

(1) Ghani Once...

operations in a single area, stressing the need for comprehensive and well-planned operations.

"A repeated operation is a sign of weakness," Ghani said. "Once the operation is conducted, its result should be known."

Referring to the possible peace talks with the Taliban, Ghani once again assured the people that the gains would not be compromised in the peace negotiations.

"I assure you that there will be no compromise on a single national value," Ghani said, emphasizing that the process would be transparent and would not be hidden from the people.

These statements were expressed after the rights advocates and civil society groups expressed deep concerns over possible sacrifice of achievements, especially women gains for peace with the Taliban. (Tolonews)

(2) High-Ranking ...

spokesperson, Shoaib Habibi, deputy chief of staff, and Salem Wahdat, archives director, were placed on the suspended list.

Another source said four of the officials had been sacked, but the archives director and the spokesperson were yet to be formally replaced; they continue with their duties.

Najib Aqa Fahim, who has reportedly been nominated as minister of justice, is being replaced by Nazifullah Salarzai as director of policy and strategy.

On Tuesday, the ministry spokesperson told journalists that no official had been sacked. He added the government was committed to reforms.

Pajhwok has found the sacked officials had been appointed by former foreign minister Zarar Ahmad Osmani in violation of due procedures and exams.

Mostly sons and close relatives of government officials and members of parliament hold key posts at the MoFA.

President Ashraf Ghani recently dismissed 11 ambassadors and directed ministry officials for thorough reforms. (Pajhwok)

(3) Afghans Not...

condemned the attack on the part of Afghanistan's enemies as "cowardly and barbaric" in a statement from his office.

He said the attack showed the armed opposition was not ready for peace talks. "Peace talks are only possible with those willing to shun violence and bloodshed. No one can obtain privilege with such barbaric attacks," he said.

Dr. Abdullah said if the insurgents wanted peace, they should first stop carrying out terrorist and inhuman attacks and killing innocent people. He said anyone trying to get advantage with such terrorist acts was mistaken. "The Afghans seek a durable and dignified peace, but they are not ready to cut a deal in return." The CEO said such attacks in the ongoing circumstances did not benefit efforts initiated to bring peace and stability to the country.

He said no one could reach their goal with terrorist attacks and seeking peace and continuing bloodshed of Afghans could not go together.

"We still insist on peace, which we consider a long-standing demand of Afghans, something that can ensure calm in the country and put to end violence." (Pajhwok)

(4) 21st ...

and then to Pakistan and India. It is economically a significant project for Afghanistan.

Rafiqullah Sediqi, spokesman for the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum of Afghanistan says that this 30 years long project will find job opportunities to Afghans and also Afghanistan will get millions of dollars as the transit from this project.

Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India TAPI is an 1800 kilometers long pipe line will initially deliver 27 billion cubic meters of natural gas out of which two billion cubic meters will be allowed to Afghanistan and 12.5 billion cubic meters to each Pakistan and India every year. But the capacity will be increased to 33 billion cubic meters after the initial stages with Afghanistan also getting more than two billion cubic meters of the gas.

The project is developed by the Asian Development Bank. (KP)

(5) Taliban Can...

transparent and clear to the people. He once again called on the government to not let the country be sacrificed for the policies of any other country.

"Afghanistan should not be sacrificed for the strategic and big plans

of any country," Noor warned.

Expressing concerns over the activities of newly-emerged Daesh group, Noor warned that conspiracies were underway to replace the Taliban with Daesh.

His statements come as the National Unity Government (NUG) is about to initiate peace talks with the Taliban after the Pakistani government assured Afghanistan to bring the Taliban to the negotiation table. (Tolonews)

(6) Remaining Cabinet...

met the president this morning. "We would introduce the remaining cabinet picks next Saturday or Sunday," he quoted Ghani as saying. Saturday and Sunday are closed holidays on account of Nawroz celebration.

Two days earlier, an official had told Pajhwok Afghan News the president planned to introduce the remaining members of the Council of Ministers before leaving for the United States of America.

The president and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) are scheduled to visit United States next week.

