

(1) Afghan President...

and protecting lives and property of Afghans is the fundamental responsibility of the government," Ghani said. Ghani also said the digitized national ID card is an essential and crucial step toward better governance, economic development, transparency and delivery of services.

Not everyone is happy with the electronic card. The document identifies its holder as "Afghan," which some critics say is used to denote the country's majority ethnic Pashtuns. However, President Ghani, an ethnic Pashtun, defended the card, saying it represents every Afghan ethnic group. Some within the Dari-speaking Tajiks, the country's second largest ethnic group, are leading the opposition to the new ID cards. (VoA)

(2) Afghan Mother...

parents to sell babies. Afghan lawyer DibaAbhar says selling or buying children is usually illegal. He tells VOA's Ashna Radio that such transactions can only take place under exceptional circumstances and need court supervision. Jawid Bidar, spokesperson for Faryab province, called this case a "gloomy incident." He said authorities should prevent such actions, and journalists and others could help by reporting them. (VoA)

(3) CEO Slams ID...

system was officially launched in Kabul when President Ashraf Ghani and the First Lady Rula Ghani were handed their cards.

"I want to say that national processes in Afghanistan need nation level consultations. Whether it is election or the process of distribution of Electronic Tazkiras," Abdullah said, adding that "I have always kept national interests of the Afghan people on top. Issues that challenge national interest and the stability in Afghanistan must be consulted. My decisions have always been in accordance to the national interest and the will of the Afghan people."

"We should also prioritize our work. Today the Afghan people need better security and services from the government, not issues that can challenge our collective effort for peace and stability," he said. Abdullah mentioned that the "electronic Tazkira was an issue that people had concerns with. This issue was discussed in the Afghan Parliament and there were concerns with many in the parliament and out of government structure."

"I as an Afghan am proud of my identity as a Muslim and Afghan. I know there are individuals and groups that are preaching the message that I am against certain words being mentioned in E-Tazkira. This is completely false," he added.

He noted that at a time when half of the Afghan people cannot access registration centers for Electronic Tazkiras, we come with an idea of distributing it which leads to additional problems countrywide. It is not a national achievement.

This process of distribution of Electronic Tazkiras does not have the needed recognition. This step doesn't only have problems of recognition but, can lead to further chaos and problems in country.

He said that the reason I have not participated in distribution of electronic Tazkiras is that I know this process has not received the needed legitimacy and support from the Afghan people. A one-sided decision that has been approved by all sides can only lead to crisis and more problems. He said that: "We have serious security issues throughout the country. Right now, there is an attack going on against the Afghan Forces Dai Chupan of Zabul and we have lost soldiers. That should be our priority to reach out to them, not something that can divide the nation."

Residents of Badakhshan said government's negligence on Taliban's movements in insecure parts is the reason behind the fall of the district. "We will witness the fall of Faizabad City if the situation prevails," Wahid Shiwan, a resident of the province, said.

So far government officials have not commented about the exact death toll in Kohistan fight between government forces and the Taliban. (Tolo news)

(7) Iran Blames...

to withdraw from the nuclear deal, saying Iran will not "renegotiate or add onto" the atomic accord. The five-minute video shows Zarif behind his desk, delivering his message on the deal. "Let me make it absolutely clear once and for all: We will neither outsource our security nor will we renegotiate or add on to a deal we have already implemented in good faith," he said.

Zarif also appeared to troll Trump as well, saying: "To put it in real-estate terms, when you buy a house and move your family in it or demolish it to build a skyscraper, you cannot come back two years later and renegotiate the price."

On Thursday, Iran's Ambassador to Afghanistan Reza Bahrami said the Iranian government has shared information with Kabul on Daesh's infiltration into Afghan-

istan. He made the remarks at a research briefing on "the perception of Afghanistan's elites from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan" at the Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies in Kabul.

Bahrami did not elaborate on how the group infiltrated Afghanistan but said an increase in Daesh activities in Afghanistan is a common concern for the two countries.

"One part of confidential information by security services about details of the transfer of some members of Daesh from other areas into Afghanistan were given to security systems of Afghanistan," Bahrami said. (Tolo news)

(8) 'CAREC, BRI...

investment projects to deepen economic cooperation in the region. Over the past two decades, the CAREC program has grown from 6 projects worth \$247 million in 2001 to 185 projects worth more than \$31.5 billion as of December 2017. It has helped establish multimodal transportation networks; increased energy trade and security; broken down trade barriers; facilitated the free movement of people and freight; and laid the groundwork for the development of economic corridors.

ADB, based in Manila, is dedicated to reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration. Established in 1966, it is owned by 67 members—48 from the region. In 2017, ADB operations totaled \$32.2 billion, including \$11.9 billion in co-financing.

