

(1) Reforms for ...

consider emergency reforms for Wolesi Jirga elections and to reform the election law and job descriptions of the election management bodies," Tawhidi said, going into greater detail about what exactly the commission plans to do.

Still, after months of delay in the formation of the commission, the ERC continues to lack a work space of its own, and has been operating out of the office of Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah.

"Foreign obstructions, political teams and politicians are among the challenges that could undermine implementation of necessary reforms in the country's electoral system," head of Transparent Election Foundation of Afghanistan (TEFA) Naeem Ayoubzada said.

Many commentators remain skeptical of the ERC. "As long as the work of the commission is incomplete or is delayed, then it will have negative impacts on the elections," civil society activist Jandad Spinghar said. (Tolonews)

(2) Taliban Set ...

government anymore. Nawid Ahmad Frotan, spokesman for acting governor, however, said they had received reports regarding release of 36 Afghan forces.

He told Pajhwok Afghan News 107 security forces including local, border and national police personnel had been captured by Taliban amid rumors that all had been released.

Frotan said the policemen were released without any deal or conditions.

The spokesman claimed Tirgran military post was surrendered to Taliban by a local police commander named Jalal and local elders.

Gen. Baba Jan, police chief, said the local and border police had surrendered the military post after an embarrassing deal with the insurgents. (Pajhwok)

(3) India to Donate ...

in the Khushal Khan area and the third one is in Khawja Bughra."

Meanwhile, analysts have suggested that the Milli Bus Enterprise organization does not have enough capacity to overcome its shortcomings. Nevertheless, they have emphasized that new public transport is key for the Afghan economy.

"We can use the buses for transportation in different parts of Kabul and the neighboring provinces. The Indian aids will be productive to Afghan commuters and this also economically helps the people to travel from one destination to another," economic analyst Qais Mohammad said.

Over the past 14 years, up to 900 buses were provided to Milli Bus Enterprise. (Tolonews)

(4) Next Round...

Pakistani newspaper The Express Tribune quoted the senior Pakistani official as saying on Saturday.

"The understanding is that the process should continue here," he said, dismissing earlier reports from Kabul that the talks could be held in China or Qatar. "The first meeting was to break the ice and some progress is expected in this round," said the official.

In addition to the lack of confirmation regarding the venue, the government's line up of negotiators is reportedly not yet finalized.

"Firstly, the government of Afghanistan should take action and bring the peace negotiation process out of political and commercial processes. The peace talks need to be broad based and inclusive. Government must at least avoid the appointment of those who took part in wars and who are greedy for power to participate in the talks as representatives or deciders of the fate of Afghanistan," MP Shukria Barakzai said.

Although the Afghan High Peace Council has announced that they will be leading the talks analysts express reservations about this and say that the decision is made by the highest echelons of government.

"Top government officials serve in the ranks of the council. The peace council cannot play the

role of a mediator as the government remains on one side of the conflict with Taliban or Pakistan. Their [HPC] role could be interpreted on a national level. But on an international level, the peace council does not have a constructive role," Assadullah Walwanji, a member of the negotiation team in Qatar and Dubai talks said.

Analysts are meanwhile positive that the talks will be beneficial especially as a number of countries are monitoring the discussions. In a recent statement, US special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Daniel F. Feldman said that the US is monitoring the negotiations at the request of Afghan officials. (Tolonews)

(5) MoIC to Add ...

a crucial role in various spheres of society, including in highlighting sensitive issues such as government corruption.

"The activities of social media outlets have been effective over the past several years, particularly in disclosing government deficiencies, corruption and providing information to the public," NAI head Abdul Mujib Khelwatgar said. "Our demand is that any move in this respect must be taken in close coordination and in harmony with the institutions that work in this field."

Journalist Kamal Nasir Hamyar equated putting constraints on social media as the same as censoring the public media, a stance that reflects the burgeoning role social media has in connecting users to important information. "If such a law is imposed, this means that we impose restrictions on the media," he said.

Some feel like social media has taken too outsized of a role in the lives of Afghan youth, particularly when it comes to how they inform themselves. "Unfortunately, with the development of social media, the youths become busy with this media and book reading and newspaper reading cultures have been undermined," Kabul resident Waqif Noori told TOLONews.

