afghanistan, but one day my father enrolled me here to study and get familiar with the education curriculum," says Muslima while sitting in the classroom next to her sister Nawbahar. As many as 39 girl students are studying in the class. "We are four sisters. We (two) are in grade one, while two others are minor. I want to be a doctor and serve my community," says Muslima. Dr. Niaz U Rahman, senior officer of SCA Education Programme in eastern region, says, "SCA has initiated the emergency education classes project for the students of returnees and internal displaced families." (Pajhwok)

(12) Emergency ...

police district. This shows the weakness of security institutions in the province," the public representative maintained. On the other hand, police chief Brig. Gen. Abdul Hameed Hameedi also acknowledged an increase in crimes and terrorist attacks in Kunduz City. However, he said efforts were ongoing to normalize the situation. "We acknowledge crimes do happen in society. We have made arrests and 190 cases and criminals have been referred to the attorney office," he pointed out. (Pajhwok)

(13) Public Reps...

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(14) US Welcomes ...

40 tonnes of dried fruits from southern Kandahar province. During the inaugural ceremony at the Presidential Palace, Ghani underlined the importance of the project. Top government officials, the Indian ambassador, Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce (ACCI) representatives and some businessmen were in attendance. Ghani said the corridor was aimed to create more opportunities and make Afghanistan an exporter. As long as Afghanistan was not transformed into an exporter, people's poverty could not be mitigated, the president believed. (Pajhwok)

(15) Taliban Ambush...

unarmed," said Qudusi. Three other employees were injured in the attack. Taliban has claimed responsibility for the attack. Meanwhile a number of Bagram residents expressed concerns over the growing security threats in the area. "I heard the firing and then we stayed at home," said Sayed Rahman, a resident who lives close to the scene. (Tolnews)

(16) Militants Use ...

the security forces or the civilians. There are no further information available regarding the location where the pictures have been taken or the militant group using the new technique for the attacks. However, the violence is on the rise, mainly due to the insurgency led by the Taliban group across the country. (KP)