

(1) Govt. Officials'

should be also registered, he said. Humaira Ayubi, a lawmaker from western Farah province, who voted in support of the draft law, said the assets of parliament members should also be registered. "Though registration of public representatives' assets is against the law, yet it would make people trust more their representatives and the house of the nation", she said. However, Ahmad Behzad, a lawmaker from western Herat province, said registration of legislators' assets was against the Article 154 of the Constitution. The article says: "The wealth of the President, Vice-Presidents, Ministers, members of the Supreme Court as well as the Attorney General, shall be registered, reviewed and published prior to and after their term of office by an organ established by law."

The lawmakers finally approved the draft law in three chapters and 16 articles with a majority vote. The law also calls for registration of assets of parliament members. The draft law after its approval by the lower house would be referred to the Meshrano Jirga or Senate for a review and then sending to the president for signature. (Pajhwok)

(2) Serious Problems

He said there were no problems in terms of prison compounds in 14 provinces. But 10 provinces did not have proper facilities for inmates, the official added.

"Uncertain fate of inmate cases, lack of professional personnel, food problems and paucity of funds are among the serious problems facing prisons nationwide."

Issues like lack of health services, transfer of inmates, lack of ambulances, electricity, water and transparency in implementing presidential decrees were shared with the CEO.

Kohistani also presented a four-year plan for correcting the situation inside jails. Suggestions regarding inmate safety, health, welfare education programmes and processing their cases are included in the draft.

He said every prisoner was provided 85 afghanis on a daily basis, which was not enough. Kohistani pointed out that women jailed along with children were in need of more services and facilities.

While lauding positive changes in prisoner ration, Abdullah agreed the 85 afis amount was irrational and should be increased. The General Directorate of Prisons, Ministry of Public Health and the Cabinet Secretariat are responsible for working on this issue.

He ordered the General Directorate of Prisons to provide an exact list of the prisoners who are suffering from incurable diseases. A decision would be taken on their fate, the CEO said.

Abdullah also directed that a joint commission comprised of ministries of finance, interior, health, education, economy, martyrs and disabled, AGO, a representative of the international community be created.

Spearheaded by first deputy CEO, the commission will prioritise all aspects of the draft in terms of budget and timescales for discussion at cabinet meetings. (Pajhwok)

(3) Ghani Assigns Team

will have significant impacts on boosting local economies particularly in Afghanistan's urban areas.

Ghani thanked the Khost governor, Hukum Habibi, for his efforts to increase the trade of pine nuts in the province, saying government will provide equal opportunities to all provincial governors to boost the sector.

In turn, the Khost governor said his province is unique in terms of having fertile land for agriculture and that it has the right climate for pine nuts. He also said thousands of tons of dry fruit from Khost is exported to various countries every year.

Khost is known for its moderate climate, forests, mines and pine nuts and walnuts.

According to Habibi, Afghanistan exports 30,000 to 33,000 tons of pine nuts annually – a sector that also creates jobs for local people.

The meeting was also attended by high level government officials including Naseer Ahmad Durani, acting minister of agriculture, irrigation and livestock; Humayoun Rasa, minister of commerce; Mustafa Mastoor, acting minister of economy and MP Obaidullah Ramin.

The officials said government must ensure that the exports of Afghanistan's pine nuts are carried out in a professional manner and under the name of Afghanistan.

They also said revenue generated from the export of pine nuts must be tackled transparently and distributed fairly.

Ghani said a joint team of officials from the ministries of agriculture, economy, finance, commerce and the office of the presidential advisor on banking affairs must work together to find ways to help boost the sector. Pine nut trees are mostly found in Afghani-

stan's eastern provinces of Nangarhar, Laghman, Nuristan, Kunar, Paktia, Khost and Paktika provinces. Pine nuts also constitutes one of the major income sources for local people.

A recent report Pine Nuts Global Report one of the major drivers for this market is the multiple health benefits associated with pine nuts. The report found that as consumers around the world become more health conscious, there has been an exponential increase in the consumption of natural food products.

"Consumers are becoming more conscious about their health and fitness and paying more attention to the nutritional content of the food that they consume. The health-conscious population demands foods that have lower calorie content but have the right combination of essential nutrients. Hence, healthy eating has increased the demand for pine nuts as they are unprocessed and contain vitamins, fibers, and naturally occurring minerals," read the report.

Health Benefits of Pine Nuts

* Pine nuts are one of the calorie-rich edible nuts. 100g of dry kernels provide 673 calories. Additionally, they comprise of numerous health promoting phytochemicals, vitamins, antioxidants, and minerals.

