

(1) President, ...

But disagreements over the membership of the commission has stalled its reform work. Abdullah, who has been the most vocal proponent of electoral reform since he lost the runoff round of 2014's presidential race, objected to President Ghani's initial choice for chair of the commission - Shukria Barakzai. "Members of the commission weren't obligated to start work or establish an office," explained Sediqlah Tawhidi, the deputy head of the electoral commission. "It is the government that has delayed the job of the special commission on electoral reform."

Some election monitoring groups have expressed concerns about the bargaining that has gone into the formation of the electoral reform commission, which they believe should be an apolitical body. "We believe that disagreements between the government leaders could lead to symbolic reforms in the electoral system and again we face a conflicting situation," Free and Fair Election Forum of Afghanistan (FEFA) executive director Naeem Asghari said. (Tolnews)

(2) Women Rights...

for Afghan women's equal rights in the country.

The Security Council adopted the 1325 resolution on 31 October 2000, reaffirming important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building and their equal participation in all matters of peace and security.

Marijët Schuurman, the NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for women, peace and security, said her presence at the gathering meant NATO had an active role in empowering of women. "I'm here to listen to Afghan women and learn from them."

She praised Afghan women's role in security and ongoing peace process. "The Afghan women's determination is praiseworthy." Ms. Schuurman also met with Rula Ghani and discussed ways ahead on how to protect women from conflicts.

Afghanistan's Fist Lady stressed during the wars in Afghanistan the women suffered the most and had less facilities to cope with the situation.

Referring to Farkhunda's recent brutal murder, Rula Ghani said women in Afghanistan sometimes met with such fates and when they raised their voices they were being suppressed.

"In a society where warlords are people's heroes, Farkhunda became a symbol of justice," she said, adding that it was necessary to educate people and change their mentality. (Pajhwok)

(3) Wolosi Jirga ...

on June 14.

The deal that had to be brokered by US Secretary of State John Kerry made Ghani the head of state and Abdullah the head of the newly-created position of a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the government "with the functions of an executive prime minister" but not that title. A month after his inauguration as president, Ashraf Ghani issued a decree declaring the structures under the CEO --- the office of his Chief of Staff and the Council of Ministers' secretariat as a budgetary unit.

However, the decree has to be approved by the parliament.

On Wednesday, the presidential decree was presented before the lower house by the Justice and Judicial commission for a debate.

Mohammad Obda, the commission head, said the presidential decree had been sent to the national assembly during its winter recess.

He said budget for the CEO office hanged in the balance and it was necessary to approve the CEO office as a budget unit.

But outspoken female lawmaker from Kabul Shukria Barakzai said the creation of the chief executive office was against the constitution and the lower house could not act against the constitution. She said since the CEO position had come into being under a political compromise, expenses for the office should be paid by political leaders from their own pockets.

But a lawmaker from central Parwan province, responding to Barakzai's remarks, said political affiliations and grudges should be avoided in the debate.

"It the government had not been formed under a political compromise, the country would have plunged into a new crisis."

He said lawmakers should not make statements that created problems for the country, keeping in view the prevailing political scenario.

Lawmaker Abdul Hafiz Mansoor from Kabul held similar views, but Ramadan Bashardost said the unity government had no credibility.

Mansoor told Bashardost: "You shut up and listen to me. If I approached you, I will hit you in the face. You have not been hit in the face so far that's why you talk much. If I was the speaker, I would have got rid of you in two days."

On hearing these harsh words, Bashardost complained to Speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahim, but he overruled his complaint and ordered security guards to take Bashardost out of the house.

Ibrahimi said the house could not approve the presidential decree on budget for the CEO office because the quorum was incomplete and the next session would make a decision on the issue without any debate.

Of the total 245 members, only 70 were present at today's session. (Pajhwok)

(4) Naderi Assumes ...

presented to the Lower House of the Parliament.

