

### (1) Elections to ...

Concern at divisions

"The enemies of the country have been trying to widen the gap between the government and the people and create divisions among different ethnic groups," the VP alleged.

Danish accused Afghanistan's foes of seeking to pit government organs against one another. He said the government and parliament should work together to prevent divisions in the nation.

Elections

Danish said the Wolesi Jirga election is set for the next year and presidential election for the year after. He stressed over the organisation of timely election which he termed top priorities of the government. Danish claimed many steps had been taken during the past one year to ensure the conduct of upcoming polls.

He added: "Criticism and suggestions from eminent personalities, political parties, civil society and public representatives have been noted by the government. Election belongs to the people, not to the government or parliament."

"As it has already announced, the government is committed to conducting elections on time with the support of parliament, political parties and civil society. We hope the election will be free and fair..."

The Independent Election Commission (IEC) has announced July 18, 2018 as the date for the Wolesi Jirga and district council election.

Government performance

The VP admitted the government went through a difficult situation last year but was able to deal with challenges. Despite difficulties, tremendous gains had been achieved, he said.

He added Afghanistan had a positive image at the international level and many pledges of support held out to the country by the global community were being implemented.

Danish hailed the new US strategy as a giant stride, as far as support from the international community for Afghanistan was concerned. The new policy represented hope for the people of Afghanistan.

The vice-president claimed major steps had been taken to eradicate the scourge of corruption and some institution like the judiciary, civil services and others were being reformed. (Pajhwok)

### (2) A Dozen Cabinet...

affairs and martyrs.

Nargis Nehan has been nominated as mines and petroleum minister, with Mohammad Shafique Gul Agha Sherzai being named as borders and tribal affairs minister.

Other cabinet nominees are Hamid Tehmasi, minister-designate for transport, Najibullah Khwaja Omari, higher education minister, and Shehzad Gul Aryubi, telecommunication and information technology minister.

A day earlier, Wolesi Jirga Secretary Irfanullah Irfan told Pajhwok Afghan News that documents of the ministers-designate had been received.

Currently 14 ministries are headed by acting ministers. Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani and the higher education minister despite being disqualified by the parliament continue to be on job.

The minister of information and culture, Abdul Bari Jehani, has resigned. Last week, the president sacked acting education minister Asadullah Balkhi, replacing him with Ibrahim Shinwari.

Danish asked Wolesi Jirga members to hand confidence votes to the cabinet picks, whom he hailed as trustworthy, clean and prominent individuals.

The VP told the lower house that the government remained committed to holding parliamentary and district council elections on schedule. The elections will be conducted next year. (Pajhwok)

### (3) Education System...

The meeting was also attended by the Asia Foundation representatives, who have been working to reform the MoE composition.

Haqmal quoted Minister Shinwari as saying the ministry's current structure and distribution of responsibilities could not meet present day education needs.

He insisted on reforms from the minister to teachers and devolution of responsibilities in order all affairs were not performed from a single table.

He said every education official should realize their responsibility and no problem should be allowed to expand and create further problems.

Other members of the leadership delegation also insisted on reforms first and said

identification and distribution of responsibilities and a check and balance system could help address existing problems. (Pajhwok)

### (4) MRRD Executes ...

said 1,502 other projects were currently under implementation in the country and some would complete until the end of the current year.

He said the MRRD had so far spent 78 percent of \$272 million budget for this fiscal year, which will end 26 days later.

Talking about Citizen Charter program, Rustami said: "It is a national program, it is the charter of generations, the national unity government has the plan to improve people's livelihood and services with this program."

Despite problems and challenges, the MRRD is working on improving livelihood of rural residents, something reflected in the Asia Foundation survey, he said.

He added the Citizen Charter program would cover 2,000 villages in the next three years as initial work of the program had been currently completed in 1,200 villages.

"Under this program \$171 million will be spent next year on implementing development projects and improving people's livelihood," Rustami said.

The MRRD also constructed buildings for 500 schools during the past three years in order to facilitate students' education.