Of the 24 ministers Ghani had referred to the parliament two months back, only eight were able to win votes of confidence along with the new spymaster. (Pajhwok)

(7) Japan Gives ...

Evidente, UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) Deputy Representative, Johann Siffointe, UNOCHA Head of Office, George Khoury, WFP Country Representative, Ms. Lola Castro, Captain (Retired), Tariq Hayat Khan of Ministry of SAFRON and Joint Secretary of Ministry of Food and Security also attended the event.

In his remarks, Takeshi Katae said the government of Japan attaches high importance to supporting stability of the region near the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan since it is critical to stability of entire Pakistan and the neighbouring countries. He expressed his appreciation for cooperation of the United Nations and partners in delivering assistance to those in need also conveyed his deep sympathy for families who had had to leave their homes. He also emphasized the international community's responsibility to support Afghan refugees, for whom Japan has been providing assistance since 2001.

Approximately \$13.48 million (Rs 37 billion) of today's contribution is allocated to UNDP, UN Habitat, UNHCR and WFP to provide basic services and livelihood opportunities to those who fled their homes in FATA, to the hosting communities and to those returning home. In addition, approximately \$2.73 million (Rs 277.66 million) is allocated to UNHCR to support Afghan refugees in Pakistan. WFP will use \$5 million to support 91,000 displaced families from North Waziristan Agency (NWA) and returnees. The grant will finance the costs for processing and distribution of about 16,408 metric tons of wheat, which was provided in kind by the government of Pakistan.

The contribution will also provide 1,400 metric tons of pulse and 718 metric tons of vegetable oil to families from NWA. It is expected that the cereals, pulse and oil to be provided will be sufficient for three months for these families. UNHCR, which has received \$1.7 million for the displaced people, will provide legal assistance to approximately 83,300 families and blankets, kitchen sets and other non-food items to 10,000 families from NWA. The UNHCR will also use \$ 2.73 million for providing health, education and legal services to Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

Moreover, approximately US \$ 2.75 million has been allocated to UNDP to provide technical assistance to local government, create community networks, and provide livelihood opportunities through cash for work activities and skills training. This will increase the resilience both in the area of displacement and the area of origin following the people's return. UN-Habitat will receive \$4.03 million to provide shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene assistance (WASH) to 5,600 displaced families from NWA and 1,800 families returning to Tirrah Valley in Khyber Agency. Dr. Badcock thanked the government of Japan on behalf of the humanitarian community for their generous contribution, stating that "this funding will provide critical support to address the humanitarian needs of some of the vulnerable populations. The four UN agencies - UNDP, UN Habitat, UNHCR and WFP - will work together to use these much needed funds to support the government and the people of Pakistan." Additional Secretary SAFRON said

the government of Pakistan deeply appreciates the invaluable support being provided by our partner and brotherly country of Japan which will go a long way in providing relief to the TDPs of FATA.

He said the government is committed to providing all out support to the humanitarian crisis affecting that region and with the help of brotherly countries and partner development agencies is trying its best to cope with the situation. Once again, the efforts of the government of Japan in helping our people in these troubled times are highly appreciated, he added. More than 91,000 families were displaced from North Waziristan in 2014 following military operations against armed militants, and they remain in need of humanitarian assistance and livelihood support. (Monitoring Desk)

(8) Amendments...

achievements in a number of areas in the past 13 years, but the government had miserably failed to curb administrative graft, he said.

Massoud stressed the need for a strong national will to control the menace said: "Corruption would not exist if vital state institutions and civil society organisations are strengthened."

He advocated for introducing a law to hire officers on the basis of professionalism and removing parallel government departments. The civil services law also needed changes to ensure the supremacy of merit.

While asking civil society to help implement administrative reforms, the president's special representative promised the government would bring about the required changes for the sake of good governance. Baryalai Omarzai, head of the Afghans Coordination for Fighting Corruption Institute, said concrete measures should be taken for elimination of corruption.