He said construction of residence, roads and rehabilitation/reconstruction of informal settlements and old cities along with the creation of engineering and residence organization for better urban governance are parts of the national projects where practical steps would be taken.

Naderi also thanked the lawmakers in the Lower House of Parliament for casting confidence vote for him and pledged to take strict steps to tackle corruption in a bid to smoothly implement the plans.

Naderi was unanimously approved as the Minister of Urban Development by receiving 202 votes from the Lower House of the Parliament earlier this week.

Naderi presented his plans and strategies as Urban Development Minister to Afghan lawmakers earlier this month and vowed to plan and develop a comprehensive urban development system considering the social and economic condition of the country and Islamic, tradition and international standards.

He also pledged to closely monitor the urban development activities of the state and private sector to ensure the necessary urban development standards have been considered.

Naderi also vowed to take necessary actions in upgrading the national housing policy and building the infrastructures including canalization, electricity, telecommunication, roads and other necessary facilities in the main cities of the country.

Naderi is the former chairman of the SMN Investments and was the first and only Afghan entrepreneur who received the peace through commerce award from the US Department of State. (KP)

(5) Massoud Wants ...

vacating the state-property from influential. Masood praised the role of justice ministry in the past 13 years but also pointed out that the ministry failed to represent government cases in an efficient manner.

He hoped Abdul Basir Anwar would play a decisive role as justice minister in the law making process. The president special envoy said implementation of law and order helped decrease gap between people and government. He lamented in some parts of the country local referred their disputes to militants due to weak government writ.

Mohammad Halim Yousuf, secretary at Justice Ministry, asked Masood to dismiss corrupt individuals working in the ministry. He recalled the Justice Ministry played an active part in the law making process.

Justice Minister Abdul Basir Anwar praised efforts of previous ministers for justice and said corruption and other problems were rampant in the ministry.

However, he warned corrupt officials would be sacked if they failed to demonstrate efficiency. (Pajhwok)

(6) UNHCR Vows to ...

Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs (BAFIA) of the Ministry of Interior.

"We (the UNHCR) are duty-bound to continue the search for solutions when it comes to refugees and in the Iran context we are obviously talking primarily about Afghan refugees," Dhanapala said.

Asked by IRNA correspondent that as the war in Afghanistan is almost over and a democratic government is established in the country, isn't it the proper time for the return of refugees to their country, Dhanapala said, "I think we are all encouraged by the success of the democratic exercise in Afghanistan and the establishment of a unity government and

the appointment of a very effective and dynamic minister of refugees and repatriation in Kabul."

However, he said that the realities on the ground show that the security concerns in Afghanistan continue to exist.

"While we've had a government being established, just two or three days ago we had two major explosions in Jalalabad," Dhanapala said.

"Both Mr. Mohammadifar and I met the Afghan minister while he was in Tehran together as part of President Ashraf Ghani's delegation," he added.

He noted that next month there will be a meeting among the Islamic Republic of Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the UNHCR that will focus on solutions.

"Access to basic services in Afghanistan is still extremely challenging, when you think about, access to health care, access to education, and these are the areas where the UNHCR together with the international community that would include of course the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran are looking to assist the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan."

"As the deputy minister Zolaqari mentioned in his statement earlier today we need to create conditions that will be eventually conducive for return to Afghanistan and by creating conditions we are basically talking about, yes, the security is won but from the development side there's still a lot that has to be done," Dhanapala said. (IRNA)

(7) 60,000 Afghan ...

officers to read and write.

The Ministry says that by the end of 2016 at least 13,000 of those 60,000 officers should be literate.

Deputy Minister of Interior for Administrative Affairs Kiramuddin Yawar, confirmed that about 60,000 police officers and police personnel are illiterate.

This comes after a UN sponsored investigation recently found that top Afghan officials at the Ministry of Interior systematically ignore complaints of corruption against the police.

