

(1) Distrust is ...

frequently attack the security forces, preventing children from going to school, torching schools and TARGETING the tribal elders.

But President Ghani says that "peace is easier in Nangarhar province than in Kandahar." He said that the justice is one of the basic foundations of religion. On Thursday, Ghani wished the nation a peaceful and happy Eid-ul-Azha and called for an end to violence.

After Eid-ul-Azha prayers at the Presidential Palace, Ghani said that peace is a prerequisite for the entire nation.

"I'd like to wish a very joyful and peaceful Eid to all Afghans and Muslims around the world. May you have a wonderful time with your loved ones," Ghani said. Ghani also said that Kabul still prefers intra-Afghan peace process.

In his Eid message, Ghani again called on the youth not to leave the country and assured them that the National Unity Government is working on developing employment programs.

Thursday is the first day of Eid ul-Azha - the tenth month of Dhu al-Hijjah. This holiday is the largest religious festival of the year for Muslims around the world.

However, he went on to praise the Afghan security forces and he expressed hope for economic and infrastructural development in the country. (Tolonews)

(2) US May Keep ...

continuing with current plans, the paper explained.

According to the Journal, some U.S. officials worry that a large cut in the number of international forces could endanger the sustainability of the Afghan government.

Pentagon has however not made any official recommendation to the White House on any changes on troop presence, the paper added.

"We will continue to work closely with President Ghani, the Afghan government, and our international partners to ensure that Afghan forces have the capabilities and training necessary to preserve the gains made by the Afghans and the international community over the last 13 years," the paper quoted an unnamed Obama administration official as saying. The Afghan officials and analysts, meanwhile, stressed the need for continued international community's support to the Afghan forces.

"The American generals realize that their military gains are still vulnerable in Afghanistan," lawmaker Mirdad Nijrabi said. "The Afghan security forces need support from their international counterparts. We see the role of foreign forces very important. If necessary, we will request them to bring back their combat forces to Afghanistan."

This comes after President Barack Obama announced in March that the U.S. would keep 9,800 troops in Afghanistan through the end of 2015 following a request by Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. However, the original plan suggested keeping 5,500 troops by the end of 2015.

Currently, about 13,000 U.S. and NATO troops are stationed in Afghanistan, mainly focusing on training and assisting the Afghan forces under the Resolute Support (RS) mission, which started last year after the end of combat mission. (Tolonews)

(3) Lack of Regional ...

were fully capable of thwarting internal and external threats, but there was need for more support from international community as far as the equipments of Afghan security forces were concerned.

The CEO said that a commission had been tasked to reform the country's electoral system so that rigging and irregularities in future election could be avoided.

He said Afghan government was committed to bring reforms in the government administration and eliminate corruption.

He said with the help of international community Afghanistan had made progress in security, economic and political sectors and the country was on track with global community.

He said his country went through two major developments last year one was the transfer of political power and another was the transfer of security and both were successful.

The CEO said creation of Unity government was a new experience in the region and he and President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani pledged to work jointly for the prosperity of people. (Pajhwok)

(4) 8 Afghan ...

went missing on the way [back from Minal]," Deputy Hajj Minister Dai -ul-Haq Abed said. "Five of them are possibly dead or injured but there is no report on the three others."

President Ashraf Ghani, meanwhile, asked the ministry to investigate the issue.

"I have talked to the minister and instructed him to investigate the incident and address the issues facing the Afghan pilgrims," Ghani said. Meanwhile, the Iranian government has led growing criticism of the Saudi government, accusing it of "incompetence."

Iran's Supreme National Security Council has asked Saudi Arabia to take responsibility for the deaths.

It is the second tragic incident in two weeks after a construction crane collapsed at Mecca's Grand Mosque, leaving over hundred pilgrims dead, including nine Afghans. (Tolonews)

(5) Daesh Active ...

security forces and the Taliban in different areas of Afghanistan.

It said 10 percent of the Taliban fighters had sympathies with the Daesh fighters, adding that 70 percent of the group's fighters came from Syria and Iraq to Afghanistan.

Afghan security officials did not consider IS a threat, said the report, however, their intelligence agencies kept close eye on its activities.

