

(1) Ghani to...

watchdog organizations warned that any further delay in electoral reforms will question the legitimacy of the government and will further weaken people's trust in the elections.

"The government's silence and negligence towards the electoral reforms will give a legal base to activities of the current commissioners of electoral bodies," said Naem Ayubzada, head of the Transparent Election Foundation of Afghanistan (TEFA) and a member of the Election Commissioners' Selection Committee. He added that a delay in the implementation of reforms will also question the legitimacy of the government.

Electoral reforms faced a deadlock, after the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of Parliament) rejected a presidential decree on reforms and the selection committee stopped its activities. Although bringing about electoral reforms was one of the main promises made by the National Unity Government (NUG), the pace of the reforms has been very slow. (Tolonews)

(2) Gen. Dostum...

operations in the north are meant to strengthen our own party and destroy others," he explained.

Dostum added he had honestly left Kabul and accepted risks to fight against rebels despite being ill. He said such comments from some so-called experts should be used against Pakistan's intelligence agencies, Daesh and Uzbekistani fighters. He alleged such experts received orders from Pakistan intelligence agencies to destroy the national unity in Afghanistan.

Dostum said such baseless remarks could not help the Afghans who should work for strengthening the national unity instead.

"They accuse me of dividing Afghanistan while I voted for President Ashraf Ghani who is from a Pashtun tribe because I wanted to remove tribal and regional discriminations," he added, saying the operations in Jawzjan had been ordered by the National Security Council (NSC) and President Ghani.

Without naming anyone, he said the two individuals should prove where and when he entered the house of a Pashtun and killed his children. Dostum said he would investigate the propaganda against him and take the issue to a court after he concluding his operations in Jawzjan. The issue would be also shared with the President and the NSC for further attention, he added.

However, Seddiq Mansor Ansari, head of Afghanistan Civil Society Federation (ACSF) in response to Dostum's claims, said: "Before President Ghani appointed Dostum as VP, we had warned him that Dostum is addicted to genocides because he in the past regimes was also known as the leader of mass destructors." He said the VP once again violated his authority and traveled to northern region and got involved in fighting and genocides.

Ansari said the national unity government would collapse soon if it did not prevent criminal gangs from carrying out their destructive activities.

A week ago, Dostum left Kabul for Jawzjan and cleared Qush Tapa district from militants. Dostum is now busy in conducting operations in northwestern Faryab province. (Pajhwok)

(3) President Confers ...

of the International Security Assistance Force and United States Forces-Afghanistan on August 26, 2014. He is going to be replaced by Lt. Gen. John Nicholson. (Pajhwok)

(4) Afghan Special ...

operations over the past two months. Since Jan. 1 last year, Afghan security forces have assumed the full security charges from NATO and U.S. forces after the foreign troops switched from combat to support role, which focuses on training, advising and assisting Afghan forces. In addition, four Taliban were killed and two others detained after the Afghan Special Operation Force conducted a night raid operation against a Taliban hideout in northern Kunduz province, the statement noted. (Xinhua)

(5) 25 Percent...

Sediq Sediqqi, Mol spokesman said: "There are currently numerous plans in place to further enhance the capability of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces." He went on to tell the Wall Street Journal: "Massive reinforcements in areas of conflict have taken place in the past months, new measures are already in place." The newspaper stated that this comes amid Interior Minister Noorulhaq Olomi's sudden departure. The Presidential Palace said on Thursday he had been appointed as Afghanistan's

ambassador to the Netherlands.

But the Wall Street Journal stated he quit and published a letter accusing government of deliberately ignoring proposals for reforms and failing to approve appointments within the ministry in a timely manner. "This lack of attention... increased the level of casualties of the police and civilians," Olomi said.

"Of late, I am realizing that there actually exists little interest in meeting my suggestions."

The newspaper stated that U.S-led Resolute Support in Afghanistan declined to comment on police force losses, but said it is working on a system that will be rolled out at the interior ministry in June. This new system will reportedly make it easier to monitor attrition and identify the areas that are worst hit.

The current system makes it difficult to "look at trends across the army of police force to see if the problem is in a unit or region because the data is entered manually," said Colonel Robert McVay, who is in charge of the program.

