

(1) Fair Elections to ...

Afghanistan would be hosting the representatives of poll panels and watchdogs for three days. The IEC would try to learn from their experiences.

The CEO hoped meetings among the election watchdogs would help improve social connectivity and partnership. He said the meeting was important for Afghanistan because many elections, including presidential, were going to be held in the next two years. (Pajhwok)

(2) Kabul-Delhi ...

Nations General Assembly in New York this week, opposed India's political and military role in Afghanistan. But the Presidential Palace rejected the statement as interference in the country's internal affairs.

For his part, Shiada Abdali said: "The stances of any other country on Afghanistan -- an independent and sovereign state -- is not above our national interests." He added India's relations with Afghanistan were based on a strategic agreement. "Afghanistan is independent in forging relations with other nations and chooses its friends on its own."

In response to a question about Pakistan's concern that India would pose a threat to it from Afghanistan, he replied: "Kabul would never allow anyone to use its soil against others. We are an independent country and we hope Pakistan would see Afghanistan as such."

He said India had extended three billion US dollars in aid to Afghanistan for on long-term reconstruction and high-impact development projects.

Abdali said India had promised training and equipping Afghan security forces. "India can play a good role in developing Afghan security forces to NATO standards and repair damaged our helicopters," he believed. (Pajhwok)

(3) Joint Efforts ...

"Afghanistan and Pakistan are facing common threats which should be tackled with joint efforts," the Afghan diplomat said.

The envoy further said his government gave much importance to relations with Pakistan compared to other regional countries.

Notable speakers included Rahmat Shah Sayal, Abaseen Yousafzai, Abdul Majeed Chandio, Fatima Atif, and chairman of the forum Alamzeb Khan.

To a question about alleged increasing Indian's influence in Afghanistan, the diplomat said "every country has its policy to strengthen relationships with neighboring countries and his country has the utmost desire to enhance mutual ties with all regional countries including Pakistan."

However, he stressed, it was necessary to sort out all outstanding issues by jointly addressing common problems faced by both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

He also said the Pakhtuns on both sides of the border had suffered a lot during the prolonged war against terrorism in the region.

The health and educational infrastructure had been shattered badly during the war that led to a large number of Afghans being displaced from their country, he added.

Earlier, while speaking at the seminar, Waheed Poyan said both Afghanistan and Pakistan were bound with each other due to their common language, traditions, culture, and religion.

"We as a nation have proved that we are capable to resolve all issues on our own through traditional 'jirga' system. Women are given great respect in Pakhtun culture," the Afghan envoy said.

"Both the countries are in flames. Let's come together to fight the menace of terrorism and to bring everlasting stability for peaceful 'co-existence' in the region," the diplomat said.

He also said Pakhtuns were much resilient and had remained steadfast against terrorism and rendered unforgettable sacrifices for establishment of durable peace in the region. He stressed the need for increased people-to-people contact and exchange of delegations to boost cultural, business and trade relations between the two neighbors.

Other speakers at the event emphasized that both Pakistan and Afghanistan should promote mutual cultural relations and settle all issues in a peaceful manner. (Pajhwok)

(4) Afghanistan Likely...

situation in Afghanistan.

His visit to India and likely discussions on the situation in Afghanistan takes place amid concerns by Pakistan regarding the growing role of India in Afghanistan.

The Pakistani Prime Minister said last week that Islamabad wants zero political and military role for India in Afghanistan.

This will be the first visit by a top US official to India following the announcement of the new US strategy for Afghanistan and South Asia.

President Donald Trump last month announced the new strategy and called for contribution of India in the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

However, he strongly criticized Pakistan regarding the presence of the terror sanctuaries in the country. (KP)

(5) AAF UH-60 ..

the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission has said.

"The world is taking notice of Afghan Air Power and its success against the enemy. The

Afghan Air Force will more than double their fleet of aircraft over the next seven years," the Resolute Support mission said last week.

