

(1) Govt. Asks Wolesi ...

nationality and tribe in new computerized identity cards after the president approved the law in September 2014.

On March 2, 2016 following protests, the president approved amendment to Article sixth of the law about distribution of electronic ID cards. Based on the presidential decree, nationality and tribes would also be mentioned in identity cards.

A statement from Presidential Palace said the lately amended population registration decree was in line with the Constitution and people's demand.

"It was expected the Wolesi Jirga would take decision in accordance with the Constitution by approving the much-awaited population registration law," the statement said.

"The government wants the National Assembly to give a second look to the rejected law and strive to approve it in the second review. (Pajhwok)

(2) Clear Stance on ...

British envoy to Kabul, Sir Nicholas Kay, recently told the BBC that the Durand Line was a recognized border between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Achakzai said: "Share our concern with the government and let us know if a deal is reached with Pakistan or not, the Durand Line is the property of Afghans and no country except Afghanistan can make a decision in this regard."

Jummadin Gayanwal, another senator also said that the Afghan government directed by the US had signed a deal with Pakistan to fence the Durand Line.

"Afghans sacrificed their lives during the past several decades for the Durand Line, they would not let anyone recognize this line as a border," Lotfullah Baba, another senator said.

A number of other members criticized fencing of the Durand Line by Pakistan and asked the government to address the problem through diplomatic channels.

Mohammad Alam Ezdyar, first deputy chairman, called the Durand Line an important issue and said: "The only problem Afghanistan has with Pakistan for the past 60 years is the Durand Line."

He asked the government to break its silence and clear its stance on the issue immediately. At the end, a majority of senators decided to summon National Security Advisor Mohammad Hanif Atmar, acting foreign minister, Salahuddin Rabbani, acting tribal and border affairs minister, Mohammad Shafiq Gul Agha Sherzai and Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) head Matin Baig to provide information about concerns regarding the Durand Line. (Pajhwok)

(3) UNAMA Issues ...

At the end of the 40-day-period of mourning after Ashura- Yamamoto commended the recent efforts of the Government of Afghanistan to protect places of worship and urged them to take all necessary measures to protect all Afghans, especially those vulnerable to sectarian attacks, to exercise their right to freedom of religion or belief and to worship in safety.

The report highlights a disturbing pattern of attacks by Anti-Government Elements directed at civilians in places of worship, particularly those directed against Shi'a Muslims. The report also documents the targeted killings by Anti-Government Elements of religious scholars and leaders whom they regard as pro-Government, as well as the targeted killing of security personnel amidst other worshippers inside mosques.

The report ends with a series of recommendations, including a call for Anti-Government Elements to immediately cease targeting worshippers and religious leaders. (PR)

(4) Iran Prepares ...

Session of the UNESCO General Conference which is underway in Paris.

Referring to 2.5 million Afghan refugees in Iran, he said the country has managed to mainstream over 900,000 Afghan children in Iran's educational system and to realize UNESCO goals.

Jalali called for reinforcing multilateralism to take advantage of UNESCO members' potential and humanitarian achievements.

During the biennial UNESCO Conference which is underway with the attendance of officials from over 195 countries, cultural, educational and knowledge fields are being discussed. (IRNA)

(5) IEC Chairman...

Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC) fired five of its members for a range of indiscretions including manipulating attendance records, ignoring a presidential decree, not doing their work and administration violations, IECC said in a letter sent to the media.

The officials named in the letter are the technical deputy of IECC head secretariat, head of analyses and evaluation department, head of documents and relations department, head of human resources department and IECC attendance manager.

Over the past few months, the IEC has come under massive pressure from Afghan political parties, civil society institutions and election monitoring groups over its poor performance.

On Sunday, Election and Transparency Watch of Afghanistan (ETWA) said its assessments show that the IEC is not capable of holding parliamentary elections next year

and necessary reforms that were pledged in the past have not been implemented.

