

(1) Parliament ...

five invalid.

Nominee for the Ministry of Mines Daud Shah Saba was approved: 146 votes in favor, 74 against, 13 blank, 10 invalid.

Nominee for the Ministry of Higher Education Khatera Afghan was rejected: 71 votes in favor, 146 against, 21 blank, and three invalid.

Nominee for the Ministry of Borders and Tribal Affairs Qamaruddin Shinwari was rejected: 102 votes in favor, 112 against, 22 blank, and seven invalid.

Nominee for the Ministry of Public Works Abbas Basir was rejected: 85 votes in favor, 131 against, 19 blank, and eight invalid.

Nominee for the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation Faizullah Zaki was rejected: 81 votes in favor, 133 against, 25 blank, and four invalid.

Nominee for the Ministry of Defense Sher Mohammad Karimi was rejected: 96 votes in favor, 112 against, 26 blank, and seven invalid.

Introduced by Abdullah: Nominee for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Salahuddin Rabbani was approved: 151 votes in favor, 70 against, 12 blank, and nine invalid.

Nominee for the Ministry of Interior Affairs Noor-ul-Haq Ulumi was approved: 131 votes in favor, 91 against, 15 blank, and six invalid.

Nominee for the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation Sayed Husain Alemi Balkhi was approved: 134 votes in favor, 87 against, 17 blank, and five invalid.

Nominee for the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development Nasir Durrani was approved: 145 votes in favor, 71 against, 19 blank, and five invalid.

Nominee for the Ministry of Public Health Ferozuddin Feroz was approved: 170 votes in favor, 54 against, 12 blank, and four invalid.

Nominee for the Ministry of Economy Sardar Mohammad Rahman Oghli was rejected: 104 votes in favor, 103 against, 27 blank, and nine invalid.

Nominee for the Ministry of Commerce and Industries Sardar Mohammad Rahimi was rejected: 111 votes in favor, 102 against, 20 blank, and nine invalid.

Nominee for the Ministry of Education Mohammad Gul Zalmai Younsi was rejected: 90 votes in favor, 123 against, 20 blank, and nine invalid.

Nominee for the Ministry of Water and Energy Abdul Rahman Salahi was rejected: 106 votes in favor, 109 against, 24 blank, and four invalid.

Nominee for the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology Barna Karimi was rejected: 115 votes in favor, 97 against, 26 blank, and five invalid.

NDS nominee Rahmatullah Nabil, who was an independent candidate, won the Parliament confidence vote with 154 votes in favor, 58 against, 22 blank, and nine invalid.

Upon hearing the announcement of the eight ministerial nominees and NDS Chief approved by Parliament, President Ashraf Ghani welcomed their decision. (Tolonews)

(2) IS Claims...

nounced the expansion of the self-styled caliphate in South Asia.

Abu Muhammad al-Adnani declared in an online message "we bring the mujahideen the good news of the Islamic State's expansion to Khorasan," a reference to the historical region that now encompasses Afghanistan, Pakistan and what Adnani called "nearby lands."

Adnani's comments confirmed what Pakistani security analysts view as a growing threat.

In a video released earlier this month, a band of breakaway Pakistani Taliban militants based in the tribal area swore their allegiance to IS. The video showed dozens of fighters riding horses and waving IS flags. Former Taliban spokesman Shahidullah Shahid appears in the video, speaking Arabic and declaring his allegiance to the IS leader and self-styled caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

Last week, Pakistani media reported that security forces had arrested an IS leader, Yousaf Al-Salafi, in the eastern city Lahore. Pakistan's government has not confirmed an IS presence in the country. But some mainstream

political party leaders have expressed concerns in parliament, calling on the government to take action against the Islamic State before it establishes a foothold.

Those warnings appear to be too late and, according to some observers, Adnani's declaration will only make any anti-IS fight by the government harder. Pakistani defense analyst and retired army general, Talat Masood told VOA Deewa "Taliban breakaway factions who have announced allegiance to IS otherwise faced isolation. But the announcement will bring them into the fore and magnify their presence."

According to Khadim Hussain, author of The Militant Discourse, local jihadis will gain more than just publicity. In an interview with VOA Deewa, he said "Pakistan Taliban groups know that allegiance to IS will bring them financial benefits."

It's not clear how much material support the Syria- and Iraq-based IS is able to provide to members abroad. Branches of the franchise in Libya appear to be getting some technical training, but reports of money and equipment transfers have not been verified. What al-Adnani tried to promise in his statement was unity, calling on "all the mujahideen in Khorasan to join the caravan of the caliphate" and abandon factionalism.

