

(1) Lawmakers ...

Barakzi, a lawmaker from western Herat province, also demanded an end to officials working in acting capacity.

"When you visit an organization led by acting officials, no one will respond to you, this is not in the interest of people and the government, the government must introduce these officials to the lower house for a vote of confidence," she said.

Some other lawmakers held similar views. Mohammad Nazir Ahmadzai, the second deputy speaker, said it was a matter of concern that the acting culture continued.

He also asked the government to introduce the acting officials to the house for a vote of confidence.

On March 15, Wolesi Jirga speaker Abdul Raouf Ibrahim said that the president had promised to introduce nominees for the vacant Cabinet seats soon.

The lower house in 2015 approved the law on acting officials, barring officials from performing duty for more than two months in acting capacity. (Pajhwok)

(2) Pending Proposals ...

break up Kabul into five constituencies and Herat into three. Ten other provinces would be broken up into two and the remaining provinces will remain one provincial constituency.

Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah's office said assessments by government of the IEC's proposals will take some time.

"Any decision which is taken is the authority of the IEC. Government is taking part in this process only as a bystander," the CEO's deputy spokesman Jawed Faisal said.

However, the ongoing delay in setting a date for elections has drawn harsh criticism.

"The international community and donor countries for sure will make a final decision on elections if government puts aside its political disputes and supports the [election] process," said Hekmatullah Shahbaz, a university lecturer.

This comes after reports indicate that a three-member delegation, including two foreign representatives, will assess the digitization proposal of elections in the near future.

According to the IEC, the delegation will share its findings with the commission within two weeks.

Two proposals pending - one is funding of the budget - and the second is to introduce a system to fragment provincial constituencies into smaller one. For example Kabul into five, Herat 3, ten other provinces each with two and the remaining provinces will remain one provincial constituency. (Tolonews)

(3) Cash-Strapped ...

the council's international relations head.

He told Pajhwok Afghan News the HPC had no budget to conduct activities and pay its employees' salaries for next month. He said aid-giving countries had been informed about the budget shortage which he called a temporary issue, saying the council continued its activities like the past.

Qasimyar believed the international community would resume funding the PHC if its strategy was finalized and a new head of the body was appointed.

HPC's strategy has been under consideration with the National Security Council (NSC) and might be finalized in the next two weeks, after which the council would return to its normal status, he said.

"If finalization of the council's strategy isn't finished soon and its head is not appointed, the HPC's activities will be interrupted." Following the death of former

HPC head Pir Sayed Ahmad Gilani in January, the peace body has been without a head.

The BBC recently quoted a HPC source as saying last month the cash-strapped HPC was unable pay for expenditures and employees' salaries. But the United Nations, at the request of the UK, provided money to the HPC for expenses and salaries last month.

Shah Hussain Murtazawi, acting spokesman for the President, said the HPC should share the issue of lack of budget with the Ministry of Finance and President Ghani in order to get the problem resolved.

A Pajhwok report in September 2015 claimed millions of dollars had been spent on the peace process by the government, but the public remained dissatisfied with the situation.

Reaching the peace accord with the Hezb-i-Islami Afghanistan (HIA) was HPC's great achievement, but the agreement could not be fully implemented in the past six months. (Pajhwok)

(4) Tillerson ...

the Afghan government and the Taliban, protects this alliance's interests," he said.

If the plans come to fruition, they would ensure that Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven for terrorists, according to the secretary of state, who urged NATO allies to boost defence spending or come up with plans to reach the alliance's budget guidelines within two months. (Pajhwok)

(5) Parliamentarians

policy against all those involved in trafficking in persons, reaffirming the critical role of parliamentarians to review, amend, enact and enforce legislation on prevention, prosecution, protection, including rehabilitation of survivors, and other measures through accelerated coordination. Parliamentarians committed to reinforcing the accountability of their respective governments in addressing and ending human trafficking.

