

(1) US Visit ...

bilateral commission and security consultative forum to discuss Afghan energy issues, Abdullah said. According to the CEO, the US announced the launch of a \$800 million New Development Partnership with Afghanistan as part of the effort to give a new direction to the bilateral relationship.

The CEO said talks on issues including good governance, human rights and peace negotiations with the Taliban also took place during the week-long trip. (Pajhwok)

(2) Ghani Visits ...

According to the eyewitnesses, the bomber detonated his explosives when the participants, most of them elderly, were leaving the meeting. So far, no group including the Taliban has claimed responsibility for the attack. (Tolonews)

(3) India's ...

struction projects as part of New Delhi's rebuilding efforts in Kabul.

Afghanistan has been passing through a transitional period and maintaining peace and stability has been the biggest challenge for the country.

The Afghan scholars believe that the gradual withdrawal of western forces present an opportunity for India, Afghanistan and Pakistan to work collectively for the betterment of the region.

A contributor from Afghanistan is Shah Mahmud Mia Khel. He is currently the director of United States Institute of Peace in Kabul and he was earlier Deputy Minister in Afghanistan.

Mia Khel has looked at Afghanistan from the point of view of India-Pakistan relationship and he argues that the withdrawal of western forces from Afghanistan has created opportunity for the three countries, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, to try and work together for the common betterment of the people of our region.

Vishal Chandra, Associate Fellow Research, IDSA, has emphasized on the need for "younger leadership, younger leadership with a vision for development for our region to come together India enjoys goodwill of the Afghan people. Therefore, there is a growing view that India needs to play a more active role in Afghanistan."

"Afghans feel that India needs to remain engaged and India needs to do more in terms of capacity building programmes. They appreciate the kind of assistance that we have been providing to Afghanistan since 2001 and interestingly there is enough consensus within India that we have to remain engaged in Afghanistan and from time to time we have made it clear that we do not have any exit option," said Chandra. "We would certainly like to partner with the Afghan people and the wider international community in rebuilding the capacities of Afghanistan," he added.

The book is the final outcome of annual South Asia conference conducted by IDSA. (ANI)

(4) Protests Continue...

The families and activists traveled from southern Ghazni province to demonstrate in front of Parliament. They demanded President Ashraf Ghani to break his silence and inform the families about what is being done to free their relatives.

"We object to the government's ignorance with regard to the hostage taking, because it institutionalizes the culture of hostage taking and have damaging consequences ahead," civil society activist Asif Sahar said on Monday.

Although virtually no details have been made public or verified, the 31 abductees, all of which are Hazara, have reportedly been transferred to the Khak-e-Afghan district of southern Zabul province.

Although the Afghan security forces launched a military operation in effort to rescue the hostages, it was ultimately successful. Attempts to negotiate the release of the hostages through tribal elders were also unsuccessful.

Still, some are hopeful for a negotiated release. "It is better that we follow our traditional way and establish frequent contacts with the armed opponents and hear their conditions," Zabul MP Abdul Qadir Qalatlwal said.

Khuda Bakhsh is one of the hostages, and his wife Bano Qamar says that her husband was a street seller and the breadwinner of the family. Without an adult son, she has no one to work and provide for her household. "He is a hostage, but his wife and children are also hostages; I have a four year old baby, and last night his uncle brought some fruits," Qamar

said. "He felt that his father had returned when he woke up and ran toward his uncle's home, but he returned with crying eyes after he realized that his father hadn't returned," she said.

Some Zabul MPs have maintained that the hostages have been separated, some transferred to Urozgan and others to Ghazni province. (Tolonews)

(5) Economic ...

Alkozyay, First Deputy Chairman of the ACCI.

Tajik CCI press center reports the two sides discussed issues related to state and prospects of further expansion of trade and economic cooperation between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. They reportedly reached an agreement on holding the exhibition of economic achievements of Afghanistan in Dushanbe in August this year. The number of Afghan entrepreneurs working in Tajikistan's has reportedly increased in recent years. 85 Afghan enterprises now operate in Tajikistan.