The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program has a membership of 11 countries: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, the People's Republic of China, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

The other issue's discussed during first day of ADB's 51st Annual Meeting in Manila, Philippines in different seminars such as despite the progress made over the last two decades in empowering women in Asia and the Pacific, there remain huge gender gaps, particularly in the economic and political spheres. The ADB-hosted seminar "Breaking Barriers: Women Entrepreneurship in Asia and the Pacific" was held at ADB's 51st Annual Meeting, with the participation of policymakers, entrepreneurs, researchers, and development practitioners.

The message from the seminar is that supporting women's entrepreneurship is key to their economic empowerment.

"Women's entrepreneurship is important because it helps us move closer to the goal of achieving a more gender equal Asia and the Pacific," said ADB President Mr. Takehiko Nakao at the seminar. "Under our new Strategy 2030, ADB will pay increased attention to generating employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for women."

In the theme chapter of the Asian Development Outlook Update 2015, ADB estimated that closing the existing gender gaps could generate a 30% increase in the per capita income of an average Asian economy in one generation or 30 years, and 70% in two generations.

The panelists agreed that while there is a long road ahead to full gender equality, policies supporting women's entrepreneurship can help ignite momentum for this effort, together with access to information, government services, and credit. The seminar discussed various ways in which women entrepreneurs can overcome the multiple barriers they face and how the public and private sectors can help accelerate support for women startups and entrepreneurs.

Nearly half of ADB lending already has strong gender design elements. ADB under Strategy 2030 will place an even stronger emphasis on women's economic empowerment. Infrastructure projects will maximize women's access to markets and opportunities for skilled jobs. Through enhanced technical and vocational education and training programs, ADB will enable women's access to quality jobs in nontraditional, higher-paying sectors.

ADB will also expand integrated support for women entrepreneurs through better access to finance, the adoption of new technologies, and policy and institutional reforms.

ADB has been adopting innovative approaches involving other partners in promoting women's entrepreneurship. In April 2018, ADB received a \$12.6 million grant from the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi) (a global fund hosted by the World Bank Group) to help Sri Lankan women-led businesses obtain bank loans and improve business skills. This new source of funding complements ADB's own financing of \$175 million, which was approved earlier to encourage local partner banks to grow their small and medium-sized enterprise portfolios—especially for businesses that are outside Colombo or are women-led.

On the Seminar Considers How New

Technologies Can Improve Financial Inclusion in Asia

Asia and the Pacific has made important progress in expanding and deepening its financial systems, but must make further progress to improve financial inclusion using new financial technology (fintech), according to participants at a high-level Asian Development Bank (ADB) seminar during its 51st Annual Meeting in Manila, Philippines. This seminar was co-hosted by ADB, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP).

"Governments in the region can improve financial inclusion by broadening access to basic digital infrastructure and providing an enabling environment for innovators and entrepreneurs," ADB President Mr. Takehiko Nakao said. "Policymakers should also consider ways to improve regulations, including protecting consumers against cybercrimes and fraud, while striking the right balance between innovation and financial stability."

Panelists discussed how fintech, including new innovations like distributed ledger technologies, virtual currencies, machine learning, and big data, can improve financial inclusion. The lack of access to financial services is widely viewed as a key challenge for Asia's poor households and smaller firms. About two billion people in the world still do not have access to finance and half of them live in Asia and the Pacific.

"Fintech can help foster financial inclusion in Asia by its ability to reach rural areas, making financial services more affordable, and broadening access to small and medium-sized firms," said Mr. Furusawa. "Financial regulators will play a crucial role in creating an environment that promotes financial inclusion while mitigating the risks."

Seminar participants also agreed that new technologies hold promise for bringing financial services to poorer communities and for overcoming the challenge of obtaining the collateral needed to access formal credit markets.

International financial institutions such as the IMF and ADB can play a significant role in supporting countries as new technologies are introduced.

Beside the seminars the ADB Signs Agreements with the Republic of Korea to Strengthen Co-financing and Technical Cooperation. (Pajhwok)

(9) Govt Says...

"Recommendations were made to promote easy access to land, access to electricity and loans in order to resolve the issues of the private sector," said Atiqullah Nurat, chairman of the ACCI.

They said if government cooperates with the private sector, the private sector maintains the potential to play a more effective role in the entrepreneurship sector and can create more jobs.

According to Zaki, the labor conference in Kabul helped to forge a good understanding of the job situation and that it will also help relevant institutions to come up with more working policies regarding job creation and poverty alleviation in Afghanistan.

(10) Ministry to...

"A year ago the issue of employment was not on the agenda of any institution, but today it is placed on the national agenda. I think this was the most important result of the conference to address it from a national perspective," said Zaki Thursday.

