

(1) WJ Fat...

meetings were held to talk about the possible dates for parliamentary elections and work of the electoral reforms commission.

Senior political and Jihadi figures, religious scholars, members of the Independent Election Commission (IEC), and members of national assembly were in attendance.

"After listening to suggestions of attendants, we are committed to specify a date for parliamentary elections, but before that a consensus should be developed on security, technical and political affairs," the statement while quoting the president added.

The president has assured that finding financial sources was government's responsibility and all means would be exploited for holding transparent elections.

He however, said that interpretation of constitution was Supreme Court's responsibility, the statement concluded. (Pajhwok)

(2) Senate Again...

taneous elections of WJ and district councils was necessary for arrangement of Loya Jirga.

Article 110 of the constitution says that Loya Jirga is the highest entity reflecting people's wishes, comprising members of parliament, provincial and district councils.

Chairman Senate Fazal Hadi Muslimyar urged unity government to immediately set dates for elections of WJ and district councils.

He, however, said that president had started consultations with members of parliament and other institutions to conduct WJ elections. WJ member Abdul Qader Zazai who was present at a meeting with the president last night said that keeping in mind the security and economic situations of the country, conducting WJ election was not possible before May 2016. (Pajhwok)

(3) EU Special...

EU special representative noted. He hoped there were no specific reasons for the delay and insisted it was better to start the reforms process today than tomorrow.

The Presidential Palace, however, denied any differences between the president and CEO, saying the electoral reforms panel would start work this or next week.

Ambassador Mellbin said they were closely following developments about peace process in Afghanistan. He added it was the Afghan government, civil society, national assembly and political groups that had major role in the process. "We want coordination and defined roles for different groups based on which each group should play its part in the peace process." The president called peace building his top priority after taking office. But nine months on the unity government has not been able to have tangible achievements in this regard.

Taliban have reportedly shown a softer stance on peace and unofficial talks have taken place between the group and representatives of High Peace Council (HPC), civil society organizations and members of parliament, including women in Qatar, Norway and United Arab Emirates (UAE). (Pajhwok)

(4) Ministry Pledges...

countries, economic experts and a number of Afghan lawmakers attended the gathering, which was the first consultative and management of natural resources meeting convened by the government. The intent to the meeting was to share views on how to take better advantage of Afghanistan's natural resource wealth.

The stakeholders discussed the implementation of reforms in the country's mine and petroleum law, views on regulations and procedures, strategies for building trust and preventing corruption.

In addition, the MoMP shared some of its vision for the coming years. "Transparency in the contracts is our top working priority, and with joint support of the elders we will come to realize that the contracts are accessible to the people, and by utilizing information technology, they will be able to monitor the contracts," Minister Saba said.

Lawmakers from Parliament focused their comments toward the MoMP, demanding improvements on combating illegal mining operations around the country, which they say saps potential public revenues. These comments were echoed by industry experts.

"With regret I must say that problems are still there - still some mines in the country are extracted illegally," Mines and Natural Resources Monitoring Network member

Jawed Noorani said. "But first we have to identify the mineral spots to overcome the issue."

Security threats, the absence of a framework for natural resource exploitation, the lack of infrastructure and low-level capacity are all problems identified by stakeholders at the gathering. (Tolonews)

(5) President Stresses...

a mother was great responsibility. There is a mother behind every successful boy and girl, she said, adding that a mother was involved in their kids moral and physical development from childhood. (Pajhwok)

(6) Ghani Introduces...

Rassouli is the first female judge in the history of Afghanistan to be introduced to such a senior judicial position.

Rassouli will be introduced to parliament soon to get a vote of confidence.

In an interview with TOLONews, Rassouli said she will increase the number of women in the judiciary and will address cases of violence against women properly.

Rassouli who graduated from the Law and Political Science Faculty of Kabul University said: "I will leave no stone unturned to bring transparency and accountability in the Supreme Court."

She said interference in the High Court's affairs was one of the main hurdles for the organization. "Meddling in judges' affairs should not prevent them from their sacred duty, which is ensuring justice," Rassouli remarked.

Women's rights watchdogs welcomed the move by Ghani, and said it is a good step towards supporting women's rights in the country.

Head of Afghanistan's Women Council Fatana Gilani said the most important thing is that corruption should be rooted out in the Supreme Court and then new staff who are committed should be introduced.

Alima, a civil society activist said now there is a woman in the High Court who will treat cases of violence against women from a female's point of view.

The process of addressing cases of violence against women has always faced huge criticism. Women's rights organizations now however, have pinned their hopes on Rassouli to ensure that justice is served for female victims of violence, said the activist. (Tolonews)

(7) Afghan Army Chief ...

reiterated government's strong commitment to eliminating insurgents.

Shaheem stated that the government would never make a truce with the insurgents threatening the stability of the country.