AFPPD Secretary General, Dr. Jett Sirathranont, Member of the National Legislative Assembly of Thailand, welcomed the participants, followed by opening remarks delivered by four dignitaries. H.E. Paul Robilliard, Ambassador of Australia to Thailand, congratulated ASEAN leaders from six countries on the ratification of the Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP) which came into force this March. He further stressed the importance of accelerated efforts in achieving the human trafficking related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including Target 8.7. Amjad Hussain Sial, Secretary-General of SARRC, highlighted remaining challenges especially in coordination among key stakeholders. "It is a pressing need of the hour to evolve a concerted and well-coordinated response to address the global menace of human trafficking."

Thailand's efforts in tackling human trafficking were also highlighted by Mr. Suthi Sukosol, Inspector General at the Ministry of Labour of Thailand, noting the establishment of a specialized anti-trafficking prosecution and court division, and increased training for local actors, such as the police, judges, labour inspectors, and social workers. H.E. Mr. Isra Sunthornvut, Secretary General of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, also urged fellow parliamentarians to address the implementation challenges of anti-trafficking measures. "As legislators, our only legacy is the legislation that we leave behind. And there are two types of legislation: the legislation that remains on paper and the legislation that is taken seriously and implemented," he asserted.

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ed. "We should all rally behind the fight for the eradication of human trafficking, including the sexual exploitation of children, because this is not only a legal issue but also a moral issue."

Expert organizations which contributed to subsequent knowledge sharing and discussion sessions included the Australia Asia Program to Combat Trafficking in Persons, ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), ECPAT, Plan International, UN-ESCAP, UN Women, UNICEF, UN-ACT (COMMIT)/UNDP, ILO, SDGs Alliance 8.7 and High Time Movement 16.2. (PR)

(6) 'Extreme ...

as of September 2016. The agency observed that fewer than 20 percent of students reportedly enrolled at eight schools, and fewer than 10 percent of students enrolled at five schools.

It said that inspectors did not observe any of the 963 students who reportedly enrolled at one school in Kishidih district.

"At a school in Khulm district, 30 of 460 enrolled students were reported absent during our site visit. At the time of our visit, there were only 10 students on school grounds," according to the SIGAR report.

The report added that on average, school staff reported that 77 teachers were assigned to each school.

"Our site visits found an average of 25 teachers on school grounds, or approximately 35 percent of the number of teachers reportedly assigned to a school," SIGAR noted.

The agency observed that less than half of the schools had reliable electricity, and 10 facilities lacked access to clean water. (VoA)

(7) Taliban can't ...

of the Afghan security sector.

Kaiser praised the security forces and assured them, especially the Afghan Air Force, of close coordination and cooperation. Mohib urged the official to continue cooperating on strengthening the air force. (Pajhwok)

(8) Women

of them has been employed permanently.

While at the neighboring Samangan province, women complain of decreasing women presence in Medias.

Some of these women, mostly young ladies, while being so interested in working for public, in particular for Medias, but traditional mentality block them.

Samangan has traditionally been one of the cultural hubs in Afghanistan, but now, only three media actively operating in the province.

Freedom of speech and women involvement in the public sphere has been one of the rare and handful achievements of Afghan government and its global allies. (Agencies)

(9) 180 Hectares ...

to the provincial police commandment, a number of the district administrative chiefs had also participated in the campaign.

The local officials are saying that the campaign will continue until all lands cultivated with poppy are fully cleared.

There has been a sharp rise in opium cultivation, production and smuggling across the country during the recent months.

According to the last survey report, there has been a 43 percent rise in opium cultivation in Afghanistan.

The survey jointly conducted by the Afghan authorities and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, around 201,000 acres of land were cultivated with opium in 2016. (KP)

(10) Projects Worth...

and Kachwal villages had been

damaged and was being reconstructed to facilitate commuters, he said.

A standard building was being constructed for the hospital which previous served as clinic and had no building. "We decided to convert the clinic to hospital and reconstruct its building too", he said.

According to the district chief, the projects will cost 38 million Afghanis and take a year to complete.