Yet there remain a number of very practice obstacles to social media proliferation around the country, such as poor connectivity and the expensiveness of Internet service. (Tolonews)

(6) ALP, Border...

However, provincial council head Abdullah Naji said that security forces had offered stout resistance for four days against Taliban attacks and they demanded air support but the government failed to provide them with reinforcement.

A day earlier, Naji had said that parts of Tirgran area were already in Taliban control and the roads to Ashkasham, Zibak, Shaghan and Wakhan would also be blocked if the base lost control to Taliban.

ut militants claimed capturing the base along with 110 security personnel stationed there.

The group's spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said that a National Afghan Police (ANP) commander and a border police commander were also captured. He said that 25 security personnel were killed, 10 machine guns, 10 rockets, tens of Kalashnikovs, mortars, and some ammunitions were also seized during the firefight. (Pajhwok)

(7) Salma Dam ...

constructed on Hari Rud River in Chiste Sharif district of the province with objectives of 42 MW power generations and improvement of irrigation facilities in 80,000 hectares of land.

It is flagship infrastructural project of India's developmental assistance programme to Afghanistan, the statement added.

The project includes construction of 107.5 m high and 550 m long rock fill dam and other typical components of any hydroelectric power project such as spillway, powerhouse, switchyard, and transmission line.

The statement said that Salma Dam has faced several logistical constraints and security challenges contributing to delay of several years and is now expected to be completed by mid-2016. (Pajhwok)

(8) Taliban Take....

foreigners and two Taliban commanders were killed in Tirgran

gun battle.

They said that around 300 rebels including 70 foreign fighters participated in Warduj fighting. A day earlier, spokesmen of the Ministry of Interior and Defense had denied the Taliban's siege of the base and said that no base was under security threat in any part of the country. (Pajhwok)

(9) MoD to....

of the Kunduz Provincial Council have warned that insecurity is growing and the public is losing trust in the government's ability to maintain law and order. "The government has no plan to eradicate militants in Kunduz," Kunduz Provincial Council member Ghulam Rabbani said. "The reason behind rising insecurity in Kunduz is inefficiency and poor administration of the local government."

Six districts of Kunduz have recently witnessed heavy clashes between security forces and insurgents. Reports suggest that Dasht-e-Archi district and some others in the province are fully under militant control. (Tolonews)

(10) Logar Airstrike ...

over the incident and appointed a delegation to investigate the incident.

Ghani stressed foreign troops should exercise utmost care during their operations to avoid harming Afghan forces and civilians.

The president extended his condolences to families of the slain soldiers and prayed for early recovery of those wounded in the incident.

US forces also confirmed involvement in the incident that resulted in the death of seven and injury of five Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers.

In a statement, the coalition said that on behalf of General Campbell, the NATO and US forces commander in Afghanistan that "we deeply regret the loss of Afghan National Army soldiers in this incident." (Pajhwok)

(11) \$5m Allocated ...

in district development councils from now onwards.

Several people, in the past, found guilty in corruption in development projects while they lived in cities, the governor explained. The governor reassured transparency in development projects in the province therefore every NSP official would be held accountable in future.

Abdul Wali, a resident of Naish district, accused NSP staff involved in corruption in the past. Central and provincial departments should nominate genuine representatives in development council on priority so they could design and ensure the reconstruction projects in letter and spirit, he suggested.

rn zones, explained the projects in a meeting with Governor Dr. Humayoun Azizi. Security played pivotal role in consuming the budget in a transparent way since the budget had been properly utilized last year in areas where the security situation was better, Ahmad Wali added.

He accused several local influential people used to utilize the development budget for their personal gains and interest in the past and he demanded from governor to develop village committees which could provide support and quell corruption in the development projects.

Several development council committees can jointly and with their consensus utilize the budget for a project which would benefit more people, he suggested. The governor ensured that nobody would be allowed to utilize the NPS budget without proper legal process, he said, and those who lived in cities could not be included in district development councils from now onwards.

Several people, in the past, found guilty in corruption in development projects while they lived in cities, the governor explained. The governor ensured transparency in development projects in the province therefore every NPS official would be held accountable from now onwards. Abdul Wali, a resident of Naish district, accused NPS staff involved in corruption in the past. Central and provincial departments should nominate the true representatives in development council on top priority so they could design and ensure the

reconstruction projects in true sense, he suggested.