Meanwhile a number of MPs have said that the main reason for desertion among police is weak leadership. One MP, Amanullah Paiman said: "After the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan, attacks by insurgents intensified against our security forces and on the other hand, leadership within the security forces is weak.

Senator Abdullah Qarlog meanwhile said that "from (former president) Hamid Karzai's time until today we have not had strong leadership to secure Afghanistan." (Tolonews)

(6) Mol Rejects...

number of officers absent - for different reasons such as absenteeism, illness and other issues - remains quite low and it can be estimated that around four to five thousand only are away," Najibullah Danish, deputy spokesman for the Mol said.

Experts believe that poor leadership within the security institution has been a major challenge for the Afghan police.

"In my opinion the Afghan police has been confronted with problems in terms of management; the problems aren't supposed to be with the ministers, commanders, deputies; the problem exists with the leadership of the government.

Government leadership has not been able to create a legally supportive framework for police; the minister of interior must have a supportive responsibility and not the responsibility for appointments and changes. Appointments and changes must occur from the lower positions to the upper ones," former deputy minister of interior Mirza Mohammad Yarmand said.

Nepotism in the appointments within the government institutions has also led to state of uncertainty, say critics.

"In my view, there is an environment of mistrust between the ministers and the president on the one hand and nepotism on the other. This has undermined the options for considering the abilities and qualifications," said military expert Mirdad Khan Nejrabi. Following the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan, the Afghan security forces have shouldered the overall security responsibilities of the country, a move which has been plagued with challenges. (Tolonews)

(7) UN ...

Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees "because individual determination of refugee status and assessment of individual protection needs are not made possible."

In response to fresh border restrictions, hundreds of Afghan refugees staged a demonstration in Greece in protest against restrictions imposed on them by the Macedonian and Serbian governments.

Dujarric added that Ban, "calls on all countries to keep their borders open, and to act in a spirit of responsibility sharing and solidarity, including through expanding legal pathways to access asylum."

Dujarric said Turkey is hosting more than 2.6 million refugees and asylum seekers, and the influx to Greece from Turkey continues unabated.

"All the people you are seeing around here, we came from Afghanistan, we took a lot of risk from Afghanistan coming to here and we hoped to get to Germany and all the people around here are looking to get to Germany. But when we came here the borders, the Macedonian borders closed, we are really disappointed, we are hopeless, we are homeless." An Afghan refugee Mukhtar Ahmad said. Hundreds of refugees with majority of them women and children have spending uncertain future in Greece amid fresh restrictions.

"I don't know, I think Europe made a huge mistake, especially (German

chancellor Angela) Merkel, bringing all these refugees. To solve the problem is where it is originated. You solve them where they are, in Afghanistan, in Syria. And Syria we know the situation, we cannot help them. But you don't bring them here and cause all these problems. And look now, they closed the border for all the Afghan people. What these people going to do here? Greece does not have enough money to help these people, even if the United Nations give them, and they said they will give them, but what are you going to do with these problems?" A Palestinian volunteer Hamza said.

It seems that the Afghan government is also unable to address the concerns of Afghan refugees in Greece.

"Fresh border restrictions in the Balkans is a clear violation of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. We call on the international organizations and human rights organizations to mount pressure on these countries who have signed the convention to deliver on their pledges and avoid closing their borders to refugees," Islamuddin Juraat, spokesman to the ministry refugees and repatriations said. (Tolonews)

(8) 1,500 Children ...

campaign.

He said more than 300,000 CC blood had been collected last year during a similar cricket tournament. About 30,000 CC blood was collected from donors during matches on the eve of the tournament involving Pedestrians of Life, Peace Ambassadors, Peace Mangers and Servants of People teams.

A resident of Behsud district, Naveed Ahmad, said his 11-year-old son was a Thalassemia patient.

He said thalassemia was an inherited characteristic of blood and it reduced the amount of haemoglobin in a human body leading to anaemia.

He said his son was given 500cc blood each month. The father said he often faced with difficulties in finding blood for his son because his son's blood group was O (negative), which was rarely found.

