

(1) Ghani Underlines

resources were exploited over the next 20 years, Ghani hoped. The Afghans had to achieve development as prolonged reliance on others had been a mistake, he said.

The president said water was a source of energy and its better management could meet Afghanistan's needs to a large extent. Water also plays a key role in promoting agriculture in a country whose 80 percent population is dependent on it, he added.

"Our historical experiences in areas of culture, civilisation and Shariah law, particularly in using water resources, are learning points in water management. Water is a great blessing of Allah but its improper use also can create problems," he said.

The president added: "Drought has increased as result of insecurity and flooding; the old culture of water distribution base has been damaged."

The president said scientific and judicious management of water was needed for a solution to problems including drought.

Ghani suggested public awareness on the issue through mosques, media and schools. The people should be educated on how to avoid water wastage and improve a just distribution of the precious natural resource. (Pajhwok)

(2) Mail to Launch

next year to expand the saffron cultivation and harvest. We will organize exhibitions to boost saffron market," he stated.

Mohammad Yasin Farahmand manager at agricultural institute of science academy said government's efforts are not sufficient for agriculture development in the country.

"Saffron is produced sufficiently in the country but it is not introduced to the market. People still lack the required awareness about saffron. We need to make them aware about benefits of saffron," he said.

MAIL statistics show that more than six tons of saffron was harvested this year which is double the crop yield compared to the last year. (Tolonews)

(3) \$70m Early

The February 28 launch ceremony was attended by First Lady Rula Ghani, US Embassy Special Chargé d'Affaires Ambassador Hugo Llorens, deputy education minister Rahil Mohammad Formuly and USAID mission director to Afghanistan, Herbert Smith.

Ministry officials, representatives of UN agencies, heads of national and international educational organizations, civil society and other stakeholders from the education sector were also present on the occasion.

"The United States is committed to promoting education, and we passionately believe that education offers the best and surest path for a brighter future for Afghanistan," said Ambassador Llorens said.

"The Afghan Children Read Program is a clear example of this sacred commitment and it will directly advance opportunities for more than one million children in primary grades."

"A good education is the best gift we can ever give our children and their success depends on how educated they are in life," said Rula Ghani. "I welcome and encourage any and all efforts that improve the state of education in Afghanistan." (Pajhwok)

(4) US Concerned

for those who committed human rights abuses were serious problems.

The government did not consistently or effectively prosecute abuses by officials, including security forces, it said.

The Taliban and other insurgents continued to kill security force personnel and civilians, including journalists, using indiscriminate tactics such as improvised explosive devices (IEDs), car bombs, suicide attacks, rocket attacks, and armed attacks. The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) attributed 61 percent of civilian casu-

alties (1,569 deaths and 3,574 injured) to non-state actors.

"The Taliban used children as suicide bombers, soldiers, and weapons carriers. Other antigovernment elements threatened, robbed, kidnapped, and attacked villagers, foreigners, civil servants, and medical and nongovernmental organization (NGO) workers. Authorities did not effectively investigate or prosecute most of these abuses," it said.

Other human rights problems included extrajudicial killings by security forces; ineffective government investigations of abuse and torture by local security forces; poor prison conditions; arbitrary arrest and detention, including of women accused of so-called moral crimes; and prolonged pretrial detentions; the State Department said.

Judicial corruption and ineffectiveness; violations of privacy rights; restrictions on freedom of speech, press, religion, and movement; pervasive governmental corruption; underage and forced marriages; abuse of children, including sexual abuse; were other major human rights problems in the country, it said.

Trafficking in persons, including forced labor; discrimination against persons with disabilities; discrimination and abuses against ethnic minorities; societal discrimination based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and HIV/AIDS status; and abuse of workers' rights, including child labor, were some other human rights issues in Afghanistan, the State Department said. (Pajhwok)

(5) Afghan Refugees

Durand Line Khattak said Pashtun parliamentarians raised the issue in the National Assembly and Senate but to no avail. An all Parties Conference was also held on the issue, but the situation remained changed, he continued.

"Religious extremism breeding terrorism has existed in Pakistan since (Gen.) Zia's martial law but the country has lived in denial for too long. The fault lies in the state policy that has used the so called non-state actors as an instrument of policy..."

