

### (1) Abdullah Slams ...

Talking about ethnic and pitting one province against others is not encouraging anyone towards any positive goal."

Hekmatyar was also strongly criticized by a number of analysts for saying that "independent islands of power" in the country have to end. "Today, there are sovereign islands of power in the country. Everyone who has made their way to the ministries and departments has established a sovereign island of power of their own. This trend must come to an end," Hekmatyar said.

Hekmatyar said the practice has diminished opportunities for some other ethnicities and has caused a gap between them and the government. He also called on the Afghan political parties to participate in elections and confirm their share in government through the ballots. (Tolonews)

### (2) Hekmatyar Opposes ...

Loya Jirga," said Hekmatyar.

On the peace process between the Afghan government and the Taliban, Hekmatyar said the Taliban must use the opportunity and enter into purposeful peace negotiation talks with the government by opening an office in Kabul.

"It is a fact that Pakistan has suffered much from this war. Pakistan not only benefited from this war, but it paid much for it. Even today Pakistan has its own Taliban and it has reached Karachi. The only country which is has benefited from this war is Iran," he added.

Members of the Afghan public have dismissed Hekmatyar's views and say that Pakistan gains more than any other country from the turmoil in Afghanistan.

"When the US defeated the Taliban regime, Pakistan achieved a lot from it. All Afghans know that Pakistan has always benefited from the war in Afghanistan and therefore Pakistan wants the war to be continued," said civil society activist Sayed Jamaluddin Asif Khail.

"Pakistan gets more from the war in Afghanistan than Iran. Pakistan funds and supports the militants in Afghanistan. The Jihad project in Afghanistan is handled by Pakistan, it has also developed nuclear weapons and lives in peace. It is only the Afghans who are facing problems," said another activist Farid Ahmad Taskeen.

Hekmatyar's remarks come at a time that relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan have been fragile over the past years, with Afghan president Ashraf Ghani constantly warning that Pakistan may face isolation unless it halts its meddling in the affairs in Afghanistan.

Earlier in the day, Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah reacted to Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's recent remarks and said "unity among the people is a must".

On Sunday Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of Hizb-e-Islami, said at a gathering in Khost province that some eastern parts of the country have less of a share in the government compared to Panjshir, Bamiyan and Daikundi provinces in the center of Afghanistan.

Reacting to Hekmatyar's comments, Abdullah said "unity among the people is crucial at the moment". (Tolonews)

### (3) Danish Wants ...

scholarships for Afghan students, he hoped.

The VP urged the expansion of cultural, economic and business links. He also called for cementing political and strategic relations between the allies.

He commended India's assistance in constructing Afghanistan's parliament building and Salma dam in western Herat province.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Rao suggested air connectivity of Kabul as well as other Afghan cities with Mumbai to boost trade and promote tourism. (Pajhwok)

### (4) IMF Confirms ...

employment opportunities.

ACB director Khalil Sediq said the IMF while assessing economic growth and the banking system, found the ACB activities to be beneficial to the country. According to Sediq, over 100 people have been arrested on charges of money laundering and financing terrorism. The ACB will accelerate its efforts and monitor private banks to prevent money laundering.

"We will increase pressure on banks to implement all the set standards to prevent money laundering. We also will hold accountable those involved in money transactions and ensure that no one can launder mon-

ey through them," said Sediq.

Based on the information provided by the finance ministry, in the second phase of the evaluation conducted by the IMF executive board on the improvement of the banking system in Afghanistan, the board was satisfied with the efforts carried out by the Afghan government.

According to the finance ministry, having IMF support is vital for improving banking systems and other financial plans in the country.

"The IMF has assessed government activities in various parts especially in financial stability, fighting corruption, strengthening banking and employment and the result was positive," Finance Ministry spokesman, Ajmal Abdul Rahimzai, said.

Based on the commitments of the Afghan government to IMF, if the government brought significant reforms in the economic sector, the IMF will provide yearly aid packages of up to \$200 million USD to the government until 2018 and do so under the framework of Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund. (Tolonews)

### (5) Wolesi Jirga...

The Wolesi Jirga can summon a minister and disqualify him/her if they fail to convince lawmakers with their information.

