

### (1) 'Disagreements' Delay...

Office, Fraidoon Khozoon, said the disagreements between government and politicians will be ended in the near future.

"Efforts are underway and we hope that all issues are resolved in the next meeting of Reconciliation Leadership Council," Khozoon said.

The Coalition for the Salvation of Afghanistan, a political alliance formed in July 2017, which is consisting of 22 political parties, has also confirmed the disagreements over the selection of the Qatar delegation members.

"Some individuals are trying to have their favorites in (the delegation), not a national and Afghanistan-inclusive team," said Shah Mahmoud Popal, head of the coalition.

Qatar meeting was scheduled after the Afghan prominent politicians met Taliban in Moscow in February in which the Afghan government did not attend.

President Ghani's Special Envoy and spokesman of the Reconciliation Council, Umer Daudzai, who briefed media on peace Jirga at a press conference in Kabul on Saturday, April 13, said that one of the disagreements is about the number of the delegates.

"One of the disagreements is the number of delegates who will travel to Qatar. On Wednesday meeting of the Reconciliation Leadership Council, an agreement was reached in this regard. Some members of the council were suggesting that a small number of delegates will attend the (Qatar) meeting," said Daudzai. (Tolo news)

### (2) Political Parties Seen...

They say most of political parties in Daikundi are unaware of their role in the democratic system, based on the philosophy of peoples' government.

Reza Tanha, a resident of Daikundi, acknowledged political parties were not acting in line with principles and laws of the land. Instead they were a source of unhealthy competition in the country, he believed. Nasir Haqbin, hailing from Eshtarli district, linked the existing insecurity and unrest in the area to activities of political parties.

Naseer Tamzani, a young man, claimed: "Political parties have divided us into different groups."

Haji Ali Yawar, representative of a political party, acknowledged much of insecurity in the province was due to the unwholesome competition among political parties in the province. The groups were trying to suppress smaller rivals, he charged.

Mohammad Hussain Muzafari, a university teacher and political commentator, said political parties are part and parcel of jihadi groups, with roots in the masses.

"One of the basic points regarding the creation of a political party should be the source of its income. But our political parties never disclose their sources of income and are mainly supported by external elements," he concluded. (Pajhwok)

### (3) Huge Water...

He said construction of the project would cost \$200 million at the financial assistance of World Bank. All the residents of Kandahar city would receive water for 24-hour after the completion of the project, he added.

He said many houses and government agencies had not paid their bills for several years. The AUWSSC administration is reliant on its own revenue.

According to AUWSSC information, residents and government institutions owe it 191 million afghanis.

In order to resolve the issue, the president ordered the Ministry of Finance to pay AUWSSC water bills from budgets of relevant agencies.

Another issue, Yalani said, was the high electricity rate. His department is facing losses while supplying water. One kilowatt of electricity costs 25 afghanis while one meter cubic water is sold for 25 afghanis.

Around 340 homes would benefit from clean drinking water with the completion of a project in the 6th police district of Kandahar City.

The project was implemented at a cost of more than four million afghanis provided by UNICEF and the Rural Rehabilitation and Development Department in seven months.

A similar scheme has been completed in the Haji Aziz area of the 5th police district. The \$192,000 project will benefit 450 houses.

Construction work on another projects in the 9th police district kicked off under the citizen charter programme, costing \$70,000 and benefitting 300 families.

Mohibullah, hailing from the 9th police district, told Pajhwok they were supplied no water at times. As a result, he

added, people did not pay their water bills.

He urged people to pay their bills on time as the water network could provide the best solution to their problem.

Abdul Wahid, a resident of Haji Aziz area, said Kandahar City was faced with scarcity of water. He demanded work on the water network be done on a fast-track basis.

Meanwhile, officials promised the immediate launch of work on the project. Other projects include raising the dam walls, providing drinking water for Kandahar City, production of 24MW of electricity and modernisation of agricultural canals.

The projects are being funded by World Bank and Asian Development Bank. (Pajhwok)

### (4) AGO Hides Info...

Complete report

In 2015, a court in 1st police district of Kabul convicted Katawazai of forging document and using fake number plates for his armored vehicles. He was sentenced to five years in jail

However, despite the passage of three years, he has not been jailed. Still at large, Katawazai told Pajhwok Afghan News he was informed of the court order through media. None of state organs has approached him so far, he insists.

