

(1) Supreme Court ...

Constitution to the Supreme Court for interpretations in this regard.

The Article says that the House of Representatives, at the request of 20 percent of all its members, can request reports from each minister. If the explanations given are not satisfactory, the House shall consider the issue of a no confidence vote. The no confidence vote against a minister shall be explicit, direct, as well as based on convincing reasons. The vote must be approved by the majority of all members of the House.

However, the Supreme Court has not spoken to the media about this.

"Any kind of move to avoid accessing information will affect governance. It will impact governance negatively if the judicial and legislator pillars avoid giving information to the people," said Ainuddin Bahaduri.

The seven cabinet ministers were given a vote of no confidence late last year after they allegedly failed to spend sufficient portions of their development budgets. (Tolonews)

(2) CASA-1000...

kilometres, had invited three bids for three different parts of the transmission lines, an unnamed government official told the daily.

Indian and Chinese firms, which have participated in one of three bids, are currently being evaluated. "There is a high possibility of the Chinese company winning the bid," the official added.

Initially, three converter stations were to be established, but the number has been reduced to two in order to cut the project cost. (Pajhwok)

(3) Muslimyar ...

allied with the US, Kabulov and regional countries wouldn't have intervened in Afghanistan.

No one from Afghanistan was invited to the Moscow meeting that held on December 27.

The meeting decided to push for delisting some Taliban leaders from the United Nations blacklist. The Taliban also welcomed the announcement.

Kabulov last month told a news agency that Russia had contacted the Taliban to jointly fight the common enemy Daesh.

"US wrong policies and the Afghans' poverty and urgency allow regional countries to interfere in Afghanistan and establish contact with anti-government insurgents. We say it again that it is a shame for the Taliban to fight against Muslims with receiving arms from non-Muslims."

He said the house had decided to summon National Security Advisor Mohammad Hanif Atmar and share the government's view on these matters with public representatives.

An angry Muslimyar asked the government to prepare basic foreign policy lines and submit them to the National Assembly for approval so Afghanistan could establish relations with countries based on them.

He also appreciated the suspension of the telecom minister, saying the matter shall be publicly and in the presence of media outlets investigated so that others could learn a lesson. (Pajhwok)

(4) Afghanistan...

Uzbekistan is quick and currently Afghanistan-Uzbekistan trade exchanges total more than \$300 million USD annually.

"When we import goods from Pakistan, it takes nineteen days, but when we import from Uzbekistan, it takes nine days," said Rasa.

Rasa also stated that in the near future a trade agreement will be signed between the two countries and that many of the private sector's problems will be resolved when the agreement is signed.

Mahmoud Baligh, the acting minister of public works, meanwhile said once the agreement was in place, construction materials will be imported from Uzbekistan and that Uzbek companies will invest in road construction, bridges and railways in the country.

"We asked Uzbek companies to invest in road construction, railways and other sectors," he said.

Acting minister of transport and civil aviation, Mohammadullah Batash also said Afghanistan had agreed with Uzbekistan to establish joint-transportation companies.

Ferozuddin Feroz, minister of public health said Uzbekistan has good quality medicine and that some necessary medicines will be imported from Uzbekistan.

"Uzbekistan has better quality medicines than some countries and this year a big part of the necessary medicine for government hospitals will be imported from Uzbekistan," he said. Statistics show that in 2016 Afghanistan's export increase by 12 percent while its imports have decreased. (Tolonews)

(5) Noor Claims ...

that Gen. Dostum is the First Vice President, ignoring that he has a good or bad personality.

Noor also claimed that he has proposed to Kabul that Gen. Dostum's successor should be an Uzbek Afghan, in case the First Vice President opts to resign.

The remarks by Noor came as he earlier said that he is no more counting on decision making capabilities of Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah. Noor further added that Abdullah has performed with weakness in the past two and half years and the reason behind direct talks between him and President Ghani is due to lack of proper presentation of Jamiat-e-Islami by Abdullah.

However, earlier he said he is ready to step down as the governor of Balkh province if the government takes practical steps for the commitments it has made.

He said his party is committed to support the central government as he called the current situation as 'fragile'. He said a draft agreement has also been prepared to be signed by him and the central government in a bid to establish a political understanding as he promised a comprehensive support to the government.

Noor said he shared with President Ghani their demands, specifically to have a prominent role in the political framework and in key decision makings, comprising major, strategic and national issues.

According to Noor, President Ghani has also offered demands to him and the supporters of Jamiat-e-Islami party, including the party's support to peace process and the government's foreign policies, being implemented via the ministry of foreign affairs. (KP)

(6) Education Boosting...

comments from mothers.

According to information from MoPH, tuberculosis (TB), diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, measles, hepatitis-B and Pneumonia vaccines are administered to children unevenly across the country.

Dr. Gula Khan Ayub, public relations officer at MoPH, said the viruses could create a dangerous situation for the country if these vaccines are not administered to all children. Currently pneumonia among children was a huge challenge, he added. He confirmed pneumonia-caused fatalities among children were higher in Afghanistan at the moment.

World Health Organization (WHO) statistics show that most of children lose their lives to acute respiratory infections and diarrhea. Ayub said diarrhea vaccines would be also added to the mass vaccination program.

According to MoPH says there are about 9 million children in Afghanistan under the age of five who should be vaccinated.

But the 2015 survey showed, on average, only 43 percent of children were administered vaccines as part of the campaign.

The percentage of children covered by the vaccination drive was high in some provinces and low in others.

