

(1) Council of ...

budget," House Chairman Abdul Rauf Ibrahim said. Others focused their criticism on the process through which the draft emerged. "The main problem is not the budget, but it is the absence of suggestions from representatives, meaning that it was brought to Parliament at the last moment," said Ramazan Jumazada, a member of the National Economic Commission of the Lower House.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) has cast Parliament's disapproval as unwarranted, but within its rights. "The national budget of the country is complete, transparent and economical, but Parliament has rejected it," Ministry spokesman Abdul Qader Jilani said. "It's their right, and we will do our best to bring changes to the budget." (Tolonews)

(2) Deadline to ...

The faces they introduced so far for different ministerial posts did not meet the standards the president had set," he remarked.

Without naming anyone, Marastial said there were also internal as well external groups creating troubles for the unity government. "It is impossible to introduce the cabinet tomorrow."

However, he said the cabinet could be introduced by the end of this week. Sources close to the CEO also insist that the process is time-consuming.

Mahmood Saeqal, Abdullah's advisor, said negotiations were ongoing, but the process would take time and hoped the deadlock would be overcome soon.

Referring to the delay in cabinet formation, he said: "The negotiations are part of politics. We are ready to name our picks."

Earlier, parliament raised serious concerns over the delay in cabinet introduction and the deteriorating security situation in the country. Hamidzai Lalai, a lawmaker, said parliamentarians were of the opinion that candidates for key security posts as well as Supreme Court judges and Attorney General should not be chosen by either the camps. Fauzia Kofi, another MP, said people across the country belonged to both the camps in one way or another.

"If we want technocrat ministers then all of them should be technocrats, no ministry should be exempted. But if we want them to be political, then all should be political. As we know people from all walks of life are associated with the two groups," Kofi added. (Pajhwok)

(3) Ghani Visits...

During the meeting with the elders and members of Provincial Council, President Ghani assured that the security institutions have been given new directions. However, the directions are not disclosed to public so far.

"Our trip is focused on two things; security and governance," Ghani told the elders. "I need time to prepare a comprehensive plan for the people of Herat to engage them in country's economic sector."

After knowing the demands of Herat elders, Ghani promised to announce his plan for the province in near future.

Strongly criticizing the security agencies of Herat, the elders demanded skilled persons must be appointed in the key positions.

"As long as we don't have professional persons in

our security institutions, our security would not be improved," a participant Toor Mohammad Zarifi insisted.

Ghani's visit of Herat came two weeks after hundreds of Taliban insurgents attacked a Bazaar in Shindand district fighting with the security forces for several hours.

Abductions, targeted killings and robberies are said to be the other major problems in the western province.

Ghani during his campaign had vowed to turn Herat into an industrial and trade capital. (Tolonews)

(4) MPs Announce...

mosphere of the assembly turned unpleasant when the House speaker, Abdul Raouf Ibrahim, was accused of keeping silent on the issue.

"Mr. Speaker we are going to resign due to your silence," warned Sayed Ikram, secretary of the House.

But after the MPs disputed on how to deal with the matter as every representative was presenting their own suggestions, the House decided to meet with the government leaders on the controversial issue.

"The administrative board, as decided, shall meet with the government leaders and present the outcome to the people," Speaker Ibrahim said.

However, the Presidential palace insists the cabinet nominees would be introduced to the Parliament as per the timeframe given by Ghani.

"As the Mr. President announced earlier, the cabinet nominees will be introduced in two to four weeks," Ghani's spokesman Nazifullah Salarzai said.

Not only the Parliamentarians, but the citizens are also fed up with the delay in the formation of cabinet, saying the current acting ministers and acting heads of government departments are neglecting people's problems. (Tolonews)

(5) Construction ...

further houses would be built for another 1 million people in the second phase. According to the official, the Kabul New City construction project is estimated to cost around 80\$ billion, and the private sector would play a major role in financing construction work.

The construction design of Kabul New City was completed almost eight years ago with the assistance from international experts, but this ambitious project has been postponed several times due to the difficult political situation in Afghanistan. Experts suggest that the Kabul New City would remain on paper if the international coalition forces completely withdraw from the war-torn country. (Asia-Plus)

(6) Afghan Sikh ...

some 3,000 have been given Indian citizenship.

