

(1)WJ Delays...

of members of the electoral bodies. Other lawmakers held different views. Some said the decree should be voted upon and others rejected the idea.

MP FarhadAzimi said if the decree was rejected the people would say the Wolesi Jirga had hijacked the elections and if approved, it was feared the two leaders would divide members of the electoral bodies between them.

Another lawmaker Mohammad DaudKalkani also said he feared if the decree was approved, government officials would distribute seats on the two commissions and would pave the way for their own people to make it to the parliament.

He claimed: "Reports which have reached us say the parliament seats have been distributed between the president and the CEO."

MP GulBadshahMajidi said elections were people's demand and therefore the decree should not be rejected. He said controversial articles should be discussed before voting on the decree.

Concluding the debate, Speaker Abdul Rauffbrahimi said the house commissions should once again discuss the decree tomorrow and present their proposals to the house in the next meeting.

A few days ago, some political parties and civil society groups had asked the Wolesi Jirga to approve the presidential decree on electoral reform and had warned the country could plunge into a new political crisis if the decree was rejected.

Ibrahimi had also a week ago urged lawmakers to approve the decree in order to pave the ground for the parliamentary and district council elections. (Pajhwok)

(2)Ghani Demands ...

attention on investments inside the country, still there is no clear written policy on the economy side to help the International investors to invest within the country, economical expert Mohammad AzarakshHafizi said,

Earlier Afghan businessmen were facing serious challenges in United Arab Emirates, but officials in Afghanistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs have resolved their issues. (Agencies)

(3)Experts Slam ...

all of these fighters by having such a big force which is also backed by tanks, aircrafts and weapons," Helmand police chief Aqa Noor Kintoz said.

As outrage over the presence of alleged ghost soldiers in ranks of the military forces in Helmand grows, the Ministry of Defense (MoD) on Saturday strongly rejected the rumors.

"The majority of the people do not know about the war. Because they are not professional in it to say what is war. The war going on in Afghanistan is the most complicated war," MoD spokesman DawlatWaziri said. Poor leadership of war and ambiguity on the part of government's war strategy are apparently the key elements believed to have underestimated the military campaign against the Taliban insurgents in the country. "Today Helmand is the hub of corruption, it is the center of smuggling, those who pay money are appointed in Helmand, because they gain a lot over there, otherwise 40,000 soldiers are a lot," military analyst AtiqullahAmarkhail said.

"The situation in Helmand is not normal, our police forces have continued defending Helmand. When your force encounters threats in an area, then they start facing problems such as wastage, shortages, lack of equipment and many things," Mol spokesman SediqSediqqi said.

At the moment, 10,000 Afghan National Police (ANP) personnel including 16,000 Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers and forces from other security institutions including the Public Protection Force, Border Security Forces and Afghan Local Police ALP are battling the Taliban in the province. (Tolnews)

(4)Security Forces ...

Taliban's control for the past eight months.

"We are not aware of the army decision to launch a military operation in the districts, but clearing the PD4 of Lashkargah city is very important for us and we want clear it as soon as possible," he said.

This comes after parts of Musa Qala and Nawzad districts fell to the Taliban five months ago. (Tolnews)

(5)US Concerned...

also dealt a blow to ongoing efforts for reconciliation in Afghanistan, he said. In response, the American diplomats referred to the presence of Taliban and Haqqani network sanctuar-

ies on Pakistani soil -- a threat to the region and the US national security interests. (Pajhwok)

(6)Traders Yet...

dollars through the port annually. Though some Iranian media outlets reported Afghan traders' goods had reached the Chabahar port, the ACCI said since the launch of the port, no Afghan export goods have been so far registered.

SiamuddinPasarlai, ACCI public relations director, told Pajhwok Afghan News exports through Chabahar port would have a positive impact on Afghanistan's economy but the lack of infrastructure, cold storages, factories and large ships were problems Afghan traders faced at the port.

He termed high land prices and land purchasing procedure at the Chabahar port as another issue for Afghan traders. "Land prices aren't so much high in real, but brokers' rate has made them many times higher than its real price and it's the main reason Afghans are unable to purchase the lands at the port."