Amini said Zazai had also added her name to the list of 62 lawmakers but she added she was never in the group and would never make a deal on her vote.

"In the past some lawmakers were rumored warning ministers with support of others if they did not accept their demands, it is no longer a rumor but a fact" she said.

However, Abdul Qadir Zazai, secretary of the lower house, said, "If anyone proved this claim, I am ready to resign, otherwise internal duty rules should be applied on Amini."

He said Amini had defamed him and she should be banned from the lower house for 20 days.

Zazai asked Amini to name the minister who had accused him of demanding employment of his people in the ministry, but she did not name that minister.

But Amini said: "Zazai knows who is the minister, I can name him in the office of the house speaker in presence of Zazai."

Abdul Rauf Ibrahim, Wolesi Jirga speaker, talking to lawmakers, said: "You should consider national and the lower house interests when expressing your views."

He said accusing someone without evidence was against the morals of the lower house.

Ibrahim tasked the protection and privileges commission of the lower house to investigate the issue. (Pajhwok)

### (6) Central Asian ...

The UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia is a special political mission of the United Nations Organization established in 2007 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan upon the initiative of the five Central Asian states.

The role of the Center is to identify and address existing and potential threats to regional stability. The Center will also facilitate partnerships between the governments of Central Asia in cooperation with regional and international organizations. (Tolonews)

### (7) Indians to Begin...

worth \$2.1 million USD, will cross seven provinces, Minister of Energy and Water, Ali Ahmad Usmani, said. "This is not the only project which will transfer energy from Central Asia to Afghanistan and South Asia, but this is a bridge which connects the four nations in the region," said Usmani.

Jamshed Shoimzoda, Deputy Minister of Energy and Water of Tajikistan, said that CASA-1000 project connects the people and paves the way for the progress of countries in the region, adding that from the technical aspect, CASA-1000 is a unique project in the region, he says.

Overview of CASA-1000:

The CASA-1000 project will include:

- 500 kV AC line from Datka (in the Kyrgyz Republic) to Sugd-500 (477 kilometers away, in Tajikistan)
- 1,300 megawatt AC-DC Converter Station at Sangtuda (Tajikistan)
- 750-kilometer High Voltage DC line from Sangtuda (Tajikistan) to Nowshera (Pakistan)
- 1,300 megawatt DC-AC Converter Station at Nowshera

CASA-1000 project will start from Kyrgyzstan and it will reach Afghanistan through Tajikistan and onward to Pakistan's Peshawar city. The length of the project in Afghanistan is estimated to eventually run

for 562km. With the implementation of the project, 1300 megawatt electricity of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan will arrive in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Afghanistan will receive 300 megawatts of power and the remaining one thousand megawatts will be transited to Pakistan via Afghanistan territory.

"Of the four countries, Afghanistan is the first country which has wrapped up procurement works for the project, we have completed these works six months before the deadline," said Amanullah Ghali, chairman Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS).

The CASA-1000 Project is an important step in building a functioning, efficient electricity system across Central Asia and South Asia. By facilitating clean power export revenues for the Central Asian countries and by alleviating electricity shortages in the South Asian countries, this project will enhance growth prospects across both regions.

This project demonstrates landmark cooperation among the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. The modern and efficient CASA-1000 electricity transmission system will help transform the region and signify an important step toward realizing the planned Central Asia-South Asia Regional Electricity Market (CASAREM). The CASAREM initiative will help not only these four countries but also improve the electrical systems and develop inter-regional cooperation between Central Asia and South Asia.

Afghanistan will receive \$50 million in transit duty from the project annually. The project will also enhance the economic connectivity between the contributing nations and will boost Afghanistan's transit reputation in the region and entire Asia. (Tolonews)

### (8) Voters Cannot...

access to the centers, but this was not achieved.

