

(1) Ghani Promises ...

saying his government had been able to deal with many economic, security and political challenges during the past three years, significantly reducing the problems. Three years back, he said, the international community started withdrawing their forces from Afghanistan and since the Afghan forces were able to deny the Taliban and their allies safe havens in the country. After the Taliban failed to achieve their ominous goals, they carried out barbaric attacks against the people of Afghanistan and shed the bloods of a large number of Afghans including women and children, Ghani said.

He said the Afghan forces should receive more training and become more professional as well as would be equipped with advanced weapons.

Ghani said the economy of Afghanistan had been in trouble three years ago when he was elected as the president. The country's economic growth fell from 10 percent to two percent that time and when foreign forces withdrew, the situation was critical, he added. But the Afghan government was committed to rescuing the country from its economic crisis.

About developments in education, the president said enrolling girls in schools and educating women and girls was his government's priority.

Currently millions of girls attended schools in Afghanistan, Ghani said, adding efforts at increasing national revenue had yielded results. He said the country's customs were reformed and administrative and financial corruption reduced to some extent.

"I have promised to stabilize Afghanistan's economy, the Ministry of Finance and Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB) with support of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have taken some steps in this regard," the president said.

He said the Afghan government wanted to strengthen its business relations with the world and make Afghanistan a connection bridge between regional countries.

"There is significant capacity in investment in mining, agriculture, energy and other areas in Afghanistan," he added. Developments have been made in attracting investment and promoting the private sector. Some laws have been prepared, some taxes were nullified and the license issuance process was simplified," he said.

Ghani said foreign aid to Afghanistan was being spent transparently. His government was committed to holding Wolesi Jirga and provincial council elections next year and the presidential elections in 2019.

The president said transparency and highest world standards would be observed in the upcoming elections and some efforts in this regard had been made.

Ensuring security, fighting administrative corruption and law enforcement were main responsibilities of the government and problems in these areas should be responded by the government itself, he said. He added steps were taken for eradication of corruption and the Afghan government had been able to investigate 300 corruption cases by creating the Anti-Corruption Justice Center (ACJC). Those found guilty in the cases were imprisoned, including senior security officials, he added.

The president said the National Anti-Corruption Strategy had been prepared and was currently in the implementation phase. "We promise to the international community, the Afghan people and civil society institutes that we are decisive about fighting corruption," he said.

He said the Citizen Charter program was implemented in the whole of the country and it was going ahead without facing any problem.

"Women are important part of this program," said the president, who added some steps for countering narcotics had been taken but security problems hindered progress in this regard.

At the end of his speech, the president stressed institutionalization of democracy, enforcement of law equally on all and providing equal services to citizens of Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(2) Anti-Nuclear Weapon ...

chairperson of the five-member committee, said in her announcement.

Nuclear weapons are not yet subject to any international legal prohibition such as what land mines, cluster munitions and biological and chemical weapons face, she said. "Through its work, ICAN has helped to fill this legal gap."

ICAN, a coalition of non-governmental organizations from around 100 different countries, "has been a driving force in prevailing upon the world's nations to pledge to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders in efforts to stigmatize, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons," Reiss-Andersen said.

She said the Norwegian Nobel Committee wished to emphasize that the next steps towards attaining a world free of nuclear weapons must involve the nuclear-armed states.

"This year's Peace Prize is therefore also a call upon these states to initiate serious negotiations with a view to the gradual, balanced and carefully monitored elimination of the almost 15,000 nuclear weapons in the world," Reiss-Andersen said. (Xinhua)

(3) Limits on US ...

care of a long time ago like North Korea, Iran, Afghanistan, ISIS (Daesh) and the revisionist powers that threaten our interests all around the world," said Trump.

This comes after Pakistan's Foreign Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif at a gathering in US Institute of Peace in Washington said Islamabad really wants to cooperate with Washington to find a solution to the Afghan problem.

"We want to cooperate, really cooperate with the US. We want to find a solution to the Afghan problem, because we are the direct beneficiaries of peace in Afghanistan," said Asif.

Asif also warned of Taliban and Daesh cooperation and said if these two groups get together; it will be a very serious threat for the region.

Asif said US has already lost the Afghan war.

"You already lost the war. You're just trying to salvage your situation over there. If you pursue the military solution, you will force Taliban and Daesh (IS) to get together and that will be the biggest curse for us to face, for the region to face. We don't want to see that situation happening in our region," said Asif.

The Pakistani foreign minister meanwhile said Islamabad is fighting against terrorists and that it is winning the war against extremism and terrorist groups.