Basic reforms have not been put in place in the independent election commission, said ETWA.

According to the watchdog, the lack of coordination between IEC commissioners and government's reluctance to hold elections are key factors that have overshadowed the implementation of reforms in Afghanistan's election system. (Tolonews)

(6) Quality of Developin...

determination of the NUG in developing road projects in different parts of the country and said that Ministry of Public Work would deal with the implementation of this project with great seriousness.

Addressing the contracting sides, the Second Vice President said that Afghans expected the projects to be completed with good quality work based on the time frame specified in the contract.

He added that Ministry of Public Works would deal with the fulfillment of contracting companies' obligation on the speed and quality of work in accordance with law.

Over all, five major road construction projects, which include Jawzjan, Sar-i-Pul, Ghazni, Takhar, Kabul, Logar and Daikundi provinces, were signed on Tuesday with the presence of Second Vice President and representatives of the provinces at a cost of more than 2 billion Afghanis by Engineer Yama Yari and representatives of winning companies.

(7) NATO to Agree...

"We have decided to increase the number of troops ... to help the Afghans break the stalemate," Stoltenberg told a news conference on Tuesday before a meeting of the alliance's defense ministers later this week.

Stoltenberg stressed the soldiers would not have combat roles but would be part of NATO's train, advise and assist mission called Resolute Support.

U.S. Army General John Nicholson, the commander of the Resolute Support mission and of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, called for more troops in February, saying that a few thousand more troops would make a difference in weakening the Taliban and other Islamist militants.

The NATO contribution would take Resolute Support, which is building up Afghanistan's army and air force, to around 16,000 troops, up from around 13,000 today, Stoltenberg said.

Under a new strategy announced by U.S. President Donald Trump, U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said in September that more than 3,000 additional U.S. troops will be deployed to Afghanistan.

While NATO officials declined to discuss troop numbers in detail, the expected announcement on Thursday by NATO defense ministers is likely to mean the U.S. troops will be split between the training mission and the U.S.-led counter-terrorism mission in Afghanistan. (Reuters)

(8) Maternity & ...

on fistula treatment and recovery), pediatric audiology, endoscopy and cancer clinics.

The specialized healthcare capabilities, in addition to a blood bank, would provide highly specific treatments that are currently unavailable in Afghanistan.

The women's cancer center will provide essential screening, diagnosis and treatment to address and reduce the rising levels of cervical cancer.

"The hospital, when completed, will be the most modern, advanced and capable medical facility in Afghanistan," said Dr. Ehsanollah Bayat, co-chairman of the Bayat Foundation.

"We look forward to the day that the hospital opens and we can begin providing healthcare to the people who need it most."

Fatema Bayat, co-founder of the Bayat Foundation, said: "Our Foundation has built or refurbished 12 hospitals which have treated over two million patients. But despite the progress made by our Foundation and other organizations, we still face great challenges in providing healthcare in Afghanistan, especially to women."

She added: "The Maternity and Surgical Hospital is a strong and much-needed step in our efforts to provide women - and all Afghans - with the best healthcare possible." (Pajhwok)

(9) US, Afghan Govt. ...

schools in Afghanistan.

This new effort is a follow-on to the Textbook Printing and Distribution Project from 2011-2016, when USAID partnered with the Afghan government and other donors to procure and distribute appropriate MoE-approved textbooks in Pashto, Dari, and English for the primary and lower secondary levels.

"This is indeed an extremely important partnership between the United States and the Government of Afghanistan," said Ambassador Llorens. "Our teams will be working hand-in-hand to ensure that this ambitious effort will be a success for the benefit of all Afghan children," he added.

USAID's Textbook Printing and Distribution Projects support the MoE in expanding access to and improving the quality of basic education for Afghanistan's school-aged children.

"Any contribution at any time is a big contribution for human dignity and human pros-

perity. The printing and distribution of the textbooks is a major contribution and support for Afghanistan," said Chief Executive Dr. Abdullah.

