

### (1) Afghan Govt....

seeking to address its neighbours' concerns, and also for dealing with the threat from terrorist groups, including Daesh. (Pajhwok)

### (2) ERC Urges ....

Government have not interfered in any way.

The ERC chief assured the IEC officials that the commission will not side with anyone in government and that the ERC was determined to identify the challenges facing the electoral system. He said that the reform commission will take decisions in line with the law.

The ERC is expected to submit its findings to the president within three weeks. However, the ERC has accused a number of people close to the leaders of the NUG of being involved in electoral fraud during the previous elections.

"We move forward in the spirit of cooperation. At our meeting with officials of the independent election commission we reiterated that the people expect reforms and for this purpose, we need to have a look at the election law including the law on job descriptions and authorities of the election commission and this could lead to a focus on the structure of the IEC," Akifi said.

In recent days, the ERC has held meetings in Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah's office building and in this time ERC officials frequently met with government officials.

"We held our last meeting in the CEO's office building today. Our next meeting will be held in our own office in Kabul. During this period we met the CEO several times. But we have not met with the president due to his schedule. However the second vice president regularly met with us on behalf of the president and he persistently reaffirmed his commitments for electoral reforms," Akifi added.

He said that the ERC was completely aware of the electoral impasse and irregularities during the previous elections and that there is a need to work hard at maintaining transparency during future elections.

Meanwhile, a number of residents have said that the government must work through its reform process as soon as possible so as to revive public trust in the elections.

"I was part of the campaign and there was extensive fraud. Public trust must be revived regarding elections, otherwise no one will vote in future," Kabul resident Abdullah said.

"This is a failed government and it can't bring about reform. A professional individual must be appointed and favoritism must be avoided," another resident Subhan said. (Tolonews)

### (3) Afghan Troops....

are volunteers, continuing to put their lives on the line to protect their people and their country."

However, he went on to say it is clear that Afghanistan still needs "broad support, and that's one of the reasons why the Resolute Support mission remains critical."

He also said there were "capability gaps" in close air support, aviation, intelligence and logistics, and that the fighters will require help "over the next few years."

During the current fighting season, Afghan forces have learned hard lessons but achieved significant results, the general said.

"They've conducted deliberate, planned operations that are well resourced and they've performed very well," Shoffner said.

"We've seen this starting in January in Helmand province, we saw that in Zabul province and Ghazni and we've seen that in the last two weeks in Nangarhar province."

On the downside, he added, "whenever they employ their forces hastily or do so in an uncoordinated manner -- and by that I mean the army doesn't coordinate with the police ... or with air or fire support -- they're far less effective."

In terms of security in Afghanistan, the general said the number of enemy-initiated attacks for 2015 is eight percent lower than it was last year, but Afghanistan is experiencing an increase in the use of homemade bombs and high-profile Taliban attacks in Kabul.

"Kabul remains an area of strategic importance for the insurgency as a ... symbol of the government of Afghanistan's authority," he said. "The attacks are an attempt to garner widespread coverage that ... leads to a perception that the Afghan government is unable to provide adequate security."

Shoffner said the Afghan government has a delegation in Pakistan

now (Thursday), "and we're watching that closely, we're watching the Taliban closely."

He said the Taliban, many of whom are Afghans, have an opportunity now to strike for peace with the Afghan government and rebuild their own lives in Afghanistan.

"We stand with the international community and support any outcome that the Taliban or any armed opposition group may use to pledge to end violence, to break associations with international terrorism and to accept the Afghan constitution," Shoffner said.

In response to a question about Daesh in Afghanistan, Shoffner said their presence is an issue of great concern to the Afghan government. Daesh is also an issue of great concern to the coalition, he added, noting that the coalition and Afghanistan share intelligence and information on Daesh.

"We categorize [Daesh] in Afghanistan as operationally emergent," the general said. "We do not see them as having operational capabilities so we do not see them as having the ability to coordinate operations in more than one part of the country at a time. We do have reports of them operating in different parts of the country but not in a coordinated fashion."

Shoffner said that some funding is flowing to Daesh in Afghanistan, but not a significant amount, and that their capabilities are increasing but not to the point where they can conduct the sort of operations they're responsible for in Iraq and Syria.

"We do note the potential for them to evolve into something more dangerous," he added, "and we take that very seriously."

Shoffner also said there is some fighting in Afghanistan between Daesh and the Taliban.

"Usually this is a result of Daesh incursion into Taliban territory and interfering with established Taliban operations," he said, noting that fighting between the groups has been seen in Nangarhar province, northern Helmand and elsewhere, with the most intense fighting in Nangarhar. (Tolonews)

### (4) Afghan, Pakistani ....

lamabad had advised Kabul to resume peace talks with the Taliban. Salahuddin Rabbani led the delegation which included Acting Defence Minister Masoom Stanikzai and Director General of National Directorate of Security (NDS) Rahmatullah Nabil.