"We are the only winners against terrorism in the whole world," Asif added.

Asif's remarks come following his meeting with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on Wednesday and National Security Adviser HR McMaster earlier on Thursday. (Tolnews)

(4) Project Document ...

reforms and conduct the necessary preparations to realize credible elections," said Tadamichi Yamamoto, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan and head of UNAMA.

"Time is of the essence, and key decisions need to be made to ensure timely and credible elections," stressed Pernille Kardel, who is the UN Secretary-General's Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan and UNAMA's political chief.

"This is not just any project; it is about the stability of the country."

The UN officials noted that critical decisions are urgently required for the electoral process to move forward, as is public outreach to build trust in the electoral institutions.

UNAMA has pledged the international community's support as a partner throughout Afghanistan's electoral preparation process.

Under Resolution 2344 (2017), the Security Council requested UNAMA to support Afghan authorities in the organization of elections, and to strengthen the integrity, sustainability and inclusiveness of the electoral process.

Supporting strong and independent electoral management bodies will be a key feature of these efforts in the lead up to elections.

In its statement, UNAMA said the mission remains committed to working with Afghan institutions as they implement reforms to enhance transparency and build trust in Afghanistan's democratic processes.

"UNAMA encourages Afghanistan's political leaders and civil society to unite their efforts to prepare credible (parliamentary and district council) elections in 2018," read the statement. (Tolnews)

(5) Conflict in Uruzgan ...

He said efforts were underway in cooperation with local elders to reopen the 80 schools located in Tirinkot and districts.

A student of Malalai school said traditions also played a key role behind the closure of schools besides conflict in Uruzgan.

She said girls were harassed on their way to school and as a consequence, many girls opted to stay at home.

About 600 schools have been closed nationwide for various reasons including insecurity amid efforts by the authorities to reopen them as soon as possible. (Pajhwok)

(6) President Promises ...

in a better way, according to a statement from the Presidential Palace.

Speaking on behalf of the returning pilgrims, Haji Syed Noor Khan appreciated efforts by the president and the minister concerned to ensure food, transport, health and accommodation facilities for them.

In his remarks, Ghani billed the Hajj process as important. The president said he himself had been tracking the process. He asked the pilgrims to share with him the problems they faced during the ritual.

"In consultation with religious scholars and the departments concerned, we are working on basic plans to improve the Hajj process," the president concluded. (Pajhwok)

(7) Russia to Host...

could bring the Taliban to the peace negotiations table.

Following the announcement of the new US strategy on Afghanistan and South Asia, President Ashraf Ghani said the situation in the region has changed.

In response to a query about whether the October 11 meeting will bring the Taliban to the negotiations table, political affairs analyst Sayed Ahmad Ahmadi said "I hope that it will be a positive step towards peace."

"If the Afghans lead the peace process, we will reach a result; otherwise, I am not more hopeful about the (Moscow) meeting," he added.

Meanwhile, Afghan Finance Minister Ekil Hakimi said at the Senior Officials Meeting that Kabul will host a big meeting on the Afghan peace process within the next three months.

Hakimi said the meeting will be attended by representatives of the international community, Afghan officials and political figures to design a roadmap for the peace talks and to take practical steps in talking with the Taliban.

"We want to agree on a roadmap to determine that which work can be done to assure the armed opposition groups to embrace peace as it was done by the Hizb-e-Islami," Hakimi said.

Pakistani media meanwhile reported on Friday that President Ashraf Ghani will visit Islamabad in the near future. However, it is not clear so far that will the president visit Pakistan before or after the International Contact Group meeting in Moscow.

According to Pakistani media, Pakistan's chief of army staff General Qamar Jawed Bajwa in his last visit to Kabul, invited the Afghan president to visit Islamabad and he has received positive response from Ghani.

The first International Contact Group (ICG) meeting was held in Jeddah this year in February to discuss the political, security, and economic situation in Afghanistan.

The meeting was hosted by the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and co-chaired by Ambassador Sabine Sparwasser, German Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Hekmat Khalil Karzai, Deputy Foreign Minister of Afghanistan. Over 50 ICG member states and multilateral organizations participated. (Tolnews)

(8) USAID Offers ...

under the Promote program have said the program not only helped improve their skills but also helped them secure jobs.

On Thursday, at least fourteen graduates who studied in the Doppler ultrasound field graduated in Kabul where they stressed the need for the program to be expanded to more regions across Afghanistan.

"We live in a society where citizens go abroad due to the lack of expertise in the Doppler ultrasound field, so this program is basically a solution to remove the problem," said one Promote graduate Sharifa Nazari.

