

**(1) Speaker Election...**

After two days of tussle among lawmakers, the lower house assigned a 27-member delegation, including 10 members of an earlier delegation, to resolve the dispute.

Some lawmakers and the delegation on Wednesday said their assessment showed one vote used on the election day for Rahmani was written with the number (2) on it in front of Rahmani's photo on the ballot paper but it actually meant (right) and the vote should be used in favor of Rahmani.

On the other hand, a number of members of the delegation and supporters of Osuli left the session as statements were made in favor of Rahmani.

Ghulam Hussain Naseri, a member of the delegation, said that their assessment showed all lawmakers who were present on Thursday had used their votes on the election day for the two candidates.

However, he said another review of the issue showed Rahmani had received a total of 124 votes including the one vote that was declared invalid while Osuli received 55 votes on the voting day.

He said 54 votes on the speaker election day were declared invalid, 13 blank and a totally of 246 votes were polled by 247 lawmakers present.

Naseri said a vote previously counted as invalid was later counted valid for Rahmani considering the vote signing method was used in the past. By this calculation, Rahmani won majority of votes from lawmakers, he said.

Abdul Qayum Sajjadi, a member of the delegation, concluded that the Wolesi Jirga would make a decision regarding the matter today, Thursday. (Pajhwok)

**(2) Fall in Afghani...**

Kabul residents said the ordinary Afghans are paying the price for the unprecedented rise in the value of dollar against Afghani.

"We call on government to control the market because the people are faced with many problems," said Ajmal, a Kabul resident.

"The government is not paying attention to this matter. The value of dollar is rising unprecedentedly," said Mohammad Sami Mohmand, a Kabul resident. According to Central Bank officials, Afghani's value is "more stable" this year compared with the last year. (Tolo news)

**(3) New World Bank...**

continue helping them in their efforts to create a better future."

The new premises, on a plot purchased from the Government of Afghanistan, were built through a close collaboration between the WBG and Afghan businesses and workers. Construction work started in November 2016 and was completed in January 2019. The new building provides an improved and safe working environment for the Bank's staff and its partners to better coordinate their efforts to implement critical development programs.

Speaking at the ceremony, Stoilkjovic said: "This is a strong signal that IFC remains committed to helping Afghanistan's private sector grow and tackle some of the country's most pressing development challenges. A competitive economy which will propel the country towards private sector led growth is critical for creating opportunities for Afghan people to escape poverty."

World Bank Vice President Schaffer thanked the World Bank staff in Afghanistan for their invaluable efforts and expressed the hope that the new office space would provide a conducive environment for the success of their work. (PR)

**(4) Ghoris Worried...**

Meanwhile, Women Affairs Director Halima Porstish said an oversight program showed girls' education in Ghor was poor.

She said some families were not allowing their girls to attend school because of no buildings and security threats.

She said, "Due to shortage of female teachers and lack of buildings, parents are not willing to send their girls to schools."

A less number of girls have been attending schools in only three districts of the province.

Meanwhile, Ahmad Sabir Noori, edu-

cation director, confirmed security threats against school girls in many places but said the number of girls attending schools had increased compared to the previous years in the province.

Currently, 192,000 students, including 85,000 girls, are attending schools in Ghor, he said. (Pajhwok)

**(5) Germany Departs...**

in which 15 people were hurt.

Two other Afghans and an Iranian were also convicted over the assaults. It wasn't immediately clear whether those men, too, were being deported. (AP)

**(6) Afghanistan...**

has made us more determined to fight firmly resolutely against this menace," the minister said.

Speaking on global climate change, Swaraj said, "India is committed to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement on Combating Climate Change. We welcome the agreement reached at Katowice Climate Change Conference (COP 24) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)."

The External Affairs Minister further said that India has adopted regional connectivity initiatives that are inclusive, sustainable, transparent, and respect the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity with other SCO member nations.

"India's commitment to regional connectivity is evident from our involvement in International North-South Transport Corridor, Chabahar Port, Ashgabat Agreement and India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway," Swaraj said, adding that India operationalised air freight corridors between Kabul and Kandahar and New Delhi and Mumbai in 2017

In the meeting, the minister stated New Delhi firmly believes in the efficacy of multilateralism and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter.

Earlier, on the sidelines of the meeting, Swaraj called on Kyrgyz President Jeenbekov and discussed bilateral cooperation between India and Kyrgyzstan and committed to explore the untapped potential.

The two-day meeting, beginning May 21, witnessed all sides exchanging views on issues of international and regional importance, along with reviewing the preparation for the forthcoming SCO Summit in Bishkek from June 13 to 14.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi is also slated to attend the impending SCO meeting. (ANI)

**(7) OSCE Head...**

has a long border with Afghanistan and has repeatedly offered to hold talks in Ashgabat under the auspices of the UN to restore peace in the neighboring state.