He asked Indian and Iranian authorities to resolve the issues in order to enable Afghan traders to export their goods through the port and provide other facilities for them.

Chabahar is an open sea port in Iran's SistanBalochistan province, having a great capacity for shipping goods and services, especially for a land-locked country like Afghanistan.

With the launch of trade via Chabahar port, Afghanistan could earn millions by shipping a huge quantity of goods and services, like clothes to central Asian countries and create job opportunities for Afghans directly and indirectly, and the port can help resolve issues traders facing in exporting goods through Pakistan's Karachi Port. (Pajhwok)

(7)Blind Officer...

pointed for the post based on the recommendations of the local residents of Dehrawood district. Commander Mahmood is said to be an arch rival of the Taliban group and reportedly lost his eyes due to a bomb explosion planted by the Taliban militants.

According to reports, this is the first time the Ministry of Interior has appointed a disabled individual as the district police chief in south of Afghanistan. (KP)

(8)Turkmenistan,...

the construction of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline and the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Tajikistan (TAT) railway prove that.

Turkmenistan is supplying electricity and liquefied gas at a discounted price to Afghanistan.

Turkmenistan is also building social facilities in Afghanistan, and assists in the training of the Afghan youth and specialists. (Agencies)

(9)Contractors...

millionafghanis for the project design structure.

The NPC also returned proposals to the Ministry of Public Works regarding budget approval for Ministry of Rural Development-related water supply project in Zaranj, the capital of Nimroz province, the installation of a national construction laboratory and a Kabul municipality-related project for further assessment and addressing technical shortcomings.

During the debate about extension of projects' duration, the president made it clear that contractors would be fined if they failed to complete projects in the stipulated time without offering a strong reason. He stressed timely completion of projects and proper planning.

About designing big development projects, the president said the private sector should investment in the area according to their capacity and the government was ready to cooperate with it.

Ghani once again asked ministries and government departments to spend their development funds in a timely manner. (Pajhwok)

(10)Residents ...

floods. He made a strong appeal to the government to construct dams on Kunar River.

Qazafi, another Kunar resident, said the government had long been promising construction of dams, but was practically doing nothing. He said instead of paying for imported electricity, dams should be constructed on the Kunar River, which could produce enough electricity and Afghanistan would become importer of power.

Religious scholar MaulviBurhanuddin said they were promised twice construction of dams during former president Hamid Karzai government, but the promises were never honoured. He said President Ashraf Ghani should also construct dams on Kunar River the way he built on rivers in other provinces.

A resident of Asmar district, Yar Mullah Khan, said the establishment of hydropower dam on the river would not only benefit Kunar but several other provinces.

Kunar electricity department head Abdullah said they had conducted surveys for two dams on Kunar river and all the documents had been completed.

He said the sites surveyed in Sagai and Asmar's district Shal areas had the capacity to produce 300 megawatts and 796 megawatts of electricity respectively.

He said the surveys on the two dams had been completed and the documents for designs sent to the Ministry of Water and Energy, but the ministry was yet to pay attention.

He also said another survey for the route of a power line carrying imported electricity to Kunar province had also been completed but the ministry was yet to launch work on the project. Kunar Governor WahidullahKalimzai said the people of Kunar lacked electricity despite having a huge river. He said work on a dam having the capacity to produce 2.1 megawatts of electricity was underway on the Pechriver. He said the dam would resolve electricity problem of Watapur and Manogi districts.

While inaugurating the Salma Dam, President Ghani had said work on the Kamal Khan and Kajaki hydropower dams would be launched in the near future and that would follow construction work on a mega dam on the Kunar River. A survey during Sardar Mohammad Daud Khan government had found that 1,000 megawatts of electricity could be generated at the Sara Taq area in Asmar district on the Kunar river, a major tributary of Kabul River contributing almost 13 million acres feet (MAF) annually to Pakistan. (Pajhwok)

Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the Taliban, of the Quetta Shura, of the Haqqani group and the whole world needs to rally around that fact to ensure that Pakistan changes its behavior," he said. The Canadian diplomat said despite a number of Taliban realizing the fact they fight a proxy war on behalf of Pakistan in their country, they still wage war because of the pressures on them by the Pakistani military.