Corruption and terrorism were the biggest challenges for the national unity government, he said. The government should identify corrupt officials and bring them to justice, he demanded. (Pajhwok)

(9) MPs Lobbying ...

forces in the calendar. "We have presented the proposal to the national assembly and hopefully the trust fund will be established soon to assist and treat the injured soldiers."

Andkhoy district chief Sultan Sanjar said residents should support Afghan security forces who independently protected the country.

The Afghan forces have taken security responsibilities nationwide by the end of last year, when the NATO-led combat mission was replaced by the Resolute Support mission aimed at training and advising Afghan forces.

Col. Ali Mohammad, a border police commander, said: "The support from public representatives, local elders and youths boosts our morale to fight until the last breath." Mohammad Nasim, a policeman in Farah, said he was happy that people praised their sacrifices and paid tributes to them by presenting flower bouquets. "I promise to fight the enemy to the last breath." (Pajhwok)

(10) Afghan Air ...

already supplied to the Afghan Air Force.

Around 17 of the Afghan Air Force's MD-530F helicopter will be upgraded under the contract which is expected to be completed by the end of September next year. MD-530F helicopters are designed for high altitude and/or hot weather operations, where thinner air costs helicopters some of their lift.

In the meantime, an official said earlier this year that Afghanistan will receive 20 MD 530F Cayuse Warrior helicopters which would be donated by United States with an aim to provide additional fire-support to Afghan national security forces.

Afghan Air Force is also expecting to receive 20 A-29 Super Tucano light air support aircraft which will replace the Mi-35 attack helicopter that reaches the end of its service life in January 2016.

According to reports, the first of 20 A-29 Super Tucano aircraft arrived here Sept. 26, in preparation for the Afghanistan pilot and maintenance training mission.

The aircrafts will be used to train 30 Afghan pilots and 90 Afghan maintainers as part of a requirement from the International Security Assistance Force to conduct training outside of Afghanistan. (KP)

(11) Summit on ...

have also been invited.

A parliamentarian, who has been invited to the conference, told Pajhwok Afghan News former presidential candidate and Hezb-i-Islami

Afghanistan (HIA) member Qutbuddin Hilal, former first vice-president Yunus Qanuni, Haji Roohullah, Maulvi Shahzada, Mullah Zaeef and some others would attend the event. But presidential spokesman Ajmal Abidi told Pajhwok Afghan News they were unaware of the summit. (Pajhwok)

(12) Worried b...

Five of them, including two women, had been murdered and another one lost his life in a suicide attack. Sixteen more had been wounded, while 17 faced temporary imprisonment, he added.

Danish Karokhel, director of Pajhwok Afghan News, called lack of access to information a major challenge to journalists.

"Fortunately, the access to information law, despite deficiencies, has been ratified by the president. But some departments use the pretext of coordination on releasing information not to cooperate with journalists," he regretted.

Karokhel asked the government to take practical steps for removing impediments in the way of journalists. "The government might have good intentions when it comes to coordination, but local departments use that as an excuse and do not cooperate at all."

Siddiqullah Tawhidi, executive director of NAI-Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan, said during the presidential campaigns both Ashraf Ghani and Dr. Abdullah had promised to support the media and freedom of expression.

The ceremony concluded with Wahid Paiman receiving the reporter of the year award and Mujahid Kakar, Tolo News journalist, honoured with a life-time achievement award. Meanwhile, seminars and gathering were also conducted in Laghman and Balkh provinces to celebrate the day. Speakers alleged gradual moves towards curbing hard-won media freedom in Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(13) 13 Insurgents ...

offensive inside these districts. The operation came to an end on Tuesday after five people including civilians were killed and six others were wounded.

The Taliban have not yet commented in this regard. (Tolonews)

(14) With Exit...

production by 50 percent in 2015. Established in Pul-i-Charkhi area in 2005 at a cost of \$3 million, the plant provided job opportunities to 100 people, according to Arifi, who also noted a 20 percent fall in production by the Tabiyat Mineral Water.

Initially, foreigners used to import mineral water, but after the establishment of factories in Kabul, they started consuming domestically-produced water. Gulabuddin, owner of a general store in the Taimani locality of Kabul, also confirmed the production of mineral water had witnessed a major decrease.