Election commission secretary Abdul Badi Sayyad has meanwhile accepted that some problems in assessing the polling centers exist but said the latest assessment is not final.

"If in some provinces people feel that new polling centers should be added, or have any complaints about the centers being removed by the election officials, they can register their complaints to the electoral complaints commission. After their complaints were registered, it is possible to bring some minor changes to polling centers. This was the primary assessment and after the (final) assessment, the complaints will be finalized," said Sayyad.

"Transparent and professional work was not done in the assessment of the polling centers. The reason is that the commission does not have the capacity to conduct a transparent assessment," Naeem Ayubzada, head of Transparent Election Foundation of Afghanistan said.

The Election commission chairman's seat has been vacant for a month and institutions overseeing election process say they do not believe that elections will be held based on its current schedule.

"We face a lack of management in making decisions regarding the election and it can affect elections. This could even delay holding the election," Yusuf Rasheed, director of Free and Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan said.

The head of Hizb-e-Islami, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, emphasized the need to conduct the upcoming elections based on the scheduled time.

The Election commission was supposed to digitalize elections and hold the upcoming parliamentary election using technology. However, the commission on Saturday said they have prepared an outline based on which they will hold a paper-ballot election. (Tolonews)

### (9) Reducing Number ...

coordination meeting with journalists and human rights activists in Jalalabad city.

Shersha Hamdard, one of the meeting organizers, told Pajhwok Afghan News they invited journalists and civil society activists to strengthen coordination among them. The participants discussed various issues related to human rights and shared their concern about the ongoing situation.

They also expressed concern about the IEC move to reduce polling stations in Nangarhar and slammed it as unfair and unprofessional decision. A civil activist Dr. Niamtullah Hamdard said about 600,000 refugees had returned to Nangarhar during the past three years and despite the increased population, the IEC reduced the number of polling centers.

He said the IEC had either made the decision for political reasons or because of non-professionalism. Another activist Rohullah Lalpurwal urged the IEC to review its decision and asked the government to monitor polling stations.

Last week, the IEC announced completing evaluation of voting centers and designating 7,355 polling stations nationwide. (Pajhwok)

### (10) Afghanistan ...

first Test," BCCI acting secretary Amitabh Choudhary was quoted by Press Trust India.

Afghanistan, along with Ireland, were awarded Test status by the International Cricket Council in June. Ireland will play their first Test match against Pakistan in May. (Agencies)

### (11) DABS Officials ...

since 2002 and called for the issue to be seriously pursued.

A number of other members of the lower house also held similar views and demanded investigation into the topic and summoning of DABS officials.

Speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahim tasked the house's transportation and telecommunication commission with scrutinizing the MEC report and also ordered the summoning of DABS officials to next sessions of the lower house.

Waheedullah Tawhidi, DABS spokesman, about the MEC report, told Pajhwok Afghan News: "Every kind of allegations being leveled against DABS must be based on proof and documents." He said claims without documents and proofs weren't acceptable to DABS. (Pajhwok)

### (12) Militants Killed ...

was also killed and two commandos were wounded during the operation," he said.

He did not provide further details. Taliban has not yet commented on the report. (Tolonews)

### (13) Afghanistan Asks...

country.

Vaziri underlined that his country wants increased cooperation with Iran, specially in military fields, and said, "We demand Iran to treat our wounded soldiers who have been injured in the war against terrorists." Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in a telephone conversation with his Afghan counterpart Ashraf Ghani in November voiced his country's support for eradicating terrorism and establishing peace in Afghanistan.

During the phone talk, the Iranian president said that Tehran is determined to help Kabul to get rid of the terrorist groups and restore stability to that country.

"Sustainable peace and security in Afghanistan is to the benefit of the regional countries, including Iran," President Rouhani added. Meantime, he underlined the need for an all-out campaign against narcotics production and trafficking, and called for extensive international cooperation to eradicate the phenomenon. (FNA)

### (14) 3 Suspects...

had escaped to Mazar-i-Sharif, but they were wanted and forced to flee Balkh. A police team dispatched to Balkh to arrest the killers managed to catch them in Baghlan.