The ex-MP alleged the Taliban project was launched by the Punjab-dominated security establishment of Pakistan in 1994 for two objectives -- to fill the vacuum created by the fragmentation of the Afghan groups known as mujahideen and to create a brutal fighting machine which could implement the policy of "strategic depth".

Pashtuns were deeply affected by the terrorist onslaught and military operations in their areas, particularly in FATA, he noted, saying the tribal region had been used mostly as a strategic space for fighting great games and no one had thought about the human beings living there.

Foreign terrorists brought to fight in Afghanistan were imposed on tribal Pashtuns, the ANP leader complained. After September 11, he recalled, the tribal area was controlled by terrorists for more than a decade. Terrorists killed thousands of tribal elders but no one was bothered and the area was hit by the largest number of drone attacks, he maintained.

"The state of Pakistan needs to have a clean break with the policy of making distinction between good and bad terrorists. There is need for implementation of the policy of zero tolerance towards extremism and terrorism and not just making pious noises," he observed.

He believed Pakistan's misguided policy of Talibanisation had pushed Afghanistan towards India. Interestingly, Pakistani leaders had been lecturing the world during the last four decades that Afghans would never accept foreign hegemony, but forgot their own advice when it came to the Afghan policy.

"President Ashraf Ghani's offer for close friendship with Pakistan was the best deal that Pakistan could get in the last 70 years. Both countries need to defuse tension, go for some confidence building measures (CBMs) and pick up the thread from where it

was left in 2014." (Pajhwok)

(6) Pakistan Has

North Waziristan and South Waziristan. Additionally, the FATA includes 'frontier regions' that adjoin the districts of Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Tank and Dera Ismail Khan.

This tangled mass constitutes an area of 27224 sq kilometres and is inhabited by around 3.17 million people belonging to different Pukhtoon or Pushtun tribes.

The 1400 miles (2500 KM) long Durand Line, which was drawn in 1893 by the British colonial rulers of India, geographically divides the Pushtun tribes in the region between Afghanistan and the FATA of Pakistan.

Afghanistan does not recognize the Durand line and President Ghani had said that, not the government of Afghanistan, but the people will decide on Durand line. (Pajhwok)

(7) High-Level

"The war in Helmand is on personal interests because real Taliban could not resist that longer against the Afghan forces," he said.

He claimed around 50 officials joined the government delegations only to get employed their own people in security organs.

"The interests of local and Kabul officials are shared, whenever they visit Helmand, they promise equipping of security forces but Taliban capture more areas after these officials return," Watanwal added.

He said the delegations had only met security officials in secret and they never talked to tribal elders and ordinary people.

Lt. Col. Mohammad Rassoul Zazai, 215 Maiwand Military Corps spokesman in Helmand, said the security situation in the province had improved better with visits by the high level delegations.

The Taliban militants were planning major attacks in Helmand but they failed because Afghan security were equipped with more weapons with each visit of delegations, he said.

He said around 20 delegations had visited Helmand this year and they helped a lot in holding important meetings. "Security situation is comparably better now and militants are prevented from advancing," he said.

A mechanic, Mahmud Jan, in Lashkargah city, said nothing had improved with visits of delegations. He said the officials just wasted money by traveling to the province.

He said local officials could be advised from Kabul to take decisive action for improving the situation.

Musa Kala and Nawzad districts were already under Taliban control but Nawa and Khanashin districts also collapsed after government delegations' visits to Helmand.

Afghan forces currently control only centers of Marjah, Nadali and Garmser districts. The militants have advanced their sway to the first police district of Lashkargah city. (Pajhwok)

(8) Lecturers

asked Abdul Hafiz Mansour, MP.

President Ashraf Ghani decreed recently that ethnicity should be written in the new electronic national identity cards, but in the seminar, Abdul Hafiz Mansour, Member of Parliament said steps to print a person's religious Sect on the electronic identity cards should be taken wisely.

"When in our National Identity Card, in the section referring to Sect, writes 'Hanafi', it should not be just a slogan and symbol, we should know what Hanafi is," he said.

University lecturers said Muslims should find solutions and ways to overcome the current challenges and counter the negative beliefs about Islam. (Tolonews)

(9) Balochistan

governments to launch a crackdown on banned militant organizations.

Following a heated debate, the assembly clubbed the two adjournment motions into a resolution that was passed unanimously.