Based on the report, almost 2,000 complaints were referred to the Inspector General's office in the Afghan Interior Ministry during the previous year - of which only nine cases were referred to legal institutions for follow ups.

According to the report, police officials have been a major barrier in terms of referring cases to court.

The report apparently states that the majority of the complaints filed were regarding the illegalities inside the police, involvement of officials in corruption and other issues.

The Afghan National Police (ANP) is the primary police force of Afghanistan, serving as a single law enforcement agency all across the country. The agency is under the responsibility of Afghanistan's Ministry of Interior. (Tolnews)

(8) Afghan Conflict...

unimaginable only a few months ago," he said.

During his seven days in Afghanistan, Simonović visited Kabul, Nangarhar and Kapisa provinces, the UN News Centre said.

The human rights official said recent violence underlined the fact that it would be Afghan civilians who pay the price, with more work needed to be done to protect them.

"2014 was already a terrible year for the civilian population of Afghanistan and figures for the first quarter of 2015 have confirmed that negative trend," he said referring to statistics compiled by the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which pointed to the deaths of 655 civilians and injuries to 1,155 more in the first quarter of 2015.

During his second official visit to Afghanistan, the Assistant Secretary-General focused on the increasingly difficult security situation following the withdrawal of foreign troops and the transfer of security tasks to the Afghan National Security Forces. He met with children detained for conflict-related crimes, including attempted suicide bombing, as well as civilian victims and their doctors at an emergency hospital in Kabul. Simonović was in Jalalabad on Saturday at the same time as a suicide attack by anti-government elements on a crowded marketplace, which killed at least 35 people.

"It is unacceptable that Afghans should face such violence on a daily basis," he said. "There can be no doubt that the use of tactics of this kind represent war crimes, and those responsible for organizing or perpetrating such attacks must be brought to justice." He encouraged Afghanistan to institutionalise torture prevention by ratifying the

Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture welcomed the government's commitment to eradicating that scourge. "I was greatly encouraged by President Ghani's and Chief Executive Abdullah's personal commitment to ending torture in Afghan detention facilities, and the steps being taken to prepare a national action plan on torture prevention," he said. "These institutional reforms must be reinforced by strict accountability measures. Torturers must be prosecuted and punished, not transferred to other positions." Simonović also helped launch a new report by UNAMA and the UN Human Rights Office on barriers to justice still faced by women.

"Clearly the gains for women's rights in Afghanistan need to be reinforced and protected," Simonović said. "I welcome the appointment this week of four women ministers, and the imperative now should be to ensure women's representation in key institutions like the police and judiciary, and participation in the peace process." (Pajhwok)

(9) Regional Intelligence...

for the attack. He also clarified that Shahid Ullah Shahid, the so-called Daesh spokesperson, never claimed responsibility and explained: "Pakistan intelligence agencies spread fabricated messages on his name since he does not have access to telephone and internet".

Dot said that Daesh leader Abu Bakar Al-Baghdadi strongly condemned blasts which killed innocent civilians.

Dost is from Kot district in eastern Nangarhar. Pakistani police arrested him in Peshawar after Taliban fall in Afghanistan. He was detained in Guantanamo Bay and later released by the US. He wrote a book titled "Da Guantanamo Bay Matey Zawlaney" (Broken shackles of Guantanamo Bay) and joined Daesh last year. Pakistani media also reported regarding Muslim Dost as Daesh leader in Khurasan but he rejected all such reports. Pakistan, India and central Asian states are known Khurasan. (Pajhwok)

(10) Relatives of

peace in Afghanistan. The Daesh group claimed responsibility for the Jalalabad attack, which killed 34 and left 125 others wounded.

"We want to show our sympathy to the families of the wounded individuals in Jalalabad city and convey our message to the armed groups that they will not reach their goals by killing the citizens of Afghanistan," civil society activist Abdul Mujeeb Khelwatgar said on Tuesday.