The children of Sikh and Hindu refugees are being given education and vocational training by Khalsa Diwan Welfare Society.

The Khalsa Diwan Welfare society, established in 1992, has ensured that Afghan refugees staying in India are able to earn their livelihood. At present, around 750 children are studying in Khalsa Diwan education center. The expenditure of the society is funded by the Afghan community living in India.

"We do not want to go back to Afghanistan as the situation there is problematic and there is

no hope of improvement. So, we would like to stay in India. If we get our nationality and visa free status from the Indian government, our grievances will be taken care of. We will go abroad for work but would like to come back to Delhi," said Harbit Singh Nagpal, the president of Khalsa Diwan Welfare society.

The second generation of Afghan Sikh refugees feels safe in India and do not wish to go back to Afghanistan.

"We left Afghanistan because there was fighting and insecurity there. I am not aware, but my parents told us about it and we came to India," said Saroop Kaur, an Afghan refugee.

"My family has been staying in India for the past 22 years. In India, we get everything and we can lead our life independently. I have completed my education, learnt computer and seeking training in tailoring," added another Afghan refugee Jasmeet Kaur.

India has agreed to grant five-year long term visas instead of one-year long visa to refugees who have migrated from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh to India. (ANI)

(7) Helmand...

people of Zabol province were happy when he was serving there.

He said Helmand was facing daunting security challenges particularly the north part of the province was facing deteriorated law and order. He hoped that the newly elected deputy governor would take tangible steps to improve security. (Pajhwok)

(8) Ex-Jihadis...

Hussaini said mujahideen had rendered countless sacrifices after the Russian invaded Afghanistan and forced them to flee Afghanistan, but the day had been accorded no value.

He called on former jihadis to join hands and shun their past differences for their own rights and resolving the country's problems.

Civil society activist Dr. Kamal Sadat in his address to the gathering strongly criticized the former jihadis, saying they destroyed their own country following the 1991 Soviet collapse.

"Where is your jihad? You offered martyrs but left their families without supporters. They are still suffering. If you had not jumped into infighting, you would not have been in this situation."

Sadat urged the former jihadi leaders to fight against corruption and work for law maintenance and the rights of orphaned children and widowed women.

Other former jihadi leaders also spoke on the occasion and condemned the Russian invasion. They also urged the government to consider rights of the former jihadis. (Pajhwok)

(9) President Ghani ...

of National Unity. President Ghani visited Herat province in an unannounced visit to meet with the local officials. He is expected to take serious decisions regarding the provincial government by this evening.

The commitment by President Ghani to take rape cases extremely serious, comes as sexual abuse and rape of children have been rampant in Afghanistan, specifically during the recent months.

According to a government survey, around 65 rape case were recorded in six provinces where child rape happens more frequently. The survey covered incidents recorded between

March and September this year where incidents on children as young as -1year-old to -13year-old were reported raped. (KP)

(10) 'Soviet Invas...

government, recalled Sayed Ahmad who was imprisoned twice during the Soviet onslaught of Afghanistan.

Sayed Ahmad, who is paralyzed from both legs and has acquired mental problems, told Pajhwok Afghan News that both times he was tortured while in prison. "The inmates were tortured for being Muslim. They were electrocuted, burnt, or even had their nails pulled," the wailing Ahmad recalled.

Ahmad 53, who was an officer in the Afghan air force, remembered that the prisoners were being taken behind the notorious Pul-i-Charkhi prison for execution.

Today (Saturday) was the 35th anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

The 120,000 strong red army equipped with sophisticated weaponry, invaded Afghanistan and installed Babrak Karmal as president of the country.

The invasion was followed by uprising in various parts of the country which continued for ten-long years and gifted the Soviet Union its biggest defeat and subsequent disintegration.

During the invasion, Afghanistan turned into rubble. More than one million people got killed, thousands maimed, and another five million migrated to neighboring Iran and Pakistan.

Ahmad said that no Afghan remained indifferent towards the invasion and everybody played their part in defeating the red army. The Russians, he added were undertaking all the government matters.