Quality Arifi said Tabiyat and 19 other factories produced quality mineral water. Equipment being used by the factory was purchased in the US. Majority of foreigners used to consume Tabiyat Factory's water.

Factory officials say they sell pure water, coming from 80 meters deep wells and containing appropriate amounts of calcium, magnesium, sodium, potassium and iron. Abdul Karim, who recently returned from Ukraine after 20 years, said he consumed many types of mineral water. "The mineral water really has good quality."

Gulabuddin, a retailer in Taimani locality, said there were different kind of products, however, his customers preferred Crystal.

Purchasing power A bottle of mineral water, weighing half litre, costs 15 to 20 afghanis. Majority of the people do not have the capacity to buy mineral water. Gulabuddin confirmed majority of their customers were expatriates and non-governmental organisations.

Abdul Mansur, a Taimani resident, said people could not buy mineral water because of its high price. "Water in our area is salty. If the mineral water were cheap we would definitely consume it."

"When I'm out I buy mineral water. But at home we have no choice but to use the salty water. We are a 10-member family and the cost would be too high," reasoned Ahmad Sayar - another resident.

Domestic products Arifi said if the government was willing to support the use of domestic products, he could halve down the price of mineral water. A half-litre bottle of water costs 8 afghanis in the wholesale market.

He asked the government to reduce the taxes on raw material and other imported goods. Last year, he recalled, he had paid one million afghanis in tax.

Water bottles and labels are imported and the company pays 10 percent tax to the government. Production levels could increase and price fall if the government allocates land to the factory.

"The government should support industrialists by cutting taxes on raw materials and jacking up the import duty if it really wants to improve the economy," Arifi argued.

AISA paid less attention to domestic promotion and addressing requirements of industrialists in the past 13 years, he acknowledged. "I respect the AISA chief, but we have received little cooperation from him."

He asked the agency to pave the ground for loans, reduce taxes, distribute land plots and provide electricity to industrialists.

AISA's Deputy Director Mohammad Ibrahim Shams confirmed some problems, but said: "We don't accept the claim the agency has done nothing to solve problems of the industrialists and investors."

Eight industrial parks have been created in the country in the past 12 years, while three other such parks are being set up, according to Shams, who claimed the industrial parks did not encounter power outages.

Abdul Qadir Jilani, Ministry of Finance spokesman, said they had always supported industrialists. Taxes on eight kinds of raw material imports had been reduced, he maintained.

But the tax on water bottles and labels had not been changed because such factories were already active inside the country, the spokesman explained.

For his part, Arifi said the number of bottles produced inside the country was not enough and the labels printed in Afghanistan were of poor quality.

Under Article 4 of the tax law, industrial units have to pay 20 percent of its income in taxes to the government annually.

Ministry of Commerce spokesman Musafir Qoqandi said 3,000 factories were functioning in the country as a result of efforts by the government in the past 13 years.

In an effort to encourage investors and jump-start the economy, he added, land plots had been distributed to industrialist in Kabul and other provinces. But plots in Kabul are fewer. (Pajhwok)

(15) 6 Militants ...

residents called the operation an exercise in futility, saying the insurgents would return to the area soon after the security forces withdrew.

One of the locals, Abdul Azim, said: "Taliban storm back when security forces pull out of the area after each operation." But officials said that they had established security checkpoints after and would take steps to prevent the fighters' entry into the area. (Pajhwok)

(16) Dispute Resolutio...

district crime branch chief and permission to cross the river. He said the crime branch chief had been dismissed and their others demands would be met soon.

A resident, Muhammad Hassan, said the Amu River had drastically changed its course. He said Shireen Boya was found across the river. The plant is used for making colors of rugs and herbal medicine. (Pajhwok)

(17) Protestors Demand...

past and they wanted it to be restored. He added the government had promised shifting the capital many times.

"Baghlan-i-Markazi is also a better place for industry," he argued, accusing the authorities of repeatedly breaching promises. Some 25 years back, during the administration of Najibullah, Pul-i-Khumri replaced Baghlan-i-Markazi as capital of Baghlan.