The statement further said "Along with the new arrival of UH-60 Blackhawks this week, plans include the introduction of AC-208 light attack and surveillance aircraft, A-29 attack aircraft and additional UH-60 assault and MD-530 attack helicopters to the force." (KP)

(6) Military Ops ...

of the country and hundreds of insurgents were killed or wounded.

According to Waziri, among those killed were 1,022 Daesh fighters who were mostly killed in Nangarhar province.

Waziri said the operations were as follows:

- 3,122 pre-planned land operations
 - 3,090 operations by Special Forces
 - 271 night operations by Special Forces
 - 2,460 air strikes by Afghan Air Force
- Waziri said the number of flights made by the Afghan Air Force totaled 17,356 of which 2,460 were airstrikes.

"The insurgents do not have the ability to fight the security forces on the battlefields and they carry out terrorist activities at gatherings, mosques and other places," said Waziri.

The defense ministry said hundreds of insurgents including 292 commanders of Taliban and Daesh were killed in the first six months of this year as a result of Afghan forces operations.

"From the beginning of the year up to now the level of the war has dropped and security forces have changed their position from that of a defensive stance to an offensive one. You know Nawa district (in Helmand) has been cleared of Taliban," Mohammad Hashim Alokozay, head of defense commission of Meshrano Jirga said.

"I hope that security forces maintain security which is a big aim of the Afghan people," Amir Mohammad Akhundzada, former governor of Uruzgan said.

The defense ministry figures have not been confirmed by armed anti-government groups. (Tolonews)

(7) Car Bomber Hits ...

Danish spokesman said the Danish soldiers were part of a security team normally engaged in protecting advisers traveling to and from the Afghan military academy near Kabul.

NATO personnel traveling by road normally travel in convoys of three heavily armored personnel carriers which can resist all but the heaviest explosions.

Past suicide attacks on such convoys have usually caused casualties among nearby civilians while leaving their targets relatively unharmed. NATO personnel now often travel even short distances in Kabul by helicopter.

The Taliban, which often exaggerates casualty estimates from its attacks, said 16 Americans had been killed and three armored vehicles destroyed. It said it was preparing to step up the pace of attacks on foreign forces in Afghanistan. (Reuters)

(8) Afghan Children...

second and current Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei on Saturday evening wrote that all Afghan children, including illegal immigrants, have a right to enroll in Iran's schools. "No Afghan child in Iran, not even illegal immigrants, should be deprived of education & schools must enroll them," read the tweet.

This is a major step forward for Afghan children in the country who were often deprived of an education.

Currently hundreds of thousands of Afghan children are in Iran as refugees - many of whom are not in school. (Tolonews)

(9) Ministry to...

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 75 percent of dairy products are imported into Afghanistan but that many provinces have the capacity to run major dairy processing plants. (Tolonews)

(10) AGO Vows...

of elections and technical issues facing the elections so that we can find a solution," said IEC chief Najibullah Ahmadzai.

Senators Troubled By Sidelining Of Some IEC Commissioners

Meshrano Jirga senators meanwhile raised concerns on Saturday over remarks by a commissioner regarding secret decisions being taken by the IEC and the sidelining of some commissioners.

IEC commissioner Ma'azullah Dawlati on Friday told TOLONews that many decisions by the commission were being taken by four members who failed to consult the other three commissioners. A recent document seen by TOLONews also reveals that there are serious disagreements between members of the IEC over the utilization of previous voting cards to determine the age of voters in the elections. But, members of the IEC have expressed hope that these internal rifts would not affect the election process.

"In every institution there are different views, but these disagreements are not too serious to create obstructions in the way of the election process," said IEC member Mazullah Dawlati.

A recent issue also emerged over the controversial process used to purchase IEC's technical and electoral equipment.

Following the controversy, a member of the IEC's leadership claimed decisions by the

election commission were being taken by four individuals in secret.