* Their high caloric content chiefly comes from fats. Indeed, the nuts are especially rich in monounsaturated fatty acids like oleic acid that helps lower LDL or "bad cholesterol" and increases HDL or "good cholesterol" in the blood

* Pine or cedar nuts contain essential fatty acid (the omega-6 fat), pinolenic acid. Recent research has shown its potential use in weight loss by curbing appetite. Pinolenic acid triggers the release of hunger-suppressant enzymes cholecystokinin and Glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) in the gut. Also, pinolenic acid has thought to have LDL-lowering properties by enhancing hepatic LDL uptake.

* Likewise in almonds, pine nuts too are an excellent source of vitamin-E. Vitamin-E is a powerful lipid soluble antioxidant, required for maintaining the integrity of cell membrane of mucosa and skin by protecting it from harmful free oxygen radicals.

* Furthermore, pine nuts are one of the gluten-free tree nuts, and therefore, are a popular ingredient in the preparation of gluten-free food formulas. Such formula preparations can be a healthy alternative for people with wheat allergies and celiac disease.

* Pine nuts are an excellent source of the B-complex group of vitamins such as thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, pantothenic acid, vitamin B-6 (pyridoxine) and folates. These vitamins work as co-factors for enzymes in cellular substrate metabolism inside the human body.

* Furthermore, pine nuts contain healthy amounts of essential minerals like manganese, potassium, calcium, iron, magnesium, zinc and selenium. Pine nuts are one of the richest sources of manganese. Manganese is an all-important co-factor for antioxidant enzyme, superoxide dismutase. Therefore, consumption of pine kernels helps the human body develop resistance against infectious agents and scavenge harmful oxygen-free radicals.

Afghanistan is known throughout the world for its fresh and dry fruits. But years of war and violence have hindered the country for taking full advantage of what its land and natural resources offer. (Tolonews)

(4) Russia Should

must build up relations with Russia and other neighboring countries on a bilateral and mutually beneficial basis, based on our interests and the interests of these countries.

Karzai believes the American strategy in Afghanistan has been a failure but in response to question regarding the Russian military intervention in Afghanistan, Karzai said had brought about a dramatic change in the situation in Syria but there is no need for a military operation by Russia.

"We do not want this. Neither do we want the Americans to continue their military operations, endangering our cities and villages. We want the cooperation with the US to be aimed only at combating terrorism and not to damage our positions in the region and our relations with our neighbors. Afghanistan should be a place for cooperation, rather than regional rivalry," he added. (KP)

(5) Agreement Signed

In a statement, the IEC said it had signed a number of agreements with the relevant departments in line with Article 9 of the electoral law to ensure transparent and timely elections. (Pajhwok)

(6) Islamic World to

As a result of the ensuing war, in 1992 Armenian armed forces occupied 20 percent of Azerbaijan, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven surrounding districts.

The 1994 ceasefire agreement was followed by peace negotiations. Armenia has not yet implemented four UN Security Council reso-

lutions on withdrawal of its armed forces from the Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding districts. (Trend)

(7) Japan to Help

for improvement of self-reliance and stability of the region.

According to a joint statement, the projects approximately worth 8.6 million USD and 9.1 million USD, respectively, will help to procure the vaccines to protect 10.3 million children against polio, reach 1.37 million children with routine immunization and 2.5 million women of child bearing age in Afghanistan, and improve the livelihood of 1.8 million people living in border districts in Tajikistan and Afghanistan.

In the UNICEF's Project "Infectious Diseases Prevention for Children in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan" (USD 8.6m), the contribution from the people of Japan will be used to procure routine vaccines for an annual cohort of some 1.37 million children under the age of one.

The vaccines include BCG against tuberculosis, Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) for poliomyelitis, Measles vaccine and Hepatitis B. In addition, some 2.5 million women of child-bearing age will benefit from the purchase of Tetanus Toxoid vaccine.

These vaccines will be available for free at all health facilities and through the polio campaign.

At the signing ceremony, Dr. Feroz said: "With continued support from the Government of Japan, we have succeeded in ensuring the provision of health services including the immunization services for the children and mothers of Afghanistan."

The minister assured the Afghan government would maintain focus on routine immunization as one of the key pillars for stopping circulation of the polio virus in Afghanistan.

"We hope that you will continue to keep routine immunization in Afghanistan as one of your top priorities, and I wish to thank you in advance for your future support to the Routine Immunization Programme in Afghanistan."