"The day the red army invaded the country even the defence minister was not aware. The soviet fighter jets were bombarding the villages on daily basis killing people and forcing them to leave their homes," he recalled.

Engineer Bashir, a Kabul resident said, his brother who was teaching law and political science in police academy, vanished during the occupation. He added they did not know about his whereabouts until last month where he read his name in a book called "martyrs without graves".

"Mohammad Daud was an honest and sincere man. He was a patriot and when he was martyred he did not own anything," he said his brother's only wish was a stable and developed Afghanistan.

Bashir said, his second pilot brother was also imprisoned and subsequently killed.

The soviets also suffered huge casualties in Afghanistan. Based on reports, some 14,450 red army soldiers died, another 49,980 wounded and 330 more went missing.

Gen. Boris Gromov was the last soviet soldier to leave Afghanistan, crossing on foot the Friendship Bridge spanning the Amu-River on February 1989. He is said he did not even want to look back. (Pajhwok)

(11) Beneficiaries ...

of plant and animal diseases and natural disasters, management of irrigation system and finding markets for agriculture and dairy products are objectives of the project, which is being implemented in 22 provinces.

Under the scheme, so far orchards of various fruits including almond, apple, grapes, apricot,

pomegranates, lemon, and others have been established on more than 27,500 acres of land and on 1,750 acres of barren land across the country.

A resident of Nasro village in the Bagram district of central Parwan province, Abdul Qadir, told Pajhwok Afghan News he had attended an essential training in gardening arranged by the Ministry of Agriculture five years ago.

On completing the training, he recalled, he was given saplings of apricot, apple and peach, a quantity of chemical fertiliser and some gardening tools. The assistance enabled him to have his own orchard now, he said.

"This is a good project. I own 234 trees of various fruits and this year I sold 2240 kilograms of fruits," he said, but said nothing about income.

He said if the programme was expanded, more people would benefit from it and their economy would improve.

Abdul Aqa, a resident of Bayan area on the outskirts of Charikar, said the NHLP had been beneficial. However, he said he was yet to benefit from the scheme, which he urged should be expanded.

Agriculture Ministry officials responsible for the project say so far 40000 women have benefited from the project in rural areas.

A resident of northern Samangan province, Sajida, said she had benefited from the scheme.

The -35years-old said it was few days ago when she obtained vegetable seeds and plastic sheet and metal wires for establishing a greenhouse.

She said he had also received necessary training how to grow plants in the greenhouse. She said she was able to meet some needs of her family.

Another female, Noria, said her spouse run a shop of vegetable she grew in their greenhouse, which they had established with assistance under the NHLP.

Agriculture Ministry officials say the project's livestock section has been working in 29 provinces in areas of animal diseases, raising chickens, and expansion of poultry farms. They say anti-brucellosis disease vaccine was given to 2.5 million household animals this year and last year across the country.

A Parwan resident, Fatima, said she had received 20 hens, some food for the birds and essential protection tools, as well as a training in this regard under the project six months ago.

"This is very good programme. I have so far sold many chickens and eggs, which we use as food at home as well. Now I have 60 chickens. I am happy I can support my family," she said.

All those interviewed by Pajhwok called for the project to be further expanded. The officials concerned also said the project is being expanded. It will be implemented across the country until 2018.

The project was honoured by the Kabul Governor's House two days ago. In its appreciation letter, the governor's house said a large number of farmers and livestock owners had benefited from the scheme, which brought positive changes to their lives. (Pajhwok)

(12) Pakistani Polic...

war city. The provincial government spokesman Mushtaq Ghani had said that the government can no longer afford refugees, insisting that the "time has come

for the federal government to take practical steps for the repatriation of the refugees."

Pakistan's Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran backed the demand of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government to the federal government to expel the Afghan refugees illegally staying in the province. (KP)

(13) Killing of...

the people of Ghoryan district.

Reports of Iranian officials sending Afghans to Syria in support of Bashar Assad's forces against Syrian rebels also have come on surface. Iran has a border with Herat and some other provinces and it is close for those people to go to Iran for work. (KP)

Syria Ready to Discuss Russia Peace Plan Talks, Opposition Dismissive

BEIRUT/CAIRO - Syria said on Saturday it was willing to participate in "preliminary consultations" in Moscow aimed at restarting talks next year to end its civil war but the Western-backed opposition dismissed the initiative.