Although the tents set up in the capital were originally pitched in order to house protestors demanding government action to release the 31 hostages, who were kidnapped along the Kabul-Kandahar highway over two months ago, they took on a new, or at least dual, purpose this week.

"This tent is not only for the release of 31 hostages, but we have come here to ask for justice and demand security for the 30 million residents of Afghanistan, and to show our sympathy to the families of the citizens killed," activist Muneera Yusuf told TOLONews.

Tuesday's blood drive was, more than anything, a showing of solidarity by those who have suffered as result of mounting violence and insecurity around the country in recent months. "Our move has a clear message, and that is that we want to show sympathy to all our effected citizens," civil society activist Barry Salaam said.

Over the past week, Parliament has summoned security officials to answer questions about what by most counts appears to be a deteriorating national security environment. Many have criticized national unity government leaders for being consumed by persistent disagreement and political bargaining, instead of addressing the country's abounding security concerns. The government has only just named its nominee for leadership of the Ministry of Defense. (Tolnews)

(11) Afghanistan ...

affairs, it said that it is important that the state leadership stand up to its responsibilities and face the challenges. The government needs to earn back public trust through delivery of quality public services and responding to the public needs, it stressed.

While the current situation expects strong leadership from the unity government, it said that the country is faced with instabilities. Assigning of executive leadership i.e. ministerial level took longer than expected and mid-level leadership is yet not deployed.

President Ashraf Ghani and Chief

Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah, the statement said have been engaged in wrangling on distribution of positions between them resulting in delays in assigning of ministers and deputy ministers.

It is happening at a time when both leaders of the country promised to have meritocracy as the only criterion for formulation of the cabinet creating a hope that qualified people would run the government.

However, the statement said it has been evident that instead of considering merit, both leaders are bringing in people based on political settlements and as such political compromises has been the bases for deployment of mid-level leadership. Following a lengthy and patience testing process for the nation, it said that the distribution of deputy ministerial positions and political struggle for those is another phase of political tussle among the groups.

"Efforts are underway in order to terminate all currently serving deputy ministers and possibly directors in order to make way for candidates of political allies of the two state leaders," the statement added.

As part of the process, even those individuals who have proven performance track record are planned to be sent home in order to create space for political appointments, it lamented.

It said that though the current situation has resulted in gains for certain groups, it has caused suffering for Afghanistan in different spheres. (Pajhwok)

(12) Taliban Announce...

and those who involved in civilian casualties would be punished as per Islamic law.

However, he asked civilians to keep themselves at distance from government officials and offices since these would be the main targets.

Gen Daulat Waziri, deputy spokesman in the Defence of Ministry, called mere tall claims of militants who could not implement their designs.

Gen. Waziri assured that Afghan security forces had the capacity to confront all challenges efficiently. He said that anti-militants operations were started in 14 different provinces to purge several areas of anti-state elements.

"We are not worried about militants' threats therefore the nation should be worried at all," he added. (Pajhwok)

(13) No Money Taken...

back over money allegedly paid over to the Presidential Palace by the U.S's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Former president Hamid Karzai had said that most of that money went to funding the office of the national security adviser as well as for cases including operations, helping out the injured, providing health services, and paying accommodation within the government's framework.

However, national security adviser Dr Rangin Dadfar Spanta told TOLONews that the money was given to the office of Karzai for operational purposes, stressing that he had no information on the source nor the amount of money, or how it had been spent. (Tolnews)

(14) Key Suspect

of burning the Holy Quran.

She was brutally killed near the crowded Shah-e-Do Shamshera shrine of Kabul.

Kabul Police have detained more than 40 people including several policemen in connection with the case. The case files are currently being reviewed by the Attorney General's Office (AGO) and will be referred to the High Court next week. (Tolnews)

(15) Afghan-Pakistan...

electrical tools, cement and other similar products at the show.

Similarly, Afghan traders have showcased different handicrafts, food items, agriculture products and several industrial products.