Mohammad Laiq, a local elder, told Pajhwok Afghan News the government had neglected the district's development and security. "Our demand," he said, "is the district's development."

Ferozuddin Aimaq, deputy head of the provincial council, said lack of security was a major challenge to residents of the district. Over the last 14 years, the government had built 36 department buildings in Pul-i-Khumri.

"But I don't think the government has the capacity of shifting the capital," the public representative believed. Deputy Governor Abdul Qadeem Niazi said only the central government could take a decision on the

issue, which the provincial administration was not empowered to deal with. (Pajhwok)

(18) Protestors Want ...

willing to stand trial if the protestors could support their claims with evidence. (Pajhwok)

(19) Traffic ...

highway, according to transporters. They claimed traffic on the road had declined by a half.

An official of Ahmad Shah Abdali Bus Service, Dr. Ahmadullah, told Pajhwok Afghan News their company was the largest in Afghanistan and their buses ferried passengers from Kandahar to Kabul, Helmand, Nimroz, Herat and other provinces, but the operations had declined due to recent incidents of kidnapping.

"During the past years, our 60 to 80 buses would ply between Kandahar and Kabul alone in 24 hours, but their number has decreased to 20 and 30 these days."

He said the road had long been in a dilapidated condition and bridges on the road had been destroyed. He said robberies and harassment of passengers by insurgents had lately increased particularly on the road's most insecure part in Ghazni province.

He said the highway's Ghazni portion had badly damaged and witnessed frequent incidents of robberies and interception of vehicles by Taliban militants. "No one is safe on this road now. Fearing for their lives, passengers and traders avoid journey on the road."

Traffic on the road was controlled only in Kandahar, where police did not allow heavy vehicles to enter Kandahar City before 10am, Ahmadullah continued.

He said there was no control over traffic on the road elsewhere and tragic traffic accidents occurred as a result.

He talked about robbery incidents on the highway in western Farah province's Farahrud district and said: "Robbers in the area are ruthless, they stop vehicles at gunpoint, kill drivers and take away their vehicles."

It was few days ago, when armed robbers shot dead a number of drivers and stole their vehicles, he said, accusing police of forcibly taking bribes from goods carrying vehicles instead of providing security to them.

"There are security posts along the highway, but the security personnel are only able to protect themselves," he said, urging the Ministry of Interior to improve security on the highway to enable commuters and traders to fearlessly travel on the road.

A driver on the Kabul-Kandahar highway, Abdul Majeed, said the road was in good condition from Kandahar to Zabol's Jaldalak area only. He said Taliban had blown up bridges 100 metres from security posts.

Passengers also expressed similar views. They said high-ranking officials, when needed, travelled to Kandahar from Kabul by air because they knew the road's security condition.

Kandahar police spokesman Zia Durrani said security forces had been able to provide complete security on the road between Kandahar and Kabul and from Zabol's Shahr-i-Safa to Herat and then Maiwand district of Kandahar.

He said police continuously patrolled these areas so that passengers could travel fearlessly to various provinces. He said besides the Kabul-Kandahar road, police were providing security on the road between Kandahar and Uruzgan province and other roads leading to districts. Durrani said they were trying to improve security on roads in coordination with security forces in neighbouring provinces.

Zabol police chief Ghulam Sakhi Rogh Lewanai said they had completely secured the 120-km portion of the Kabul-Kandahar highway that traversed Zabol province. He said 30 police security posts had been established on the road passing through Zabol and insurgents could not dare to emerge on the road and harass passengers. He said the militants could only fire at the road from a long distance in remote parts.

Rogh Lewanai also rejected the impression that the 30 passengers had been kidnapped in Zabol, saying they were kidnapped in Ghazni. He promised to intensify their efforts at improving security on the road. (Pajhwok)

(20) Ukraine Peace...

while Moscow appears to be supporting a push by the rebels for powers that could give them veto over national policy and coming closer to officially recognising the setting-up of the two "people's republics" in Ukraine's east. (Reuters)