

**(1) Wolesi Jirga...**

of the country," Balkhabi added. Amid controversy, reports have surfaced that the president struggled till the last minute to convince the lawmakers to approve the decree. However, Saturday's voting will prove whether these efforts were effective. "The government wants to justify its negligence, incompetence and weakness and it tries to put its responsibility on parliament, because of this some of the lawmakers oppose the decree," Balkhabi further said. The statement comes a week after Ghani's second VP Sarwar Danish told lawmakers in a parliament speech that the international donors have linked their continued financial cooperation to Afghanistan to implementation of reforms in Afghanistan's election system and that the government must attend the Warsaw Summit on Afghanistan with an achievement. (Tolonews)

**(2) Govt. Steps...**

When asked about the election budget and security, Murtazawi said that special teams were tasked to work on the financial issues and security of the elections and government is committed to using all it can to conduct the elections. Meanwhile, election observer institutions have hit back at government's election schedule and at government for not delivering on its promises it made to the people on election reforms, saying that it is would be quite difficult to conduct the poll in the fall due to limited time.

"We hope that parliament will not repeat the past experience and that it issues its verdict on the legislative decree soon. If parliament once again rejects the decree, this is not less than an act of oppression against the people," Yousuf Rashid, head of The Free and Fair Election Forum of Afghanistan (FEFA) told TOLONews. This comes nearly two months after the government referred the legislative decree to parliament for a second time to seek its approval from lawmakers. However the decree so far has not been approved by parliament, something which has elicited strong reactions from election monitoring groups who believe the delay will harm election reforms and damage the democratic process in the country.

In addition, Mohammad Naeem Ayoubzada, head of the Transparent Election Foundation of Afghanistan (TEFA), has said that considering the limited time till fall, one should not hope for process-oriented elections. "I think holding process-oriented elections will not be possible. But there is the possibility for holding an election of convenience in the shape of the parliament of national unity and districts of national unity. But one thing is clear that this would be the last election in Afghanistan which would not have legitimacy," he said. The 2014 presidential elections hit a deadlock when then rival front-runner and present CEO Abdullah Abdullah accused the Independent Election Commission (IEC) of fabricating results and rigging the polls.

After months of impasse, finally the US Secretary of State John Kerry brokered a political agreement between President Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah to establish the national unity government. After the formation of the national unity government, the two rivals pledged to undertake fundamental reforms in Afghanistan's election system to avoid such crisis in the future. (Tolonews)

**(3) Peace...**

the second largest militant organisation behind Taliban. Lifting of sanctions against HIA leaders, dropping their names from the US blacklist and facilitating the party to operate openly are among pledges the government has held out. (Pajhwok)

**(4) MoU Signed**

improved by computerizing the system. We will be witness to many positive changes, improved service delivery and reduced corruption in government departments," he said. (Pajhwok)

**(5) Obama Approves...**

policy, the US commander in Afghanistan, General John Nicholson, will be able to decide when it is appropriate for American troops to accompany conventional Afghan forces into the field - something they have so far only been doing with Afghan special operations forces, the official said. The expanded powers are only meant to be employed "in those select instances in which their engagement can enable strategic effects on the battlefield," the official said. That means that US forces should not be expected to accompany Afghan soldiers on day-to-day missions. The decision is a departure from

current U.S. rules of engagement in Afghanistan, which impose limits on U.S. forces' ability to strike at insurgents. The U.S. military was previously allowed to take action against the Taliban "in extremis" - moments when their assistance was needed to prevent a significant Afghan military setback. That definition, however, left the U.S. military postured to assist them in more defensive instances. The new policy would allow U.S. forces to accompany Afghans at key moments in their offensive campaign against the Taliban.

"The U.S. forces will more proactively support Afghan conventional forces," the official said. (Tolonews)

**(6) Gen. Raheel ...**

leaders over the May 21 drone attack that killed the Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour at a time when efforts were underway to start peace negotiations in Afghanistan. "Expressing his serious concern on the U.S. drone strike in Balochistan as a violation of Pakistan's sovereignty, the COAS (Chief of the Army Staff) highlighted as to how it had impacted the mutual trust and respect," an army statement said after the meeting.

