

(1) We will...

Ghani continues to call for peace and called on insurgents to join the process. "They don't have any way to escape the prayers of upset mothers and orphans, and they cannot get rid of the anger of our devoted and patriotic soldiers who are ever ready for tackling insurgents," said Ghani. Ghani reiterated that war has been inflicted on Afghanistan and its continuation will increase poverty in the country.

He hinted at a charity fund for bereaved families of Afghan security forces and said it will collect donations during Ramadan. "At least Afs90 million has been prepared to kick-start the process of collecting funds for bereaved families of security troops. This will come into effect during Ramadan," he said. Critics believe that the move by the president is crucial in supporting the morale of the security forces.

Assadullah Walwaji, who participated in talks with the Taliban in Dubai, said this is war; the government should find those who don't want peace, and it should turn against them and tackle them. (Tolonews)

(2) Abdullah Asks ...

bomb blasts and other incidents of violence occurred on a daily basis. He hoped the wave of terror would come to an end this holy month.

"The Taliban should stop killing innocent Afghan citizens and shun violence in the larger interest of Afghanistan. It is not possible to keep fighting and talking simultaneously," he observed.

The unity government, he reiterated, was all poised to provide the Taliban with all facilities like other Afghans but they had to renounce violence and terror.

Abdullah praised the valiant Afghan security forces for defending the country and the nation from internal and external threats posed by anti-state elements. (Pajhwok)

(3) ANSF Much ...

if you would go back 15 years would say a very unlikely place for that to be done," he said.

In response to a question, Carter said: "...we have assisted and enabled that. Our people are very good at that. We're not at that stage yet in Iraq, but when we get to that stage, I think that we will participate in an international effort to help these places that are tragically demolished to rebuild themselves and govern themselves."

Congressman Mac Thornberry expressed his concern over reports of Iran helping the Taliban. "Very concerning to me are recent press reports that in the midst of negotiations to remove sanctions related to its nuclear program, Iran is continuing to pay and equip the Taliban in Afghanistan as part of its regional efforts to sow instability and harm US interests," he said. (Pajhwok)

(4) CA Success...

connectivity efforts is the US Government's New Silk Road initiative to revive trade and people-to-people connections that used to bind Central to South Asia through Afghanistan and bolster economies across the Asian continent.

"Through efforts to connect markets in Afghanistan, Central Asia, Pakistan, India and beyond, the initiative encourages common interests and economic activity as stabilizing factors for peace in the region," he said. "A key component is the promotion of a regional energy market that connects Central Asia's abundant energy resources with energy-deficient South Asia," Stivers said.

In support of a Central Asia-South Asia regional electricity grid (CASA-1000), USAID provides technical assistance on the negotiation and implementation of operating agreements, he told the lawmakers.

"In April 2015, the project took a major step forward with the signing by all four countries of a master agreement in Istanbul, paving the way for construction to begin. This and other milestones achieved build on years of USAID assistance helping countries develop and implement modern energy sector management, regulation and governance structures that today make sustainable energy trade between Central and South Asia possible," he said. (Pajhwok)

(5) India to Invest...

capacity of supplying 16 inches water. Two water reservoirs with each 6,000 gallons storage capacity would be built in Charikar City and the residents would get clean drinking water round-the-clock. (Pajhwok)

(6) Trilateral Transit ...

The hydroelectric power trade agreement was signed by Kyrgyz Repub-

lic, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan in December last year in Turkey. The Casa-1,000 project is slated for completion by 2018 under the umbrella of the World Bank. Tajikistan will have a share of 70% in energy export while Kyrgyzstan will make 30% contribution.

Afghanistan will consume 300MW of exported electricity while Pakistan will receive 1,000MW. The project is expected to give a boost to energy trade in the region that will lead to sustainable development. (Pajhwok)

(7) Iranian Ambassador...

Iran's policy to refrain from supporting terrorist groups even if they indirectly supported Iran's interests, Bahrami, said "The enemy of my enemy isn't necessarily a friend."

"Let's not forget that terrorism is terrorism, extremism is extremism, and both have similar dangers," he added.