The Meshrano Jirga (Upper House of Parliament) is expected to summon the IEC officials to answer questions, specifically on the progress being made regarding the election process.

"We will summon members of the independent election commission on Tuesday and will see" what progress has been made, said senate chairman Fazel Hadi Muslimyar. (Tolonews)

(11) Taliban Overrun ...

News Bandar and Qala-i-Mirzad areas had fallen into the hands of the Taliban. He said one policeman was killed and 12 others were wounded while many others had been missing.

Without giving the exact number of security forces stationed in the area, he said that 42 people, including seven policemen, had fled the locality. There has been no information about the rest of the security personnel.

He added Bandar area, with a population of 60,000, had 75 small and large villages. The strategic area was lost to the Taliban last night due to negligence of the provincial leadership, he alleged.

Kohistan's deputy police chief Col. Mohammad Naeem Andrabi verified that the area had fallen to the militants. However, he was unaware about the casualties inflicted on security forces.

Damla Nader Sayedi, Taliban's shadow chief for Bandar, rejected the claims that the fighters were destroying and torching civilian houses. But he did say the rebels had destroyed seven security check-posts. (Pajhwok)

(12) 'Jalalabad Shopkeepers..

Afghan News that revenue officers created problems for traders who were already struggling with insecurity and obtaining licenses from the municipality.

"Traders and their family members are subject to kidnapping, they are threatened and asked for ransom, shopkeepers and money exchangers are looted in broad daylight, this situation will collapse the businesses," he said.

Arab said the municipality also created problems for shopkeepers in issuing them business licenses.

He said the categorization process of licenses had not been proper and municipality officials sought bribes under different pretexts.

"Another problem we face is insurance at the revenue office, whenever we apply for a license for a company or pay taxes, we are forced to accept the insurance policy despite the fact the insurance office does not provide any services to us," he said.

Fabrics Association head in Jalalabad, Shukrullah Jalandarzai, acknowledged the problems and asked the provincial government to find solution to them.

He said licenses for opening shops on roadsides, underground or constructing multiple-storey markets had the same rate, an issue he criticized as injustice.

Meanwhile, Jalalabad shopkeepers demanded security and solution to problems regarding insurance and licenses.

Omaid Khewawal, who owns a bike repairing shop in Jalalabad, said that the license fee for a shop was suddenly increased to 3,000 afghanis from the previous just 200 afghanis. Tamim, a grocer in Jalalabad, complained security problems haunted them amid absence of essential services. He said municipality officials took extra money from shopkeepers seeking licenses.

He said the increase in license fee and categorization of licenses allowed municipality officials to force shopkeepers into paying kickbacks.

Acting Jalalabad mayor Eng. Hakimuddin Omakhel did not comment about corruption, but said shopkeepers should not pay bribe. He said the categorization of licenses was a process relating to the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) and they could not change it.

"Shopkeepers should complain to the municipality about its officials who demand bribes", he said. Meanwhile, the governor's spokesman, Attaullah Khogyani, said the acting governor had met with traders and shopkeepers and discussed with them solutions to security problems.

He said traders' problems were heard and discussed for solution in a meeting on Saturday. Khogyani said the traders' complaints would also be discussed with the revenue office and legal action would be taken if any violations were found.

The complaints from traders and shopkeepers come days after doctors and drug store owners went on a strike against security problems. (Pajhwok)

(13) Meshrano Jirga ...

told the media that gunmen loyal to Governor Noor had detained Momand. But the governor had said Momand was arrested based on a letter from security organs. However, the Attorney General Office (AGO) had denied issuing arrest warrants for Momand.

The AGO has been investigating the incident and in its initial investigation has revealed that Momand was held with orders of the Balkh governor. Mohammad Rahim Husainyar, a lawmaker from Ghazni province, said: "Momand's complaint has officially reached the house and it is our responsibility to investigate his complaint because one-

thirds of the Mesharano Jirga is composed of members from provincial councils."