But if the internecine battles of jihadis in Syria and Libya are any guide, unity among militants may be a more audacious goal than the establishment of an Islamic State itself. (VOA)

(3) President Ghani ...

your complaints to these two numbers: 0202104444 or 0202104445."

President Ghani successfully projected a public image of himself as someone who gets things done soon after taking office as the new President of the country.

He proved himself a man intent on not losing time by delivering on some big issues including signing a long-term bilateral security agreement with United States and a similar pact with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). However, President Ghani's popularity among the Afghan people gradually reduced mainly due to delays to announce the new cabinet of the government of national unity.

According to a poll report released earlier this month President lost popularity among the Afghan people by almost 50 percent.

The poll conducted between 27 December 2014 to 3 January 2015 revealed that only 27.5 percent of the Afghans are satisfied with the performance of President, while 32 percent others said they were not satisfied.

The survey was conducted with an aim to find out regarding the views of Afghan people regarding the first 100 days of the Government of National Unity. (KP)

(4) Parliament Approves...

the newly-established offices are approved by the House. Furthermore, the House rejected former President Hamid Karzai's decree to pay the salaries of his advisers for five years after the end of their tenure.

The approved 436.172 billion (AFS) national budget includes 283.486 billion for the ordinary budget and 152.686 billion for the development budget.

Initially, the House had rejected the budget for what they called "unfair and unbalanced" fund allocations.

Another reason MPs had rejected the budget was the withdrawal of 443 incomplete projects, something the MPs called a wastage of millions of dollars.

The approved budget now includes all the incomplete projects; however, no new development project has been considered for the next year.

Head of the Wolesi Jirga's Finance Commission, Amir Khan Yaar, said 135 billion of the budget would be paid from the domestic revenues, while the rest of them would be paid from foreign aids. (Tolonews)

(5) Iran Has ...

Afghan deputy foreign minister and hoped for closer and more serious cooperation between the Foreign Ministry of Afghanistan and the Iranian Embassy in Kabul.

He renewed Iran's commitment

to admit Afghan top university students for studies in Iranian universities and invited the Afghan higher education minister to visit Iran to coordinate implementation of the agreement in this respect and academic cooperation. (IRNA)

(6) Obama 'Literally...

technically ended, but all U.S. troops are scheduled to leave by the end of 2016.

Graham, a leading foreign policy hawk who has floated a run for president, faults Obama for not leaving a residual force of troops in Iraq after 2011, and says the same mistake is being made in Afghanistan.

The Pentagon stood by the timetable earlier this month.

"There's simply no adjustment to the milestones," said Pentagon spokesman Army Col. Steve Warren. "But I think what's most important is that Gen. [John] Campbell has flexibility within those milestone to flow forces out at the pace that he sees most appropriate based on conditions on the ground."

Graham is also deeply skeptical of the Obama administration's negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program.

"If we continue on the path we are with the Iranians, they'll wind up with a nuclear capability like North Korea and one day have a bomb," Graham said. "He's about to make the biggest mistake of his presidency." (Agencies)

(7) Distribution...

Director General of the Electronic National ID Cards Project, Humayun Muhtat, following the publishing of a new population registration law outlining the legal parameters and functions of the new standardized ID cards two weeks ago, it was expected that distribution would begin promptly.

"Two and a half weeks ago, the Ministry of Justice's population registration law was published in its official gazette and on the same day we sent a letter to the National Security Council of Afghanistan and asked for permission [to start distribution]," Mr. Muhtat told TOLONews on Tuesday. "So far we are waiting for the Security Council's response and we have not received any answer."

The Director General of the project, which is intended to help make elections run smoother as well as help Afghan law enforcement and security institutions, warned that failure to launch distribution soon could cause the funders of the project to back out. "If this situation continues, it can certainly be said that the program donors and the Ministry of Finance will be deterred from this program, and then we have to fire our staff," Muhtat said.

Nasrat Rahimi, the spokesman for the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, has said that planning for the distribution of the new ID cards has been in place for over a year. "The law has been signed and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology made all technical plans and arrangements a year and half ago," he said.

With parliamentary elections rapidly approaching, many in the public wonder if the ID cards will be distributed in enough time to be widely used. "The distribution of electronic ID cards is a serious need, especially for transparent elections," a Kabul resident named Ahmadullah told TOLONews.

Regarding why the National Security Council has failed to issue a response to leaders of the project granting them permission to move ahead with distribution, a spokesman of Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, Asif Ashna, cited the sluggish cabinet confirmation process. "We are waiting for the national unity government cabinet to be complete and with the beginning of electoral reform the ID cards distribution will start," Ashna said.