The provincial council members also confirmed the corruption charges in NPS projects but they ensured that the corrupt people had been taken out from development councils and they would ensure proper monitoring to avoid corruption in future. (Pajhwok)

(12) Kandahar Trade....

important role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Piri noted that expansion of economic relations with Afghanistan is a priority for the political and economic management of Sistan-Baluchestan Province.

Pointing to the newly opened hospital in Hirmand border city, he said the hospital is ready to receive Afghan people from the friendly and neighboring country.

Meanwhile, head of the Agriculture Jihad of the province, Reza Najafi, said grounds have been prepared for the investment of Afghan businessmen in the province, adding that development of railways from Chabahar to Milak will increase border transactions between Iran and Afghanistan.

Najafi further remarked that during their 2-day visit, the Afghan delegation will inspect dairy factories and centers for breeding poultry.

In another development, Rahmuddin Haji Agha, head of the team, said Afghan businessmen have taken advantage of trade with Iran and expressed hope that such an advantage will be mutual.

He stressed that obstacles on the way of investors of the two countries should be removed and preparations should be made in Iran to facilitate trade transactions for Afghan businessmen.

The 26-member Afghan delegation is expected to inspect industrial, trade and port capabilities in Zahedan and Chabahar during their stay. (IRNA)

(13) Helmand Special ...

the pension.

"Poverty and joblessness have been increased therefore the families of disabled and martyrs could not wait for their turn but start complaining," he said. (Pajhwok)

(14) Kabulis Criticize...

[MoTIT] to pressurize telecommunication companies to provide better services to the citizens."

Meanwhile, MoTIT officials said they are not aware of the problem and that they have not received any complaints in this regard so far.

"Such a complaint has not been registered yet. We address any kind of complaint and technical problem once we receive it. We share complaints with telecommunication companies and then try to resolve it," said Mohammad Anwari, head of MoTIT Legal Department.

This come as residents in a number of provinces also complain about the quality of telecommunication services. It is said that residents of provinces are receiving telecommunication services only a few hours a day. (Tolonews)

(15) Afghanistan Seeks ..

that the cross-border trade plays an important role in strengthening bilateral relations between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, noting that five bridges were built across the Panj River to consolidate permanent overland links between the two countries, the source said.

Construction of one more bridge is nearing completion and marketplaces will be built on the Tajik sides in Qumsangir district in Khatlon province and in Vanj, Ishkashim and Murgab districts in the Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO), Sharif Said noted.

According to data of the Agency for Statistics under the President of Tajikistan, a two-way trade between Tajikistan and Afghanistan in the first half of this year has valued at more than 45.5 million U.S. dollars, 1.7 percent fewer than in the same period last year. This consisted Tajikistan's exports to Afghanistan estimated at little more than 11.5 million U.S. dollars and Tajikistan's imports from Afghanistan worth about 34 million U.S.

dollars. (Asia-Plus)

(16) Agricultural Test ...

Abdul Qodus, director gardening programme at the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, said that they have found some samples of fruit plants that could produce good crops as compared to crops in other countries.

"Now, we can tell farmers that their crops are ready for use but in the past we did not know the exact season for reaping of crops," he said.

Qodus added farmers of Nangarhar, Kunar, Laghman and Nuristan provinces would get help in line with their crops.

An official of Nangarhar agriculture department Abdul Latif Barakzai said that they had launched new research for new plants to adapt with the seasons of eastern zone. (Pajhwok)

(17) Social Media ...

its way in Afghanistan and has effective role in accountability, education, entertainment, reflecting the truth, fighting graft, citizen journalism, etc," said NAI executive head.

"Social media is an outcome of modernization. Geography and place has lost its relevance in it and people from far-away areas can exchange ideas and views," he continued.

Saeeda Muzhgan Mustafawi, deputy information and culture minister, said social media had a huge impact on lives of people and could be used as a good tool to pressure the government and irresponsible officials.

"The geographical boundaries have become irrelevant and through social media we can actually connect to people everywhere," she added.

Expressing concerns about distribution of violent and graphic pictures and videos through social media, she said it had bad impact on society. (Pajhwok)

(18) Creation of...

of independent militia did not bring peace to the country rather armed groups led to insecurity and chaos in the country.