UNICEF Representative Ms. Adele Khodr said: "Thanks to Japanese funding over the past 10 years, 11.6 million children and 9.2 million women of child-bearing age have received vaccinations against five vaccine-preventable diseases in Afghanistan."

Since 2006, she said, Japan's contribution to polio eradication efforts had supported the immunization of up to 9.5 million children during National Immunization Days, held on average four times a year.

"The world is closer than ever to reaching the goal of a polio-free world but much still needs to be done. This is why we greatly appreciate this sustained funding from the Government of Japan, which is critical to keep up the momentum until every child is immunized and the world is polio-free."

UNDP's Project "Livelihood Improvement in Tajik-Afghan Cross-Border Areas (LITACA) Phase II" (USD 9.1 M) will be built on the past achievements of LITACA Phase I, which was also funded by the Government of Japan.

The project aims to improve living standards of the people in six districts in four provinces in Afghanistan (Shahr-e-Buzurg District in Badakhshan Province, Cha Ab, Yang-e-Qala and Dasht-e-Qala Districts in Takhar Province, Imam Sahib District of Kunduz Province, and Khulm District of Balkh province) and eight districts in Khatlon Province in Tajikistan.

Furthermore, the project intends to promote stability and security of these cross-border areas, by ensuring self-reliance of the local people, reducing poverty, supporting economic development of the regions and encouraging cross-border collaboration among the communities.

LITACA II will be implemented in line with the Citizen's Charter of the Government of Afghanistan.

Mukhtar Ghafarzoy, Representative of Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, expressed gratitude to the people of Japan and said: "This initiative will empower Afghan women, youth, new graduates, and farmers and make a positive difference in the lives of rural communities."

Japan's support in the first phase of the project has helped set up and equip seven new market facilities.

Jocelyn Mason, UNDP Country Director ad interim explained, "The project will offer opportunities to increase the skills of the local government officials, civil society and private sector organizations to plan and manage local socio-economic development. LITACA will also invest in the construction of priority infrastructures to support local business as a means of improving livelihoods of the target population."

JICA Afghanistan Chief Representative, Takeshi Watanabe remarked, "Polio eradication is the goal for both Government of Afghanistan

and international communities." Mitsuji Suzuka, Ambassador of Japan, remarked, "To support the stability and self-reliance of Afghanistan, Japan has been placing the value of several sectors such as agriculture, rural development, health, education, infrastructure and so on.

Among them, he continued, infectious diseases prevention for children, agriculture and rural development were their priorities.

"We will keep close cooperation with the Government of Afghanistan and we try to provide the support which is based on the needs of Afghan people."

Japan has been assisting Afghanistan's nation-building efforts in various fields. The cumulative Japanese assistance to Afghanistan since 2001 amounts to \$6.4 billion. (Pajhwok)

(8) ICC Set to

Meanwhile, a human right's researcher at Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN) said that investigations show that there are three categories of people who are accused of war crimes in Afghanistan.

"Based on the ICC investigations, four groups so far have been identified who are allegedly involved in violation which include the Taliban group; second the Haqqani network, a few members of the Afghan security forces particularly from the national directorate of security and some from the Afghan police while the fourth group belongs to the central intelligence agency (CIA) and the US army; however the scale and nature of their actions are different," said Ehsan Qane, AAN researcher. AAN said that the Afghan government does not have the capacity to ensure the trial of those accused of having roles in war crimes.

According to TJJC, the ICC decided to conduct investigations into war crimes in Afghanistan after the Afghan government failed to provide convincing reasons over not probing the case.

On 20 November 2017, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court ("ICC"), Fatou Bensouda, requested authorization from Pre-Trial Chamber III to initiate an investigation into alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity in relation to the armed conflict in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan since 1 May 2003, as well as regarding similar crimes that have a nexus to the armed conflict in Afghanistan and are sufficiently linked to the Situation and were committed on the territory of other States Parties to the Rome Statute since 1 July 2002 ("Situation in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan"). The Prosecutor issued a Public Notice on the same date.

As per the ICC's legal framework, the victims of the alleged crimes committed in the Situation in Afghanistan have the right to submit "representations", i.e. to provide their views, concerns and expectations, to the ICC Judges that are considering the Prosecutor's request. To help facilitate this process, the Victims Participation and Reparations Section ("VPRS") of the ICC Registry has prepared a template PDF representation form which is available for download below in English, Pashto and Dari. (Tolonews)

(9) IFC Invests in

as well as extensive local affiliations. These relationships allow AIB to offer a wide range of services including dollar clearing—the only organization in the country able to do so— as well as correspondent banking and the financing of commercial and consumer loans. AIB is also actively engaged with its workforce to provide equal opportunities for all staff, particularly in the career development of its female employees.