Two rounds of peace talks this year in Geneva failed to halt the conflict which has killed 200,000 people during more than three years of violence and there was little sign of the latest move gaining traction.

Syrian state television quoted a source at the foreign ministry saying: "Syria is ready to participate in preliminary consultations in Moscow in order to meet the aspirations of Syrians to find a way out of crisis."

But there are many obstacles to peace. The most powerful insurgent group, the hard-line Islamic State, controls a third of Syria but has not been part of any initiative to end the fighting.

Other rebel factions are not unified.

The opposition is also suspicious of Russian-led plans as Moscow has long backed President Bashar al-Assad with weapons.

Hadi al-Bahra, head of the Turkey-based opposition National Coalition, met with Arab League Chief Nabil Elaraby in Cairo on Saturday and told a news conference "there is no initiative as rumoured".

"Russia does not have a clear initiative, and what is called for by Russia is just a meeting and dialogue in Moscow, with no specific paper or initiative," he was quoted by Egyptian state news agency MENA as saying.

The opposition said after the failed "Geneva 2" talks in February that Damascus was not serious about peace. Syrian state news agency SANA said on Saturday the Moscow talks should emphasise a continued fight against "terrorism", a term it uses for the armed opposition.

Members of Assad's government in exile is not representative of Syrians and instead says a small group of opposition figures who live in Damascus, and are less vocal against the president, should represent the opposition.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said this month that he wanted Syrian opposition groups to agree among themselves on a common approach before setting up direct talks with the Damascus government.

But Lavrov did not specify which opposition groups should take part. Syria's civil war started when Assad's forces cracked down on peaceful pro-democracy protests in 2011. (Reuters)

N. Korea Uses Racial Slur against Obama in Sony Hack Row

SEOUL, South Korea - North Korea blamed its recent Internet outage on the United States on Saturday and hurled racially charged insults at President Barack Obama over the hacking row involving the movie "The Interview."

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North Korea's powerful National Defense Commission, which is led by Kim Jong Un and is the country's top governing body, said Obama was behind the release of the comedy that depicts Kim's assassination. The commission described the movie as illegal, dishonest and reactionary.

"Obama always goes reckless in words and deeds like a monkey in a tropical forest," an unidentified spokesman at the commission's Policy Department said in a statement carried by the country's official Korean Central News Agency. The White House's National Security Council declined to comment Saturday.

North Korea has denied involvement in a crippling cyberattack on Sony Pictures but has expressed fury over the comedy. Sony Pictures initially called off the release of the film, citing threats of terror attacks against U.S. movie theaters. Obama criticized Sony's decision, and the movie opened this past week.

It wasn't the first time North Korea has used crude insults against Obama and other top U.S. and South Korean officials. Earlier this year, North Korea called U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry a wolf with a "hideous" lantern jaw and South Korean President Park Geun-hye a prostitute. In May, the North's official news agency published a dispatch saying Obama has the "shape of a monkey."

A State Department spokeswoman at the time called the North Korean dispatch "offensive and ridiculous and absurd."

In the latest incident, the North Korean defense commission also blamed Washington for intermittent outages of North Korean websites this past week.

The outages happened after Obama blamed the Sony hack on North Korea and promised to respond "in a place and time and manner that we choose."

The U.S. government has declined to say whether it was behind the Internet shutdown in North Korea.

According to the North Korean commission's spokesman, "the U.S., a big country, started disturbing the Internet operation of major media of the DPRK, not knowing shame like children playing tag." DPRK refers to the North's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The commission said the movie was the result of a hostile U.S. policy toward North Korea, and threatened the U.S. with unspecified consequences.

North Korea and the U.S. remain technically in a state of war because the 1950-53 Korean War ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty. The rivals also are locked in an international standoff over North Korea's nuclear and missile programs and its alleged human rights abuses.

A United Nations commission accuses North Korea of a wide array of crimes against humanity, including murder, enslavement, torture, imprisonment and rape.

The U.S. stations about 28,500 troops in South Korea as deterrence against North Korean aggression. (Reuters)