"There is no more restriction on you to use artilleries against the enemies," he announced while visiting the Afghan National Army (ANA) 209th Shaheen Corps.

"You are no longer prevented from conducting night raids. And you will no longer be punished and prosecuted for your sacrifices."

Meanwhile, the residents of the northern provinces voiced their concerns about a sharp increase in insurgent activities since the beginning of the Taliban's summer offensive in April.

According to Abdul Ghaffar Dastar, the deputy acting governor of Sar-e-Pul, Kohistanat and Sozma Qala districts of the province are on the verge of collapse.

"The number of insurgents has risen to more than 800," he said.

"Today, Kohistanat is facing a serious threat. All except 10 villages are under the control of the Taliban."

The elders of Sar-e-Pul, meanwhile, said if the government is unable to eliminate the insurgents, residents are ready to take up arms and defend their province.

"Government should either launch operations or give us weapons to fight the insurgents," an elder, Haji Ismail, said.

The residents of Sozma Qala claimed dozens of unknown families, most of whom they said were armed, had settled in the district. The residents claimed the local authorities ignored the settlement of these families who they accused of siding with insurgents.

On the other hand, the residents of Kunduz claimed that the Taliban was forcibly collecting Zakat (almsgiving) from the owners of farmlands who are now busy harvesting their crops.

Earlier, the elders and MPs of Kunduz asked security forces to stop operations in Kunduz to let the farmers harvest their crops.

But the governor of Kunduz, Omar Safi, strongly rejected this request saying the request was a type of lob-

bying for the Taliban.

"Taliban are running out of bullets and ammunition, therefore, they are now forcing the elders to request the government to stop fighting for at least two or three months," Safi told TOLONews.

Badakhshan was the next stop for Shaheem but he was unable to spend time in Yamgan district as it is under the control of the Taliban. Meanwhile, acting governor of Badakhshan, Shah Waliullah Adeeab, said security forces had been unable to launch anti-insurgent operations due to its mountainous terrain.

"We are getting ready to launch a massive operation in the near future," Adeeab said, noting that most of the ANA armored vehicles seized by the Taliban have been reclaimed. (Tolonews)

(8) HRW Calls...

Declaration, not to use schools for military purposes," said Zama Coursen-Neff, the Executive Director of the Children's Rights Division at Human Rights Watch.

HRW reports that schools and universities have been used for military purposes by government forces and non-state armed groups in at least 26 countries since 2005.

"Hundreds of thousands of children around the world have found their schools not just caught in the crossfire but actually being intentionally targeted as a tactic of war," said Coursen-Neff.

"We've seen school girls abducted from their schools in Nigeria, schools attacked in Pakistan, in Syria, children who should find their schools as safe places where they can learn and instead find their schools places of terror and violence," she added.

In early 2011, the UN Security Council requested increased monitoring of attacks on schools and teachers, and military use of schools, according to HRW. In 2014, it encouraged all member countries to "consider concrete measures to deter the use of schools by armed forces and armed non-State groups in contravention of applicable international law."

The Security Council debate on children and armed conflict is scheduled for Thursday.

This comes after a growing number of schools in Afghanistan closed for short intervals this year due to security risks.

Only last month, a number of schools and education centers closed in Pol-e-Khomre capital, northern Baghlan province due to missile attacks.

At the time, local officials said clashes between insurgents and security forces and missile attacks in Pol-e-Khomre forced authorities to send students home for a few days.

Earlier in May Uruzgan deputy head of the provincial education department Mohammad Noor Amini also had to close schools due to insecurity. At least 69 schools in Uruzgan were closed for a few days. (Tolonews)

(9) 7 Million ...

of the Refugee Day is 'Life of ordinary people under abnormal situation'.

There are some 150 Afghan and Iraqi refugees having certificate cards and some 60,000 of their children study in the province. (IRNA)

(10) Interior Ministry...

minister while presenting his 100-day plan to Parliament on Saturday admitted the problem but blamed it on the previous government.

Promising to strictly monitor the process, Minister Noorullohaq Olomi blamed corruption in the previous government for the high number of licenses.

According to the minister, in the past about \$10,000 dollars was paid to the ministry for obtaining a gun license.

"We had such a problem in the past. Even one licensed gun was being issued for \$10,000. But now we have stopped it and also dismissed several officials of that department," Olomi said.

An increased wave of targeted killings and armed robberies in the capital Kabul is also linked to easy availability of guns and licenses.

Most recently, a hotel owner and an NDS official were mysteriously killed by unidentified gunmen in Kabul, causing huge panic in the city. (Tolonews)

(11) Foreign Rebels ...

where they shared same culture, languages and physical appearance with locals, the minister added.

"We will hunt every terrorist who is involved in creating chaos in Afghanistan. And building peace in the country is our top priority," he pledged.