A resident of Jalalabad, Rizwanullah, said he had come to watch the tournament and then got to know about the blood donation campaign.

He said he donated blood to please God and also watched the match, calling on others to donate blood and save the lives of thalassemia patients. During the campaign, deputy governor Mohammad Hanif Gardiwal and a number of departmental heads, civil society activists and university teachers also donated blood.

The first match between Peace Ambassadors and Pedestrians of Life was won by the former. (Pajhwok)

(9) MYO-Organised...

had met them on the Education Star contest. He said the ministry supported every individual promoting education in line with the law of the country. (Pajhwok)

(10) Turkmenistan, ...

Significance of the construction of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline was underlined too.

The sides then pointed out construction of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Tajikistan (TAT) railway, which is expected to serve for economic prosperity of Central Asia.

Construction of TAPI was started in December 2015. Its total length is 1,735 kilometers. (AKIpress)

(11) More Than ...

Malik and Amanullah had been detained, he said.

At least 20 villages in Khwaja Sabz Posh district have been cleared of insurgents, according to the VP, who is also a dreaded Uzbek commander. Scores of fighters were wounded in clashes with security personnel, who seized two anti-aircraft guns, one mortar launcher and one machine-gun.

Dostum, who heads the Junbish-i-Islami party, said hundreds of foreign rebels had fled the area and security forces were chasing them. He acknowledged two security personnel were killed during the ongoing offensive.

"In line with the decision of the National Security Council, I am in northern Afghanistan to lead the anti-Taliban offensive and protect the region from insurgents."

But the Taliban claimed inflicting heavy casualties on Dostum-led security forces in Khwaja Sabz Posh district. Their spokesman Qari Yousaf Ahmadi said the fighters had made a tactical retreat from the area. He rejected Dostum's assertion of nabbing 120 Taliban fighters. (Pajhwok)

(12) 48 Militants ...

wounded in Qara Bagh district of Ghazni, one killed and two arrested in Nadir Shah Kot district of Khost,

six killed and two wounded in Zurmat district of Paktia, four killed and as many others wounded in Imam Sahib district of Kunduz, three killed in Gomal district of Paktika, one killed and another wounded in Dehrawud district of Uruzgan province. The statement further states that 15 militants were also arrested from Khwaja Sabz Posh district of Jawzjan province with a number of heavy and light weapons.

Three Army personnel embraced martyrdom during these operations, the press release adds. (KP)

(13) Taliban Claim ...

after seizing the base.

But Paktia police chief Brig. Gen. Qadar Gul Zadrani said security forces had tactically retreated from the base. He said the president had ordered that in areas where security posts were not required should be packed up and installed in other areas and the Kolago was one such area.

He said no clash had taken place between security forces and insurgents in the Kolago area.

A resident of the area, Bismillah, told Pajhwok Afghan News that security forces on Saturday left the base and the Taliban captured it.

"When the security forces left the base and started moving towards the district centre, the Taliban attacked them and later they erected their white flag on the base."

The resident said the Taliban had previously many times mounted attacks on the same base.

Zurmat is 40km west of Gardez, the provincial capital, and Kolago area borders Ghazni province. (Pajhwok)

(14) UN Urges...

discussions" with the Pakistani government to resolve the population's uncertain situation.

"We await with a lot of interest the decision of the government on those questions," Okoth-Obbo told Reuters during a Friday visit to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, home to a large Afghan population.

Many Afghans living in Pakistan have been living in the country for decades and contribute significantly to the country's labour force.

"HOST FATIGUE"

Since 2009, international donors have poured more than \$30 million into improving basic services in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa communities that have hosted their neighbours for decades.

"People have hosted (the Afghan refugees) for over 35 years," Imran Zeb, Pakistan's chief commissioner for Afghan refugees, told Reuters after a ceremony inaugurating one of three schools in the area to have been refurbished with aid money.

Pakistan is committed to helping refugees voluntarily get back to Afghanistan, Zeb said, but: "There is definitely some host fatigue."

The government is trying to improve education and opportunities for the 70 percent of the refugees who are under 25 so they "can do something positive" and not fall into crime or recruitment by "elements that are not desirable," he said.