The report pointed out Rauf Khadem, a former advisor to Taliban supreme leader Mullah Omar, had traveled to Iraq last month and since organized his own group in southern Helmand and western Farah provinces. (Pajhwok)

(6) Ghani Urges ...

while we need them to serve in the legal and judicial systems. Already 249 female judges serve there. There is not a single female judge in Iran. But this is not enough, numbers of female judges should be increased," he said. "The fundamental issue is that women aren't prepared to serve in the provinces, I want to request the human rights commission and national assembly to study the environment and offer their recommendations to me, because without presence of women, we can't resolve the problems facing the women," Ghani added.

He said that contribution of women in the cabinet helps to improve women situations in the country, adding that there is a need to increase women representation in the government institutions.

"Women contribution must be increased in the departments, the current trend is not acceptable to me. My instruction to ministers is to consider female candidates for deputy ministries. There will not be proper representation of women unless women are in place in jobs," he said.

In addition, Ghani pledged to dispatch a number of women abroad to pursue short term courses in leadership and management. (Tolonews)

(7) Afghan, Indian,...

for India as the port will facilitate direct access to Afghanistan bypassing Pakistan besides providing investment opportunities for the Afghan businessmen and being a critical alternative trade route for Afghanistan.

The Indian ambassador to Afghanistan Amar Sinha quoted by The Times of India said "We are looking at a trilateral transit corridor MoU."

Sinha further added that Iran has allotted land for the Afghan investors to invest in the attached free trade zone.

Afghanistan is expected to have sea-land access through the strategic Chabahar port in Iran by the end of next year as the work

on the port has already begun by a joint venture of Kandla Port Trust (KPT) and Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT).

Access to Afghanistan's Garland Highway can be made from Chahbahar port using the existing Iranian road network and the Zaranj-Delaram road, constructed by India in 2009.

This would establish a direct road access to four of the major cities of Afghanistan - Herat, Kandahar, Kabul, and Mazar-e-Sharif.

The port will be also used to ship crude oil and urea, saving India transportation costs. It will also cut transport costs and freight time for India to Central Asia and the Gulf by about a third. (KP)

(8) India Announces...

1000 scholarships per annum to Afghan students, the largest scheme for any country run by ICCR.

Out of total 998 candidates enrolled this year, 15 students enrolled for pursuing PhD programme (14 boys and one girl), while 211 students have been enrolled for Postgraduate studies (192 boys and 19 girls) and 772 students have been enrolled for undergraduate studies (682 boys and 90 girls).

259 have been admitted in technical courses such as B.Tech, M.Tech, BE, ME, B.Sc.(IT), B.Sc. (Comp. Sc.) etc. Technical courses were a priority for Afghan Government.

The candidates from all 34 provinces availed ICCR Scholarship this year. Some of the top performing provinces are: Kabul, Nangarhar, Ghazni, Parwan, Balkh, Badakhshan, Wardak and Herat.

The universities most preferred by Afghan students are Bangalore, Punjab, Chittoor, Gujarat, Delhi. (PR)

(9) Abdullah Talks ...

that NUG is determined to take measures in reducing poverty in the country.

"Afghanistan begun to pursue its MDGs almost half a decade later than other member states. Based on our 2005 to 2015 MDG report, we have a mixed achievements and setbacks, while poverty rate as remains more or less constant for several years, we have made considerable progress in primary education, gender equality, in women empowerment, child and maternal mortality rate are being reduced," CEO Abdullah said. In addition, Abdullah talked on the issue of terrorism and reiterated that the militant groups are still operating inside the Pakistani soil.

It is expected that NUG will submit the evidences proving Pakistan's support of terrorism to the UN general assembly.

A trilateral meeting between Afghanistan, Pakistan and the US is also scheduled to take place in New York on the sidelines of the general assembly meeting. (Tolonews)

(10) Taliban Make...

areas they control. They meet their financial needs through pistachio earnings," said Baha-uddin Qadesi, head of Badghis Provincial Council.

Furthermore, the local officials claimed that the militants also destroy pistachio forests while battling the security forces. (Tolonews)

(11) Soybean Growers ...

fixation characteristic in soil. A farmer in Qala-i-Zal district, Mohammad Yaqub, told Pajhwok Afghan News he was given soybean seeds last year by the Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock department and he cultivated them on his 1.5 hectare of land.

"The crop is very good for us because it is legitimate and has a high income," he said, adding there was no need for too much hard work to grow the plant.

Yaqub has been growing soybean for the last three years, but in the absence of a processing factory, he sells his produce at low price. He asked the government to establish a soybean factory in the province to enable farmers to sell their product at suitable prices.