According to data from the Agency for Statistics under the President of Tajikistan, a two-way trade between Tajikistan and Afghanistan last year valued at 106 million USD, which was 10.8 percent fewer than in 2013. This consisted of Tajikistan's exports to Afghanistan estimated at 54 million USD and Tajikistan's imports from Afghanistan worth 52 million USD. (Asia-Plus)

(6) No Debate ...

But Obda said the draft amendments suggested these appointments be made in agreement between the president and the chief executive officer. He said some members of the joint commission had suggested the inclusion of another two clauses to the law, but others opposed their suggestion.

He said one of the amendments authorized members of the two commissions to remove the leadership, deputies and secretaries if they worked against the rules. But there was no discussion on the amendments as some lawmakers said the parliament was in its last legislative year and could not amend the law on duties, powers and composition of the election bodies.

They said the law on duties, powers and composition of the electoral bodies was part of the electoral law and the house should not discuss or make a decision in this regard.

The Article 109 of the Constitution says "proposals for amending elections law shall not be included in the work agenda of the National Assembly during the last year of the legislative term."

But Obda said the house could debate the law because it had been framed in compliance with the Article 56 of the Constitution.

However, first deputy speaker, Haji Zahir Qadir, who presided over the session, said the house could not take a decision due to incomplete quorum. He also suggested the joint commission should once again discuss the proposed amendments.

The acting head of the Independent Commission for overseeing the implementation of the Constitution, Gul Rahman Qazi, told Pajhwok Afghan News the assembly could not debate or amend the law on the two commissions because it was serving the last year of the legislative term. He said the law was part of the electoral law and could not be decided upon by the parliament. (Pajhwok)

(7) ACSEN Voices ...

officer (CEO) themselves. It said civil society activists had been given little representation on the important panel — something that could compromise impartial decisions.

ACSEN head Jandad Spin Ghar told a news conference here: "A majority of members are related to the president and the CEO and we are concerned the body will be politically influenced and people will not trust it." He believed the commission would be unable to bring reforms in line people's expectations in the current composition. Electoral reforms are part of the national unity government agreement between the president and the CEO.

The 15-member commission is aimed to bring reforms to the electoral system and build people's trust in the process, law enforcement and prevention of fraud.

Spin Ghar said final decisions from the commission depended on president's approval, affecting the body's independence.

Transparent Election Foundation of Afghanistan (TEFA) head Naeem Ayubzada, also a member of ACSEN, said the president's decree had some problems which needed to be reviewed and corrected.

"I see no clear political will on the

part of the government to bring about electoral reforms. It seems difficult to conduct free and fair parliamentary elections, and we are concerned about it," he remarked.

ACSEN members said the reforms commission should devise its plans that enabled civil society activists and experts to work closely with it and share their suggestions and views. The commission should also hold public hearings before taking decisions so that people could trust it, the network suggested. (Pajhwok)

(8) Karimov Win

Democratic Party of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov collected over 90.39% of votes. About 17.122 million people voted for Karimov.

In line with the article 35 of the law "On election of the President of Uzbekistan", Islam Karimov can be considered as president-elect, he said. He noted that 18.942 million people or 91.08% from total number of registered voters participated in the elections, which means elections of the President of Uzbekistan can be recognized as valid.

Three more candidates participated in the presidential elections: Hotamjon Ketmonov (the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan), Akmal Saidov (the Democratic Party of Uzbekistan "Milly Tiklanish") and Narimon Umarov (the Social-democratic party "Adolat").

Akmal Saidov collected 3.08% of votes (over 582,680 votes), Hotamjon Ketmonov - 2.92% (552,300) and Narimon Umarov - 2.05% (389,240) votes in the elections.

Mirzo-Ulugbek Abdusalomov noted that no violations of election legislation were received. (Monitoring Desk)

(9) Karzai Upbeat ...

Karzai also attended a gathering of Afghan expatriates in Melbourne, where he talked on several issues. He returned to Kabul on Sunday. (Pajhwok)

(10) Health Officials ...

to the hospital building's dilapidated condition, but did not make a clear promise to reconstruct it. However, he said, he would make efforts to improve healthcare services in Kunar on a priority basis.