(11)Probe Finds ...

on just outside the city.

"Obviously, it is concerning when you hear that 40 or 30 bus passengers were stopped by insurgents," said Shafiqullah, a rickshaw driver.

"The city was very busy. You could see huge numbers of people walking around, but now as you see no one is here," said Mohammad Ismail, an electronics device seller in the city. After looking into the security situation of Kunduz city, Hamid and colleague Habib Azizi travelled to the outskirts of the city, where the passengers were abducted by Taliban a few days ago.

Qand Agha, a police force member said on the kidnapping incident: "We saved a number of them and a few of them were able to escape the Taliban." According to sources which were interviewed, there are at least 4,000 Taliban fighters in Kunduz who are supported by an additional 1,500 fighters from Samangan, Baghlan and Takhar provinces during their big attacks.

As per TOLONews' findings, Taliban has 180 ranger vehicles, 54 Humvee tanks and thousands of heavy and light weapons. These vehicles and weapons were seized by them during Kunduz city siege.

The vehicles are reportedly kept in Chardara, DashtArchi and Qala-e-Zal districts in Kunduz.

Meanwhile, security forces include 3,000 army troops, 2,000 police force members and 1,000 local police force members, which have access to far less equipment. These numbers include support personnel that are non-combatant.

The total number of ANSF soldiers on the ground fighting the Taliban is far less than the number of fighters the Taliban has in the province, sources said.

According to local officials, security forces have not received vehicles to replace those that were taken by the Taliban during the fall of Kunduz city.

Kunduz governor AsadullahAmarkhail said they have witnessed heavy attacks by the Taliban in the past eight months, adding that a shortage of security forces was one of their main problems.

"The forces which we have are busy ensuring local security. Some security force members have remained to do our operational activities," the governor said. Kunduz police chief QasimJangalbagh meanwhile said that his forces are not there to fight insurgents; they have other duties to follow, he said. "All our forces are in a defensive mode. Yes! We will have good results hopefully in the near future," he added. The investigation also found that security forces' support for the Afghan Security and Defense Forces (ANDSF) has decreased and that the U.S troops have completely stopped their drone attacks following the death of Taliban's former leader, Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour. Meanwhile, head of Kunduz provin-

cial council, Mohammad Yusuf Ayubi, who attended a session to assess the Kunduz security situation, said they have sent dozens of suggestions to government to address the security concerns in the province, but that they have not received any proper response as yet.

"We suggested 2,000 local police, six new districts, four security headquarters for Kunduz city and the province itself, because the city has eight PDs and therefore eight security headquarters should be operational for them," he said.

Kunduz provincial council secretary SaharGulAlemi meanwhile said: "When we see a slight change in the city, we think that we have been attacked. We leave home with this morale," he added.

Akhtash, Kalbad and Gultepa are the new three districts which have been added to Kunduz's administrative structure recently but they are not out of government's control.

Most of those interviewed during this investigation said they believe that there are some measures that can help Kunduz city not to fall back to the Taliban.

Establishment of the army division which was promised by government, full equipment of security forces, removing the gap between security forces and people, are key suggestions made by interviewed residents of Kunduz. (Tolnews)

(12)Pakistan's ...

Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the Taliban, of the Quetta Shura, of the Haqqani group and the whole world needs to rally around that fact to ensure that Pakistan changes its behavior," he said.

The Canadian diplomat said despite a number of Taliban realizing the fact they fight a proxy war on behalf of Pakistan in their country, they still wage war because of the pressures on them by the Pakistani military.

"Many of the Taliban leaders that I have spoken to directly or heard from indirectly have families in Pakistan that are threatened if they are not fighting, if they are not following orders, if they are not targeting the government buildings and people that they are asked to target, then their families are threatened and sometimes consequences can be very high for them," he added.

Concurring with the Canadian envoy, a number of political analysts have also asked the international community to take action against Pakistan's terrorism policy.

"Pakistan is the sender of terrorist groups in the region that disrupt peace and security. Pakistan is home for terrorists, even Pakistani economy is run through terrorism," a military analyst AjmalSaees said.