Ashgabat is in favor of providing more ambitious and targeted international economic assistance to Afghanistan, primarily through the involvement of Afghanistan in the implementation of large infrastructure projects in the energy and transport sectors.

They include the projects of laying power transmission lines and fiber-optic communications along the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP) route, and the construction of railway lines from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan.

A large-scale project to lay gas pipeline to India and Pakistan for the supply of Turkmen gas is also connected to the territory of Afghanistan, where unstable situation has remained for a long time.

Observers believe that the implementation of this project may contribute to the restoration of Afghanistan, as it will allow creating jobs and provide the country with guaranteed income from transit. (Trend)

**(8) Explosion...**

The ministry said two policemen and one child were killed and five civilians were wounded in the explosion.

Local health officials said that three people were killed and 15 others were wounded in the explosion. (Tolo news)

**(9) Al-Qaeda Elements...**

Afghanistan which has been longstanding will be part of that process," said Miller.

"We remain committed to working together with not only your leaders, the forces in the provinces, but also the people of Afghanistan," he said.

Miller said the Resolute Support forces are focusing on precision in their operations to protect civilians.

"As we look at the current fight, any time a civilian bears the brunt of the fighting, there is nothing good about that. From a Resolute Support perspective, we are very focused on precision in our operations and protecting civilians at all cost," said Miller.

This comes at a time that a new UN report reveals that more civilians were killed in the Afghan conflict last year than any time since records have been kept.

The report documented 3,804 civilian deaths, including 927 children, in 2018. In total, UNAMA documented 10,993 civilian casualties (3,804 deaths and 7,189 wounded), representing a five percent increase in overall civilian casualties and an 11 percent increase in civilian deaths compared with 2017.

In this report, UNAMA attributes the majority of civilian casualties - 63 percent - to anti-government elements (37 percent to Taliban, 20 percent to Daesh, and 6 percent to undetermined anti-government elements).

According to the report, pro-government forces caused 24 percent civilian deaths (14 percent by Afghan national security forces, six percent by international military forces, and four percent by other pro-government armed groups and forces). (Tolo news)

**(10) Women's presence...**

that women in Faryab were working only in women's affairs department, education department and higher education.

"Insecurity, collapse of districts to Taliban, misogyny, restrictions from families are obstacles to women's activities in government offices," she said.

She said women should bravely use their rights given to them by Islam and the country's laws.

Qahira Qarizada, human resources manager at Maimana municipality, also criticized the presence of a limited number of women in government offices in the province.

She said women's education level had improved compared to the past but their families did not allow them to work in offices due to lack of safety and harassments.

She said no women had the courage to work in an environment dominated by men due to the mentioned problems.

However, Qarizada said Maimana city municipality had significantly changed and 16 of total 60 workers of the office were women.

Besides security challenges, discrimination, restrictions, lack of facilities such as toilet, kindergarten, transport and others have caused women to show less interest to work in government offices, she said.

Meanwhile, Firoz Karimi, Faryab University Chancellor, said that 34 of total 158 lecturers in the university were women as well as 1,056 of total 4,171 students of the university were girls.

However, he said that the number of female students had reduced due to security threats, warnings from insurgents and women's low interest in agriculture, engineering and economic subjects.

Mohammad Shoib Noori, acting Faryab education director, told Pajhwok that there were more than 320,000 school students including 42 percent of them girls in Faryab.

He said that 3,217 of total 9,147 education workers and teachers were women in the province.

Karima Behiqi, director of labor and social affairs department of Faryab, said insecurity was the main problem of women in the province but the gender was able to work outside their homes after the fall of Taliban regime.

She said that women's presence in the education sector was higher compared to other sectors.

Baihaqi added women have been part of the Provincial Council, Parliament, government and non-governmental or-

ganizations, but there was the need to expand their role and presence.

"There is no hurdle in the way of women to work in government, only a negative mindset in the public has emerged with stories coming from other provinces regarding the harassment of women, no such incident has happened in Faryab," he said.

But Shahla, not a real name, said: "Back in 2010, I was working with an NGO and assisted my family with my salary but the news of secret marriage of another female employee with her colleague sent a negative message in our traditional society. I myself decided not to work before my family could stop me."

Hameedullah Azeemi, an employee of the local Human Rights Office, termed the presence of women at government institutions as satisfactory and added participation of women in social, cultural and political aspects of life had improved compared to the past and their level of awareness and knowledge had gone up.

He said women awareness and awakening helped decline incidents of violence against women and strengthened their resolve to stand against under age, forced marriages and advocate for their rights.

"Although women have been serving as teachers, lawyers, government employees and civil society activists, but there is still need to have effective and influential role in government institutions," he said.

Referring to the limited access of women to jobs in districts, he said insecurity not only prevented women but also men from seeking jobs in districts.