This comes as earlier reports suggested that the Iranian government has quietly started supporting the Taliban militants in Afghanistan by supplying weapons, ammunition and funding the group's fighters in a bid to countermeasure against the US influence in the region and providing a counterweight to Islamic State's move into the Taliban's territory in Afghanistan.

A Taliban commander who receives \$580 monthly salary from Iran told The Wall Street Journal "Iran supplies us with whatever we need." (KP)

(8) Ismail Khan ...

not happy with the government, insisting that "Mujahideen comprise a big population of the Afghan nation." This is not the first time Ismail Khan has raised objections regarding the sidelining of jihadi leaders by the government.

Speaking to a gathering of his supporters in Herat province earlier in February this year, Khan said there will be no security in the country if the jihadi leaders remain sidelined in the new government.

He also claimed that the cabinet is comprised of communist leaders and insisted that such a cabinet would remain unable to implement peace and stability. (KP)

(9) Ghani Tells...

within a few days. "The president is already involved in a series of consultations and discussions and he will announce his decision about the extension of Parliament's job and the implementation of reforms in the electoral system," Hashemi said.

The controversy around the term limit of Parliament emerged gradually over the past couple of months as it became clear that the national unity government would not implement electoral reforms in enough time for parliamentary elections to be held according to schedule. Delaying those elections, in turn, has forced the government to extend the terms of current representatives.

Some Afghan law experts and election monitoring institutions have raised questions about the legal grounds on which Ghani is making his executive decision to extend the term of Parliament beyond what is mandated in the Afghan Constitution. Nevertheless, it is clear that if the term is extended, the legislature will have to enjoy all the authorities it does under normal conditions in order to be fully legitimized.

"While there is no legal justification for the continuation of Parliament's term, if its tenure is extended, the authorities will not be negated," law expert Nasrullah Stanikzai said.

The head of electoral watchdog Afghanistan Democracy Watch, Zekirya Barakzai, urged national unity government leaders to announce the schedule for electoral reform and parliamentary elections as soon as possible. Based on consultations with legal experts and various stakeholders, the presidential palace is said to have concluded that the only way to extend the term of Parliament credibly would be to announce a timeline for elections. (Tolonews)

(10) Wolesi Jirga...

Abdullah said electoral reforms agreed between him and the president should be enforced. He said the Electoral Reforms Commission would start working soon and simultaneously a decision about the parliamentary election would also be made.

He added the sitting parliament would continue working until the parliamentary and district council elections were conducted.

His remarks comes after Wolesi Jirga speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahim told Wednesday's session that lawmakers would make a decision next Sunday about their duty beyond June 22, the date when the parliament five-year term expires. (Pajhwok)

(11) Former Education ...

Karza'i's cabinet member, Farooq Wardak, told TOLONews that he was ready to give accounts for each school and teacher in the country.

Wardak mentioned that all the U.S. assistances to Afghanistan's education had been done by the American officials, not the Afghan ministry.

"What we had in our statistics, today again we say they are hundred percent the same," Wardak said, noting that the current mechanism for collecting data was also the same during his term in office.

"I challenge the current [education] minister, SIGAR, Americans and the international community to find a teacher that a salary had been transferred under his name but he had not actually received the money or the money had gone to the pocket of former ministers," Wardak said. (Tolonews)

(12) 1st Woman Judge ...

time in the history of Afghanistan a female judge is being appointed as Supreme Court high council member.

The Supreme Court is composed of nine members who are appointed by the President for a period of ten years with the approval of the Wolesi Jirga with observance of the provisions of last paragraph of the Article 50 and article 118 of this Constitution.

Three members are appointed for a period of four years, three members for seven years and three members for ten years. Later appointments will be for a period of ten years.

The President appoints one of its members as the Head of the Supreme Court. (Pajhwok)

(13) No One Has ...

been occupied."

He also underscored that Azerbaijan, despite being very strong in terms of military might, seeks to find a peaceful solution to the conflict.

"Afghanistan has always supported the stance and position of Azerbaijan," said Taqi Khalili. "We are going to keep supporting Azerbaijan."