Mohammad Ajan Mangal, another lawmaker, was the same view and demanded formation of a committee to investigate Momand's allegations.

Muslimyar said Momand's complaint should be investigated as per the law. He tasked the Impunity Commission to investigate Momand-Noor conundrum. (Pajhwok)

(14) 15 Years a Long Time ...

for the US administration to decide the regarding lies of Pakistan.

"It doesn't take a country 15 years to decide whether someone [Pakistan] is lying to them or not; 15 years is a long time. They can't come to us after 15 years and say Pakistan is exporting terrorism," he said.

The remarks by Karzai came as the Afghan government is optimistic and welcomed the announcement of the new strategy, calling it a move the Afghans have long been waiting for and demanding to eliminate the menace of terror from the region. (KP)

(15) Corruption Seen...

properly. But the firm did it superficially. We asked the company to fill it twice, but it didn't," he said.

Sher Mohammad, chief engineer with the Rashid Sultani Company, said they would reconstruct the stretch, as previous construction was not up to the satisfaction of the provincial council member.

Local residents also grumbled about the sub-par construction of a five kilometres road between the Syedkhel district center and Pul-i-Mullah Aziz area of the Hesa-i-Dwom district of Parwan.

Haji Qandagha, a resident of Aqtash area, said: "This road was built in 2008 of inferior standard; its ground surface was not properly prepared. Only tar was sprinkled on sands. The road's destruction began a year after its construction."

He called corruption the main reason behind defective projects. Contracts for most of the projects were awarded to powerful individuals and people could not raise their voice against them, he added.

Ghulam Hazrat, hailing from the Chinki village of Syedkhel district and head of people's council, also hit out at shabby condition of the road that was damaged only a year after its construction.

"The road is full of potholes; cars can hardly travel it, particularly during rains and snowfalls when the holes are full of water. The damaged portions haven't been repaired," he continued.

Syedkhel district chief Mohammad Lamar Osmanyar also acknowledged the road's quality was pretty poor. He was not in his current position at the time of the project's implementation.

He explained the reconstruction of the road had been approved by the Ministry of Public Works (MoPW) and work on it would start in the near future.

Retaining wall Syed Akram, leader of Hufyan Sharif village in Charikar, said the construction of a 1,000 metres retaining wall along the Ajmil stream was completed by the Rashid Sultani Company in six months.

After 700 metres of the wall was built, he saw engineers using mud instead of cement in some parts. Akram easily separated portions of the wall where mud had been used.

He said local residents complained about the low quality of the construction to the provincial rural rehabilitation and development department.

Subsequently, the department appointed a team to oversee the construction process. But some parts of the wall were not repaired, he maintained. Abdul Matin Qudusi said a 700 metres part of the wall was substandard.

However, sectorial director, Mohammad Zahir Himmatt, said parts of the wall had already been reconstructed.

Sher Mohammad, chief engineer of the construction company, said: "People complained the wall was of low quality, but the MRRD found no issues when some of its parts were checked."

Building of a madrasa Local officials said the building of Darul-Ulom Ali Mohammad Bin Hasan Shebani Madrasa in the Aqtash area of Syedkhel district was constructed with financial aid from Japan last year.

Abdul Latif Syedkheili, education director of the district, said the seminary building was not commissioned due to its poor quality.

"Its walls and ceiling are crumbling. Its doors have been damaged in less than a year. Chairs and tables are not worth using, with stairs and metallic cover installed improperly," he noted.

The official said that the building was constructed by a provincial council member who had been awarded its contract. However, he did not name the public representative.

Syedkheili said though he was under pressure from some officials, yet he did not approve the building's implementation.

Mohammad Lamar Osmanyar also said that the building was constructed with low quality despite they oversaw the construction process. "Its walls were built very poor, we destroyed it and ordered reconstruction, but the quality was still poor, we were unable to oversee it day and night," he said.