Since 2002, USAID has supported the Afghan government in delivering quality education throughout Afghanistan by training teachers, producing and distributing millions of textbooks, helping Afghan girls attend community-based education classes, and expanding higher education opportunities.

With almost \$17 billion spent on development programs in Afghanistan since 2002, USAID provides the largest bilateral civilian assistance program to Afghanistan. USAID partners with the government and people of Afghanistan to ensure economic growth led by the country's private sector, to establish a democratic and capable state governed by the rule of law, and to provide basic health and education services for all Afghans. (PR)

(10) Survey Finds ...

Kandahar, Zabul, Helmand, Nangarhar, Kunduz, Baghlan, Ghazni, Maidan Wardak, Logar and Nangarhar provinces according to the survey.

Poor performance of the MoE was another reason behind closure of schools in Paktika, Kunar, Nangarhar, Logar, Balkh, Kunduz, Maidan Wardak, Ghazni, Zabul, Uruzgan, Helmand and Kandahar provinces.

"Of 16,000 and several hundreds more schools in the country, 1,300 of them are closed, while this number stood at 380 in 2014," the source said.

According to the survey, 87 percent or 392 interviewees believed the education sector was damaged under the national unity government. Corruption and tribal favoritism also reached the peak in the education ministry. About schools, the survey shows all schools particularly girls schools were in worst condition compared to their condition three years ago.

Nearly 2,000 schoolgirls have been poisoned in different incidents over the last three years, according to the survey statistics.

Lack of textbooks and learning materials in schools is another major challenge in the country's education system, it says, adding only 35 percent of schools received necessary materials on time this year. (Pajhwok)

(11) 19 Schools Closed, ...

the closure of schools and asked the government and insurgents not to deprive the country's children of their right to education.

According to local officials, insurgents damaged two school buildings in Herat in the past few days, but the Taliban denied involvement. (Pajhwok)

(12) President Trump ...

"This request supports additional effort to detect, defeat and defend against any North Korean use of ballistic missiles against the United States, its deployed forces, allies, or partners," he said in a letter to House Speaker Paul Ryan on Monday.

About \$700,000 of the requested funds will be spent on repairing the USS John S. McCain and USS Fitzgerald. Both naval vessels collided with merchant ships earlier in 2017. (Pajhwok)

(13) Border Crossing ...

which Pakistan has closed periodically.

"We received the body of late Nayyar Iqbal Rana in Torkham," a government official in Torkham who asked not to be identified told Reuters.

"The Pakistan-Afghanistan border was closed for all types of traffic."

Afghanistan's ambassador to Pakistan, Omar Zakhilwal, condemned the killing in a message on Twitter and said he had conveyed his government's sympathies to the ministry of foreign affairs in Islamabad.

The killing comes around a week after the deputy governor of Kunar province in eastern Afghanistan was kidnapped near the Pakistani city of Peshawar, although there was no immediate indication of any connection between the two. (Reuters)

(14) 5 Killed in TV ...

a building inside the facility and exchanged fire with Crisis Response Unit (CRU) forces, Special Operation, who arrived shortly after the attack.

The CRU also rescued scores of journalists and media workers during a three-hour gunfight.

Among those injured were several media workers and four personnel of fire department of Kabul police.

Further details about the incident are still forthcoming amid the absence of any official statement.

Islamic State (IS) terrorist group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Media outlets and journalists frequently come under attack in the militancy-hit country as 10 Afghan journalists and media workers have been killed in the first half of the year, according to AJSC. (Xinhua)

(15) Terrorists Cannot ...

government will take serious steps to protect the media foundations and journalists in the country, who are providing information under very hard circumstances", President Ghani added.

He also extended his condolences to the families of the martyrs of today's attack and prayed for fast recovery of those wounded. (Pajhwok)

(16) Attack on Shamshad

and have not been hurt in the attack.

