

(1) WJ Rejects ...

Wednesday's session that there was no balance in provincial allocations. He said projects worth 76 billion afghanis in the last year's budget had been dropped. He claimed allocations had been made for some unapproved administrative units and creation of 22,000 new positions that were unnecessary. But he did not provide details about the administrative units.

"This draft budget proposes the creation of 7,000 posts for a single office of a department, which needs even less than 100 personnel," he said, without going into details.

Of the 120 lawmakers present, 115 of them voted against the draft. The lower house has rejected the proposed budget just seven days before the start of the next fiscal year.

Under Article 98 of the Constitution, the general and development budgets are prepared in light with Meshrano Jirga's recommendations before being sent to the Wolesi Jirga for final approval. (Pajhwok)

(2) Backed by ...

The military is reaping political dividends from what the Kremlin saw as its big successes in Crimea, annexed from Ukraine after Russian soldiers in unmarked uniforms seized control of the peninsula in 2014, and Syria, where Russian forces helped turn the tide of war in President Bashar al-Assad's favor.

"That has translated into more top-table influence," said a long-serving Russian official who interacts with the defense ministry but declined to be named because he is not authorized to speak to the media. (Reuters)

(3) IEC Has ...

fair and timely elections.

A day earlier, IEC members during a press conference in Kabul accused the government of noncooperation and said the elections would be held on time if the government provided the required financial resources and ensured security for the commission.

Speaking at the conference, Abdullah regretted women were not fairly supported by political parties, something he called against expectations in the past 16 years. Calling women's role as important in the society, the CEO said that women could influence elections with their vote power. He said political parties lacking women's support had not been very successful. While stressing the importance of women's presence in politics, the CEO said: "The political environment has always restricted women's activities, but I promise national programs which are underway will open ground for women."

Acting IEC chief Wasima Badghisi called women's support for election process as important and said women also needed support of others.

She said only two of seven commissioners on the IEC were women. "The commission is trying to employ women besides men to its 24 provincial posts", she added. (Pajhwok)

(4) US Forces ...

Lance Bunch, head of the Resolute Support's future operations division, reportedly said US President Donald Trump's new Afghan strategy gave the US-led coalition new permissions to target the Taliban's command-and-control nodes, illicit revenue-generating ventures, and logistical networks.

"This new air interdiction campaign directly strengthens the Afghan defense forces and their continued battlefield successes," he said.

Bunch pointed out that narcotics is a major source of revenue for Taliban as it receives at least USD 300 million to USD 400 million a year with almost \$200 million of it coming from the production of heroin.

"They have been completely unable to achieve any objectives from their declared Operation Mansouri during this fighting season," Bunch said. "In addition to their unrealistic goals, they have been unable to take a provincial capital or even a single city. (ANI)

(5) Armenian ...

of the IPAP was approved by NATO in April. The document lists joint activities planned for 2017-2019, he told reporters. Yedigarian and Ayvazian met the press at the official launch of an annual "NATO Week" in Armenia. Rosaria Puglisi, deputy head of a NATO liaison office in the South Caucasus, also spoke at the event. She announced that NATO's Deputy Secretary General Rose Gottemoeller will arrive in Yerevan on Monday for talks with President Serzh Sarkisian and other Armenian leaders.

In Ayvazian's words, "military-technical cooperation" is also on the agenda of Armenia's dealings with NATO and its individual member states. "It is not confined to buying weapons and ammunition," he said. "It also has many other components such as cooperation on technology, joint solutions, ventures and so on." The defense official cited the example of

a Polish-Armenian joint venture that was set up in 2013 to manufacture protective gear such as army helmets, flak jackets and inflatable tents and decoys for the Armenian military.

"We also have a fairly long experience of setting up and operating joint ventures with Greece," added Ayvazian. "We are holding negotiations in this direction with various states and I think that we will have better, more visible results over time." (Agencies)

(6) Kabul Police ...

of their position.

"The individuals who refuse to respect the orders and the traffic signs at the checkpoints, will be dealt in line with the prevailing laws of Afghanistan," said MoI spokesman Najib Danish.

Meanwhile, a number of people who have guards have raised questions about the nature of the program by the security forces.

"They should work on a program to clarify, for instance, if a lawmaker can carry the gun or if an investor is also allowed to carry gun. Today we saw one person that had over 50 guns," said local investor, Maula Mohammad Paiman.