Also passed was a resolution on the closure of the border with Afghanistan. The resolution demanded the border in Torkham and Chaman be reopened without any delay.

The house expressed concern over the closure of the border for the last two weeks, saying the move was affecting people on both sides. The neighbours should resolve issues through negotiations, they suggested. (Pajhwok)

(10) Beach Soccer:

to create clear chances but it was Qaderi who scored the period's first with an easy lob past captain Cai who had switched role to that of keeper.

Hamidullah Gulzar then bulged China's net to register Afghanistan's seventh goal which helped the side's clinch their second three points in the group.

The top three finishers at the AFC Beach Soccer Championship will represent Asia at the 2017 FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup, which is scheduled to be held in Nassau, Bahamas from April 27 to May 7. (Tolonews)

(11) Casualties Rise

military forces," said provincial spokesman Wahidullah Kalimzai.

Reports from eastern provinces of Kunar and Nanagarhar indicate that over the past three days several civilians have been killed and dozens others wounded after the Pakistani government launched deliberate attacks on the border provinces.

Nazian, Lalpur, Goshta, Khas and Sarkano districts are among those areas which have been under massive Pakistani shelling.

The Afghan government previously announced that it is taking all necessary steps in the diplomatic sphere to stop the Pakistani shelling. But these efforts so far have not yielded the desired outcome.

Although the ministry of foreign affairs is not prepared to comment on the issue, experts say that the only solution to the ongoing tensions on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan is to resolve the matter through diplomatic channels.

"This approach by the Pakistani military is against diplomatic principles and this does not fit the actions of a good neighbor. You are aware that our border forces are deployed at border points, but those soldiers are not willing to take action which is against the international principle," said Mohammad Ayoub Hussainkhal, commander of Afghan border forces in east.

There are reports that the Pakistani military forces over the past two weeks have fired more than 500 rockets on Afghanistan's border regions. The attacks have left more than 500 families homeless. (Tolonews)

(12) Ghazni Court

He asked the people to help the government in fighting against corruption.

Ghazni court head, Sikandar Haidari, said: "I do not confirm or reject these claims, but if the provincial council head or any other person has evidences they can share with us."

However, High Peace Committee (HPC) head in Ghazni, Khalil Hottak, said cases of criminals were not properly prepared at the attorney's office and police headquarters.

"The court has to release suspects if there is no enough evidence establishing them criminals. Cases are provided with very poor evidences," he said.

Such problems are also common in other provinces where people have repeatedly complained about corruption at lower judiciary but nothing has improved. (Pajhwok)

(13) Balkh Children

Balkhtar High School in Mazar-i-Sharif city illustrating elimination of violence against women.

Mrs. Razam Dostyar, who painted a portrait on the wall, said they were spreading positivity about women in their society.

She painted a black image of a woman with a red hand writing: 'No more violence.'

Residents of Mazar-i-Sharif thanked women activists for

their efforts at highlighting the plight of women and children in the war-torn country. (Pajhwok)

(14) Garment Factories

lots of workers had jobs here, but now there is no work to do," said Maria Omary, owner of a factory.

Economic analysts blame government negligence for not supporting domestic production and say if the situation continues, the factories will all face recession. "Afghanistan's industry needs government support to stand on its feet, otherwise, the situation will get worse day by day," Shabir Bashiri, economic analyst said. (Tolonews)

(15) Three Districts

problems of these residents, yet no one bothered to focus on it. Now we want to call upon the leaders of national unity government to address the problem," said a tribal elder Shoaib Gul.

Wazikhaw, Tarwai and Ramamai districts are in border regions with Pakistan with majority of the residents obtaining their daily provisions from Pakistan.

Tribal elders of Paktika have called on the Afghan government to take steps and find solutions to the problems. (Tolonews)

(16) 15 Daesh

police, he added. But there has been no word from Daesh in this regard.

Khogyani said a roadside bomb went off in the Khairabad area of Surkhrud district when Afghan Local Police (ALP) personnel were patrolling the area at around 9am. One ALP member was killed and another wounded. (Pajhwok)

(17) Some Districts

lot of production factories producing Narcotic drugs cocaine, Heroin, Cristal in Bakwah district."

Narcotic Drugs Traffickers are using underage children to irrigate poppy crops and avoid them to go to schools at these ages.