Addressing the gathering, religious scholar Maulvi Najibullah Haqyar urged the visiting minister to give more attention to the health sector in the province. He said the majority of Kunar residents were poor and they could not afford travelling to other provinces or abroad for treatment.

"The capacity of the provincial civil hospital's building is not more than a district hospital. You the minister should approve a new building for the facility."

Public Health Director Dr. Asadullah Fazli acknowledged weaknesses in the provincial healthcare provision system, but in the same breath claimed many achievements had been made in the sector so far. He said there were 48 clinics across Kunar, each having a modern building and ambulance service. He said nothing about the deadline set by the minister. The hospital's building was not in good condition and the ministry should construct a new one, he suggested.

Acting Governor Shujaul Mulk Jalala said Kunar being a border province often witnessed a number of security incidents and thus needed a well-equipped hospital. The hospital served civilians, government officials and security personnel for their treatment. (Pajhwok)

(11) Daikundi Security...

to Kajran to maintain security in the restive locality. The security forces, he said, recaptured some of security check posts overrun by insurgents.

Last week, Ibrahim Rahmani, provincial council member, had said that seven villages including Gharna, Menara, and Chobzar Kejran had fallen to insurgents and the Taliban were two kilometres away from the capital city.

Kajran is bordering Helmand and Zabul provinces and is largely viewed an unstable district in the relatively peaceful Daikundi. Earlier, the district police chief was also injured in a roadside bomb.

Regarding the release of 23 abducted passengers and truck drivers, the acting governor said they were released following hectic efforts by local elders. "Whenever the Taliban face defeat they block roads and abduct passengers for ransom," he added. The militants stopped 20 trucks on their way from Kandahar to the Kajran district of Uruzgan and took the drivers to unknown location last Wednesday.

He added 20 trucks loaded with food items stopped by insurgents on Helmand-Kajran road, had also been released. (Pajhwok)

(12) All MPs Faced...

office when the attack happened. Abdul Zahir Qadeer, the first deputy speaker, informed the house: "I had warned Majidi a month back that he is on the hit list of suicide attackers." The parliamentarian, when replied he could not cope with the threat, was offered an armoured vehicle by the deputy speaker.

"I have a list. All MPs are faced with a security threat," he added. Without giving details, Zahir claimed receiving similar reports from different security organs.

On November 16, the vehicle of woman lawmaker Shukria Barakzai had come under suicide attack in Kabul. Three people were killed and 30 others including the MP wounded.

The deputy asked the relevant organs to pay special attention to the protection of legislators. "Security threats to us are seen as threats to the entire nation," he remarked. Hamidzai Lalai, a public representative from southern Kandahar province, vehemently condemned suicide attacks on and Majidi and called for bringing the perpetrators to justice. (Pajhwok)

(13) Natural Disasters...

also voiced same concerns by saying that wheat crop was mostly damaged in attacks by some kinds of insects.

The medicines and other pesticide advised by agriculture officials could not produce any positive results to protect the crop, he recalled.

He demanded the government to help farmers in producing bumper crop to fulfill local demands. Nazari Gul, a senior official at agricultural directorate, said growers did not observe agricultural rules.

"We shared the problem with the Ministry of Agriculture to protect harvests from insects and other natural calamities. A solution to the problem will be worked out soon," he added. (Pajhwok)

(14) Speakers Call...

to a report in a Pakistani newspaper, the Express Tribune.

Kabul also desired better relations with Islamabad by removing misunderstandings, analyst Aimal Khan said, adding the Afghan government had noted Pakistan's reservations regarding India's growing presence there.

The speakers urged Pakistan to support a democratic and strong government in Afghanistan and give up trying, as it had in the past, to install a regime of its choice in Kabul. "We need to expand our circle of friends in region."

The neighbours were urged to evolve a comprehensive joint anti-terrorism mechanism, enhance people-to-people contact and cultural exchanges. Frequent exchanges of visits by media people were also suggested. (Pajhwok)

(15) Four Polish ...

upholding the "not guilty" verdict given to three others.