Currently, the Nutrition and Education International (NEI) and Zafron Growers Association purchase soybean produce from farmers and send it to northern

Balkh province for processing, according to Abdul Basir Faqiri, the extension department head at the provincial Agriculture Department.

He said a soybean processing factory would be established in Kunduz next year. He said 70 acres of land cultivated with soy this year when the yield was nearly 250 tonnes.

A farmer in Chardara district, Mohammad Rassoul, said previously he would grow vetch crop on his one acre of land which would usually produce about 420kg of vetch.

But for the past two years, he has been growing soybean on his land with the yield hovering between 120kg and 160 kg.

He said the Agriculture Department also assisted them with 10kg of urea and 20 kg of DAP and the soybean association purchased a tonne of soybean for \$700 -- more profitable than vetch crop.

"If a processing factory is established in the province, farmers will sell their produce with good prices," he said.

Agricultural experts say the cash crop could be an alternative for poppy crop which is illegal and has many hazardous effects on the society.

Faqiri said they have been trying to encourage soybean cultivation in the province to discourage poppy.

He said had distributed soybean seeds to 700 farmers for trial cultivation and the yield was satisfactory.

To encourage soybean cultivation, Faqiri said had distributed 15 tonnes of seeds, 30 tonnes of DAP and seven tonnes of urea to 1000 farmers in 88 villages of Kunduz City, Khanabad, Al-iabab, Chahardara, Qala-i-Zal and Imam Sahib districts. (Pajhwok)

(12) Ghani Praises ...

National Army (ANA) high ranking officials, including interior minister, defence minister, chief and deputy chief of the armed forces were present in the meeting and briefed the president about ongoing operations in the country.

"Our purpose was to protect our people and I always told security forces officials to pay special attention to the families of martyrs," the statement quoted the president as saying.

Security officials promised to pay the highest prices for and render scarifies for the sake of the country and making Afghanistan a secure place. (Pajhwok)

(13) Afghan Police ...

Sopko wrote that the US-led Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A), which is responsible for training Afghan forces, had ordered more than 75,000 coats for Afghan police for delivery by July 2015, but they still had not been delivered.

Another 15,000 coats were not scheduled to be delivered until July 2016, it said.

"A lack of cold-weather clothing could adversely impact the overall effectiveness of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) and degrade their operational capabilities," he wrote.

Winters in Afghanistan can be frigid, with temperatures as low as 15 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 9 degrees C) in the Hindu Kush mountain range. The coldest temperatures are usually at high elevations.

Afghan security forces have faced an intensified Taliban insurgency since a US-led military coalition formally ended its combat mission last year.

About 12,000 NATO troops have remained in Afghanistan to train and assist Afghan forces.

According to the letter, from 2011 to 2013 the procurement of cold-weather clothing was the responsibility of Afghan ministries, while the United States funded the purchases.

When clothing shortages became apparent, the United States took back responsibility for procurement.

Shipments of clothing resumed in May 2014, but only Afghan police received coats, the letter said. Neither the army nor the police received sweaters, gloves or caps.

SIGAR said the Pentagon had 335,054 coats on order for the Afghan army, but they were not expected to be delivered until 2017. A SIGAR official said the letter was part of a larger audit that should be published by early 2016.

The Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan did not respond to a request for comment. (Reuters)

(14) Laghman Ulema ...

During a meeting with Governor Abdul Jabbar Naeemi, a group of ulema hailing from Karghaio district, underlined the need for military action against insurgents.

A statement from the governor office said the ulema believed the operation would bring peace and stability in the restive areas of the province and public trust on government be restored.

According to the religious scholars Afghan security forces were fully capable of defending the country. They, however, stressed the need for an effective use of available resources.

Governor Naeemi on the occasion said law and order, reconstruction, good governance and development was the unity government priority and added public that these targets could not be achieved without public support. (Pajhwok)

(15) Mass Exodus ...

Over the past few months, nearly 70,000 Afghans have left the country for Europe in search of jobs and comfortable life, he said, adding illegal travel to those countries was dangerous and claimed dozens of lives each month.

He appreciated the youth going to foreign countries for higher education. In the same breath, however, the unionist stressed their return to work for their motherland and contribute to its prosperity.

"Youth are a huge asset to any country. The government, therefore, should give them jobs inside the country," Dr. Aadel stressed. The youth voting with their feet was a big loss for the country, he maintained.

The AAFTU chief asked the government and the private sector to provide employment opportunities for the youngsters to prevent them from leaving the country in droves.