The Afghan delegation met Sartaj Aziz, advisor to the prime minister on national security and foreign affairs, and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The team was likely to meet military officials, but the meeting did not transpire.

Aziz assured the Afghan delegation of Pakistan's complete support for the elimination of terrorism and cooperation in dealing with common challenges.

President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah and NDS chief accused a branch of the Pakistan military of being behind the Shah Shaheed carnage.

Soon after a recent wave of terrorist attacks, Ghani pledged he would send a delegation to Islamabad to discuss the situation with high Pakistani officials. He also asked Islamabad to rein the in terrorists being trained on Pakistani soil.

A late-night statement from the Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the two sides, inter alia, had candid discussion on Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, the evolving political and security situation in Afghanistan, security cooperation and reconciliation in Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

### (5) Civilian Casualties....

Kunduz that showed a higher rate of casualties compared to Baghlan and Takhar provinces.

Earlier, the UN report showed as many as 16,000 civilians, including women and children had been killed and more than 3,300 wounded in the first five months of 2015 during incidents of violence in Afghanistan.

According to the report, 70 percent civilian casualties were caused by the militants and the remaining 30 percent were inflicted by security forces. (Pajhwok)

### (6) MCIT Rejects ....

"Contrary to the rumors, they are not yet ready," Ghani said, contradicting a recent decision by the Council of Ministers (CoM) to launch the process on August 19. "They have not tested the process even once, and they have not resolved fundamental technical issues."

The Council of Ministers recently announced that the pilot roll out phase will launch on August 19.

Meanwhile, the electronic National Identity Cards (e-NIC) department of the Ministry of Interior Affairs (MoI) stressed the need for a test phase in order to identify possible errors.

"To find out problems and shortcomings, we need to first launch a pilot project," said Zemarai Baher, head of the electronic ID card program.

However unconfirmed reports suggest the discordance between the National Unity Government (NUG) leaders over the program has caused a further delay in the distribution of the cards.

"Government leaders must not let their differences become an obstacle to the launch of the electronic ID cards," said Ahmad Sami, a resident of Kabul.

It has been more than three years since the computerized ID card project was introduced and a budget was approved for the program. However, the government has still been unable to launch it.

The inclusion of ethnicity in the new ID cards is however said to be the leading cause of the constant delay in the launch of the process. (Tolonews)

### (7) Pakistan Restrictions....

Trade Coordination Authority (APTCA) agreement for the exports of Afghan goods through Waga Port to India was a huge impediment.

Not giving permission to Afghan cargo trucks from India through Pakistan was another barrier, he added.

President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani directed ministers of foreign, commerce, and transport to study and analyze the trade and transit issues with India based on APTCA agreement and brief the next cabinet meeting.

The APTCA agreement was signed between Afghanistan and Pakistan on 12 June, 2011. The agreement allows Afghan goods to be exported to major markets in India, China and other countries through Karachi, Gwadar and Qasem Ports. (Pajhwok)

### (8) Int'l Partners....

of Afghan National Defense and Security Forces.

Col. Tom Tickner, CSTC-A director of Combined Joint Engineer, highlighted the creation of the Airfield Economic Development Commission recently decreed by President Ashraf Ghani.

"This commission will maximize and promote economic opportunities at six complex coalition airfields [small cities] that will be turned over to the Afghans," said Tickner. "We will work with the Commission to balance the military mission requirements with successful economic investment."

Col. Chris Crane, CSTC-A director of Combined Joint Resources, discussed the recently founded integrated Joint Coordination Council.

"The JCC brings together representatives from Afghanistan's government, Resolute Support and the international donor community to participate in a budget development process," said Crane. "It provides a platform for coalition members and donor countries to work together through a transparent process to address and adjust any issues with the Afghan budgets."

Efforts to overhaul the Afghan Pay and Personnel System were also introduced by Col. Robert McVay, who revamped the U.S. Army's equivalent system.

"We need to get the right pay to the right person at the right time," said McVay. "That's why we're creating a centralized payroll processing and disbursement system for the Ministries of Defense and Interior." (Pajhwok)

### (9) Hizb-E-Islami....

Abdul Hakim Munib also denounced the recent wave of bloody attacks on Kabul.

He said: "Harakat-e-Inqelab-e-Islami Afghanistan Party strongly condemns the recent attacks in Kabul and expresses its sympathy with the bereaved families who lost their loved ones in the aftermath of the attack."

The union meanwhile also criticized the alleged distribution of weapons to civilians in some northern regions of the country and called for the ANSF to tackle security issues seriously. (Tolonews)

### (10) Rebels Block ....

discussed with the militants to open the road, but Taliban said they would conditionally reopen the

road.

Taliban set conditions that all security personnel and government officers of Nawmish serving in different parts of the country should immediately leave their jobs and return to their homes.