In the same period, the ministry asphalted 56,000 kilometers of roads, covering 60 percent of villagers. (Pajhwok)

### (5) Afghanistan ...

Afghanistan \$233 million each year over the next five years, and the bank's goal is to provide better life opportunities for the people.

According to the officials, the bank also supports the private sector in Afghanistan in order to help boost economic growth.

One senior official said: "We continue to work on infrastructure, energy, agriculture and natural resources and also on transport sector and the thing we want help the government and the people of Afghanistan to achieve is to provide men and women in Afghanistan with better opportunities."

Meanwhile, a number of economic analysts say the government needs to put in place effective economic solutions to attract more funds and implement large-scale development projects.

"One of our issue is management - financial, human, physical and information resources. Managerial tasks must include planning, staffing and organizing to lead and control so we can reach our goals," said Sayed Masoud, a lecturer at faculty of economics Kabul university.

The Asian Development Bank is one of the major contributors to Afghanistan, and it is expected that the bank will launch major development programs next year. (Tolonews)

### (6) EU Calls for...

"The new figures about violence against women in Afghanistan are highly disappointing. Elimination of violence against women has been a major task of the Afghan government and international community and it is crucial to see rapid improvements in this area.

"The National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security needs to be implemented and there must be full participation of women in all aspects of social and political life, including the peace process and elections" said the EU Delegation head, Ambassador Pierre Mayaudon.

Elimination of violence and discrimination against women and girls remained a pivotal objective of the EU's human rights policy. The EU reaffirmed its strong commitment to eliminating violence against all women and girls. (Pajhwok)

### (7) UN Underlines ...

"Violence against women in Afghanistan must immediately stop," said Tadamichi Yamamoto, the UN secretary-general's special representative and head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

"For Afghan women to achieve their full potential and their immense capacity in development, in peace and in security, the violations of the rights of women and girls, particularly through violence, must cease." One in every three women around the world has experienced physical or sexual violence, according to a statement from UNAMA, which called gender-based violence a global issue, affecting millions each year.

Particularly affected were the most vulnerable, including Afghan women and girls, the statement added. Violence, including

harassment and harmful practices, is major barrier to women and girls enjoying their fundamental human rights.

Rebecca Tavares, country representative ad interim for the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, said: "Violence against women and girls is not inevitable. There are many ways to prevent violence in the first place..."

Alongside effective legal and institutional mechanisms for access to justice, stopping violence against women need an effort from all to speak out against violence in homes, workplaces and social settings, UNAMA stressed.

This year's 16 Days theme -- Leave No One Behind -- reflects the importance of the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, which commits to eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls.

Supported by the UN, the Ministry of Women's Affairs is initiating advocacy and awareness-raising activities to address issues of violence against women and girls in Afghanistan. The campaign runs until 10 December, International Human Rights Day.

Recalling the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan, the United Nations recommitted itself to support efforts by Afghan institutions and civil society to empower women and girls, and to promote the protection of their right to be free from fear, intimidation and all forms of violence. (Pajhwok)

### (8) Refugees' Modeling ...

perform short acts on the traditions in Afghanistan.

"We have created this group to show Afghanistan's original culture to the people here (in Sweden). People should know our country. They should know that Afghans want peace and Afghanistan is a country of colors and beauties," Elham Kandahari, a model, said.

"Today we performed the Atan dance. This is part of our efforts to portray the traditions of Afghanistan to the people out here (in Europe)," Shazia, a female member of the modeling group, said.

The modeling group also helps those Afghan refugees who have problems in their migration documents in Sweden and other parts of Europe.

"By establishing the modeling group, we want to show the culture and traditions of Afghanistan to the foreigners," founder of the group Liyun Khurasani said.

These models also support the newcomers to settle in Europe. The fate of some of the models who recently went to Europe is not clear that so far. (Tolonews)

### (9) Barmak Rules...

officials to send him a list of names of at least 500 anti-riot officers who were of Hazara, Pashtun, Uzbek and other ethnicities - except Tajiks.

Meanwhile, he briefed reporters on his future to improve the Afghan police.