According to Aadel, of the 12 million potential work-force in the country, 65 percent (7 million) are jobless. Up to 3 million Afghans are drug addicts. Insecurity, corruption and joblessness are the main reasons forcing youth to seek refuge in drugs.

He hit out at the government for anomalous appointments and called for an immediate end to discrimination in the recruitment process.

Dr. Aadel also urged the authorities to take urgent measures to ensure the security of workers and provide education and health facilities for their children. He hoped work opportunities would be provided for labourers with the implementation of mega projects. The unionist also underlined transparent execution of agreements and checking corruption. (Pajhwok)

(16) Officials Concerned...

past six months. Head of HIV department, Dr. Humayun Mubariz, said: "We have registered 61 positive cases of HIV/AIDS in Kandahar over the past few years of which 17 have lost their lives. The remaining are in contact with us and are under treatment."

Residents of Kandahar are also concerned over the issue, saying that the government should take serious measures to control the spread of the disease among them.

"We ask the international community and the Public Health Ministry to establish treatment centers for them. They should hold awareness campaigns about the disease," said Ahmad Shah a resident of Kandahar.

"This is a big problem for our society. It is difficult for those who are affected with the disease to reveal their problem to health officials. They should go under treatment," another resident of Kandahar, Samiullah, told TOLONews.

Meanwhile, the Public Health Director in Kandahar, Abdul Quayum Pakhla, said they have taken several steps to fight the health prob-

lem.

"The use of drugs through injection and unsafe sex are main ways which affect people with HIV. Other way that affects people is unsafe blood transfusion," he said. (Tolonews)

(17) ISIS Militants ...

or sympathy were reported in 25 provinces in the war-torn country."

According to the report the ISIS loyalists and the Taliban militants are fighting each other only in eastern Nangarhar province, citing the drug trade as the main reason behind the brutal clashes.

Abdul Rauf Khade, the former Taliban adviser to Mullah Mohammad Omar, has been described as one of the prominent ISIS fighters who formed his own group in southern Helmand and western Farah provinces after visiting Iraq in 2014.

The report also added that militants from Pakistan and Uzbekistan with some of them having close ties to al-Qaeda terrorist network have come under the IS banner after fleeing their country and have "rebranded themselves" in recent months. (KP)

(18) Paktika...

forests. But the rulers remain insouciant about our woes," he deplored.

Relevant government departments could help them with the construction of cold storage facilities and access to international markets, he explained, saying hundreds of tonnes of pine nuts were sold to Pakistan annually.

But Dur Mohammad, a farmer from the Sultan village of Sara Rawza, said: "Some days back, I sold my pine nut forest to an Afghan trader for 15 million afs. After a few days, the forest was sold to a Pakistani trader for 20 million afs."

Mohammad Raza, the Argon district chief, confirmed the traders' problems, including lack of access to the international market. But he said the issue had been taken up with higher-ups. (Pajhwok)

(19) Ghazni ...

lack of market for the fruits, saying there is no cold storage facility for the farmers to keep their products there and supply to market on the basis of demand.

"As we don't have electricity in Ghazni, we can't establish cold storages here," he said while suggested the establishment of marketing union to find market for the production. (Pajhwok)

(20) US Army...

sprang into action. Cpl Davis-Smith was shot in the arm as he ran to protect Major General Bathurst. Three others, including the team leader Sgt Ford, began giving life-saving first aid to Captain Hutton, who was shot several times. (BFN)

(21) China, Russia ...

to defend the fruits of the WWII victory as well as the post-war order, firmly oppose any act of whitewashing wartime atrocities and promote the establishment of lasting peace and common prosperity across the world.

For his part, Melnikov said Russia shared the same stances as China concerning WWII history. (Xinhua)

(22) Hungary ...

capital of Vienna on Friday that his government was not planning to build a fence on the Slovenian border.

He said that field work was under way on the border to "clean up" a strip of land and make it suitable for deploying mobile equipment, Hungarian press agency MTI reported. (Xinhua)

(23) Saudi Border ...

26. U.N.-backed efforts for a compromise faced long odds as combat ramped up on Saturday.

Clashes between Houthi forces and those loyal to the exiled administration raged in the central desert province of Marib and the southwestern city of Taiz, where residents reported that the two sides duelled with heavy artillery in civilian areas. (Reuters)

(24) EU, Iran...

meetings on the sidelines of this year's UN General Assembly meeting will seek to forge a new consensus on the way forward in Syria where fighting has driven four million people from their homes. (AFP)