He said no complaint regarding women's harassment in government institutions had been reported to them.

Governor Naqibullah Faeq acknowledged that women's presence at government institutions in Faryab was 10 times low compared to Balkh and Kabul provinces.

He said apart from the governor's office no women employee worked at University, Education Department, Public Health Department and any other department at local government and district administration level.

Continued fighting, lack of good governance and meddling of powerful individuals in government affairs were reasons behind the lack of women at government institutions.

He said earlier no woman was allowed to take part in decision making meetings but after his taking over as governor the situation had completely changed and women employees were allowed to participate in meetings and gatherings.

Faeq said women contenders would be allotted 10 extra marks as part of positive rivalry during open competitive events in order to encourage more women and girls at government institutions.

"The president during his recent trip to Faryab ordered to provide more opportunity for women in order to encourage their presence. In the past three months 193 women have been employed through Acted Programme and over 100 more women would be employed under the USAID Promote Programme," he said, adding in the coming five months around 500 women would be employed in different sectors.

The governor assured local residents that an appropriate environment had been created for women in government institutions, the past illicit culture had been eradicated and as a testimony it was observed that 31 percent of participants of the recently concluded Peace Loya Jirga were women.

Hajj and Religious Affairs Director Maulvi Gul Ahmad Lutfi said Islam was not against the education and work of women, adding Islamic teachings offered complete rights and place to women.

He said Islam ordered men and women to get education and allowed women to work in society according to Islamic teachings. (Pajhwok)

**(11) UN Disarmament...**

Assembly by a majority of votes in July 2017, with all nuclear weapons states abstaining from the vote and only one NATO member, the Netherlands, taking part in the procedure but voting

against.

The treaty needs to be ratified by at least 50 member states to come into effect. So far, it has only been ratified by 23 out of the 70 signatories.

Dawn mentioned the strategic arms race between the US and China, modernization programs run by nuclear-armed states, the emergence of new technologies that can be used for both defensive and offensive purposes as well as of new state-of-the-art weaponry as the reasons for the erosion of the decades-old mechanism that used to curb arms proliferation.

Another factor is non-state actors such as militant groups and private militias that do not abide by the law. (RT)

**(12) 'Our Eyes in...**

Back then the Indian Army provided no images and videos of the cross-border air raid into Pakistani territory which according to New Delhi targeted a terrorist camp of the Jaish-e-Mohammed militant group. Some experts speculated that thick clouds prevented the existing Earth observation satellite technology, Cartosat from capturing the operation. (RT)

**(13) 'Fool of Low IQ...**

but will certainly make them pay for it," KCNA said.

The slew of insults directed at Biden seem to echo similar sentiments expressed by Trump, who previously dismissed the presidential contender as "another low IQ individual."

Despite the borderline admiration Trump has been professing to Kim (angering his opponents and handing ammunition to the likes of Biden), actual progress towards denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula has been stalling for months. The relationship remains mired by a largely unsuccessful second summit in Vietnam in February, during which the US rejected sanctions relief for North Korea. Efforts by Washington to push Pyongyang to give up its nuclear capabilities have also faltered, with North Korea reportedly starting new missile tests in the wake of the diplomatic breakdown. (RT)

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**(14) Turkey Preparing...**

in the F-35 project and expected the program to continue as planned. He said buying the S-400s was only meant to meet Turkey's defense needs and posed no threats.

"We are doing whatever normal bilateral agreements mandate. Though there are some issues from time to time, we are pleased that there has been no sharp turn until now... Turkey is also making preparations for the potential implementation of CAATSA sanctions," he said.

"In our talks with the United States, we see a general easing and rapprochement on issues including the east of the Euphrates, F-35s and Patriots."

Turkey's lira has been sliding in part on concerns over the U.S. sanctions, which would hit an economy already in recession after a currency crisis last year. Among its other disputes with Washington is strategy in Syria east of the Euphrates River, where the United States is allied with Kurdish forces that Turkey views as foes.

Akar said linking the S-400s purchase with that of the F-35s is "another hurdle" and noted that nine NATO partners have a stake.

"There is no clause anywhere in the F-35 agreement saying one will be excluded from the partnership for buying S-400s," he said. "Turkey has paid \$1.2 billion. We also produced the parts ordered from us on time. What more can we do as a partner?"

In trying to persuade Turkey to give up the Russian missiles, the United States has offered to sell its rival Raytheon Co. Patriot missile defense systems, which Akar said Ankara was evaluating. He said Turkish and U.S. officials were working on price, technology transfer and joint production issues on the latest U.S. offer in late March.

The minister also said conceptual work on the SAMP-T defense systems with the Franco-Italian EUROSAM consortium were expected to be completed in October. He said EUROSAM had offered to install a SAMP-T battery in Turkey and that scouting work would be carried out. (Reuters)