On Aug. 16, 2007, six people were killed when the village of Nangar Khel, in Afghanistan's southeastern Paktika Province, was subjected to mortar and heavy machine gun fire. Another two people died later in hospital. Women and children were among the victims. Seriously wounded Afghan civilians were brought to Poland for treatment and compensation was paid to the families of those killed.

The incident occurred after two International Security Assistance Force vehicles were damaged by roadside bombs near the village. A group of Polish commandos arrived on the scene a few hours later to look for the Taliban fighters responsible for the attack. The Polish soldiers, who claimed that the Taliban had set up positions around the village, fired a high-caliber machine gun and a 60 mm mortar. At least four mortar shells fell on a civilian building. Seven soldiers from Poland's 18th Airborne Assault Battalion were charged. The prosecution alleged that the killing of eight civilians by firing on an undefended building that had no military significance constituted a war crime and requested prison terms of between five and 12 years.

On June 1, 2011 the Warsaw court, however, decided that there was insufficient evidence to support a war crime conviction. The court also held that there was no evidence that the soldiers had received an order to shell the village. But military prosecutors appealed the decision saying the original acquittal was made without a complete assessment of the evidence and demanded a full re-trial of the soldiers. The Supreme Court later decided that only four of them would face the charges again due to some substantial questions raised during the trial. (Agencies)

(16) Projects ...

residents' and civil society's responsibility to monitor such projects."

Ghulam Mohammad, a resident of 6th police district, told Pajhwok Afghan News more than 8,000 families living in the area lacked potable water and they consumed river water. Faizabad has around 100,000 residents and half of them have no access to clean water.

Shah Wali Adeeb, the acting governor, said their performance in areas of education, health and clean water supply had been transparent. He cited buildings constructed for the agriculture faculty, girls' hostel, provincial hospital and hydropower dams as some major achievements. (Pajhwok)

(17) Council Fears US...

The U.S. announcement during Ghani's recent visit to Washington to slow the pace at which it would wind down a force of 9,800 soldiers, and allow them to stay through the end of 2015, could further complicate the process.

Under the previous plan, U.S. forces were to have been cut to about half their current levels by year-end, and the change has angered the Taliban, which has stated that foreign troops against which it has fought must not be allowed to stay.

"This will certainly complicate the peace effort, because the Taliban have long wanted foreign troops and U.S. forces in particular to leave Afghanistan," High Peace Council spokesman Shahzada Shahid told Reuters. The High Peace Council was appointed by Ghani's predecessor to negotiate peace with the Taliban and has some 70 members.

Some senior regional diplomats and Afghan power brokers say the U.S. decision makes little difference on the battlefield, but could further erode already fragile trust between the Taliban and the government.

They fear that by seeking additional U.S. military support, Ghani is sending the wrong message to the Taliban, which was ousted in an American-led operation in 2001 and is fighting to return to power and impose a strict interpretation of sharia.

One of the more outspoken parliamentarians in Kabul, Abdul Qader Zazai, said the decision would have a "negative impact" on the peace process, while the Taliban's official spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, condemned the U.S. move.

"The Afghans will never accept foreign occupation and have the patience and determination for a long struggle," said Mujahid, who, given the fractious nature of the movement, does not necessarily reflect the views of the entire leadership.

President Barack Obama still intends to withdraw U.S. troops by 2017, but by delaying the reduction this year, he hopes to bolster under-resourced Afghan forces during the traditional fighting season which begins in spring.

Although NATO's U.S.-led mission in Afghanistan, which numbered 130,000 at its peak, has formally ended combat duties, thousands of soldiers remain to train local forces and provide support including gathering intelligence.

Around 1,800 soldiers are also engaged in fighting Taliban and al Qaeda remnants in Afghanistan.

Afghan commanders welcomed Obama's decision, although U.S. air support has been gradually wound down and is only used in emergencies, hampering their ability to battle the Taliban.