A member of the Provincial Council, Abdul Wali Wakeel, said the two projects had a huge importance for Azra district.

"Azra is a far and insecure district and has long been ignored by the government but the two projects could solve many problems our people face."

Hayatullah, a tribal leader, told Pajhwok Afghan News they had been deprived of facilities like road and hospital and the two projects would somehow bring relief to the inhabitants.

He said local people had to take their patients to other provinces and the new hospital in Azra would resolve that problem. He urged government to pay more attention to Azra district.

The highway connecting Azra with provincial capital, Pul-i-Alam, has been blocked by insurgents over the past 14 years. Local residents first travel to Nangarhar, reach Kabul and then proceed to Pul-i-Alam. (Pajhwok)

(11) National Congress..

it to us; why does government not do this? (Government) only tell lies and always says Durand, Durand ... government should discuss it logically," Pedram said.

The National Congress Party believes that documents signed between Afghan kings and British-India officials in 1893 and again in 1903 clearly state all issues relating to the Durand Line.

The border dispute dates back to the nineteenth century, when Pakistan was part of India and India was a British colony.

In a bid to strengthen their control over the northern parts of India, the British imposed the 2,640km borderline on the Amir of Afghanistan in 1893.

The agreement was signed between Sir Mortimer Durand, the Indian Foreign Secretary at the time, and Amir Abdul Rahman Khan in Kabul. As such the line is known as the Durand Line.

Abdur Rahman Khan's successor, Amir Habibullah Khan, in 1905 signed a new agreement with Britain confirming the Durand Line.

After the founding of Pakistan in 1947, Afghanistan demanded that Pashtuns living on the Pakistani side of the Durand Line be given the right to self-determination but Britain and Pakistan refused.

In response, the Afghan government reportedly refused to acknowledge the Durand Line as an official border and tension between the two neighbors grew. "Some people says that the Durand Line (agreement) was imposed on Afghanistan, while imposed agreements are those that are signed by the defeated countries after war. You know that Afghanistan was not defeated in the war," said Ghulam Mohammad Mohammadi, a historian.

A number of Parliament Members (MPs) meanwhile said the issue of the Durand Line should be referred to the Afghan people and that people should decide whether to hold a Loya Jirga.

"Unless a Loya Jirga is held and all Afghan people are included, individual talk is not important and is not a matter of concern," said Mohammad Nazir Ahmadzai, parliament's second deputy speaker.

The Afghan government however says that documents signed at

the time are invalid. The acting minister of borders and tribal affairs said the people living in both sides of the Durand Line should decide.

"The people living on this side (of the line) cannot decide about it alone. I once again stress that it should be discussed with the people. People jointly should decide about it, the Afghan people, including the millions of people who have been separated from the country," said Abdul Ghafoor Liwal, acting minister of border and tribal affairs. This comes after a recent spate of incidents relating to the Durand Line. In February, Pakistan closed the crossings for a month. They also conducted missile attacks on bordering areas of Afghanistan and last week started building a fence along the line. (Tolonews)

(12) Prince of Wales ...

to Afghanistan after the Taliban refused to expel Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden from the country.

Charles placed an urgent call to William Farish, Washington's ambassador to London, a month after the deadly offensive began in October. But the invasion was difficult to halt as it had already begun.

The ambassador writes: "Prince Charles asked me if it would be possible to stop the invasion to honour Ramadan, and if I could convey that request to President Bush."

Prince Charles: The Passions And Paradoxes Of An Improbable Life, by Sally Bedell Smith, is published by Random House and will be released next week. "But Americans can do anything!," replied the Prince, who was given short shrift after trying to influence Margaret Thatcher, who allegedly told him: "I run this country, not you, sir." (Pajhwok)

(13) Cricket Team ...

After landing in Kabul, the national squad went to the Afghanistan Cricket Board offices where they marked their victory by planting trees. They called on all Afghans to pay more attention to their environment. (Tolonews)

(14) Over 200 ...

the destroyed country," said Afzal Hadid, head of the Balkh provincial council.