Murid said 25 Pakistani traders were taking part in the exhibition. He said Pakistan would try to maintain holding similar exhibitions, which would benefit traders from both the countries.

He invited Afghan traders, particularly from northern Balkh province, to hold such exhibitions in Pakistan. He said if joint Pakistan-Afghanistan exhibitions succeeded, Pakistani traders through their counterparts in Balkh would try to convince Tajik traders to join them in Balkh.

He said the Pakistani government was trying to encourage Pakistani traders to invest in northern Afghanistan and today's exhibition was part of that effort.

Balkh Chamber of Commerce and Industry head Arsh Yunusi wel-

comed Pakistani traders taking part in the exhibition, saying it was for the first time that Pakistani traders displayed their products in Balkh. (Pajhwok)

(16) Religious Leaders ...

as martyrs", he added.

Hamim Mangal, a leading local elder, said Taliban and other government opposition groups should give importance to peace and the government "should give importance to negotiations to stop suicide and other attacks". (Pajhwok)

(17) Committee Formed ...

about Paktika Governor Abdul Karim Matin allegations and termed them baseless and far from reality. The committee, to investigate the matter, will be headed by Interior Minister Noor-ul-Haq Ulumi, with others members include the justice minister, refugee minister, deputy speakers of senate and lower house, head of the defence affairs commission, Director National Directorate of Security (NDS), Deputy Attorney General and head of the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG). (Pajhwok)

(18) NSC Create ...

John F. Campbell, the Resolute Support mission commander in Afghanistan, said the centre was need of the hour and would be crucial to lead major operations across the country in an effective way.

He added better security needed better coordination among various departments.

According to the statement national security advisor, minister of interior, director general of NDS and other dignitaries were present during the inauguration ceremony. (Pajhwok)

(19) Taliban in Pakistan...

grace of God, you'll soon see our enemies on the run," he said.

He also added that the engineering unit of the TTP has the capability to develop modern lethal weapons. "We are training our fighters to get maximum results from the use of technology, including suicide vests, suicide vehicles, hand grenades, anti-jammer devices and so on," Khurasani said. (KP)

(20) Not a Single...

Pakistan, but also bring with them food and non-food items from there."

He lamented the government had completely ignored the district as it could not establish a single health clinic over the past 14 years.

Similarly, residents of Registan district said they had been deprived of basic amenities of life and led a life full of miseries. (Pajhwok)

(21) Police, Militants ...

Mohammad Sadiq Azizi, the governor's spokesman, told Pajhwok Afghan News the clash started around 5:00pm and continued till 10:00 pm last night.

He said Taliban commander Mullah Bashir and a special force' personnel were killed and the commander's mother and three policemen wounded in the clash. Four militants were arrested after the clash. (Pajhwok)

(22) Influential Farah...

Bakhtwar on the 18th of April, but two hours later, he was released from police detention by the chairman of provincial council of Farah. (Pajhwok)

(23) Deputy Prosecutor...

district, said Abdulzai.

The victims were taken to a nearby hospital.

No insurgent group including the Taliban has yet claimed responsibility for the attack. (Tolnews)

(24) 57 Afghans ...

Authorities in Pakistan started arresting and sending back to Afghanistan thousands of Afghan refugees, who fled the 1980s and early 1990s unrest to the neighbouring country, after a bloody attack by Taliban insurgents on a Peshawar school in December last year, killing and wounding hundreds of students. (Pajhwok)

(25) 10-Km Road ...

province during the last 10 years. The province still, they said, did not even own an asphalted road.

Chairat Jawahery, provincial council, member said: "This project would help resolve people's problems." (Pajhwok)

(26) Two Terrorists ...

in Zarkharid area of Kunduz both terrorists were arrested and 50 Pakistani pistols, nine AK 47 and 2,000 rounds of these weapons were seized from the possession of the terrorists. (KP)