"In the year 1393 (2014) the ratio of unemployment was around 39.1 percent and now this ratio is around 39.5 percent, there is 0.4 percent difference," said Haseebullah Mawhid, technical deputy head of Central Statistics Organization.

"Millions of people are either unemployed totally or under-employed and they need support. It is the responsibility of the government and private sector in the country to create employment opportunities for the women and men of Afghanistan," said Manzoorkhaliq, Senior Coordinator of ILO in Afghanistan.

According to the labor ministry, plans for a better environment will be provided for private sector investment and capacity building of a local workforce will be implemented shortly after the conclusion of the conference.

Three years ago, the National Unity Government (NUG), under president Ashraf Ghani and CEO Abdullah Abdullah, pledged to create one million jobs in the country. Something which did not happen. But now the NUG says that it will create 2.1 million jobs. (Tolo news)

(11) EU Pledges...

of election-related materials and payment of salaries of temporary electoral staff recruited by Electoral Management Bodies (IEC and ECC). Outreach and public

awareness campaigns will also benefit from this funding, the statement said.

"The €15.5 million transferred today to UNDP is a concrete illustration of the European Union's support to credible parliamentary and district elections in Afghanistan. It comes in a very timely manner as we need to encourage all citizens of this country to register and seize these elections as a golden opportunity to strengthen democracy and to help shape the country's future", said EU Ambassador to Afghanistan, Pierre Mayaudon.

The agreement was signed between EU Ambassador Mayaudon and UNDP Country Director, Jocelyn Mason in the presence of the UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General Toby Lenzer, the Chairman of Independent Election Commission, Abdul Badie Sayad, and the Chairman of Elections Complaints Commission, Abdul Aziz Ariay.

The EU's financial support would be managed by the UNDP through the United Nations Electoral Support Project (UN-ESP). (Pajhwok)

(12) Tazkeras Being...

could not collect 1,000 Tazkeras that do not contest election," he said, adding the one who don't have the support of 1,000 people should not contest the election. Another Lawmaker Qais Hassan also expressed concern over the buying and selling of Tazkeras and said this practice would hamper public trust on the process of election.

He asked the masses not to cell their identities and not to send the people to Wolesi Jirga who would serve their personal interest.

Ahmad Zaki Faqirzada, a designate candidate, alleged some lawmakers had spread the gossips regarding the selling and purchase of Tazkers in order to create turmoil and faced the election with crisis. He, however, added some people referred to him to buy their Tazkeras.

He asked the masses not to sell their identity against the money and support candidates who could serve them in the future. Aminullah, the resident of Kabul City, had 50 copies of Tazkeras with him and sold each against 1,000 to 2,000 afghanis on candidates.

He said he purchase each copy of Tazkeras from people against 500 to 1,000 afghanis and would sold them on candidates at the higher prices when needed.

Meanwhile, Abdul Badi Sayyad, head of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) has asked the tribal elders to encourage people not to sell their Tazkeras and votes.

In some parts of the country powerful and armed individuals force common people to sell their Tazkeras and vote the candidate they want, he said.

Sayyad added the commission may not be able to stop the buying and selling of Tazkeras but assured that no rigging and fraud would be allowed in the polling process. (Pajhwok)

(13) 1,200 Attack...

The passage on May 3, 2016 of UNSC Resolution 2286 was a strong step by the international community to address violent attacks on health care, but commitments to prevent and mitigate this violence must be followed by action.

The ICRC urged that these steps take place in conflict zones:

1) Armed forces refrain from attacking civilians or civilian infrastructure including healthcare facilities, personnel and vehicles.

2) The lifting of any blockade that prevents the delivery of necessary medical items and the evacuation of sick and wounded people.

3) Investigations into incidents of violence against health care and accountability for attacks that violate international humanitarian law.

The destruction of health infrastructure and the disruption of health services have been particularly disturbing in conflicts in the Middle East. More than half of Syria's public hospitals and health-care centres are closed or only partially functioning. Some of them have been hit by multiple air strikes. The provision of medical supplies in certain areas of the country as well as the evacuation of the wounded and sick have been consistently obstructed.

In Iraq, the destruction of civilian infrastructure in areas affected by the most recent hostilities has been massive. In Salah al-Din more than a third of health centres are damaged or destroyed. In Yemen, only 45% of the country's health infrastructure was functioning at the end of 2017, and most did not have enough medical supplies.

"Even wars have rules," Maurer said. "The wounded and sick must be protected in all circumstances. Violence that deprives them of access to health care violates international humanitarian law, and, ultimately, it makes us all a little less human." (Pajhwok)

are real, 40 other companies are fake," said Binyamin Wardak, manager of a private transport company in Kabul.

According to the MoTCA, the government has launched work on the establishment of standard terminals in the country which would pave the way for only professional and registered companies to operate. (Tolo news)

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