One of the young farmers Dilawar said, "I take care of the poppy crops, I don't go to school." Meanwhile Local officials in Farah said neighboring countries have created good markets for the poppy production for the regional and International drug Traffickers.

Deputy Governor of Farah Mohammad Younus Rasouli said, "A protocol was signed to take the poppy cultivation out of the country even not to Iran to other Foreign countries where its being used and it has customers."

Poppy crops and cultivation in Farah provoked the war between the Government and Insurgents, because Taliban are being benefited the most out of the poppy production to stand against Afghan security forces. (Agencies)

(18) Taliban Kills

Saturday killed at least 18 Taliban insurgents, including three key commanders.

The dead militants "were involved in planning and implementing several terrorist attacks in Kunduz province," according to a statement issued in Kabul.

The insurgents have stepped up attacks on government forces around the country as springtime is arriving in Afghanistan amid fears of more violence this year.

Chief Afghan presidential advisor Homayun Qayoumi has acknowledged unprecedented losses insurgents inflicted last year in Afghan National Defense and Security Forces, or ANDSF.

"It (the Taliban) looks more of an organized army fighting Afghanistan... and actually that is why the level of casualties in 2016 ended up to be much higher than the prior decade," the advisor said at a public talk in Washington last Friday while highlighting challenges facing the Afghan government.

ANDSF lost nearly 7,000 personnel while battling the Taliban last year.

The insurgent group controls or influences several districts in Kunduz and in neighboring northern provinces that border

Central Asian states.

Last month, an American airstrike killed the Taliban's commander for Kunduz, Mullah Abdul Salam, dealing a major blow to the insurgency.

Under Salam's leadership, the Taliban briefly captured Kunduz in late 2015 in an embarrassing setback to the U.S.-trained Afghan security forces.

In another development, officials in northern Faryab province have confirmed Taliban insurgents assassinated a district police chief late Saturday.

A provincial police spokesman said a bomb attached to the slain police officer's vehicle also seriously wounded another security officer. (VoA)

(19) Obama Spokesman

to be "wire tapping" a race for president prior to an election? Turned down by court earlier. A NEW LOW!" he added in subsequent tweets. "I'd bet a good lawyer could make a great case out of the fact that President Obama was tapping my phones in October, just prior to Election!" (Xinhua)

(20) BiH Makes

also met members of the presidency of BiH and other high officials of the country.

On Feb. 15, 2016, BiH formally submitted its application to join the EU. The EU's 28 member states on Sept. 20, 2016 accepted BiH's membership application. (Xinhua)

(21) Syrian War

plane estimated to be belonging to the Syrian regime crashed in the (southern province of) Hatay," he said, adding that the pilot is said to have jumped from the plane, and search efforts are ongoing. (Xinhua)

(22) Iraqi Forces

Meanwhile, the commandos of the Counter-Terrorism Service advanced toward the neighborhoods of Sumoud and Tel al-Rumman in the southwestern part of the city, sparking fierce clashes with IS extremist militants, according to the statement.

The new push in the western side of Mosul, locally known as the right bank of Tigris, came after two-day pause of advance due to bad weather that had limited the air support by the Iraqi and international coalition aircraft.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, who is also the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, announced the start of an offensive on Feb. 19 to drive extremist militants out of the western side of Mosul, locally known as the right bank of Tigris River, which bisects the city. (Xinhua)

(23) UN Says

Kurdish-led forces, and al-Khafseh, held by IS militants. Al-Khafseh is home to the main water station for Aleppo, Syria's largest city. (AP)

(24) UK Should

Labour lawmaker and chair of the Exiting the EU Committee, said in a statement.

"They do not want to be used as bargaining chips. Although the government has said it wants EU citizens to be able to remain, this has not offered sufficient reassurance that the rights and status that they have enjoyed will be guaranteed. It should now do so."

Parliament's upper house inflicted a defeat on May this week, voting for a change to her Brexit plan that says she can only trigger formal divorce talks with the European Union if she promises to protect the rights of EU citizens living in Britain. (Reuters)

(25) China's Defense

accounted for 36 percent of all military spending worldwide." The BBC and the RT also noted the lower increase of China's military budget this year. "This is the lowest increase in the Chinese military budget since 2010," the RT said. (Xinhua)

(26) China to

the budget, much in line with last year when they were instructed to keep complaints about the low rate of the increase to themselves. (Reuters)