Security has been deteriorated worse in northern parts of the country where Yamgan district in Badakhshan has been fallen to Taliban. The security forces took control of the check posts for a short period which they retreated to avoid civil casualties, the interior minister said. The chivalry and sacrifices of police were praised in the gathering. Syed Mohammad Yazdan, chief guest at the meeting, demanded the official concerned to provide all privileges to affected and disabled policemen. (Pajhwok)

(12) Higher Education ...

and management capacity and that she will establish a system that makes it easier for students to get their diplomas and transcripts.

"I will look at ways to simplify the process of transcript and graduation diploma distribution after a student's graduation," Momand added.

She says there are 124 higher education institutions in Afghanistan and all will come under review while the assessment of private universities will also be carried out.

"There are some private universities that do not provide adequate education quality and that are experiencing problems," Momand said adding that she will appoint a deputy ministry for private universities. (Tolonews)

(13) MoPH Prods ...

sector of Afghanistan. We will help in building the capacity of MoPH personnel in collecting blood in 34 provinces," said Dr. Richard Pircon, the WHO representative in Afghanistan.

Several blood donation campaigns have been held in the country in the past few years. Recently, a blood donation drive was launched by well-known singer and activist Farhad Darya, where large amounts of blood was collected to help wounded troops in military hospitals. (Tolonews)

(14) India Grants ...

Minister Rajnath Singh following BJP's declared policy that India is a "natural home for persecuted Hindus" who will be welcome to seek refuge.

This comes as India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi had, during the Lok Sabha election campaign, said that Pakistani and Bangladeshi Hindu refugees will be treated like any other Indian citizen.

According to the local newspaper - Times of India, there are around two lakh Hindu and Sikh refugees from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan currently living in India. At least 19,000 refugees were also given long-term visas since the Modi government assumed charge in May 2014.

Citing official sources, the newspaper reported around 11,000 long-term visas were given in Rajasthan and 4,000 long-term visas were given in Gujarat.

India's home ministry also rolled out an online system for submission of Long Term Visa application and for its processing by various agencies in the month of April.

The decision by the government of India to grant citizenship to refugees from neighboring countries, was taken with an aim to address the difficulty being faced by Hindu and Sikh minorities of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan who come to India with the intention to settle permanently. (KP)

(15) Teachers' Seek...

Also the president tasked a commission to examine employees' problems and remove differences of privileges of teachers and other government officials. The commission was tasked to provide teachers long-term loan for construction of homes.

Humayun told the Mesharano Jirga that teachers' demands were legitimate and their strike would continue until they received government assurances in written to resolve their problems.

Senate has already formed a commission to address issues of teaching community. Lailuma Ahmadi, head of the commission, said they had held a meeting with minister of education who promised to do everything in his authority to resolve teachers' problems. Chairman Senate Fazal Hadi Muslimyar stressed on resolution of teachers problems, but said it would not be possible to address every demand of the teachers. (Pajhwok)

(16) 105 Balkh ...

seminaries were functioning in the province, out of which 560 were government schools and the remaining were technical institutions or religious learning centers.

He lamented the schools that had building were in dilapidated condition and did not had necessary facilities for students where they could continue their education.

He said militants' presence halted education services in Aburuz, Chahar Boluk, Chamtal, Shurtapa and Zar localities.

He said the schools of these areas were not closed, but teachers and other staffs were unable to attend classes due to insecurity. (Pajhwok)

(17) Work on 2 Flood...

The 3 million afghanis project is being funded by the government of Germany.

At today's groundbreaking ceremony, Shar-e-Buzurg district chief, Abdul Rahim Farhat, said: "One of the major challenges our communities face in Khasar and Jagoni is flooding from the mountains. The villages lack proper protection to protect their lands and they don't have irrigation canals to water their farmland properly. Every year, residents in these villages lose valuable farming income due to floods."

The district development assembly head, Faizurrahman, and local elders of Shar-e-Buzurg added: "Another problem the people here have is that during floods, six villages are cut off from the marketplace and health centres, because the roads are blocked. Students cannot reach their schools either anymore."

The official ceremony was joined by more than 100 representatives from district line departments, community development councils, community leaders, elders and religious leaders.

Khasar and Jagoni villages were chosen for the protection wall based on a risk map, which identifies which of Badakhshan's regions is most vulnerable to natural disaster. (Pajhwok)

(18) Investigations...

investigations to divulge facts. He said that provincial officials were committed to protect journalists. "We are working out a strategy to ensure journalists security," he added.

The attack was widely condemned by national and international organizations and called the incident an assault on freedom of press. (Pajhwok)

(19) Teachers on ...

other provinces. Officials of the education ministry had been trying to pressure teachers into calling off their strike, he alleged.

Humayoun Pajhman, a teacher at Habibia High School, told the Senate (Mesharano Jirga) more than 80 schools had been closed in Kabul city. He warned their strike would continue as long as their demands were not met.