The army chief underlined that the U.S. action was counterproductive in consolidating the gains of Pakistan military operation in the tribal regions.

"All efforts for durable peace in the region have to be synergized with shared commitment and responsibility in order to make them successful," the statement quoted General Raheel as telling the American leaders.

He raised the demand of targeting the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and its chief Mullah Fazlullah in their bases in Afghanistan and reiterated Pakistan's resolve not to allow hostile intelligence agencies' efforts, especially "RAW and NDS, of fomenting terrorism."

Pakistani security officials say that almost all TTP leaders and fighters have fled to Afghanistan after a series of military operations in the tribal regions. The regional security situation, with particular reference to border management with Afghanistan and peace and stability in Afghanistan in the post-May 21 U.S. drone strike environment came under discussion, the military said. The army chief told the U.S. officials that the operation in the tribal regions codenamed "Zarb-e-Azb" was launched against terrorists of all hues and sanctuaries of terrorists have been dismantled without discrimination. "All stakeholders need to understand Pakistan's challenges with regard to porous border, inter-tribal linkages and decades-old presence of over 3 million refugees. Blaming Pakistan for instability in Afghanistan is unfortunate," General Raheel said. He reaffirmed the need for continuing harmonized efforts against terrorists and effective border management as ways to regional peace and stability. He further said Pakistan is committed to work for a long term peace process for Afghanistan under the QCG framework. (Xinhua)

**(7) Russia to...**

Russia- Afghan Government is growing, this will benefit the most the Afghan farmers to plan more and get more, asking the Government let's not lose the current opportunity." Based on the information from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Afghanistan is having about \$800 million mutual business ties with Russia, the current decision will increase the number higher. (Agencies)

**(8) Demand to ...**

area as part of the Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TUTAP) project.

Last month, thousands of people had gathered in Kabul protesting against a change in the TUTAP route. A delegation appointed by the government has recommended after its investigation that the project be routed through Salang Pass instead of Bamyan for being cost-effective and shortest. The power line if passed through Bamyan could delay the project by several years. But once again the Hazara community members on Thursday said in a resolution letter that the contract on routing the project via Salang Pass was a great injustice and the government should not play with the fate of people.

They said they would never back out of their demand. They said in the contract with the company it had been said that the company was responsible for detailed designing and installation of the power line. It showed no initial work had been done on the project, they argued. The gathering said in their announcement that they were planning a large protest during the holy month of Ramadan. (Pajhwok)

**(9) Despite High...**

such cases were recorded last solar year. At least 19 cases of violence against women have been registered so far this year. Zainab Khawar, a former employee of the election commission, has been searching for work for the past 18 months. But she has been unable to find a job. "I'm pained remembering my university days because I got educated in difficult conditions." She continued an educated woman could not keep herself busy doing daily chores or working on farms. Her qualifications will literally fail to benefit her family, which struggled financing her education, if Khawar does not get a gainful job.

Mohammad Jafar, who owns a small chips-manufacturing factory, agreed unemployment was on the rise and a large number of educated females had applied for jobs in his plant.

Zainab, who did a Masters in Political Science from the Kabul University two years ago, has been looking for a job for the past two years. But due to widespread unemployment and stiff competition, she remains jobless.

"In fact, unemployment is a huge concern for the people. I could get a survey-related job for a few days and have since been unemployed."

But Sughra Attayee, head of the Afghan Women Network (AWN), linked the problems facing Bamyan women to lack of self-confidence, gender bias and an absence of women in the decision-making process.

She claimed Bamyan women had a presence in political, military, economic, cultural and social sectors but were not being encouraged to play an active role. She lamented thousands of educated women in Bamyan were unemployed. She warned if the current level of unemployment was not reduced, more and more women would lose their confidence and their overall role in society would weaken.