The Afghan police are expected to expand the campaign into other provinces once the program is wrapped up in Kabul.

Interior ministry says that the distribution of licenses for arms will be completed in four phases within six months. (Tolonews)

(7) Ghani Govt. Has...

is to deny them the ability to have a safe haven where they can organise, recruit fighters, raise money, plan and carry out attacks against our allies, our own homeland, as we know they did in the past. So the entire policy in South Asia is to achieve that," Tillerson said.

The goal could be achieved by eliminating the safe havens, encouraging some organisations to talk about how to live and creating the conditions for a reconciliation process in Afghanistan, said the top American diplomat.

Tillerson said Pakistan was still an important and valued partner of the United States. "Over the last decade, the relationship has drifted, and we've got to bring this relationship back to one of common interest."

He said the US was engaged in frank discussions with Pakistanis over the concerns about their own stability and their own future and the threat posed by terrorists operating in their territory. The two sides are in talks on how they can work together to bring stability and peace to the whole region. "And again, we've got a great team working in that region as well. A lot of work left to do," he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(8) IS Presence ...

Daesh rebels were engaged recruiting in the north and eastern parts of the country and if the terrorist group was not prevented, the spring season would be harder.

Earlier, security forces have detained 11 foreigners including women and children in Logar province.

At the time, officials had claimed one foreigner belonged to Chechnya and two to Azerbaijan.

Speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahim said Daesh was present in Afghanistan daily subjecting the people with their insurgent activities.

He demanded security forces launch special operations in areas where the militant outfit was present. (Pajhwok)

(9) Casa-1000 'will ...

run for 562km.

"Aside from CASA-1000's transit benefit, it has social, economic and political benefits. The electricity price will get lower and we can buy more electricity. It also will affect Afghanistan security," said Ghalib.

The project will produce 1,300 megawatts of electricity from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Afghanistan will receive 300 megawatts of power and the remaining one thousand megawatts will be transited to Pakistan via Afghanistan.

"Professional and committed people should be assigned to the project to make sure the projects progress correctly," economic affairs analyst Abdul Wasi Haidari said.

Afghanistan will receive \$50 million USD yearly for the transit of power and in addition to this Afghanistan's strategic location in terms of transit will be highlighted in Asia.

Moreover, infrastructure projects valued at \$40 million USD will be implemented alongside the power lines and employment opportunities will be provided for the locals. (Tolonews)

(10) India Voices ...

entire Asian and Eurasian region.

Voicing concern over the huge challenges facing Afghanistan and confronting issues of safe havens and other forms of cross-border support enjoyed by terrorists, the Vice President said they should

actively confront the policy of state support to terrorism that is being practiced by "a certain neighbour of ours".

Pointing out that last year was the most violent year since 2001 for Afghanistan with over 10,000 casualties of whom 25 per cent were civilians, Naidu stressed the need for setting up of an international verification mechanism for action taken in fighting terrorism and elimination of safe havens and other support systems. Stating that India is aware of the New US Policy in Afghanistan, he said New Delhi remains committed towards reconstruction and development of Afghanistan as a valued neighbour and strategic partner. (Pajhwok)

(11) UNAMA to Increase ...

has displaced as many as 13,000 in the province and many of them have taken refuge in Tirinkot city. (Pajhwok)

(12) Afghan MMA ...

Mubarez said.

Meanwhile, the MMA fighter's trainers praised him for his dedication.

"I think the strongest attribute of Mubarez is his strength. He is very strong physically, much stronger than many guys in this division. He needs to use his strength a lot in a fight, in striking and in ground control," said Tony Hidman, one of Mubarez's trainers.

"Mubarez came here from Afghanistan and he is not lazy. He trains a lot and he wakes up early in the morning and does a lot. I think he will win his next fight," said another trainer.

"Training with Mubarez is fantastic. He is a very strong guy and hard-working. He has invited me to Afghanistan and I think I will come to his country and will start to train with him," said an Indian MMA fighter.

Mubarez is expected to continue his training in Thailand by 15 January 2018. He will then leave for the UAE on 20 January 2018 to take part in MMA competitions which are organized by the International Mixed Martial Arts Federation. (Tolonews)

(13) 12th Afghanistan...

its own fundamental plans," Iranian president's economic advisor Seros Alaf said.

A number of Iranian officials have come to Herat along Iranian traders and industry owners and participated at the exhibition.