The convict says documents about his sentence surfaced after he was declared a winner in the Wolesi Jirga election from Paktika province.

About where he was during the convicted term, he said: "I am a free businessman -- a contractor of the National Security Council (NSC), AGO, Supreme Court and. My main office located in Sara-i-Shahzada (money market)."

The court and AGO could have approach home easily. Certainly, I was unaware of the case," he added.

Arrest and release

Findings indicate that three years after the judgment, the president not only ordered his arrest but also asked the election commissions to investigate him. But after the commissions were sacked, the president issued orders for Katawazai's release.

An NSC document, whose copy has been received by Pajhwok Afghan News, shows the council sent the president a report regarding Katawazai's conviction on February 7.

Subsequently, the president issued arrest orders for the convict. "The Ministry of Interior should immediately implement the verdict of AGO. The AGO should interrogate the election commissions on why it ignored documents of a convicted candidate."

On February 12, the MoI arrested Katawazai at Hairatan Port as he was trying to escape to Uzbekistan. Gor his part, Katawazai says he was informed about his arrest warrants after he entered Uzbekistan.

"A security official came to me and asked whether I have any problem in my country, I told him my next trip is to Dubai from where I will return to Kabul, I then said I will go directly to my country for what I have heard I am sentenced to jail and the president has ordered my arrest, it was around 9pm when I arrived at Hairatan port in Balkh, police tried to arrest me, but I told them to be calm as I will personally solve my problem in a legal way," he said.

It was the day when all election commissioners were dismissed but Katawazai was released a few days later in compliance with the president's verbal order.

On March 5, a letter signed by Lt. Col. Mohammad Yasin Zia, the president's advisor on national security, was sent to the AGO about the case.

The letter says, "A number of elders and influential figures of Paktia province have asked for the release of (Mohammad Mirza Katawazai) during their meeting with National Security Advisor (NSA) who then shared the issue with the president who then verbally ordered the release of (Katawazai).

The letter has sought action about the order.

Jamshid Rasouli, AGO spokesman, about the letter, told Pajhwok Afghan News, "A case of (Katawazai) was under process at the AGO, investigation into the case has been completed and sent to the court, this person was released by the AGO based on a credible guarantee."

However, Rasouli did not provide further details about the issue.

But Katawazai said, "I was illegally arrested and the sentence is void, I approached the National Security Council (NSC) and the NSC discussed the issue with AGO and the Ministry of Justice... they found the sentence against me as void based on the 76th Article of penalty actions law."

"I also had the legal warrant and the NSC had suggested it to the president, when the president understood I am innocent, he immediately took action for

my release, I thank him," Katawazai said.

The article 76th of the penalty action law says, "Punishment to a convict voids if charges are not applied after the release of sentence order during the stipulated time period: One: Execution sentence after the passage of 25 years, Two: life sentence with the passage of 20 years, Three: long term jail after the passage of 10 years, Four: mid-term jail after the passage of three years, Five: short-term jail after the passage of one year"

Katawazai also shared some documents with Pajhwok about his release.

NSC's legal affairs advisor on March 5 had asked the NSA to analyze Mirza Katawazai's case with AGO officials. The review of Katawazai's case shows Katawazai can run for Wolesi Jirga election based on article 39 of Electoral Law.

The review says Katawazai's crime was not among those that could deprive him of civil rights as the court also did not bar him from his civil rights.

The advisor also writes in his letter that the issue should be also shared with the president and a new order should be issued in this regard.

After the president's order for the release of Katawazai, he was announced winner by the IEC in the Wolesi Jirga election.

Based on the election data with the IEC, Katawazai had secured 5,142 votes in the Wolesi Jirga election in Paktika and he was top vote-getter.

Katawazai says nearly 96 percent of votes in Paktika were biometrically verified. The people are not responsible for problems election commissions faced during elections in Kabul, he said.

Poll win despite conviction

Findings of Pajhwok Afghan News show the IEC sought information regarding Katawazai's sentence from the AGO and the police headquarters of Paktika, but they refused to cooperate.

Some sources reveal Katawazai is not subject to the implementation of the court decision and thus he was eligible to contest the elections.

Pajhwok has received copies of some documents showing that the AGO refused to share information regarding Katawazai.

One of these documents indicates that IECC asked the Paktika police headquarters to share information about his trial. In reply, the election watchdog said it was not responsible to answer the request.