The conflict between the two South Caucasus countries began in 1988 when Armenia made territorial claims against Azerbaijan. As a result of the ensuing war, in 1992 Armenian armed forces occupied 20 percent of Azerbaijan, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven surrounding districts.

The two countries signed a ceasefire agreement in 1994. The co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, Russia, France and the US are currently holding peace negotiations. Armenia has not yet implemented the UN Security Council's four resolutions on the liberation of the Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding regions. (TNA)

(14) Pentagon ...

Ashton Carter said. "We can and will continue to develop and enable such local forces."

Yet the Pentagon report warns that the Taliban's insurgency must not be underestimated, as the Haqqani Network still poses a major threat to the United States and Afghanistan.

Separately, there have been reports in the media that Iran has started supporting the Taliban in order to defeat Daesh in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, Tehran has categorically and repeatedly denied the allegations.

In an exclusive interview with TOLONews this week, Muhammad Reza Bahrami, the Iranian Ambassador to Afghanistan, said an alliance between Iran and the Taliban would be bad for everyone involved. "Iran and the Taliban have no relations," Ambassador Bahrami said. "In Iran's security policy, relations with terrorist groups have not been defined; any relations with these groups would be a loss for Iran, the region and beyond."

Echoing that sentiment, U.S. Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Martin Dempsey, has said the only way to resolve the issues in Afghanistan and the broader region is through cooperation among governments. "Stability must be cultivated from inside out, and, importantly, owned by regional stakeholders," Gen. Dempsey said. "The potential transformation of the region will be achieved over time by and through our regional partners." (Tolonews)

(15) Ghani and ...

reflect and remember your dependence on God, I hope this season of Ramadan also provides an occasion for each of you to strengthen family and community ties and share God's gifts with those in need," he said.

Pia Sjernvall, Head of the EUOPOL Mission in Afghanistan, also extended her best wishes and said: "I would like to take this opportunity to extend my best wishes to the Afghan colleagues, partners, friends and all Muslims around the world for the

start of the holy month of Ramadan."

"The month of Ramadan is a time of prayers and reflection for Muslims. It is also a festive time - a time when families gather, friends host Ifars, meals are shared with the disadvantaged and poor people and at the same time goodwill and harmony are promoted within the society."

She went on to say she really hopes that with the blessings of this month, peace and stability are ensured and the people of Afghanistan can live in prosperity. "All staff members of EU-POL Afghanistan strive to contribute to this goal every single day by supporting the Afghan National Police and the justice sector."

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan also wished all Afghans well over Ramadan. The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan Nicholas Haysom said: "On behalf of the United Nations in Afghanistan I would like to present my best wishes for the Holy month of Ramadan, a time of reverence and peace." (Tolonews)

(16) Insecurity in ...

ture at risk.

"There is no school for us," a 10-year-old girl complained. "If there was any school, we would go there for learning."

Lack of hospitals, safe drinking water and employment were said to be other main issues facing displaced families.

"All of us have no job here. If there is any labor work, only 100 to 120 Afghans are being paid for that," Abdul Quddos said, complaining that he lost everything he had in Faryab. Director of Balkh Refugees Affairs, Abdul Saboor Qadiri, admitted to the issues facing the displaced families.

"These displaced families have no home and shelter. When their stay becomes lengthy, their problems also increase," Qadiri said, without commenting on whether they had any plan for the refugees. (Tolonews)

(17) Afghanistan to...

has mostly relied on imports. Our traders have had almost no direct access to international buyers. Afghan products are sold through intermediaries," Hassib Rahimi, the executive director of the government-run Kabul Chamber of Commerce told AFP. "Because of the political situation the business are stalled and the investors flee the country, but this online market will give direct access to our traders to sell their commodities to the world," he said.

The \$20 million funding for the project was provided by the UAE based Pride Group which will also build infrastructure such as warehouses and fridges for the retailers.

Through the marketplace the Afghans traders will be able to sell goods such as agricultural produce, handicrafts, precious stones and carpets. (AFP)

(18) IS Strength ...