Abdul Rahman Ahmadi, the governor's spokesman, confirmed unemployment was on the rise in the province. However, he explained 15 percent of government servants in the province were women. He said provincial government was not authorized to generate jobs for everyone. Ahmadi noted the unemployment issue did not affect Bamyan alone; it was a common problem across the country. (Pajhwok)

**(10) Helmand's Ex...**

information, 40 to 50 percent of the force did not exist physically when we asked for help during operations. Salaries of ghost soldiers had been received during the past eight months and the money has gone to personal accounts," said Kintoz. "Main issues related to the problems facing Helmand including institutional problems facing Helmand police. However it is a bit early to comment about the rest of the cases. The case is in the final stage in line with the orders of the president, and the former commander of Helmand police will be investigated," said Sediq Sediqqi, spokesman to ministry of interior.

"Huge numbers of ghost police are reported in Helmand province. Their equipment and weaponry were distributed to mafia and local lawbreakers while our people in Helmand and military forces are burning in war flames," senator Akhundzada Alokzai said.

"There are 40,000 people on the list, but the reports which have been received show that seven to eight thousand insurgents exist in Helmand. With forty thousand people who are backed by tanks, artillery and aircrafts, we should have eliminated each one of the enemy, it is clear that we have not everyone there," Kintoz added.

This comes at a time that the Taliban currently control several districts in Helmand and are plotting to expand their existence in several regions. The existence of ghost police is thought to be one of the reasons that has expanded the war in the province. (Tolonews)

**(11) Afghanistan ...**

and secondly the Afghan security forces have achieved better potential in their campaign against the militants and securing the country," deputy presidential spokesman Sayed Zafar Hashemi said.

The report places Iceland, Denmark and Australia as the most peaceful countries while Afghanistan's neighboring countries such as Turkmenistan is placed 106, Uzbekistan 109, China 120, Tajikistan 122, Iran 133, Pakistan placed 153 and Afghanistan 160 and Syria, South Sudan and Iraq come after Afghanistan. As the Taliban insurgency still dominates headlines, a number of civil society activists have said that despite violence surging in the country, the level of support for militants among the

Afghans has increased. "The difference between Afghanistan and Syria is that the people in Afghanistan are supporting their armed forces. But in Iraq and Syria the level of cooperation with the security forces is lower. The government and international community must seriously fight terrorists. Because the hatred of people against the Taliban has increased," MP Ramazan Jumazada said. The Afghan public has also reacted to the report. (Tolonews)

**(12) Kunduz ...**

concern over the increase in food items' prices and said there was no mechanism in place to control the market. "Shopkeepers are looting people with both hands by overpricing, but there is no one to ask them why they do so."

He said the price of seven kilograms of onion jumped from 100 afghanis before Ramadan to 200 afghanis. "I personally cannot afford that price, we ask the government to pay attention," he said. According to Pajhwok report, the price of a kilogram of rice was 60 afghanis before Ramadan but now increased to 80 afghanis. Similarly the price of a kilogram of bean increased from 50 afghanis to 70 afghanis and seven kilograms of onion from 100af to 150af. However, shopkeepers linked the price-hike to the increase in the value of the US dollar value against the afghani.

Shafiq, a shopkeeper in Kunduz city, said they purchased all goods with US dollars and the value of the greenback increased in the month of Ramadan. (Pajhwok)

**(13) Kabul...**

government has stepped up efforts to reduce the growing corruption in the country. The Afghan Attorney General Farid Hamidi promised earlier today that a serious and speedy campaign against corruption will be launched in the near future. Hamidi further added that serious work is underway to establish a judicial center and the people of Afghanistan will soon witness the start of major fight against corruption. (KP)

**(14) Pakistani Beggars ...**

misrepresent the real face of Afghan people. "We are suspicious that there are some in the Kabul streets and from one side they damage Afghan people's dignity and from the other side their existence has links with insecurity in Kabul," said Bashir Bezhana a member of the Kabul Servants Institute (KSI).

But residents and poor people said that rich people must help the needy. "They must be stopped. There are lots of needy people in Kabul like me. My rent is 5,000 (Afs), with six family members but I am jobless," said Sheren Aqa, a beggar. "It is not good for a person to ask for help and then conduct other activities. Islam religion is an honest religion, especially in the holy month of Ramazan needy people must be helped which is called sacrifice and dedication," said Abdul Saboor, a Kabul resident.