Atiqullah Amarkhel, a military analyst, said specific foreign and internal elements had been trying to derail the ongoing peace parleys because the success of talks with Taliban might put their personal interest in danger. He said after the collapse of Dr. Najibullah government it was militia groups who fueled civil war, stormed public properties, homes and looted government resources.

He termed independent militia groups dangerous than Daesh and Taliban and warned empowering such groups would again destroy the state institutions.

Majority of the residents also believed that Afghan Local Police (ALP) and volunteer security forces did not discharge their responsibility. They sometime stood with security forces and sometimes joined the Taliban ranks.

The residents believed that government should focus and spend more resources and Afghan National Army (ANA) and mainstream police rather creating militia and ALP.

Recently, Abdul Rashid Dustam, the first vice president and head of the Jumbish-i-Islami, and Atta Mohammad Noor, the governor of Balkh and executive director of the Jamiat-i-Islami formed an alliance to fight Taliban and other insurgent groups in the north. Dostam has just travelled to Faryab to organize people against Taliban, but some circles were still concerned over creation of independent militia groups.

Sultan Mohammad Faizi, spokesman for the first vice president, said that Dostam had been in Faryab following directives by the president and rejected rumours of creation of militia groups.

He made it clear that any action against insurgents would be taken in line with the law of the state.

Afghanistan has around 400,000 security personnel, including personnel of police, Afghan National Army (ANA) and National Directorate of Security (NDS). Abdul Ghafoor Sherzad, a political analyst, said the country's security forces had the responsibility to protect country and its inhabitants. He said creation of

militia groups was against law of the land.

Sidique Siddiqui, spokesman of the Ministry of Interior (MoI), said that government was against creation of militia groups and distribution of arms to locals. He said such efforts would have negative results in the long-run.

He, however, said creation of militia groups and uprising groups was totally different. A handful of people in parts of the country with their own weapons raised against Taliban and expelled them from their locality. On the other hand, Javed Kohistani, an expert on military affairs, said it was government weakness that could not end insurgency and allow people to get arms against insurgents.

He said due to government negligence Taliban, Daesh, Hizb-ut-Tahrir continued to expand their activities in parts of the country and in the given situation people had the right to defend themselves. (Pajhwok)

(19) Militants Cut....

After cutting power supply, militants also stormed security posts but it could not be immediately ascertained whether the firefight caused any casualties on either side, he said.

Mohammad Shah, a resident of Maimana City, said that the weather was too hot there and people were facing immense problems without electricity.

He said that electronics appliances were also damaged. "I and tens of other people waiting for a photocopy machine but due to no electricity we're still waiting," he added.

But Faryab electricity director Sayed Abdul Hameed said that engineers had arrived in to the area and would repair the cables.

Faryab energy officials said around 70,000 families in Maimana and eight other districts used imported electricity and the power was currently cut for Maimana city, and Khawaja Sabz Posh, Pashtun Kot, Sherin Tagab and Dawlatabad districts.

This is the second time the power cables to Faryab have been cut as result of security incidents during the past one week. (Pajhwok)

(20) Floods Wash....

resident of Khame Ab district said: "I had to leave my house due to flood and now I lived with my six family members under open sky." He demanded assistance to feed his families and warned of grave consequences in case of negligence. (Pajhwok)

(21) Badakhshan ...

transfer of food items, drinking water and other materials to the flood-hit families in the area.

He said devastated floods disconnected roads and the transfer of aid to some areas affected by flood would not be possible by road.

The Kofab district is situated 160 kilometres to the north of Faizabad, the provincial capital, bordering Tajikistan. The aid and other stuff might transfer to the district via Tajikistan. The last month floods also left seven persons dead and destroyed over hundred homes in Badakhshan. (Pajhwok)

(22) Britain May

days after US President Barack Obama urged Britain to stay in the European Union, cautioning during a BBC interview that remaining in the bloc was necessary to help preserve the nation's global influence. (AFP)

(23) Iran Launched....

Washington, emboldening Tehran to increase backing for Middle Eastern allies at odds with Gulf Arab countries.

"Iran stands behind the people in the region to fight against the threat of extremism, terrorism and sectarianism... Our message to the regional countries is that we should fight together against this shared challenge," Zarif added. (Reuters)

(24) 18 Police....

region, including destroying smuggling tunnels and evacuating over 1,000 houses in Rafah city near the border with the Palestinian Gaza Strip to create a buffer zone. (Xinhua)