Al Qaeda that aim to build an Islamic caliphate and play an important role in the destabilization of the political situation in the region.

The decision of the heads of CIS countries on the provision of urgent military-technical assistance to strengthen the protection of the Tajik-Afghan border is not implemented by many countries, according to the statement. Khairulloyev thanked the leadership of Armenia and Belarus for their assistance to Tajik border guards. (AKIpress)

(19) Balkh Govt...

with 300 people in different provinces of the country.

Nilofar Sayyar, head of the society, told this scribe the scourge of corruption existed in one manifestation or another in almost all government departments. Bribery, misappropriation of funds, misuse of office, land grab and collection of illegal levies are the common forms of corruption, according to Ms. Sayyar, who said the ordinary people were hard hit by the menace.

Khairandesh confirmed the findings of the society's survey, saying all departments were by corruption, in varying degrees though. "When asked, these organisations say everything is OK. But when you hear from the people, corruption can't be denied."

He noted the department that dealt more frequently with public complaints had a higher level of graft. Departments of Public Health, Education, Prosecutor-General Office and courts are some of the entities awash with administrative graft.

With regard to disregard for merit in the Balkh Education Department, the public representative referred to a recent test for the appointment of teachers. Some candidates with 45 out of 100 marks were declared successful, he claimed.

But others who secured more than 90

marks were shown as having failed, said Khairandesh, who blamed the civil society, provincial council and media outlets for demonstrating little activism against graft.

"Whenever the provincial council, civil and media release true reports highlighting this menace and other public problems, the level of corruption will come down," he believed, stressing the need for merit in appointments of public servants.

Every departmental head, who holds a post for more than a decade, is either corrupt or well-connected, he thinks.

On the other hand, provincial authorities also admit the curse but say they are trying their bit to combat corruption. Zabihullah Akhtari, an official at the governor's office, acknowledged the survey on corruption was accurate to some extent.

No one could deny corruption in Balkh, a part of Afghanistan, he remarked, saying the curse was ironically more rampant in organs offering public services.

The ongoing counter-corruption drive should become a nationwide efforts, he opined, stressing the participation of civil society and the public at large in the endeavour.

Nilofar Sayyar said the society had suggested in its report a number of ways to counter graft. If implemented by the government, the proposals would go a long way in reducing graft, she hoped.

Rule of law, adherence to merit in appointments to public offices, curbing nepotism, a review of salaries of government servants and a radical change in governance style were necessary to deal with the challenge, she concluded. (Pajhwok)

(20) About 1,500 ...

concentrating along the Tajik border in northern Afghanistan. "They are fighting against the Afghan government forces in the immediate vicinity of the border with Tajikistan," Rahmonali noted.

He expressed concern about a tense situation in the Afghan provinces of Takhar, Kunduz and Badakhshan, which directly border Tajikistan.

Rahmonali also noted that Tajik border service was closely cooperating with Afghan border police, exchanging information about the situation in border areas.

Meanwhile, addressing the meeting, Tajik presidential adviser on national security Sherali Khairulloyev called on border services of the CIS member nations to actively cooperate with Tajik border troops in strengthening the CIS southern border.

"One of our main tasks is to prevent the region from becoming the center of a geopolitical confrontation between the world powers," Khairulloyev said.

He stressed that redivision of spheres of influence in the hydrocarbon market was continuing, drug trafficking was extending and inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts were gaining ground.

He also noted that a decision of the CIS heads of state on helping Tajikistan strengthen its defense along the Afghan border has not been implemented. Khairulloyev appreciates Armenia and Belarus's support for development of Tajik border troops. (Asia-Plus)

(21) Children Pick ...

of the child soldiers told TOLONews. The exact location and identities of the youth militia members have not been disclosed for security reasons.

Predictably, human rights groups have responded by unequivocally denouncing the involvement of children in combat, and pointing out that such activities directly violates international conventions that the government of Afghanistan is a signatory of. "According to Human Rights Laws, which Afghanistan has also signed, these conventions are known as the Geneva Conventions, which prohibits this issue, where underage children cannot be used on armed front lines," Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) spokesman Rafi Bedar said. "Young children are still recruited among local police forces," he added, suggesting there may be some institutional backing for the youth militias behind the scenes.