"From now on, Interior Ministry officials will be appointed through a transparent process and based on merit. No more relations and influence," he said. "Within a month, Ministry of Interior will establish a system which will ensure direct communication between people and the ministry's leadership."

This comes after President Ashraf Ghani on Friday assigned the Attorney General's Office to probe a "the leaked discriminatory document" of the Ministry of Interior.

Presidential Palace said in a statement on Friday that the Attorney General's Office was assigned by President Ghani to investigate the document and act against the perpetrators.

President Ghani has meanwhile assigned Ministry of Interior to reveal all the facts and the steps taken against the issue in a press conference, the statement said.

According to the statement, the interior ministry has been assigned to cooperate with the Attorney General's Office in this respect. (Tolonews)

### (10) Balkh Records ...

complaints regarding denial of alimony to women this year compared to the previous years. He cited poverty, unemployment and insecurity as main reasons behind the phenomenon.

On the other hand, Women's Affairs Director for Balkh, Shahla Hadid, praised enhanced women's awareness level about their rights.

She said despite facing many difficulties, women in rural areas like urban areas women knew their rights.

However, civil society activists said holding events to support women had just a symbolic significant.

A civil society activist, Nargis, said efforts

made for elimination of violence against women during the past one decade had produced no considerable results. She claimed efforts at ensuring women's access to their rights remained limited to cities and women in rural areas were deprived of this. (Pajhwok)

### (11) Women Reporters,...

want to tell their story through the media." She went on to say that the media outlet also works to help get the women to safety, including, if necessary, to the local women's shelter.

"I would also say that when it comes to sexual harassment, female journalists know a lot about this problem," adds Ms. Rasoly, who heads up the regional bureau of the Afghan Journalists Safety Committee. "In Afghanistan, if a woman or girl tells her story, she can be saddled with a stigma for life."

Though women in developed countries are also subject to ostracism and further abuse for speaking out, in Afghanistan that can also be accompanied by societal perceptions that the violations of a woman or girl have tainted her for life. She, in turn, can be abandoned by her own family.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has taken a special interest in providing support for media organizations keen to help Afghan women, men and marginalized groups tell their stories. The UN has sponsored forums and athletic events to promote conversation and awareness of gender-based violence and harassment, and has worked with local media outlets to extend the messages coming out of these events to surrounding communities. The UN also has conducted traditional and social media campaigns to promote women's rights, including through the participation of religious leaders, academics, elders and other public figures.

The best way to confront gender-based violence is to empower women, girls, and all others to speak up, according to Sayed Barez, a UNAMA public information officer. "When survivors are allowed to speak out - with the help of the media - it holds perpetrators accountable, turns lives around, and sensitizes society to all forms of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment."

In the end, he says, although obstacles remain, "the UN hopes to help in Afghanistan's transformation by focusing efforts around enforcing laws that defend women and by insisting on the view that all and any violence against women and girls is wrong."

In Mazar, where efforts have been made to provide space and shelter for female survivors of violence and abuse, women who have sought protection have also been able to speak out through the media. "Though it can be dangerous even for the shelters, depriving women of contact to the outside world and the media is illegal," says Sayed Abdul Safwat, director of Independent Cooperation for Change, an Afghan group instrumental in setting up women's shelters across Afghanistan.

"Anything less than access to the media makes a shelter more akin to a prison," he says. "Women should not be required to talk to the media, but they certainly should have the right to do so."

In social media across Afghanistan, one trending hashtag is #wheresmyname, which highlights the effort of women to be heard and recognized by males. "Women are often ignored in Afghan society, and their interests fall on deaf ears, so this hashtag is a kind of a cry for recognition," said Anosha Ansari, also a reporter at Ariana TV in Mazar.

"Even when women are losing hope, they still want to be heard," she added, pointing out that women and girls can often go unnamed even on their gravestones, which merely read, "Wife of someone" or "Daughter of another."

Social media is a way not only for abused women and girls to learn more about their rights in regards to gender-based violence, but also to highlight the plight of survivors, particularly in distant locales across Afghanistan. Yet Afghan women are usually reluctant to identify themselves with a real photo on Facebook, Twitter or elsewhere.