Little has been said publicly about what the Taliban may demand before coming to the negotiating table, but even if talks did begin, experts said the process could take years.

As well as how to divide power and objections about foreign troops in Afghanistan, other potential stumbling blocks include possible demands that the constitution be changed and how Taliban fighters are reintegrated into society.

"Power sharing is not the most controversial issue compared with Taliban demands that the constitution be extensively rewritten," said Taliban expert Antonio Giustozzi, who has studied the movement for a decade. (Reuters)

(18) Public Order ...

with authorities where the unit should be based."

"Nuristan is a mountainous region full of forests, offering insurgents shelter and secure hideouts. We do have police posts in the Manogai district of Kunar and Waigal in Nuristan, but POP personnel will also be based there", Safi concluded.

governor, hoped the deployment of 700 POP members would help improve the law and order situation. "At long last, our longstanding demand for has been approved."

The POP unit would come to Nuristan on a temporary basis — like reserved force — and who would be sent to different to cope with security, the acting governor said.

Joint military operations of Afghan National Army and other security forces were needed in some areas to secure roads and ensure peace, the official believed. (Pajhwok)

(19) Unknown Gunmen...

passengers from Herat-Farah highway.

The fourth incident was abduction of 20 passengers and drivers in Kandahar-Daikundi highway who were later released following the mediation of elders, as said by the local officials. However, the protests are still underway in different parts of the country including the sit-in protest before the Parliament, criticizing what they call government's inaction to release the hostages. (Tolonews)

(20) Over 80...

features Afghan security forces. Launched a week ago, the operation led to the seizure of weapons and destruction of 12 motorbikes belonging to the Taliban.

Two ANA soldiers were killed and 18 others wounded during clashes with the fighters, according to the statement, which vehemently repudiated reports regarding civilian casualties.

In separate clearing operations in Nangarhar, Khost, Ghazni, Uruzgan, Sar-i-Pul and Farah provinces, 11 militants were killed and as many injured. Four suspects were arrested and 62 landmines defused.

The Defense Department says that due threw hefty weapon against roadside bombs and mines, not belonging to the army and died. At least nine ANA personnel lost their lives militant attacks and roadside bombings. (Pajhwok)

(21) 3 Key Members...

Afghanistan's intelligence agency states that Haqqani network was behind the November 2014 attack in Paktika province which left at least 60 people killed and more the 50 wounded. The attack was carried out during a volleyball match where hundreds of football fans had gathered to enjoy the match. (KP)

(22) 3 Police, 5...

a roadside bomb ripped through their patrol in Shahr-i-Safa district of the province, a security official wishing not to be named said.

The Taliban claimed security forces suffered heavy casualties in the clash near Qalat. Three policemen and one rebel were killed, said Zabihullah Mujahid, the group's spokesman. (Pajhwok)

(23) Windstorm Rips...

open sky. Mohammad Ewaz, a tribal chief in the Miana village of the district, told Pajhwok Afghan News the storm began on Sunday and continued till midnight.

The windstorm left the metallic roofs of some tents completely damaged while a number of other tents torn apart by the wind.

Most of the affected families were living with their relatives, he said, demanding authorities to help families repair their tents.

Bibi Gul, an affected woman, said she was displaced as a result of last year's floods and the tents her family resolved their housing problem to some extent. But now the tent they were living in were completely in last night's storm.

District Chief Abdul Khalil Rahimi said the windstorm inflicted no human casualties and the affected families were shifted to safe areas.

However, Nasir Kahzad, director Natural Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) said the issue had been brought into the notice of NRC and the aid organization had pledged to repair the damaged tents. (Pajhwok)

(24) Power Supply ...

again within two hours in Sangin's Sarwan Qala area, where fresh operations against militants had just begun.

He said their continued efforts finally succeeded on Monday when the cables were connected and electricity restored to Kandahar City and Lashkargah.

Kandahar City receives 10 megawatts of electricity and Lashkargah five megawatts from the Kajaki hydropower plant that produces 33 megawatts of electricity. The power supply restoration sent a wave of happiness among residents, but they were concerned about the summer situation. (Pajhwok)