Another condition set by militants was that 50 people of Nawmish should stand with Taliban and fight against the government. The third condition of Taliban said the goods in Nawmish areas should not be sold to the residents of Kiti, Kajran and Khadir districts of neighboring Daikundi province.

He said Taliban said that local residents should destroy security posts in parts of the area and take some areas of Kajran district from government.

Bal said that local elders have several times met with Taliban in the district to open the road but the Taliban said it was the decision of Quetta Shura (council) and Taliban's military commission to keep the road blocked.

Haji Afzal, a resident of Nawmish district, said the price of essential goods have increased three times after the roads of Nawmish, Kajran and Kiti districts were closed.

He said that prices of one bag of 50 kilograms of flour had risen to 3,500 Afghanis.

"The government has no writ in the area, and security forces can't resist against the Taliban. The roads of the areas are blocked for nearly two months by militants, but the government did nothing to control the situation," he said. (Pajhwok)

### (11) 'Govt.'s Foreign ....

Durand Line.

The government today sent a high-ranking delegation to Islamabad to raise the concerns with Pakistani officials.

Ahmad Zaki, head of CMSJ, told journalists in Kabul Afghan government has failed in its foreign policy towards Pakistan and expressed this political defeat after wasting ten months.

He added the government wanted to hide its inefficiency with regard to security by blaming Pakistan for all the insecurity.

"Existence of fifth pillar inside the government gave them the opportunity to use government resources against our national interest and by creating impediment and propaganda they are behind collapse of the government," he added.

Zaki said rampant corruption in government and security institutions has given the enemy an opportunity to infiltrate in the ranks of security forces through some corrupt officials.

He stressed the government should have clear programmes in order to gain people's trust by ensuring security and fighting corruption. (Pajhwok)

### (12) Journalists Form....

and Mazar-i-Sharif in the limits of Dehdad district.

Sapi told a press conference in Mazar-i-Sharif that two masked motorcycle riders singled him to stop, but he did not and then the gunmen opened fire at his car.

Sapi, who escaped unhurt, then informed the police who rushed to the scene. Sapi said he remained safe but his car was damaged.

His car's rear glass was broken and bullet holes were visible on the backside of his vehicle.

Gulab Shah, the president of northern zone journalists union, asked the government to provide security to media persons.

He said two journalists had been killed and several others threatened so far, but not a single case could be decided or any progress shared with the media.

Noor Agha Sharifi, NAI office in charge for the northern zone, said the government and security forces should investigate incidents of violence against journalists.

He said the newly formed committee would meet government and security officials as soon as this week. Two days ago, a journalist and writer, Hamid Muqtadir, hanged himself to death in Mazar-i-Sharif, but circumstances surrounding his death remain unknown. (Pajhwok)

### (13) Pakistan Celebrates ....

Pakistan were also read out on the occasion. Pakistani Ambassador paid homage to Pakistani elders who took part in the independence struggle. He said that Pakistan was achieved after great struggle and immense sacrifices and it was the responsibility of the present generation to work for the development, stability and unity of the motherland. He also paid glowing tribute to the Army Public School (APS)

children, Peshawar, and all those who laid down their lives in defence of the country. (PR)

### (14) 'Forgotten' ....

torched. "Everything in the school was burned. The school has nothing now, no doors and no chairs."

The village is located close to Kabul and is reportedly under threat from insurgents in Koh Safi district of Parwan and Tagab district of Kapisa. But they say, Taliban militants roam freely in parts of the village -- even flying their flag above the grave of one of their female fighters.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) has said it is virtually impossible to have troops in all corners of the country.

"We cannot have a physical presence in every nook and cranny in every village of the country, but we are working on plans to gain people's trust in government. We want to establish the required relation between the government and the people. We believe that the majority of Afghan people are supporting the government," MoI spokesman, Sediq Sediqqi, told TOLONews. "People should be cooperative with the government. (Tolonews)

### (15) Warlords, Graft ....

corded in the first trimester of the last solar year by the rights watchdog, which says 15 cases have been registered with it during the corresponding period this year.

Most of these cases involve girls running away from home, beatings, divorce and a denial of sustenance. Last year's incidents included no murder, as per the commission's record.

Farida Nasiri, in charge of the women's wing of the panel, told Pajhwok Afghan News that the killer of one woman was caught and handed over to police by residents of the provincial capital. But the remaining two murderers are still at large.

She named one of the victims as Fareshta, 22, whose husband conspired at her murder. Although police were sent a formal letter regarding the incident, no one has been arrested yet. Some say the young woman was shot dead, others claim she was stabbed.

In the Amrotak village of Ferozkoh, a woman named Rangin was shot dead by her brother-in-law a year after her marriage. "Police have not yet taken any step to detain the killer, because such incidents are deliberately kept under wraps," Nasiri complained.