In the meantime, the security officials in Kabul are saying that the attack on the TV compound has ended with the elimination of the remaining terrorists.

The exact number of those killed or wounded in the attack has still not been ascertained and it is yet not clear how many insurgents were involved in the attack.

In the meantime, the TV workers who were rescued from the compound are saying that a suicide bomber initially detonated his explosives to open the way for the remaining insurgents.

They are saying that preliminary reports indicate at least two people were killed and around twenty others were wounded in the attack.

The Taliban group in Afghanistan rejected the group was involved behind the attack.

The TV channel also resumed its operations hours after the incident and confirmed that the attack is over. (KP)

(17) Afghanistan's Saffron...

this year against last year's \$9 million.

Based on reports, last year a kilogram of saffron was sold against 100,000 Afghanis.

Durrani asked the participants to share their suggestions on how to increase cultivation, production and improve quality and standardize processing of saffron.

Khan Jan Alokkozay, first deputy chairman of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI), told the conference that no investment made to develop infrastructure for agriculture during the past 16 years in Afghanistan.

According to him, saffron could play a vital role in the country's economic development if the product's quality was improved and packaging standardized.

He said the private sector was ready to provide needed support in terms of saffron processing.

Some participating companies also showcased their products of saffron at the conference.

Sayed Abdul Wahab, head of saffron producing and exporting 'Faizy Company' in western Herat province, said Afghanistan's saffron production was increasing day by day.

He said Faizy Company exported 100kgs of saffron last year and expected the export to reach half a ton this year.

Saffron produced in Afghanistan secured first position at international exhibitions held in the past three years. (Pajhwok)

(18) Pakistan...

Pakistani diplomats and missions in Afghanistan.

The Afghan diplomat expressed condolences on behalf of his government, assured security for Pakistani diplomats and promised bringing the killers to justice.

Meanwhile, the president and the prime minister also condemned the killing and conveyed their condolences and sympathies to the bereaved family, a statement from the Foreign office said.

Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif urged the Afghan government to take urgent steps to apprehend the killers and ensure the safety of Pakistan's diplomatic personnel and missions. (Pajhwok)

(19) 2 Balkh Public...

However, Balkh police spokesman Shir Jan Durrani said no one by the name Haji Qayum had registered any complaint with police regarding land usurpation.

This comes two days after Balkh police chief Brig. Gen. Syed Kamal Sadat admitted his failure and inability to prevent corruption in security organs. (Pajhwok)

(20) Hundreds of ...

The official said only 50 percent of the migrants were able to reach their destinations while the rest were arrested and deported.

Sher Ahmad, a migrant trafficker, said each person paid him \$1,200 for transportation to Turkey.

With years of experience in trafficking migrants, he confirmed: "Those embarking on an illegal journey face huge problems, because they need food and water during their trip. They may be arrested by Pakistani and Iranian border forces."

He said that Afghan migrants first arrived in the Char Burjak district of Nimroz before moving to Mashkin area of Pakistan and then to the Sarawan city of Iran. Those who want to travel to Turkey go Iran's border city of Urmia.

Iran recently issued Afghan migrants with families six-month residency cards but it is unclear whether the document would be extended. That is the reason why the number of Afghan refugees has increased in Iran. (Pajhwok)

(21) 15 Taliban Killed in...

including a woman, and three others wounded when a helicopter attacked a wedding ceremony in Rawza Qala area on Monday.

The Taliban confirmed the clashes. Zabihullah Mujahid, Taliban's spokesman, said nine ANA soldiers had been killed and as many wounded during the clashes in Deh Yak district. Only one rebel was killed.

Mujahid also confirmed the helicopter bombardment on a wedding ceremony and said two children were killed and four others wounded, including two women, were

wounded. (Pajhwok)

(22) Negligence Seen ...

Another public representative Abdul Bari also expressed his concern about the rise in security forces casualties and said many areas had been recently captured by Taliban in Ghazni.