Residents of Chamtal district said Taliban were collecting illegal taxes from them and now they are hopeful that their region will be secure after this.

"Before this the regions were insecure, but after this, security will be maintained," said Faiz Mohammad, a resident of Chamtal district.

"People will work together and security will be maintained," said Taj Mohammad, another resident of Chamtal district.

According to a number of these residents, Khan Mohammad also known as Khan Chrik, and Dawa Jan, also known as Mullah Akhond, fought security forces in Chamtal, Chahar Bolak and Shulgara districts of Balkh province and also in parts of Sar-e-Pul and Jawzjan provinces.

Commentating on the Taliban's funding sources, former Taliban commander Khan Mohammad said: "Illegal taxes and drugs are Taliban's funding resources."

Khan Mohammad said in response to a question that he had provided his men with weapons and that he was a former Mujahideen. He also said he had been supporting his men with his own money. (Tolonews)

(15) Rice up, Sugar, ...

1,850afs, a kilogram of green tea for 270afs and the same quantity of African black tea for 290afs -- higher than wholesale prices.

Fuel prices remained steady this week. Abdul Hadi, a worker at the Wazirabad Fuel Station, said the cost of one litre of diesel

stayed stable at 41afs and the same amount of petrol at 44afs.

Ahmad Javed, a gas seller in the Sixth Taimani Road area, said the price of a kilogram of gas stood at 47afs. The price of gold dipped.

Mohammad Fawad, a jeweller in Timor Shahi area, said the price of one gram of Arabian gold decreased from 2,300afs to 2,250afs and the same quantity of the Russia variety from 1,850afs to 1,800afs.

According to the moneychangers' union in Sara-i-Shahzada, one US dollar accounted for 67.55afs and 1,000 Pakistani rupees for 628afs against last week's rates of 67.70afs and 628afs. (Pajhwok)

(16) One of Taliban's...

operations of the Afghan security forces in Nish district.

A local commander of the Taliban group identified as Rahmat was also among those killed. (KP)

(17) Trump Urges...

The congressional investigations into Russian election interference and the Trump campaign's possible Russian ties have become a near-daily distraction for a new administration struggling to find its footing. Trump has vigorously denied that his campaign coordinated with Russia during the election. (AP)

(18) UN, Partners ...

of starvation." This year, the demand for humanitarian and resilience building assistance will further escalate as four countries are at risk of famine: South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and northeast Nigeria. (Xinhua)

(19) Latest Round

who has been shuttling between delegations since March 24., the invitees touched upon "each or most" of the four baskets, referring to issues of governance, constitution, elections and counter-terrorism. (Xinhua)

(20) Russia Pressured..

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg Thursday voiced deep concern over the security situation in eastern Ukraine at a press conference after the meeting, saying that "ceasefire violations in eastern Ukraine have reached record levels."

According to sources, the sanctions introduced against Russia over the conflict in eastern Ukraine can be expanded if Moscow continues "aggressive behavior". (Xinhua)

(21) 2,200 Rebels ...

succeeded to take several key areas, becoming a few kilometers from Hama city, before the army went on a counter offensive to push back the advancing rebels. SANA said that commanders of the Nusra were among the killed militants, including Arab "terrorists." (Xinhua)

(22) French Election...

Shock election outcomes abroad including the U.S. presidential victory of Donald Trump and Britain's Brexit referendum vote have fed expectations that Le Pen's anti-euro, anti-immigration platform could sweep her to power in France. (Reuters)

(23) Austria to ...

Juncker. The German government has claimed that the tolls would generate a surplus 500 million euros that could be spent on roads and infrastructure, but Thoms Puls of the Cologne Institute for Economic Research -- among of many sceptical of the government's claims -- has pointed out that other forecasts were significantly lower. (Xinhua)

(24) Pakistan, China

establishing cooperation and such countries included Bangladesh, Nepal, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, UAE, Cambodia, Jordan, Thailand and United Kingdom. (Agencies)