"The United States started taking practical steps against Pakistan by killing Mullah Akhtar Mansour, the attack was an unprecedented move, it is hoped diplomatic pressures are increased on Pakistan in the future, including attacks on terror hideouts in Pakistan," university professor Nasir Ahmad Tarakai said. (Tolnews)

(13)Helmand's ...

urged government to use local and international resources to control water resources and construct power and hydropower projects on them.

"When power is generated from a dam inside the country, it provides support to government and enhances its situation; therefore, it is better to consider this situation more than in the past," said Kabul University lecturer SayedMassoud.

It is said that Afghanistan will turn into a big power exporter in the long run, once the planned power projects are completed. (Tolnews)

(14)Family of Hit...

sponsible for killing the boy.

"The president and his delegation had already flown to Band-e-Salma before the incident and they returned in helicopters directly to the airport, so they did not use the cars, however the presidential palace expressed sadness after hearing of the tragic event," deputy presidential spokesman Sayed Zafar Hashemi said.

Farzad's family said they were in the process of preparing his engagement, but now their dreams have been shattered. (Tolnews)

(15)2 Militant ...

also suffered casualties during the firefight.

But the Ghazni police headquarters in the statement said the security forces escaped unharmed during the clash. (Pajhwok)

(16)Taliban...

the militants presence in Qaisar district of northern Faryab province and some weapons and explosives were seized.

At least 4 militants were killed during the same operations and dead bodies

were left in the area, the statement said.

The anti-government armed militant groups have not commented regarding the reports so far.

The Afghan security forces have stepped up counterterrorism operations across the country to suppress the operations of the militant groups who are attempting to destabilize the country as part of their spring annual offensive. (KP)

(17)Soldier Left ...

defending the country; therefore, he should be taken care of by relevant organizations.

Mohammad said they receive support from their relatives and friends, otherwise they would die of hunger. "I am very sorry that I worked for a government that pays no attention to its soldiers and their future. I urge government not to forget security forces; instead, it should help them and their families," he added.

He also said that he is ready to resume his duties if he receives treatment and regains his sight. (Tolnews)

(18)11 Containers...

owners, it said.

In Balkh, police detained seven men along with 16 kilograms of heroin, the statement said, adding the drugs were skillfully placed in a vehicle. (Pajhwok)

(19)Vatican Clls...

"My delegation thus believes that in all cases where mass atrocities and other forms of attacks against defenceless civilian populations are being perpetrated or are most likely to happen, the protection of civilians in armed conflict must be a critical component of peacekeeping mission mandates.

"It would be one of the primary yardsticks with which to measure the success or failure of a peacekeeping mission. Every peacekeeping operation should be, at the end of the day, all about saving lives."

Archbishop Auza also praised the efforts of the UN's Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) for making a substantial contribution to help ease tensions.

He added: "Without ignoring the disturbing allegations of crimes committed by some peacekeepers and without underestimating the danger that the Country could still fall back to violence, MINUSCA has contributed substantially to calming down the situation, to assisting the displaced and those victimised, and to maintaining an atmosphere that is conducive to the pacification of the population, the regular functioning of the institutions and the return to normal life.

The multidimensional mandate of MINUSCA overall augurs well for the reconstruction and institutional capacity building efforts that underpin durable peace and sustainable development in the Country." (Christian radio)

(20)UN Chief...

recommendations of the Bangui Forum, the spokesman said.

"The secretary-general urged the armed groups to seize the opportunity afforded by the president's initiative to bring peace and stability to the country by engaging in it in good faith," Dujarric said. "He stressed that the early restoration of state authority was critical for security and the country's socio-economic recovery." The secretary-general emphasised the importance of the international community's support for the Central African Republic's efforts to tackle the root causes of the crisis and its backing for the country's recovery plan, the spokesman added. (Xinhua)

(21)US Urges Pakistan...

added. A day before Modi was to address the Congress, a bipartisan group of 18 Congressmen wrote a letter to Speaker Paul Rayn, urging him to put the issue of severe violence against Muslims, Christians and Sikhs in India on top of his agenda during meeting with Prime Minister Modi.