With security in Afghanistan deteriorating over the past year, many of the Afghans living in the Kalabat area have no interest in going home anytime soon.

"We have no option... We don't have land. Where should we go?" asked Jawlai, a mother of five children who fled to Pakistan in the 1980s and, like many Afghans, uses only one name. (Reuters)

(15) 12 Killed...

Ministry of Defence (MoD) and blew himself at around 3:30pm. Among the dead were mostly civilians, he said.

He put the death toll at nine and said more than a dozen had been wounded in the blast.

Earlier, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) said six people wounded in the explosion were hospitalized.

An eyewitness said it was a suicide explosion that took place in front of the entrance gate to the Ministry of Defence (MoD) at around 3:25pm.

The witness, Ghulam Haidar, told Pajhwok Afghan News: "I was passing through the area when a powerful explosion occurred. I saw a column of thick smoke rising into the sky."

He said the explosion targeted a security forces' vehicle which was comprehensively destroyed and some people were likely killed and wounded. No group has so far claimed responsibility for the attack. (Pajhwok)

(16) Number of ...

RasoulAkhunzada, a religious personality, said such incidents did not happen without reasons. He believed the dead woman would have been deprived of her due rights. The scholar said human rights violations were on the increase. (Pajhwok)

(17)NDS Rescue 2 ...

were arrested by the intelligence operatives during the raid, NDS said, adding that the suspects have been identified as Abdul Razaq son of Mohammad Agha, Mohammad Nadir son of Mohammad Jan, Hamidullah son of Lal Mohammad and Khan Wali son of Mohammad Ibrahim.

This comes as the Afghan intelligence operatives rescued a hostage from the kidnapers in central Maidan Wardak province of Afghanistan as the kidnapers were demanding a ransom of \$1 million for his release.

Kidnap for ransom cases still continue in parts of the country despite the Afghan intelligence nabbed two MAFIA bosses involved in major kidnappings who were later executed by the government.

The two top MAFIA leaders, Habib Istalif and RaeesKhudaidad, were executed late in 2014 and early in 2015 after they were arrested by intelligence operatives. (KP)

(18)13 Civilians...

Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) condemned the suicide attack, saying the indiscriminate use of explosives in areas crowded by civilians was a serious violation of international humanitarian law.

In a statement, the mission reminded all parties to the armed conflict in Afghanistan that they were bound to uphold their legal obligations to avoid harming civilians at all times.

The mission extended its sincere condolences to the families of those killed and a speedy recovery for those injured. UNAMA once again affirmed its continued support to the people of Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(19)Mostly Poor...

Kunar public health deputy director Dr. IhsanIhsanullahFazli confirmed receiving 11 dead bodies and 40 people wounded to the civil hospital. He said seven people who were in critical condition had been shifted to neighbouring Nangarhar province.

An eyewitness Mohammad Naser said he saw several dead and wounded people lying on the ground all around in the incident area.

"The injured people were shouting for help to take them to hospital, police and people arrived few minutes later and evacuated the wounded and the dead," he said.

He added most of the victims were hawkers selling cooked pea, Bolani and mobile telephone credit cards.

Abdul Aziz, another eyewitness, told Pajhwok Afghan News that a number of young moneychangers were among the dead. He said most of the people killed or wounded were poor people supporting their families.. (Pajhwok)

(20)NATO Blitz ...

In southern Helmand province, intelligence officials have arrested four alleged kidnapers.

A statement from the National Directorate of Security (NDS) said the detained individuals had abducted a child and a boy and had demanded ransom money from their families.

But NDS personnel rescued the children and detained their kidnapers, the statement said. (Pajhwok)

(21)Martyred ALP ...

families who are currently in pitiable condition. The government does not support the ALP the way it should, he complains, asking how the force will fight against the rebels. He recalls they buried eight bodies in one day.

Ainuddin, son of former ALP commander Habibullah Baloch, says: "My father has died. We want peace and the war should stop forthwith." Clad in tattered clothes, he has a brother and a sister. His father's dream was to bring peace to the country, an aspiration now cherished by his son.