However the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs said there were programs for beggars to get them off the streets but they would not comment on their connection with terrorist activities and connections with foreign intelligence services. "Well maybe such kind of people exist but it is the responsibility of the security institutions to answer the question. In our working area we have big programs for gathering of poor and needy people and we have implemented the program and had a good result," said Abdul Fatah Ashrar Ahmadzai ministry media adviser. (Tolonews)

**(15) Customs Revenue ...**

officials pocketed the customs duty and allowed people to use smuggled vehicles. However, we are investigating the issue."

A civil society activist, Eng. Sultan Ahmadzai, asked security organs to track such cases and arrest the commissioners. But Customs Manager Hafizullah Kamal denied interference in his department's affairs.

He said the decrease in revenue was not a sign of corruption but the food items previously imported from Pakistan were currently routed through the north. (Pajhwok)

**(16) Details Emerge ...**

hitting the vehicle with the general in it," said Tom Boman another colleague of the slain journalists.

The two NPR staffers said the incident happened after they left a military camp and were on their way to Marjah district. The group of four journalists were traveling in Humvees. The two surviving journalist were with an Afghan army general in the lead vehicle, the second vehicle was carrying Afghan security forces while the third was carrying Tamanna and his American colleague. (Tolonews)

**(17) Ban on Camera ...**

banned, coverage of major sports events, civil gatherings, major incidents, demonstrations, natural disasters and other related issues will not get such good coverage by media," journalist Halimullah Samandar said.

"With consideration of certain security issues and for the sake of national interests, the national security council has decided that drone cameras will no longer be allowed to be used in Afghanistan, the government of Afghanistan has major respect for media activities and because of this it has taken the decision," spokesman to CEO Jawed Faisal said.

Media activists have said that the ban on the use of camera drones during media coverage is part of government's efforts to curb media activities. "If such hasty decisions are taken on such issues, I think it is a move to restrict freedom of expression and freedom of press," political analyst Mohammadullah Babrak said.

In today's world, the use of camera drones is said to be extremely important while covering events such as demonstrations, wars, criminal cases and terrorism activities. (Tolonews)

**(18) Afghan Forces...**

One of the residents, Noor Wali, said: "On three sides of the gate, there are Pakistanis who have built military installations. Only the gate is with the Afghans." A resident of Border village, Mubariz Afghan, also said the Afghan forces had been handed over only the gate. He said keeping security of the gate was a difficult task.

He said the Afghan forces sometimes shut the gate and the move resulted in increased prices of commodities. Another resident of the district, Barat Khan Wazir, said when the border crossing facility was handed over to the Afghans, local residents were not informed about it.

He said previously local residents would keep security in their areas and the Pakistani forces had been unable to advance, but now they had built concrete structures. (Pajhwok)

**(19) Prayer Leader...**

Buzarg, he said the incident took place when the prayer leader was on his way home from mosque. The murderer was arrested by local residents and handed over to police, Shafiq said, adding the motive behind the attack was yet to be cleared. (Pajhwok)

**(20) Clash Between...**

Pajhwok Afghan News. Commander Ghafoor was loyal to the Junbish-i-Millilislami (National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan) party, led by Abdul Rashid Dostum, the first Vice President while Samiullah Kherkha was also one of the supporters of the party. The exchange of rockets and mortar shelling inflicted casualties on many people during the ongoing clash, he said without having the exact figures of fatalities. According to Daudzai, he would seek the support of provincial administration to resolve the dispute peacefully. Syed-ul-Baqi Hashimi, a member of provincial council, said that Kherkha's four relatives Ibrahim Palawan, Abdul Aleem, Shakkor and Khalifa Aman, have been so far killed and seven others wounded during the gun battle. (KP)

**(22) Soldier Killed...**

Adam Khan, Wali's brother. "What the Taliban has done - no one else will do, I never saw such kinds of horror and killing," said Mohammad Asif, Wali's father-in-law.

