Hundreds of Thousands of People March in Kabul

Ghani Praises Demonstrators for Peaceful March
Demonstrators Praise Security Forces with Flowers

By Our Correspondent

KABUL - Hundreds of thousands of people marched on Monday through Kabul streets, demanding the government’s planned rerouting of the 500kV TUTAP power line through Bamyan.

The peaceful protestors gathered in a square away from the city center chanting “TUTAP is our right”, “TUTAP” power line, which would connect the Central Asian countries of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan with Afghanistan and Pakistan, was initially meant to pass through central Bamiyan. Government officials said Bamiyan would be compensated under the route’s framework. More than 168.6 billion afghans has been set aside as development budget for the units this year.

KABUL - The Wolesi Jirga or lower house of parliament on Monday said most government departments had so far used up to 10 percent of their development budget during the past five months of the ongoing fiscal year. Afghanistan fiscal year begins from December 22 and the draft budget for the ongoing year was approved by the parliament the same month. Government officials said 56 budgetary units are under government’s framework. More than 168.8 billion afghans has been set aside as development budget for the units this year.

KABUL - After widespread protests in Kabul, the Presidential Palace on Monday announced the government would follow suggestions of the special commission tasked with reviewing the multinational power project route. The Turkmenistan-Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TUTAP) power project will import 500kV of electricity from the Central Asian states to energy-starved Pakistan through Afghanistan. The Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE) has recommended the project be implemented through the Salang Pass crossing Bamiyan province, but thousands of protestors have stressed the scheme must pass through central Bamiyan. Government officials said Bamiyan would be connected via a separate power line from central Parwan province to resolve the electricity problems – an argument that has cut little ice with opponents of the route change.

A statement from the Presidential Palace said that protest demonstrations in line with the country’s constitution will be interrogated. "Not utilising the budget is betrayal of the nation. Departments which failed to utilise their development funds should be interrogated," the law maker stressed.

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BEIJING - China vowed further support for Afghanistan’s political reconciliation process and national construction during an official visit by Afghan Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah.

Premier Li Keqiang made the remarks while holding talks with Abdullah at the Great Hall of the People on Monday afternoon.

Calling Afghanistan a priority in China’s neighborhood diplomacy, Li said China is committed to consolidating and developing bilateral strategic cooperative partnership and supporting Afghanistan’s efforts to safeguard its independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security. Li praised Afghanistan’s firm support on... (More on P4,5)

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Power Line to be Laid Based on Panel’s Proposals: Govt.

KABUL - A NATO media section officials in Brussels told Pamir Afghan News that NATO foreign ministers are due to meet on Thursday and Friday at the alliance’s headquarters in the Belgian capital, Brussels. The peace talks process and the alliance’s planned rerouting of the 500kV TUTAP power line in Afghanistan’s Bamyan province through central Bamiyan province. The Ministry of Water and Energy (MoWE) has recommended the project be implemented through the Salang Pass crossing Bamiyan province, but thousands of protestors have stressed the scheme must pass through central Bamiyan. Government officials said Bamiyan would be compensated under the route’s framework. More than 168.6 billion afghans has been set aside as development budget for the units this year.

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