Another woman Kishwar, who had been engaged forcibly to a young man, was gunned down in the Madrassa village of the provincial capital by a brother of her fiancé. The killer and his accomplice were handed over to police by residents, Nasiri said. (Pajhwok)

### (16) Indian Intelligence....

a number of senior government officials, with travelling to Kabul for developmental work in these flights. This comes as Kabul witnessed a string of deadly attacks carried out by the militant groups during the past one week which left scores of people dead or wounded.

The Afghan Intelligence - National Directorate of Security (NDS) said Wednesday that specific elements within the Pakistani army was behind the deadly attacks in capital Kabul, apparently gesturing towards the country's military intelligence - Inter Services Intelligence (ISI).

NDS spokesman Haseeb Sediqqi told reporters that the attacks were carried out by the elements of the Pakistani army with the help of their mercenaries - Haqqani terrorist network.

The former Afghan President Hamid Karzai called on United States and the West not to support Pakistan's military intelligence - Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), blaming it for sponsoring terrorism in Afghanistan. (KP)

### (17) Call to Provide....

less in government offices, he complained.

He said government leaders during election campaigns had promised to change the youths' department to youths' ministry and increase their participation in government jobs.

Sadiqi demanded the government give the youths a significant part the peace process and provide them with job and education opportunities. Timor Shah Ishaqzai, director the youth department at the Ministry of Information and Culture, said: "The rights are not properly given and rights should be snatched. If you complain no one will give your due share of right."

Currently more than four million youths were jobless in the country,

nearly three millions others were added to drugs and hundreds of other had joined militants' groups due to joblessness, illiteracy and unawareness, he warned.

"Youths do not need a ministry but they need to be managed well so their talents should not be wasted but used effectively, Ishaqzai said, adding that the opinions of youths were important in nation and country's building. (Pajhwok)

### (18) 49 Detained....

been killed during clearing operation in Ghani Khel district while three mine makers were arrested in Sherzad district.

Meanwhile, Wali Khan Sherzad, commander of the 301st border police zone, said police had detained two armed men and as many smugglers last week in the border areas of the province.

On the other hand, Deputy Police Chief Brig. Gen. Lutfullah Zaryab said at least 30 militants had been arrested in the past one week.

Taliban spokesman claimed killing more than ten security officials in Hisarak and Sherzad districts. (Pajhwok)

### (19) Taliban Force....

The Taliban have also banned women in villages on the outskirts of Pul-i-Alam, including Porak, Haroonkhel, Niazi and other nearby areas from going to a teacher training centre.

A resident of Porak area, Mohammad Habib, told Pajhwok Afghan News: "Two days ago, the Taliban invited local elders and the principal of the girls' school to our village mosque and told them that girls cannot attend school beyond class three and they too can go to school when their teachers are males."

The resident said the school had been closed down since then and confirmed females had been banned from going to the teacher training centre.

He said the insurgents had warned local residents of "legal action" if they violated the orders.

One of the students, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, told Pajhwok Afghan News that all girls stayed away from the school today (Thursday) to avoid Taliban's wrath. (Pajhwok)

### (20) 5 Afghans ....

During the second operation, the citizens of Dushanbe and Afghanistan were detained for illegal drug trafficking, too. As a result of checking their car, 48 kg 620 g of hashish were seized.

The criminal probes were launched in both cases. Materials on the cases were transferred to the prosecution authorities for further investigation. (Pajhwok)

### (21) U.S. "Human....

officials to boycott the event. The administration of President Barack Obama reportedly has decided not to invite opponents of the Cuban government to the flag-raising ceremony.

Kerry, however, is set to hold a low-profile meeting later in the day with "a small group" of Cuban dissidents at the Home Of The Chief Of The U.S. Mission There. (Xinhua)

### (22) Pakistan ....

Nawaz Sharif, hoisted the national flag. The flag hoisting ceremony featured national songs and documentaries on the progress made by the country in different sectors.

The ceremony was also attended amongst others by the federal ministers, parliamentarians, diplomats, military leaders. (Xinhua)

### (23) Iran Stresses....

option of diplomacy over war and instability," the senior Iranian official said.

Zarif also conveyed the greetings of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani to the Indian premier and invited him to pay an official visit to the Islamic Republic.

The Indian prime minister, for his part, called for further Tehran-New Delhi consultations on the promotion of peace and stability in the region. (PressTV)

### (24) Beijing to....

as inflammable and explosive materials. The warehouse blasts, which occurred late Wednesday night, killed at least 56 people, including 21 firefighters. A total of 721 were injured, of whom 25 are still in critical condition.

The warehouse was owned by Tianjin Dongjiang Port Rui Hai International Logistics Co. Ltd., which was founded in 2011 and is a storage and distribution center of containers of dangerous goods at the Tianjin Port. (Xinhua)