Iranian officials said they will meet with Afghan officials at the sidelines of the exhibition to address the challenges existed in trade sector between Afghanistan and Iran.

"We seriously believe that the development and welfare of Afghans is the development and welfare of Iranians," said Ali Rasulyan, deputy governor of Iran's Razavi Khorasan province.

Head of Herat's chamber of commerce and industries Saad Khatibi meanwhile said Afghan traders have been facing serious challenges in Iran soil in exporting Afghan goods to Iran and that emphasized the problems should be addressed.

"Unfortunately, we are still faced with serious problems in terms of transit and export of Afghan goods," Khatibi said. (Tolonews)

(14) Fate of Four ...

The said that the raid by the NDS was totally against the law and that the government is exploiting the educational institution.

But deputy presidential spokesman has said that the move was not politically motivated and said it is legal action.

Reacting to the raid, former NDS chief has described the move unprecedented in recent years. He said that move was a shame for the government.

Former government officials have said that the government leaders are using the security forces as tools for their political objectives.

"It was a politically motivated and unethical move," said former deputy minister of education Sediq Patman.

Sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, have said that a court in Turkey had ordered the arrest of three teachers of the Afghan-Turk schools, including a Turkish restaurant owner in Kabul.

The Turkish embassy in Kabul reportedly informed the Afghan government about the decision in a letter.

The Turkish government has asked the Afghan government to hand over these individuals to Turkey. But there is no agreement between Afghanistan and Turkey about the extradition of individuals between the two countries.

Amid speculation about the link between the raid and President Ashraf Ghani's visit to Turkey, the presidential palace has said that the move was not linked to the trip of the president. It was action taken against some suspects.

Neither the NDS nor the presidential palace is ready to comment on the fate of the teachers.

But documents seen by TOLONews reveal that the United Nations has provided asylum to one of the Turkish teachers currently in the detention of the NDS and has asked for the prevention of his extra-

dition to Turkey.

"It is a political and intelligence move which is moved forward by a certain team inside the national unity government to offer it as levy and bribe to Mr. Erdogan of Turkey," said political analyst Asif Ashna.

"The Afghan government wants to destroy the secure place of general Dostum by its move on the girls' hostel of Afghan-Turk school and to gain the satisfaction of the Turkish republic because the Turks want these schools to be under their control," said MP Arif Rahmani. (Tolonews)

(15) Leaders Did ...

"Last night the armed individuals of the national directorate of security entered the girls' hostel without a court order," said Sediqullah Tawhidi, member of Afghan-Turk Schools parents committee.

Ruqayya 14 is studying in class 8 and was doing homework in her hostel. She said that the students at the schools were in shock when the security forces raided the schools.

"I was very frightened and did not know what to do," said Ruqayya

"The situation of our school has totally changed, the security forces entered our school from various directions," said one student Raheel.

Currently, over 350 students are enrolled at the school.

"They said that your teachers have not been kidnapped and they are kept by the national directorate of security. We couldn't find out was the main purpose behind the arrest was," said Fawad Haidari, deputy head of Afghan-Turk schools.

"Last night armed members of national directorate of security illegally entered the premises of the school without having a court order," said Sediqullah Tawhidi, member of the Afghan-Turk parents' committee.

The office of the Attorney General of Afghanistan so far has not commented on the incident.

"If someone is guilty of something, then he should be dealt with on the basis of an order the president, not the lower officials," said Yousuf Pashton, chairman of Afghan-Turk parents' union.

"This message means that we are closing the doors of education without having a say," said MP Kamal Naser Usoli.

The raid came few hours after Afghan president Ashraf Ghani left Kabul for Istanbul to attend an emergency meeting of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) summit on Jerusalem. Critics say that the raid on the school was linked to Ghani's trip to Turkey.

"The president went to Turkey to discuss the Jerusalem issue, but here an attack was launched on the premises of innocent girls," said Abdul Shokor Dadras, deputy head of Afghan-Turk schools committee.

"This is a violation of human rights. This must stop," said Hawa Alam Nuristani, a commissioner of Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission.

Following an unsuccessful coup last year, the Turkish government asked Kabul to hand over the leadership of Afghan-Turk schools to the government of Turkey.

The Turkish government claims that these schools are led by Fethullah Gulen, who, the Turkish government says, was behind the failed military coup.

Officials of Afghan-Turk schools and students' families have rejected these claims. "The government leadership had not given such an order and the fate of those teachers currently under the investigation by the national directorate of security will be cleared very soon," said Shinwari.