Prime Minister Modi was scheduled to address the joint session on Wednesday, but a day before the Human Rights Commission of the US Congress held a hearing to discuss the human rights violation in India. (Monitoring Desk)

(22)UN-Backed...

wildlife requires a concerted and cooperative effort between all sectors. These new projects will further these efforts and help bring us closer to ending wildlife crime once and for all," he said.

Specifically, the Global Wildlife Program was established to address the growing poaching crisis and an in-

ternational call to action. The value of illegal trade has been estimated at between 10 billion U.S. dollars and 23 billion U.S. dollars per year, making wildlife crime the fourth most lucrative illegal business after narcotics, human trafficking and weapons, UNEP said. (Xinhua)

(23)Britain Faces...

campers were running virtually neck-and-neck.

The WhatUKThinks website's average of the last six opinion polls put the "Remain" camp on 51 percent and the "Leave" campaign on 49 percent.

Leading figures in the Labour Party were given orders Friday to win over members that would vote for the country to quit the European Union (EU).

Andy Burnham, Labour's home affairs spokesman, urged Labour voters to back staying in the EU, saying there is a real possibility that Britain could vote for isolation. (Xinhua)

(24)8 Dead, 4 Injured ...

meters", adding that "all those nearby were caught by it."

Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos wrote on Twitter that he "lamented the death of eight people in a landslide along the Medellin-Quibdo road" in the northwestern state of Choco. (Xinhua)

(25)Italy Continues...

have never decided to attempt the crossing if they had known about all of this violence," she told Xinhua.

Creta underlined there are people with very different stories among those trying to reach Europe.

"We tend to believe that the migrants are all the same, or youngsters who want to flee poverty and find a job here, but in fact there are all kinds of situations, including adults, very young couples and unaccompanied children," she noted. (Xinhua)

(26)30,000 Displaced...

one month. One tablet can purify 20 litres of drinking water. Beletweyne hosts about 31,000 displaced people, most of whom have fled conflict in the neighboring districts of Jalalqi and Bulle Burte.

Local residents who lived in low-lying areas have moved to higher ground in El Jaale, 5 km from Beletweyne, due to the flooding. (Xinhua)

(27)Iran Signs...

nuclear-related sanctions imposed on Iran by the European Union, the United Nations Security Council and the US would be lifted. Iran has, in return, put some limitations on its nuclear activities. Iran's oil exports are currently close to pre-sanction levels of around 2.5 million barrels per day (bpd), a recent report by Reuters said, citing shipping data by traders. (Presstv)

(28)Thousands Protest ...

which serves as the headquarters for the U.S. Air Forces in Europe. Organisers spoke of 5-7,000 people. No comment was available on Saturday from officials at Ramstein. The use of drones is highly controversial in Germany, where an aversion to military conflict has prevailed since World War Two. Organisers say allowing data for drone deployments to be routed through Ramstein goes against the German constitution and want the base's satellite relay station to be closed. (Reuters)

(29)China, EU...

cultural tourism, he added.

The EU and China will enhance co-ordination and ensure the success of the 18th China-EU Summit scheduled in Beijing next month, Yang said. As well, they agreed to join efforts with relevant parties to make the upcoming G20 Summit produce positive outcome, he noted. Mogherini said China is a key cooperative partner of the EU and the two sides conducted fruitful cooperation on a wide range of fields, bringing pragmatic benefit to both sides. She praised China's constructive role in coping with global and regional challenges, saying strengthened EU-China dialogues and policy coordination would help generate more cooperative outcomes and solve international and regional hot issues. (Xinhua)

(30)Iran Urges...

The Syrian defense minister, for his part, commended Iran's all-out support for Syria in the fight against terrorism, saying "the Syrian government and nation will continue their fight against terrorism with unwavering determination." Al-Freij deemed the trilateral meeting of Iran, Russia and Syria on countering terrorism in Tehran on Thursday as "highly successful" and "decisive," adding "the close coordination between the three countries at different levels will continue within the framework of new plans for cooperation. (Xinhua)