The electronic ID card project was launched under former President Hamid Karzai over 18 months ago. (Tolonews)

(8) Provincial Councils ...

the provincial councils to supervise provincial departments.

Mir Dad Khan Najrabi, head of the house security commission, said the draft law had been sent in to the Senate, which decided to empower the councils to evaluate the performance of local departments.

But later the draft law was placed before a joint lower house and Senate panel. Najrabi recalled the joint panel had approved to empower the provincial councils to monitor local departments but the president rejected the measure.

Of the 197 lawmakers present, 147 cast their votes against empowering provincial councils to supervise the local departments. If differences between the two houses emerge on a draft law, equal numbers from both chambers appoint a joint panel to remove them. (Pajhwok)

(9) Militants, Tribal ...

for women was the existence of Taliban and illegal armed people in rural areas especially in Dolina, Pasaband, Shahrak, Chahar Sada and northern regions that created problems for girls attending school.

Even a single girl in those areas could not attend school, she added.

According to the education department of Ghor, at least 185 schools were functioning in the province in which 84,000 girls students are enrolled.

But Anwari said 70 percent of schools were closed or partially active due to insecurity and presence of armed groups and militants.

Women could raise their voice when they are tortured as a result of violence in the areas where government has no writ, said added, saying 68 cases including seven murder cases had been registered last year.

"I know violence against women have increased, and women living in areas where Taliban and illegal armed men are active cannot raise their voice," Anwari said.

She said tribal costumes among locals were another problem forcing girls not to attend schools. Another problem is marriage of underage girls and children.

"People living in remote areas tie marriage contracts of their newborn son and daughters and when they grew it creates problems and disagreement," she added.

Taking high amount of dowry is part of the problems that caused youth to marry in older age when they find enough money to pay dowry, Anwari said. "The amount of dowry range from 500,000 Afghani to 2,000,000 Afghani," she added.

She called lack of opportunity for women to work in government offices was another problem and said that no woman was working in any districts of Ghor province. She said only 22 women were deployed in Firozkoh district.

"We have great concern about the deteriorated situation of women. A number of women have participated in the election process but they could not work in offices. We demand increase of women officers in government offices," she stressed.

Lack of family court is part of the problem, she said, adding that there no female defense lawyers to defend women cases, she noted. (Pajhwok)

(10) Target Haqqani ...

network. Every place that gets lit up in Kabul is done by the Haqqanis, and they are in the environs right now with support in infrastructure surrounding Kabul," he said.

He called for building the capacity of the Afghan forces and keeping their strength at 352,000. He also advised against pulling out US counterterrorism forces in 2016. "These are the guys that chase down high-value targets..." (Pajhwok)

(11) Security Situation...

that the area generally from Kabul to the Pakistan border had been a stronghold of the Haqqani network.

"Because the White House provided 25 percent less surge forces than requested and then pulled them out prematurely, these forces were never applied to the east as they were, successfully, in the south," Keane argued.

As such the Haqqani network had not been rooted out of their support zones and safe areas in Afghanistan, he continued.

"All we accomplished will be at risk, as it was in Iraq, if the troops are pulled out not based on the conditions on the ground. How can we not learn the obvious and painful lesson from Iraq?" he warned. (Pajhwok)

(12) 102 Militants...

dead belonged to the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan and Lashkar-i-Islam.

A military operation, codenamed Zarb-i-Azb, has been underway in North Waziristan since June 15. The offensive was launched after a peace parleys with the TTP collapsed. (Pajhwok)

(13) 19 Development ...

said. At least 24 million afis were spent on the projects from the municipality budget.

Acting Governor Juma Khan Hamdard expressed satisfaction with the completion of the projects and hoped they would benefit thousands of people and enhance the beauty of the city. (Pajhwok)

(14) MCN Plans...

Although, the Afghan government in joint cooperation with the international community has spent large amounts of financial resources in the past 13 years to eliminate the production and smuggling, Afghanistan still constitutes as the world's number one producer of opium.

According to statistics, \$7.6 billion was spent in Afghanistan to combat the drug production, but despite efforts poppy is still being cultivated in at least 17 provinces.

"This year there has been seven casualties in the fight against drugs and 19 police officers were wounded, with majority still under treatment," Gen. Khalil Bakhtyar, the general director of operations at the Ministry of Interior, said.

Money received from drug smuggling is considered an important source of funding for the insurgents. (Tolonews)

(15) ANSF Gain ...

ernment in the past 13 years," a local elder Mohammad Asif said. "Now that the security situation has improved we want the government to pay attention to our living situation and restore our power dam."