In another letter written to the AGO on 10/07/2018, the IEC asked for information about the Wolesi Jirga candidate. The letter was accompanied by a digital versatile disc (DVD) containing names, father names, addresses and identity card numbers of candidates.

In response, the AGO said 60 of the 2,726 candidates registered in the database had been involved in criminal activities and the remaining had clean track records.

A source disclosed Katawazai was not among the 60 runners accused of having criminal backgrounds. Under the relevant law, an individual accused of a crime cannot contest elections.

Katawazai was sentenced to five years in jail for an offence that was not heinous. IECC, through an inquiry letter, again asked the AGO on 31/12/2018 to provide information regarding the sentence of Katawazai. But a senior AGO official responded that no case of a heinous crime had been registered against Katawazai.

On 10/02/2019, the IECC yet again sent a letter to the AGO, with a copy of the memo from the National Directorate of Security (NDS) showing that Katawazai had been sentenced to five years in jail.

In this letter, the IECC asked the AGO for information until 12/02/2019 because an evaluation of complaints from Paktika was in final stages. However, IECC members were dismissed the same day.

Asked about the AGO silence on his background and sentencing, Katawazai said he was not entitled to speak on behalf of the AGO. He referred Pajhwok to the AGO.

Pajhwok strived to contact the AGO spokesman on why they refused to share information regarding Katawazai with the electoral bodies. But he only made promises to provide information in this regard. However, the required details were never shared.

Experts blame AGO

Kabir Ranjbar, a legal expert, blamed the AGO and the Paktika police for not sharing information regarding Katawazai's criminal background.

He insisted Katawazai had committed an offence and the court had sentenced him but the AGO refused to share information with authorities concerned.

Ranjbar believed a case should be filed against the AGO and Paktika police for not sharing vital information.

Abdul Shakoor Dadras, another expert, said: "There is no other source to pro-

vide information regarding the criminal background and trial of an individual. A specific department in the AGO has complete information about the trials and crimes. If they don't have this information, it is really surprising."

Wadir Safi, another analyst, also assailed the AGO for not sharing information with the election bodies. "The AGO is to be blamed here," he remarked. Expert views

On President Ashraf Ghani's verbal direction regarding the release of Katawazai, Ranjbar said: "Even a presidential order in writing is a brazen violation of the constitution."

A decision handed down by the court must be implemented in line with Article 129 of the constitutions, he explained. Article 129 says: "In issuing decisions, the court is obligated to state the reason for its verdict. All final decisions of courts shall be enforced, except for capital punishment, which shall require presidential approval."

Ranjbar explained Katawazai was awarded a jail sentence by a primary court, whose decision was not final but was surely enforceable. The convict should be detained and his freedom curtailed. Doing this is the responsibility of AGO.

On the other hand, Katawazai's Lawyer Mohammad Saeed Saedi claimed order against his client was passed under Article 76 of the criminal procedure law and was no longer valid.

He said Katawazai, like any common person, was entitled to all rights and could nominate himself for elections.

But Ranjbar noted Article 76 was in conflict with Article 129 of the constitution. He suggested powerful individuals might have influenced the enactment of that penal code provision.

But other law experts told Pajhwok a primary court decision, if not appealed in a given time, automatically becomes final and irreversible. (Pajhwok)

### (5) Abdullah 'will...

(on the Jirga) neither at political parties and individual levels nor at the government level," says the statement which has been issued on behalf of Stability and Partnership election ticket led by Abdullah.

"The Stability and Partnership team led by Abdullah announces that members of the team will not attend the meeting named 'Consultative Jirga on Peace' and does not see it helpful for overcoming the current problems in Afghanistan," the statement adds. (Tolo news)

### (6) Fighting Across...

of occupiers and mercenaries," Khalilzad said.

However security officials in Kabul said that apart from the operation in Kunduz, Saturday's attacks in 15 provinces across the country were limited in scope and had largely been contained.

"They engaged Afghan security forces to show their presence with the start of their spring offensive," one senior official said. "But Afghan forces were on high alert across the country and therefore several attacks were pushed back."

In Kunduz, the strategic city which briefly fell to the Taliban in 2015, fighters attacked from several directions in the early hours of the morning, causing heavy casualties, the provincial governor's spokesman Enhamuddin Rahmani said.

A local health official said more than 70 dead and wounded had been brought into the main city hospital.