IFC is already engaged in the financial sector in Afghanistan through a trade facility with AIB and an investment in the First Microfinance Bank. IFC continues to seek new investments in Afghanistan to support the development of its private sector and spur job creation, especially in the areas of infrastructure, finance and agribusiness. (PR)

(10) Turkmen MPs

the Torghundi town of Herat with Ashgabat and Caspian port of Turkmenbashi, Trend news agency reported.

It added the corridor will stretch to Baku before reaching Ankara through Tbilisi. It will include branches to Poti, Batumi, Ankara and Istanbul.

Designed to boost regional trade and economic integration, the project will cost about \$2 billion. (Pajhwok)

(11) India Pledges

of Afghanistan," the Embassy of India in Kabul said in a statement.

The statement further added "The Assistance would be used to procure spare parts for M/s Milli Bus Enterprise for refurbishment of 350 previous supplied buses under Gol assistance. An MoU for this was signed today by H.E Manpreet Vohra, Ambassador of India and H.E Mohammad Tahmasi, Minister of Transport of Afghanistan."

According to the statement, the 350 buses are expected to be operational by end of 2018 and will help to strengthen the public transport network of Kabul.

India has played a major role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban regime and has invested over \$2 billion in various reconstruction and infrastructure projects.

The construction of the major Salma Dam, the new Afghan parliament building, Zaranj-Delaram highway, and some other projects are among the key investments India has done so far in the country. (KP)

(12) TAPI Project

on Sunday.

Speaking at the gathering, acting governor, Bismillah Rohani, termed TAPI project as vital for Afghanistan and the region.

"We know the project will create job opportunities for people on the one hand and help improve the security situation on the other. We want the public to be aware of its benefits."

He called upon people to help the government in implementation of the project and provide support to relevant organisations.

Provincial council member Karim Khan Atal hoped the mega project would bring positive changes to the region. "We are seeking our benefits in this project as it will increase real estate prices and establish substations." (Pajhwok)

(13) Clashes Between

Taliban militants to battle the IS fighters in the district and counter the terror group's frequent attacks on their villages.

This is not the first time local residents have been displaced by clashes between the two groups. Civilians have borne the brunt of the rivalry between IS and the Taliban in the district.

More than 2,000 families were displaced and at least eight civilians were killed in October when IS and Taliban fighters clashed for several days in the Waziro Tangi region of the Khogyani district, according to provincial authorities.

The Waziro Tangi Valley is considered an important economic corridor used by militants for smuggling of Afghan mineral supplies to neighboring Pakistan.

An anti-corruption watchdog in Afghanistan earlier this year said militant groups received at least \$46 million from minerals and precious stones illegally exported last year from Nangarhar province to Pakistan. (VoA)

(14) After ISIS Mass

group in Shirzad district.

The statement further added that the Taliban leader was killed in Karki Khel area of the of Shirzad.

The anti-government armed militant groups have not commented regarding the report so far.

This comes as at least fifteen militants affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group offshoot, ISIS Khorsan, were beheaded by their own comrades in this province last week.

According to the local officials, the incident took place recently in the restive Achin district.

The provincial government media office in a statement the incident took place in Surkhaz Bazar area of Mamand Dara in Achin. (KP)

(15) 12 Soldiers Killed

to go unnamed, told Pajhwok Afghan News that a large number of Taliban stormed an ANA post Manar area of the district on Sunday night.

The source said 12 ANA soldiers were killed in the incident. The official did not provide information about Taliban casualties but said the militants also took weapons of soldiers killed in the attack.

Reinforcement was arrived to the area and the Taliban were pushed back, he said. Taliban did not comment yet on the incident. Manar security post is located on Zaranj-Delaram highway. Two days back, Khashrod administrative chief was killed in a bomb blast. (Pajhwok)

(16) Woman Arrested

several members of a dangerous criminal gang during a special operation conducted in the aftermath of the murder of a money exchanger. The officials further added the operation was conducted in northern Balkh province and was led by CID chief General Mohammad Salim Almas. According to CID officials, the gang had murdered a money exchanger in the vicinity of the 15th police district of the city few days earlier and had managed to flee to northern Balkh province. (KP)