"Millions of dollars flows out of Afghanistan due to the lack of resources and our patients go abroad for treatment, therefore the Women in The Economy project and Promote Program have stepped up efforts to make some contributions in the medical field so that doctors can get professional training," said Mirwais Sahra, technical deputy head of Women in Economy.

Meanwhile, officials from the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) have said that Afghanistan is still among the ten countries in the world where the outbreak of contagious diseases is high.

They said that launching of such programs could help to upgrade the skills of medical workers to help diagnose diseases correctly and know what treatment to dispense.

"Government and the private sector should carry out practical work in the country to resolve healthcare issues and there is a need for more coordination between them," said Sayed Haseeb, head of the department of non-infectious diseases at the ministry of public health.

According to officials from Promote, more than 880 female graduates have completed their education under the program since 2015 with the majority of them now working at 200 health centers in 34 provinces.

This comes at a time that access to higher education for women in Afghanistan has been challenging. It is even harder for professional women in the workforce to obtain higher degrees or additional certificates.

The Promote professional certification program helps Afghan women obtain internationally recognized certificates that broaden their employment opportunities in both the public and private sectors. (Tolnews)

(9) Certain Global ...

however, blamed the world for failing to keep some of its promises. For example, he explained, pay parity for NGO workers under government policy and need-based appointments of advisors to ministries were yet to be ensured.

Hel also noted progress in implementation of global pledges. "Yes, there have been certain breakthroughs. They can no longer hold us responsible. Instead we are telling them about their failures."

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Tadamichi Yamamoto said the international fraternity had clearly outlined its views about the government's problems and their solutions during the two-day meeting.

He said Afghanistan was still struggling with economic problems, widespread poverty and administrative corruption. The top UN diplomat hoped the Afghan gov-

ernment would overcome the issues.

The attendees, senior officials and international delegations, met in Kabul to review progress, achievements and challenges in implementing the Brussels commitments and the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF). (Pajhwok)

(10) Partnership with ...

meeting, Tillerson said the US had concerns about the future of Pakistan's government. "We want their government to be stable and we want it to be peaceful."

He said "many of the same issues they're struggling with inside Pakistan are our issues." He described the meeting an opportunity to strengthen the bilateral relationship.

"We are going to be working very hard at all levels, from the State Department to the Defence Department to our intelligence communities, as well as economic, commerce, opportunities as well."

The News quoted Tillerson as saying that Pakistan's partnership with the US was critical and it was the Trump administration's regional approach for the long-term stability of the region.

For his part, Khawaja Asif said Pakistan and the US shared a common desire for peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region at large. Pakistan sought a broad-based relationship with the US, building on decades of successful cooperation.

A statement from the Pakistan embassy in Washington said the foreign minister pointed out that Islamabad was winning its war against terrorism. He made clear Pakistan pursued a zero tolerance and indiscriminate approach in its campaign against terrorist and militant groups.

"He informed the secretary of state with regard to the strong public reaction in Pakistan to the pronouncement of US administration's South Asia policy -- based on inadequate recognition of Pakistan's sterling contribution in the fight against terrorism." "Secretary Tillerson acknowledged and appreciated the sacrifices rendered by the people and armed forces of Pakistan in the struggle against terrorism," the statement added.

He agreed cooperation between Pakistan and the United States in Afghanistan was crucial to achieving durable peace and stability in the region. He promised Pakistan's interests and concerns would be accommodated since its role was critical to President Trump's South Asia strategy.

Asif reiterated Pakistan's position on the need for an Afghan-led political approach to achieving peace and stability. He conveyed Pakistan's concerns with regard to ungoverned spaces within Afghanistan, from which attacks against Pakistan continued to be planned and carried out. (Pajhwok)

(11) NUG Committed...

National Unity Government's activities. "I also greatly appreciate the support we have received from the members of the media, in covering our activities," Abdullah added.

The third Senior Officials Meeting witnessed continued commitments from the international community to Afghanistan and also the National Unity Government's commitment to the world. (Tolnews)

(12) Women's Councils

progress in different areas, particularly in business and investment sectors. The new generation of Afghanistan was committed to a bright future and making efforts in this regard.

Rula added the Afghan women were ready to shoulder onerous responsibilities, with 3,000 women striving in different fields to improve their future by using combined cooperation and energies.

She noted significant progress had been made by Afghan women in all walks of life. They have been provided with tremendous economic growth opportunities with the creation of Women's Support Network and women's business chamber.

She said female councils, also including men, would be formed in remote areas of the country. The government's role in supporting women was extremely important, she remarked, saying females had greater contacts with local and central agencies.