There were also attacks in the northern provinces of Baghlan, Takhar and Badakhshan, as well as Faryab, Sar-e Pul and Balkh, but there were no reports of significant casualties among security forces.

In southern Afghanistan, Taliban forces launched attacks in the opium-rich province of Helmand, with operations in Nad Ali, Gereshk and Sangin districts, areas that have been fought over for the past 17 years.

Omar Zwak, the provincial governor's spokesman, said the attacks had been repelled at the cost of four soldiers and 15 Taliban. "The fighting will further increase as the weather warms up," he said.

Separately, seven members of the security forces were killed in an ambush in the western province of Ghor, leading to an hours-long firefight, provincial government spokesman Abdul Hai Khatibi said.

While much of the fighting consisted of small-scale engagements, the spread of operations across most parts of the country underlined the struggle facing the Afghan government, still shut out of the peace process by the Taliban's refusal to talk to what they consider a puppet regime.

According to U.S. estimates, government forces control just over half the country, but with many areas out of reach of easy

communications an accurate picture is difficult.

Peace talks are due to resume in Doha next week between U.S. envoy Khalilzad and Taliban officials. (Reuters)

### (7) Pakistan Airspace...

doubled.

Wafai said the Civil Aviation Authority was making efforts to use China's airspace for reaching India and it would be shorter than Iran's route.

He said they had tried a lot to resolve the issue through a diplomatic dialogue but the Pakistan's airspace responsibility was not in the Pakistani Civil Aviation Authority thus they had not yet succeed in this regard.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) asked the Pakistani government to reopen its airspace to Afghan flights en route to India.

A day earlier, Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani also discussed the issue with Pakistani ambassador to Afghanistan Zahid Nasrullah Khan in Kabul.

As part of the Accountability of the Government before the Nation, the Transport and Civil Aviation Ministry presented its performance report to media persons.

The report said the Transport and Civil Aviation ministry earned 8.1 billion afghanis income last year from its airspace. (Pajhwok)

### (8) 'Taliban Spring...

the Taliban announced their new offensive and showed the world they do not want peace, but war."

Muslimyar asked the Afghans to stand united in their efforts to frustrate the nefarious designs of the Taliban and stand shoulder to shoulder with their security forces.

He said the Afghan defense and security forces were fully capable and equipped with modern weaponry to frustrate the enemy's designs.

Muslimyar told the international community and foreign forces that the Taliban had always wished to deprive the Afghans of having a peaceful life and an organized system.

Meanwhile, presidential candidate Hanif Atmar said the Taliban's announcement of their spring offensive was condemnable because the Afghans had launched their peace campaign with new hopes.

He asked the Taliban not to alienate themselves from the Afghans whose hopes for peace had increased.

He said the Taliban should not act against the ongoing peace process and factors that the rebels deemed behind the continuation of war could be resolved through talks. (Pajhwok)

### (9) Telecommunication...

Authority (ATRA) to fulfill its commitments and solve the problems of telecom companies customers.

Recently, Afghan activists launched a campaign against telecom robbery, asking telecommunication companies in Afghanistan for accountability and quality services. (ATN)

### (10) Logar Municipality...

ordered to vacate the buildings within three days otherwise the municipality on its own would take action.

A resident of Pul-i-Alam, Sayed Toriyali, criticized the municipality and said it had failed to discharge its responsibilities properly over the last few years.

He said large swaths of land had been grabbed in many parts of the city before buildings were constructed on them illegally.

Logar police spokesman Shapor Ahmadzai said police were ready to cooperate with the municipality in erasing illegal structures on grabbed lands.

He said they last week destroyed buildings identified to them by the municipality.

The Logar governor's house says fighting against land grabbing remains its priority.

Provincial council head Hasibullah Stanikzai also said that Pul-i-Alam municipality did not perform its duty properly over the last many years.

The governor's house and the municipality should take serious steps against land grabbing, he added. (Pajhwok)

### (11) NDS Issues Clarification

The National Directorate of Security also added that the two women who were temporarily arrested have been released after contacts were established with their family. In the meantime, the National Directorate of Security also noted that the office of the president has instructions to Afghan national defense and security forces and their international partners to take necessary measures to ensure safety of the women and children who are being used as human shields by terrorist groups in a cowardly manner and in violation of Islamic and Afghan traditional values. (KP)