Shah Hakim Lami, another teacher, said Sardar Kabuli and Abdul Ali Mustaghni Schools' staffers had been forced to reopen their schools by education ministry officials.

Other schools, he said, continued their strikes. Habibia High School has 300 teachers and 10,000 students. (Pajhwok)

(20) Taliban Ban...

the area. He added he would share more information once the investigations were completed.

Pajhwok Afghan News repeatedly tried to get version of militants but no one was available for comment. Residents of the area rejected the ban and asked militants to lift the ban since Kandahar was among the areas where ratio of polio affected children remained high.

At least 28 polio cases were reported last year and Kandahar remained on top with 13 cases, Helmand had 2 and one each in Uruzgan and Zabul provinces. (Pajhwok)

(21) Dozens of Rebels...

Khanshin districts of Helmand. The statement added that another 30 fighters were killed during an operation in Nawzad district.

Abdul Sattar Noorzai, Helmand police headquarters' first battalion commander, said insurgents stormed four police posts in Greshk district last night. Fifteen rebels including a Taliban commander Mullah Bilal were killed and eight others wounded in retaliatory attack of security forces. (Pajhwok)

(22) Badakhshan PC...

Ghulam Mohammad Atashpur, a Faizabad resident, called the decline in electricity price a good example of the council's positive role. He said the monitoring of local departments had resulted in institutional reforms. However, Atashpur said security had been a major impediment in the way of Badakhshan's development. He called for sustained efforts to overcome the chal-

lenge on a priority basis. For his part, the provincial council head listed five major challenges including lack of coordination among local departments, high expectations of residents, insecurity in some parts and inadequate cooperation from some departments with the provincial council. (Pajhwok)

(23) Mothers Deserve...

differentiate between their and others' children because it could lead to family disputes. Some people after their marriage do not respect their mothers, youths should not disrespect mothers because their rights are higher than any other members of a family, Hadari said. Haidari served as a midwife in Rabia Balkhi, Blassum, French, Gulf, Mutab and Kabul City hospitals and currently in Khairkhwah Complex Hospital in Khair Khana area of Kabul. Haidari said that mother mortality had been decreased as health sector had improved in the past 13 years. She congratulated all mothers on Mother Day especially Afghan mothers and hoped and prayed for a stable and peaceful Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(24) 17 Rebels...

Abdul Wali, a provincial council member, said five civilians were killed during the fight. Besides, the local residents had been suffered financial losses because of heavy shelling that targeted residential areas. Taliban militants have not commented on the incident so far.

The Azra district is situated 90 kilometers to the east of Pul-i-Alam where Taliban cut all communication with Logar for the last nine years. The residents of the locality are forced to travel to Kabul through Nangarhar. (Pajhwok)

(25) ISIS Video

In the meantime, at least 15 ISIS militants including their commander Syed Mahmood Hussaini were killed and 12 others were taken as prisoners following a gun battle with the Taliban militants in western Farah province earlier this month. According to local government officials at least 14 ISIS militants were also injured and dozens of others joined the Taliban group together their weapons, ammunition along with some vehicles. (KP)

(26) 2 Civilians Dead...

killed and four others including a woman wounded in the incident. He accused ANA for targeting civilian population. Rahimullah, a resident of the locality, said: "When fighting between security forces and militants ended, ANA soldiers fired mortars on our area which left two women dead while four others including a woman wounded." Baz Mohammad Himat, director civil hospital confirmed receiving two dead bodies of women and three wounded including two women and a child. (Pajhwok)

(27) U.S. Plans...

that the decision will be taken soon," said a ministry tweet, quoting Defense Minister Tomasz Siemoniak. "This is another step to increase U.S. presence in Poland and the region." (Reuters)

(28) Major Sides...

United Nations takes this opportunity to appeal to Yemen's political actors to participate in these consultations in good faith and without pre-conditions, and in a climate of trust and mutual respect, in order to find ways to revive the political process and to reach a solution that will save Yemen and its people from the current crisis," the Special Envoy stated. (Xinhua)

(29) Anti-EU...

majority in the House of Commons of just 12 seats, a group of anti-EU rebels could cause serious problems for Cameron by blocking legislation if they do not approve of the reform package he brings back from Brussels. (AFP)

(30) Syrian Nusra...

groups in Syria. In a statement, the Nusra Front said it had received with "great sorrow" news of the incident in which "a number of Nusra Front members" had taken part without consulting their leaders. (Reuters)

(31) Conclusive Phase...

Asim Bajwa, meanwhile, said in a twitter posting. At the same time, in Khyber Agency, which the army claims has been mostly cleared through Operations Khyber I and II, troops would be clearing "a remaining small pocket," abutting on Orakzai Agency, besides "consolidating their earlier gains". (Agencies)