Another resident of Khonyan village, Rahmatullah, confirms: "Most of the ALP men have been buried in this graveyard. Some people consider it a shrine."

Provincial police chief, Brig. Gen. AminullahAmarkhel, says requirements of ALP personnel in terms of arms and equipment have been met. The economic woes of slain officials' families have been shared with higher-ups in Kabul, he adds, hoping steps will be taken for the resolution of their problems. (Pajhwok)

(22)Afghan Army ...

insurgents belonging to the other militant groups frequently use Improvised Explosive Device (IED) as the weapon of their choice to target the security forces but the ordinary civilians are targeted in majority of such attacks. A civilian was killed and five others were wounded in an explosion involving Improvised Explosive Device (IED) in eastern Nangarhar province of Afghanistan. (KP)

(23)UN Agencies...

Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia, he said. "All 20 will be operational within the next three months."

The hubs are established at a time when women and children account for two thirds of those crossing to Europe. And last year, more than 90,000 unaccompanied or separated children registered and applied for asylum or were in care in Europe. (Xinhua)

(24)Islamic State ...

Qaeda affiliate the Nusra Front, meaning the Syrian government, Moscow and the coalition reserve the right to strike them. The truce appeared largely to be holding across much of Syria.

Xelil said the YPG and Syrian Kurdish internal security forces were able to "crush this attack and encircle the attackers", although he gave no casualty toll. (Reuters)

(25)Thousands ...

migrant had crossed into Macedonia that day, while 4,900 people waited nearby in heavy rain, according to Greek police. Thousands more were heading north - about 40 busloads of people were waiting along Greece's main highway, while refugee camps in northern Greece and near Athens were full. (AP)

(26)Saudi-Led ...

forces have advanced to within 50 km from Sanaa earlier this month, after recapturing military posts in Nehm district and its mountains overlooking the rebel-held capital from the northeast.

The advance, backed by the Saudi-led warplanes, came very slowly because of the rebel-planted minefields in the roads ahead towards Sanaa. (Xinhua)

(27)Iran JCPOA ...

development. Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council - the United States, France, Britain, China and Russia - plus Germany started to implement the JCPOA on January 16. (PressTV)

(28)Burundi ...

days meeting with various stakeholders comprising the Burundi government, political parties and civil society soliciting their views about the political situation here in Burundi," the statement said.

The delegation was pleased with the participation and contributions of all these sectors, said the statement.

The delegation also expressed its concerns about the levels of violence, loss of life, and the general state of political instability in the country, the statement said. (Xinhua)

(29)Hollande ...

last week he has not made up his mind if he will run in the 2017 election and has stood by his pledge not to if he fails to bring unemployment, currently at an 18-year high of 10.6 percent, on a convincingly downward trend by 2017.

If Hollande decides to run and a primary is held, it will be the first time a sitting French president has faced a primary challenger from his own camp. (Reuters)

(30)Cuba, EU ...

with the EU. Negotiations between the two sides started in April 2014 at the request of the EU, which moved to accelerate the normalizing of relations after Havana and Washington announced a historic detente in July 2015.

The two sides have concluded negotiations related to trade cooperation, and Leffler said that common ground has been found in almost all areas.

The remaining chapter is human rights and is considered the most difficult, but the Cuban delegation has said it would hold a "deep exchange to bring the positions of the two sides closer together. (Xinhua)

(31)Iraq Summons ...

remarks of the UAE foreign minister over the HashdShaabi (Shiite militias)."

It said that the government-backed paramilitary HashdShaabi fighters are fighting Daesh (IS) terrorist gangs and have liberated many areas in Iraq from the extremist militants.

"The HashdShaabi (units) are working under the leadership of the prime minister, who is also the commander-in-chief of the Iraqi Armed Forces. Therefore, we reject comparing them with terrorist criminal gangs (IS)," the statement said. (Xinhua)

(32)China's Wanda...

and "Dalian Wanda's know-how in terms of entertainment and Wang Jilanin's ambition to develop his Group on a global scale have convinced us that Wanda could make a substantial contribution to the development of EuropaCity." (Xinhua)