Nevertheless, MoI officials have sought to distance themselves, asserting that there is no need for them to arm youth militias. "Overall, we are against the arming of individuals, because we have enough security forces in Afghanistan," deputy spokesman Najeb Danesh said on Thursday. "We have around 400,000 armed forces who can play an important role in maintaining security for Afghanistan's citizens." (Tolonews)

(22) MPs Urge...

31 passengers in Zabul," Ahmadi said on Wednesday. "They have

asked for the release of five women in exchange for the four kidnapped passengers in Ghazni and the remaining members of the 31 abductees."

Most of the 31 hostages taken earlier in the year were freed in May in an alleged prisoner swap deal arranged between the militants and the Afghan government. But Zabul MPs slammed the government's strategy on Wednesday, calling for an end to prisoner swaps.

"I want to ask the Afghan Taliban to find Afghan courage and zeal. It is shameful for them to witness foreign militants kidnapping women and men that are their brothers and sisters," Zabul MP Hamidullah Tokhi said. "In some cases they give refuge to the militants."

MP Fawzi Kofi, the head of the Women's Affairs Commission in the Lower House, called the abducting of women and children unjustifiable, barbaric and cruel. (Tolonews)

(23) Prices Stable...

Mir Saeed Khan, a resident and retailer from Kabul, concurred and said the prices of goods had not increased this year but that the slow economy was affecting them.

"People don't have the ability to buy foodstuffs, whether it is flour, ghee or other commodities," said Mohammad Reza, another resident of the capital city, Kabul.

Salih Mohammad who lives in Hawsinasi area in Kabul says he has started the first day of Ramadan with only a slice of bread and a little water. (Tolonews)

(24) Pakistan's Claim...

"Afghan authorities sought help for evacuation of the soldier and Pakistani forces stationed at a nearby post responded quickly and brought the wounded soldier to Pakistani side of the border," a military spokesman said.

The injured soldier was deployed at Afghan Army's 'Shaheen Post', which is some 1.5 km west of Bajaur's Nawapassa area. The soldier is now being treated at a military hospital in Khar, the headquarters of Bajaur tribal region. (Pajhwok)

(25) Spike in Abductions...

seemingly exactly what Alizai criticized the government for and largely downplayed the severity of the abduction. "Our investigations reveal that it is not a political or terrorist act, nor an act of abduction, but it is an incident that emerged out of rivalries amongst two tribes, and we hope that the issue will be resolved by Saturday," Herat Police Chief General Abdul Hamid Rojai said.

The three women were abducted on Wednesday night while returning home from a marriage ceremony. Their current location is unknown. (Tolonews)

(26) Ghazni University...

He said the students had been deprived of exam five years ago and they had no role in that. He asked why the issue was not raised five years ago. "Yesterday, we were busy teaching at the class when attorney office officials came and arrested us and cut short our hair in detention." The second university teacher, Habibullah Kashifi, said it was a plot orchestrated by Wolesi Jirga and provincial council members.

He said the student, who had been deprived of exam, was nephew of a Wolesi Jirga member Ali Akbar Qasimi. (Pajhwok)

(27) U.S. Works...

have a "very complex, very consequential relationship." "We've welcomed China's emergence on the world stage and participation in the global system," he added. (Xinhua)

(28) S. Korea ...

Korea-Vietnam free trade agreement (FTA), Joo said his government is actively preparing necessary procedures to submit for South Korean parliament to ratify the agreement.

The visiting South Korean official also hoped Vietnamese government to continue creating favorable conditions for South Korean banks to open branches in Vietnam, which aims to support South Korean enterprises to invest into Vietnam, reported Vietnamese government's e-Portal on Friday. (Xinhua)

(29) China, Russia...

promote continued achievement of new progress in cooperation in infrastructure, equipment manufacturing, the petrochemical industry, building materials, mining, automobiles and agriculture, the Chinese vice premier added. (Xinhua)