He said that he heard the building was approved by Parwan education department. The education department's administrative

and financial manager, Nizamuddin Rahimi, confirmed approving the building. He said complaints about the building's quality were raised after its completion.

The quality of the building should be checked by a technical team, he suggested. If technical experts found the project with flaws, it should be done anew, he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(16) Mobile Phone Service...

war going on, people have problems and their problems should be resolved," said one resident Hamidullah.

Mobile phone companies have also reported that the Taliban has threatened to destroy towers in the event of them not shutting down services.

"Over the past week telecom services are not working properly in Kunduz which creates a lot of problems, for instance someone if becomes ill we will face a problem," said local resident Rahmatullah.

But, Kunduz police headquarters were not able to confirm these claims of Taliban involvement but have confirmed that services shut down overnight.

"So far it is not clear why these services are cut during the night; we are trying to gather information to find out whether it is cut because of a technical problem or because of (insurgent) pressure," said Kunduz police chief Abdul Hamid Hamidi.

The Taliban's spokesman has however confirmed that telecom services are switched off at night on the orders of Taliban in areas they control.

This is not the first time the Taliban has ordered overnight service outages. In the past, they have done the same thing in a number of districts around the country. They have also repeatedly blown up towers in restive areas. (Tolonews)

(17) Taliban Assassinate...

roadside bomb killed the police chief of the Jaghatu district in southeastern Ghazni province.

The slain officer had just taken over from his predecessor, who was also assassinated in a similar attack. Taliban insurgents had also ambushed and assassinated their predecessor.

Separately, officials confirmed Saturday that scores of Taliban fighters staged a surprise pre-dawn assault on security outposts in the Qarabagh district in Ghazni.

A provincial government spokesman, Mohammad Arif Noori, told VOA that attackers had killed five policemen and wounded eight others. He added that reinforcements from the provincial capital enabled Afghan forces to push back the assailants.

Heavy casualties Intensified insurgent attacks this year have inflicted heavy casualties on Afghan security forces, though neither interior nor defense ministry officials have released casualty figures.

According to the U.S. military, a record 6,300 security personnel were killed and more than 12,000 were wounded in 2016.

The U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), in a report released this week, blamed flawed U.S. planning, training and oversight for the inability of Afghan forces to secure their country.

Afghan National Defense and Security Forces continue to suffer heavy casualties and struggle with terrorism as well as a resilient Taliban insurgency because the \$70 billion U.S. security assistance program has suffered from serious problems over the past 16 years, many of which still persist, SIGAR said.

U.S. President Donald Trump recently unveiled a revised strategy for the Afghan war, the longest military engagement in U.S. history, hoping a modest troop surge to enhance training for local forces would help break the military stalemate with Taliban militants.

The Taliban has extended its control or influence to more than 40 percent of Afghanistan since the withdrawal of U.S.-led international combat forces in 2014. (VoA)

(18) Notorious Commanders ...

during an offensive led by Vice-President Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum in Khawaja Sabzposh. But due to government negligence, he rejoined the Taliban.

An Afghan National Army official, who did not want to be named, confirmed the heavy clash between Taliban and security forces. He verified six military tanks and two Humavee vehicles had been captured by the rebels.

He said dozens of militants suffered casualties during the clash. However, he did not comment on security forces' casualties. The Taliban are yet to comment on the battle. (Pajhwok)

(19) 5 Taliban Killed ...

heavy weapons fire and gunshots targeting each other's positions," said the resident, who added an old man and a child were injured in the clash.

Some houses caught fire after being hit by mortars fired from both the sides, Najumuddin said. "Compared to last night, the situation is good today." Zabihullah Mujahid, a Taliban's spokesman, said he could not contact with their fighters in the area because there was no network. The clash between Taliban and Daesh gunmen erupted two days ago and is still ongoing. Since yesterday, at least 15 Taliban have been reportedly killed and their weapons and ammunition captured by the IS group. (Pajhwok)