He said in Andar alone the rebels overran about 72 areas.

The Ghazni city, residents expressed similar views.

Brig Gen. Asadullah Sherzad, 303 Spin Zar zone police commander, admitted officials' negligence was a factor behind the increased casualties of security forces, however, he did not provide any exact figure.

"If the police casualties' have increased by two percent, the Taliban's gain increased by 10 percent," Sherzad said.

He added they had been devising a proper plan to reduce the casualties. Taliban many times tried to overrun Ghazni province, but failed and their attacks repulsed, the commander said.

According security officials, 90 police personnel lost their lives killed, and 60 others were wounded last month in Andar, Zakhnan, Deh Yak, Qara Bagh and Khogyani districts. (Pajhwok)

(23) Frequent Power ...

cables from time to time.

Residents of Nangarhar and Laghman, civil society activists and provincial council members fault the project route. They believe the Kabul-Jalalabad highway, relatively secure, would have been a better alternative.

However, Da Afghanistan Breshna Shirkat (DABS) officials say the cost of power transmission lines was paid by the World Bank (WB) and given the funding level, the current route was cost-effective.

According to reports, work on extending power lines over more than 96 kilometres - from Naghlu Dam to Nangarhar - was launched in 2010 at a cost of \$23 million. The project was put into service in 2012.

At least 369 power pylons have been installed between Naghlu an Nangarhar, with six megawatts electricity consumed in Laghman and the remaining 36 megawatts in Nangarhar.

About 30,000 families benefit from electricity in Nangarhar and 15,000 in Laghman. The electricity transmitted through cables also benefits dozens of industrial units in the provinces.

Criticism of route selection

Residents of Nangarhar and Laghman, civil society activists and provincial council members are critical of the current route, calling it a 'wrong path'. The cables are cut occasionally, they say.

They argue if the lines had been extended along the Kabul-Jalalabad Highway, then on one hand they would have been safe and on the other hand electricity workers could timely repair them in case of technical problems.

The Nangarhar provincial council member, Israrullah Murad, said choosing a wrong route for power transmission, not keeping promises, negligence on the part of local officials were reasons behind the persistent targeting of the lines.

A civil society activist, Dr. Asadullah Khaliz, told Pajhwok Afghan News that double standards were employed in transmission of power; because instead of transferring the utility via secured highway, the lines were deliberately carried through insecure areas. Meanwhile, another civil society activist and analyst, Eng. Abasin Baheer, said from an engineering point of view shortest route should be chosen for roads and extension of power cables in order it caused little cost.

A representative from Laghman at the Youth Parliament, Hanifullah Pashai, said the wrong choice of transmitting the lines had caused issues to people rather than provided people with facilities.

Who cuts the power cables and why?

Though Nangarhar and Laghman residents say the cables are cut by insurgents and locals to mount pressure on the government, yet DABS officials deny any deal involving money.

The locals say the issue emerged when promises to them regarding the provision of electricity were not honored. A tribal elder from Badpakh district, Malak Mahboob Shah, said the power cables were cut most of the time in the Ozbin area of Sarobi.

The reason was the government's failure to keep its promises, he said, adding there had been no deals in this regard. They only demanded electricity, nothing else, he explained. Malak Niamatullah, a resident of Karoch village of the district, told Pajhwok the Taliban militants and local people cut the power cables. He hoped the problem would be resolved if the area was supplied electricity. Malak Ziarat Gul, an inhabitant of the Shadgolian village of Badpakh, recalled residents of Badpakh and Sarobi had been assured of power supply when the lines were extended. However, he complained, the officials had broken their promises and hence the cutting of cables.

Tribal elders from Sarobi held a similar view. They said the power cables were cut only to pressure the government into supplying electricity to the areas. Abdul Mobin Tulakzai, a tribal elder from Ozbin area, said locals and gunmen had the same demand for electricity supply. If the demand is met, the problem will be solved for sure. (Pajhwok)