After the end of the 13-year NATO combat mission in Afghanistan, the ANSF has now taken over the full security responsibility of the country. The limited number of alliance forces staying in Afghanistan will be leading their "Resolute Support" mission aimed at training, advising and assisting the Afghan troops. (Tolonews)

(16) Taliban Capture...

a member of the provincial reform committee, told Pajhwok Afghan News that harsh differences had recently surfaced between local militants and Mullah Abdul Rauf Khadim group.

"Mullah Khadim, who claims allegiance to Daesh (Arabic acronym for IS) forcibly assembled local residents on Thursday last in the Kakaji's Azan area and told the people that Mullah Omar no longer exists and they should now support him."

Masoomi said Mullah Rauf and his masked gunmen arrived in the area in dozens of vehicles. A day after (on Friday) they left, Taliban insurgents arrived in the area and told residents that Rauf was an infidel and no one should support him, according to the elder.

Masoomi said he had no knowledge of Rauf's arrest, but confirmed he had serious differences with his former colleagues.

Kajaki police chief Faizullah Akhund said differences among Taliban and masked gunmen had recently deepened, but they had no information about Rauf's detention.

He said Taliban's governor Mullah Akhund on Wednesday visited Olang area and held a meeting with local Taliban leaders, but no details of the meeting were available.

Pajhwok tried to seek comment from Taliban's overall spokesman Qari Yousaf Ahmadi, but did not succeed.

But this scribe was able to find a message Ahmadi had sent to local Taliban. In the message, Ahmadi confirmed Mullah Rauf had been arrested.

Pajhwok received the message from local Taliban sources. "Mullah Abdul Rauf Khadim has been detained along with 45 associates and their fate will be decided later," the message says.

An official at the provincial National Directorate of Security (NDS) also confirmed harsh

differences between the two groups, but had no information about Mullah Rauf's detention. A senior official in Helmand said Mullah Rauf had been one of Mullah Omar's close aides. He was detained during Taliban's last year in power in northern Afghanistan and was handed over to the US.

He was held for seven years in Guantanamo Bay detention centre and was released in 2007 and flown back to Kabul where he remained under Afghan government's observation. But Rauf fled to Quetta, the capital of Pakistan's Balochistan province, and was appointed as a member of Taliban's Quetta Council and head of the military council.

However, he developed differences with the Taliban and was expelled from the movement before joining the IS. (Pajhwok)

(17) NDS Seize 47...

detained individuals have confessed that the weapons and ammunition were purchased from a weapon manufacturing company located in Ring Road area of Peshawar city, NDS said. The statement by NDS also added that numerous attack plots were foiled with the confiscation of weapons and ammunition by the intelligence operatives. (KP)

(18) 8 People ...

resident of Kandahar province who had received terrorist training in Chaman area of Pakistan and was assigned to assassinate Kandahar Police Chief General Abdul Razeq.

Razeq said he was given this task by Jabbar Agha, commander of Suicide Cell of Taliban in Chaman area. (KP)

(19) EU Draft ...

hostilities and withdrawing heavy weapons from the security zone along the line of contact foreseen in the Minsk agreement, the draft said.

"Public statements distorting the reality on the ground, inciting to hatred and further violence, as well as publicly humiliating prisoners in violation of international law will not lead to the badly needed de-escalation," the draft says.

The ministers will call on Russia and the separatists to allow free and safe access to international monitors, and ask the EU's foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini to step up efforts to counter Russian disinformation. Despite sharp divisions among the EU's 28 countries over the wisdom of imposing sanctions on Russia, the bloc's main energy supplier, the EU agreed several rounds of sanctions last year.

In some of the strongest language yet, the head of the European Council of EU leaders, Poland's Donald Tusk, hit out at the weekend at "appeasement" of Russia and said it was "time to step up our policy based on cold facts, not illusions." (Reuters)

(20) Women Empower...

is an input to the post-2015 global development agenda.

"2015 is a year when the MDGs (millennium development goals) come to the end, and the beginning of the post-2015 development agenda. So, our Agenda 2063 is also an input to the global post-2015 development agenda," he said.

In collaborated efforts of Africans with the support of the international community, positive results have been achieved in the fight against Ebola, he revealed. Due to decline on oil price, Mwencha said there was a mixed picture in terms of economic performance of the continent as a whole. "Our economies depend on exporting primary products. Since the third quarter of last year, we saw a significant reduction in prices of oil, which was good news to many African countries those who import but also bad news for those that who are exporting. So, we see mixed picture in terms of economic performance of the continent as a whole," he said.

According to Mwencha, a great progress has been made on the continent in peace and security area, whereby concerted efforts were made to try and reduce conflicts in hot spots with commitment of African leaders.

He said that African forces decapitated Al-Shaabab quite significantly. (Xinhua)