"Of course, there is also self-censorship on social media," said Ms. Ansari. "Women and girls usually want to avoid confrontation, so they often choose to keep stories of violence and abuse to themselves, but not always."

Afghanistan's media culture remains one of the most open and vibrant in the region, but breaking down conservative customs and taboos about discussing gender-based

violence is a constant challenge. "There are still a lot of male leaders in society who say that this is not a subject that needs discussion," said Ms. Rasoly. "That is a mindset that we are dealing with and trying to change."

The theme for the 2017 global campaign to confront violence against women is "Leave No One Behind." Civil society activists across the world, including those in Afghanistan, are calling for all governments to use laws and policies as tools to confront and punish the perpetrators of violence against women, and better protect everyone. Led by "UN Women," an activist global entity, which also works on the ground in Afghanistan, the UN focuses attention on vulnerable groups.

Relentless fighting in the hinterlands of Afghanistan prevents reporters, including the team of women at Ariana TV, from covering the issue from the countryside where vulnerable groups are at their greatest risk. "When we hear stories about rape or torture in the villages and try to report them in the villages, we are often stopped by elders or militants from gaining access to the story," says Wahida Faizi, an Ariana TV reporter. "I would also add that women are sometimes more muted when they know they can be killed just for speaking out about violence and abuse in the countryside." (Pajhwok)

### (12) Mining in ...

survey of the mines in Nangarhar was conducted years ago but no details of the survey were made available.

Currently only the slate mine - located in Sherzad district - is legally extracted by 16 contractors, Shinwari said.

He said 20 slate processing factories had been opened in Nangarhar, employing hundreds of people.

Shinwari had no information about mines in other districts whether they were illegally extracted or not. He said they could not supervise mines in insecure areas. (Pajhwok)

### (13) Bounded Child ..

labour. But in return, the boy is given wheat worth three-month salary of a daily wage.

Legal angle  
Under Article 3 of the Afghan Law to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, hiring an individual to do unfair work or exploiting his plight... amounts human trafficking.

Another clause of the same article explains that controlling or exploiting a child to do undue things is also human trafficking.

Article 10 of the same law says if the human trafficker of a woman or child will be sentenced to eight years in prison.

Based on the above article of the law, Jamal is a victim of human trafficking. He is a resident of Haroon khel village of Pul-i-Alam. He has five brothers and two sisters. His father is dead.

Working alongside mother

During an exclusive interview with Pajhwok Afghan News, Jamal (not his real name), said he was a breadwinner for his brothers and sisters. So, he has to work to feed them.

Grazing his employer's cows, Jamal shared his story with Pajhwok. He said: "I'm responsible for working inside and outside the house. I am not allowed to go on leave unless there is an emergency."

Jamal said he was small and no one wanted to accept him as a daily-wager. As a result, he has to work at the house of this wealthy man. (Pajhwok)

### (14) Firewood, Gold ...

liquefied gas and fuel remain unchanged. Abdul Hadi, a worker at Wazir Abad Fuel Station in Kabul, said that one liter of diesel cost 48aafs and the same amount of petrol 46aafs, the same rates of last week's.

Sharif Ahmad, a gas dealer in Kolola Posh-ta area, said the rate of gas remained steady at 60aafs a kilogram.

The price of gold increased. Haji Fawad Ahmad Salehzada, a jeweler in Timor Shahi area, said the price of one gram of Arabian gold increased from 2,300aafs to 2,350aafs and the same quantity of Russian variety from 1,850aafs to 1,900aafs. (Pajhwok)

### (15) Father Kills ...

condition, but later she succumbed to her injuries. He confirmed the girl was killed by her father using a short-gun.

Meanwhile, a clash occurred between government forces and rebels in Tirinkot city on Friday night. Police chief Sidiqi said at least eight Taliban insurgents were killed and another seven wounded in the firefight and the security personnel escaped unhurt. There has been so far no word from insurgents in this regard. (Pajhwok)