Residents reaction:

"It was a wrong move because it was the premises of the girls," said one resident in Kabul Mohammad Abid.

"It was good that the issue is resolved through the ministry of education," said another resident Taha. (Tolonews)

(16) Joined By...

Meanwhile, the Taliban confirmed Karim had joined the movement along with 40 fighters. The defection happened Karim clashed with another commander named Ibrahim.

Zabihullah Amani, the governor's spokesman, also said Karim had joined the insurgents. Following a clash between the two commanders, the area was captured by Taliban, he acknowledged. (Pajhwok)

(17) 3 Uruzgan ...

husband and a son were killed during clashes between Taliban and Afghan forces in Uruzgan.

"We fled the war and came to Ghazni, but the cold weather here killed my three grandsons within a month," she said. She said they had no breadwinner and were in serious economic problems.

"No one helped us, we live under the open sky, we have no food and cloths, I fear my other grandchildren would also meet the same fate," she said. As she burst into tears, the grandmother said they needed urgent help. Fatima, another displaced woman, said

she lost 12 members of her family to the conflict in Uruzgan. "We four widows and our small children came here to save our lives."

She also said they faced serious problems and were in need of immediate assistance. "We brought nothing with us and the weather is very cold here, our children face death, we need help," she said. Fatima said her children could not sleep all the night crying due to extreme cold. Sayed Mohammad, a displaced man, said: "We are 24 families from Uruzgan, and reside here."

He said they had requested the Refugees and Repatriation Department for help on a daily basis, but to no avail.

"No one recognizes us as displaced families, the refugees department does not allow us to enter there," he grumbled.

Mohammad also complained about Ghazni people and said "cold weather killed many of our children but Ghazni people did not allow us to bury them in a nearby graveyard and finally police came and they helped us in burring the bodies."

The displaced families urged the government to help them before the start of winter snowfall otherwise all their children would die in cold weather.

Provincial refugees and repatriation director refused to comment about the issue. "I do not talk to media because I have no good memories of it," he said.

However, governor's spokesman, Mohammad Arif Noori, said they had a plan to assist the displaced families. He also called on charity organizations to help the affected people in the province.

Hundreds of displaced families currently live in Ghazni capital and they are in urgent need of help. (Pajhwok)

(18) Working Daikundi ...

Sawdaba Mohadi, a civil society activist, termed the growing number of women in state institutions in Daikundi a reality and said women's role was vital for economic and social need of society and families.

She hailed women's presence in state institutions and demanded more, but said working women faced multiple issues such as the lack of kindergartens, separate rooms for changing clothes and lunch, inadequate facilities and equipment at offices.

Women's Affairs Director Zakia Rezae termed the presence of women in state institutions as satisfactory and added more than 11 percent of government employees were women according to their information.

She acknowledged women faced certain problems at workplace and said her department in coordination with other government institutions was working to safeguard women's rights.

A female government employee, who wished to go unnamed, said there was no proper place in their office where she could breastfeed her infant. She said whenever she brought her child to the office, she was faced with disgrace from male colleagues.

She added the situation had recently become more difficult for women employees and they were not allowed to bring their children to office and as a result, they working mothers always feared losing job.

Other female workers complained about non availability of separate rooms for lunch, changing clothes and health facilities and accused the government of negligence.

Ghulam Hussain Hussainzada, acting head of the Work, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled Department, said only one kindergarten existed in the province with the capacity for only 50 children.

"No kindergarten exists in any government institution and the solo facility is not enough for children of the working women." (Pajhwok)

(19) 152 Weapons ...

cement bags, in which weapons had been skillfully concealed. He said the guns included 152 various kinds of weapons and 35,325 bullets.

Khogyani said the weapons were to be transferred to insurgents in Jalalabad for subversive activities.

No one has been so far arrested in connection with the weapons; but security forces have launched a search operation. (Pajhwok)

(20) Casualties As...

spokesman to the first battalion of Afghan National Army (ANA) forces in Khost, said that security forces had reached the conflict area.

He said it was police responsibility to stop the fight but ANA soldiers had been sent there to cooperate with police. He said security forces also came under fire in the area.

The two tribes have a long history of their dispute over a land and a mountain located between Musakhel and Nader Shah Kot districts.

Earlier, a delegation of 83 people from capital Kabul was sent to Khost for resolving the problem, but they failed to ease the situation. (Pajhwok)