On December 8, four unknown men gunned down four women, three children and one man. At least two others were injured. Two guests were among the dead. (Pajhwok)

### (15) MoI to Probe ...

Russian and French militants in Afghanistan who came to fight alongside Taliban and Daesh groups.

"Some of them are accompanied by their families and others are alone and live in Darzab. We also have reports about the presence of French fighters among them," said provincial governor Lotfullah Azizi.

The question before the public is how Daesh militants and their families manage to enter Afghanistan. In the past, reports came that Daesh and Taliban fighters had engaged in deadly battles in the eastern province of Nangarhar, but in some other areas of the country, the two militant groups have been avoiding fighting each other.

Kohistan district of Sar-e-Pul and Bala Murghab district of Ghor province are among the areas where the Daesh and Taliban have stopped fighting.

"The majority of the casualties were reported in the fight against Daesh in areas of Afghanistan such as Shinwar, Khogyani and in general the entire people of the east, but recently more pressure has been reported on Khogyani," said CEO Abdullah Abdullah.

"Military operations will be carried out against these groups during the winter to eliminate their bases," said MoI spokesman, Najib Danish.

Previously the Afghan security institutions have pledged to launch large-scale operations in various regions of the country in a move to eliminate the bases of the insurgents. However, the protection of areas cleared after the operation has been a big challenge for the country.

Afghan government officials have said the matter of the protection of areas cleared from the militants, has been included in the four-year military strategy of the Afghan government. (Tolonews)

### (16) Ruined Ghazni ...

culture department and the youths department were all in one building that created serious problems for our work," he said.

But their problem was solved with construction of the new building.

The buildings for the information and culture department, the public library, Milli Television, museum and some other departments had been destroyed in a Taliban attack in 2014. (Pajhwok)

### (17) No Female Journalist...

said she had many times faced with problems which she could only tell to a female journalist.

But she had buried those issues in her heart because there was no female journalist with whom she could discuss them.

She said the Ministry of Information and Culture, journalist unions and media outlets should work on issues that prevented women from working in the field in Zabul.

She said other provinces had the same problem in the past, but their local governments made efforts and resolved it.

Shabana Khushala, head of Khushal Charity Foundation in Zabul, said their activities were not properly covered in the media due to the absence of female journalists.

"Whenever we organize an event, I uninterestingly contact male journalists because I am not sure whether they will come or the participants (which are only women) probably show negative reaction to men," she said.

She said organs that worked for women's rights should encourage media outlets to employ female workers as well.

Sadiqa Jalali, Zabul women's affairs director, said women's role was important in media like in health and education sectors.

She said her department had shared the issue with a number of organizations but failed to elicit a positive response.

"Media gives voice to a society, it investigates problems and situations and shares them with officials and the world," she said. But this voice is unfortunately mute for women in Zabul."

"A female journalist is important like a female doctor," she said. She said domestic media and departments had more responsibilities in the area.

"If female journalists are not employed permanently, Milli Television and other TV channels should at least hire female journalists from other provinces to make reports about women's problems and present them to the public," Jalali said.

She said there were many educated girls in Zabul who were to work in the media, but they only needed training and support from other relevant organizations. Abdul Moqim Halimi, director of Khkula Radio station in Zabul, told Pajhwok that cultural restrictions were the main obstacle for female journalists in the province. "Women also do not feel safe at workplace which is another reason they do not work in media", he said.

Halimi said he had hired female workers in his radio station for presenting an agricultural project, but after the project finished, he was unable to keep the female workers due to financial problems. All media organizations in Zabul agree that female workers are important, but no one takes action for removing hurdles women face in finding a job. (Pajhwok)

### (18) Bollywood's ...

by Raju Chadha and Rahul Mittra. Sanjay Dutt plays an army officer who wants to give the 'children of war' a ray of hope.

"I am keen to be a part of films that are highly content-driven. I want to create a memorable slate of films for my fans," he said in his statement. (Tolonews)