The first lady hailed government efforts for enforcing reforms, combating corruption and introducing e-governance.

Representatives of foreign countries talked about the development of Afghan women in recent years. At the end of the meeting, Ghani visited a photo exhibition. (Pajhwok)

(13) Afghan Ambassador...

on Afghanistan, our homes, farming and irrigation system have been destroyed. Our growers, like other Afghans, have been forced into migration," he added.

The ambassador denied stopping water flows into Iran during the period. Afghanistan could not harness even its own share of water that eventually flowed into Iran, he explained.

He noted Iran had been struggling with drought for the past two decades, during which it received Afghanistan's water. But even then Iran's issue of water scarcity could not be addressed.

Like other countries, the diplomat rea-

soned, Afghanistan too reserved the right to make use of its water resources by building dams on different rivers.

He also faulted the digging of deep wells by Iran between Nimroz and Sistan-Balochistan provinces -- storing a huge quantity of water. (Pajhwok)

(14) UNAMA Chief ...

vidently put forward in the ANPDF," said Yamamoto, who stressed that real change is complex and takes time.

"In the ANPDF, the government links development progress to Afghans' right, their demand, to live in a country that is at peace and on the road to self-reliance," he said. "I challenge all of the partners, activists, business men and women, and officials here to consider each element of our work through the lens of its contribution to peace; if we can do that, we can contribute to the future that Afghans envision, and with which all of us in the international community wish to see Afghanistan succeed." (Tolnews)

(15) Rights Group...

who have been returned from Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden and Germany only to be killed, injured in bomb attacks, or left to live in constant fear of being persecuted for their sexual orientation or conversion to Christianity.

Citing official EU statistics, the report noted that the number of Afghans returned by European countries to Afghanistan nearly tripled in 2016 to 9,460 from 3,290 in 2015.

Addressing a moot in this connection in capital Kabul, Amnesty International's Afghanistan Researcher Horia Mosadiq said the deal between the Afghan government and the European countries on the sidelines of Brussels Conference had also played a key role in triggering mass deportation.

"The same European countries that once pledged support for a better future for Afghans are now crushing their hopes and abandoning them to a country that has become even more dangerous since they fled," Mosadiq said while urging the EU to consider the volatile situation in Afghanistan, and halt the review of their decision.

Last year at the Brussels Conference, the EU and its member states pledged \$5.6 billion for Afghanistan over the next four years against Kabul's commitments for reforms.

The report listed the cases of at least four Afghan deportees who went through trauma upon return and now feel their lives were in great danger in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, the Afghan government insists the situation in the country is suitable enough to absorb its citizens returning from abroad.

Ministry of Refugees and Repatriates spokesman Hafiz Miakhail told Anadolu Agency a the government had a number of plans to ensure the successful integration of repatriating Afghans.

Also on Thursday, Deputy Managing Director European Union External Action Paola Pampaloni told senior officials meeting in Kabul the progress achieved by the Afghan Government this year had allowed the disbursement of the first tranche of 100 million euros (\$117.35 million) of budget support under the state building contract. (Monitoring Desk)

(16) US Troop ..

Afghanistan," he said.

In addition, the USS Wasp, an amphibious assault ship, has delayed its deployment to the Pacific due to its role in rescue-and-relief efforts in the Caribbean.

"Secretary (Jim Mattis) said we're 'all in' to help Puerto Rico, and there are just going to be downstream effects when you make those decisions," he said, adding that helping American citizens such as those in Puerto Rico is a "very high priority" for the Pentagon.

The United States is sending about 3,000 additional American troops to Afghanistan to advise and assist Afghan forces in the field down to the brigade level.

Defense Secretary Mattis told lawmakers earlier this week that these advisors will be authorized to call in U.S. and coalition airstrikes to support the ground operations, allowing the Afghan forces to be "bolder" in combat knowing that American and NATO air power will be there to strike the Taliban and other militants on the battlefield.

"Make no mistake, this is combat duty," Mattis said Tuesday, "but the Afghan forces remain in the lead to do the fighting." (VoA)

(17) 3 Soldiers ...

facility of the 201st Selab Military Corps. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the bombing, which also partially damaged the pick-up. (Pajhwok)

district were cleared of the Taliban during the operation.

"We have eliminated Taliban's strongholds and are advancing in the area. Our operation is ongoing for the past one week," Farhad, a soldier said.

This comes after some government officials claimed that most of Taliban's training centers are located in Imam Sahib district. Taliban has not commented on the military operation. (Tolnews)