Wali was on his way from Pakiya to Kabul where he was to marry and start his new life with his bride-to-be but before he reached his destination, the Taliban killed him. (Tolonews)

**(23) 2 Umrh...**

luggage, it added. The statement said the case had been referred to judicial organs for further investigation. (Pajhwok)

**(24) Haqqani ...**

On May 22, Afghan Taliban supreme leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour was killed in a US drone strike in the Naushki district of Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province. (Pajhwok)

**(25) Balkh's ...**

two brothers, Mohammad Din, told the provincial council members that he lived in the same home with his brother Abdul Jabbar. The 55-year-old said: "No one has raped my niece. I was unaware and people told me that televisions are airing the news of my niece rape." Abdul Wakil, one of the elders from AlamKhel village, told Pajhwok Afghan News from the sidelines of their meeting with the provincial council members that

there were 200 families living in the village and no one had the knowledge of the incident. Wakil called Balkh governor Atta Mohammad Noor as an unsuccessful politician for blaming the incident on Juma Khan Hamdard on TV screen. He said the residents of AlamKhel were victim of political differences in Balkh. He said they visited the provincial council instead of the governor's house because the latter had accused them of prostitution. (Pajhwok)

**(26) Obama is...**

is absolutely a joy and an honor that President Obama and I over the years have gone from fierce competitors to true friends," Clinton told Reuters in an interview. After an unexpectedly tough battle against Sanders' challenge from the left, former first lady Clinton made history when she reached the number of delegates needed to win the party nomination this week. That made her the first woman to lead a major U.S. party as its White House candidate. (Reuters)

**(27) Russia Cuts...**

tight monetary policy, the bank said, slowing inflation allows more certain reliance on sustainable inflation reduction to less than 5 percent in May 2017 and the 4 percent target in late 2017. It said the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) dynamics in the first quarter of 2016 and macroeconomic indicators for April confirmed greater sustainability of the Russian economy to oil price fluctuations. (Xinhua)

**(28) No Peace in...**

first European visit by an Iranian president in 16 years. The trip, which followed Rouhani's visit to Rome, aimed to boost Tehran's trade with Europe after years of sanctions.

"Bilateral ties and expansion of economic relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and France entered a new phase" with President Rouhani's visit, Bartolone said. (Presstv)

**(29) German Gov't...**

the ministry said. German gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 0.7 percent in the first quarter of 2016, mainly thanks to strong private consumption, government spending on refugees and construction investment. The German government forecast the economy to grow by 1.7 percent over the whole year of 2016. (Xinhua)

**(30) Medical Units...**

reached Italy with the remaining 1,352 and 28 reaching Spain and Cyprus respectively. (Xinhua)

**(31) Thanks Giving...**

thanksgiving service at St Paul's. The service kicked off a three-day birthday celebrations to mark the Queen's official birthday. Her real birthday falls on April 21 and a series of grand celebrations were held earlier this April.

The Queen would host a governors-general for lunch at Buckingham Palace, local media said. (Xinhua)

**(32) U.S. top...**

with United States delegation," the adviser said ahead of the talks.

Pakistan believes that on one hand Washington seeks the country's role to bring the Taliban to the negotiation table, but on the other itself killed already dim chances for the peace process. (Xinhua)

**(33) Iran, Russia...**

all-inclusive solution in order to stop war and bloodshed" in Syria. In his meeting with Freij, the Iranian official hailed the Syrian army's recent victories, including its liberation of some areas from Takfiri militants. "Today, Syria is the battle ground against a very dangerous sedition, which would spread across the world if not stemmed." Shamkhani said "a political and nonconstructive attitude" to the Syrian crisis by the US and its allies in the West and the region has been key to the escalation of the conflict. (Presstv)

**(34) Turkmenistan...**

U.S. has pledged to help Turkmenistan with its border, but human rights abuses and lacking reforms remain obstacles to improved diplomatic relations. The U.S. has also vowed to work with Turkmenistan in areas of private sector investment, and Washington has called for significant economic remedies in the form of market liberalization. Russia holds interests in Turkmenistan as well, but is less concerned about the internal structure of the economy. (Agencies)

**(35) Chinese Rescue...**

team braved hot and humid weather and carried out the construction work during their stay, and "local people affected by disaster showed their hospitality and thanks to us and to China," Yang said. (Xinhua)