The survey could not be conducted in districts of Zabul province due to security concerns and the data collected in Qalat, the provincial capital, could not be included in findings.

The survey outcomes showed that 7 out of 10 children are vaccinated in in Paktika, Badakhshan and Maidan Wardak provinces; fewer than 2 in 10 children are vaccinated in Uruzgan and Paktia provinces. In Nuristan, almost no children receive vaccines.

Dr. Gula Khan Ayub said public awareness about the benefits of vaccination was an important factor in the administration of vaccine.

About the high level of vaccination in Paktia, he said: "Most of the people in Paktia traveled abroad and maybe it is why they understand the importance of vaccination."

Some countries check vaccine cards before they let Afghans cross the border.

He said most of individual from Paktia traveled to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries for work.

Peroz Khan, a resident of Sharan, the capital of Paktika, is a civil society activist. He said people of the province were eager to get their children vaccinated and it was one reason behind the high level of vaccination.

He said awareness programmes regarding vaccination were implemented through encouragement of institutions like mosques, media and by scholars. The awareness campaign was recently stepped up.

Public relations officer of the health ministry's vaccination department said with the expanding awareness programmes regarding vaccination from 2003 the expenditures of the department was also on the rise.

He said during financial year that ended on December 21, \$5.2 million

spent on vaccination out of which 10 percent was the cost of awareness programmes.

But the public health official said most of public awareness programmes regarding vaccination were conducted in Pashto and Dari languages country-wide, but people in Nuristan mostly speak the Nuristani language. It was one reason for the low level of vaccination in the remote, mountainous province.

He said the communication issue in awareness programmes was a reason behind the unsuccessful vaccination programme in Nuristan.

He said the ministry planned to publish posters in Nuristani language. However, MoPH does not have the resources to print the posters so far.

However, the official said the ministry was striving to arrange money for printing the posters in Nuristani language and convey the message through media in the local tongue.

About other reasons behind low level of vaccination in Nuristan, he said: "People in Nuristan afraid of injections.

I saw mothers who did not bring back their children for vaccination for the second time after witnessing her child suffered fever in the first time of vaccination and said it was dangerous and could killed their children. These are some of the incidents that I witnessed during visit to provincial health programmes."

The survey showed that educated, economically stable mothers are more likely to vaccinate their children.

Education
The survey showed that 9 out of 20 illiterate mothers, 11 out of 20 mothers with a primary education, 12 out of 20 mothers with a secondary, and 13 out of 20 mothers with higher education vaccinated their children

According to Dr. Ayub, educated mothers better understand the importance of vaccination, compared to illiterate ones. And that was why the percentage of vaccination was 23 percent higher among children whose mothers are highly educated.

Anisa, a schoolteacher in the Nadir Shahkot district of Khost province where the level of vaccination is 27 percent, holds a similar view. She said uneducated women in Khost believed the vaccines had no benefit.

She said some women, who once administered vaccines to their child, did not come back for a second round of vaccination and believed that vaccines left their children ill.

She explained children generally suffered from fever after vaccination, which was nothing dangerous. She regularly brings her children to the health centre for vaccination.

"Unfortunately, there is no vaccine or staff at the health centres at times. But despite the problem, I try to vaccinate my children," she added.

Economic Conditions
However, Dr. Ayub says, there is no lack of budget for vaccination drives. But economic conditions of families play a role to some extent in whether they vaccinate their children.

According to the survey, the level is higher among children whose families have better economic conditions and lower among those with fewer financial resources.

The survey indicates nearly two of every five children from poor families and nearly 3 of every five children from a rich background were vaccinated.

Dr. Ayub said some areas of the country were deprived of health centres and, therefore, some families had to travel a long distance to reach clinics.

He added poor families could not pay transport fares to take children to health centres while rich households had the resources to do so.

Syed Habib, head of the vaccination department in Nuristan, agreed that economic conditions played a role in vaccine administration.

Most people in Nuristan did not have money to pay transport fares to take their children to the public health centre. Some residents of the province still cling to the barter system, he added.

Habib said every district had a health centre, but dwellers of some remote villages with inadequate transport facilities found it difficult reaching the clinic.

According to an investigative report by Pajhwok Afghan News, in 2014 some people have to travel tens kilometres to reach a health centre. During the winter, movement becomes even harder due to the blockade of routes by snow.

Mohammad Ismael Kawosi, MoPH official, acknowledged the lack of health centres. In 2013, he recalled, 2,050 health centres were functional across the country, compared to 2,300 today. He said efforts were on for creating more health centres. In the next six months, another 300 health centres, including hospitals, would be added.

The statistics from WHO also show that there was a significant decrease in mortality of kids under five years compare to the records in 2000, but 185 of each 1,000 children under five years still lose their lives to preventable diseases each year in the country.

Based on the statistics, 1,154 cases of measles, 432 cases of coughing up black, 20 cases of polio, 74 cases of Tetanus and 59 cases of rubella have been registered in Afghanistan this year.

Public relations officer of the health ministry's vaccination department said Rubella was virus like measles that infected fetus in the womb of mothers

He said the Rubella vaccine would be soon including in mothers vaccination programme. (Pajhwok)

(7) Operation...

"We launched operations to protect Afghan people and their homes," he said.

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) said insurgents using civilians as human shields has dramatically slowed down operations.

"Changes happened in the insurgents movements as they leave the country to find more money. But our operations are ongoing and we have good achievements," said Sediq Sediqqi, spokesman for the MoI.

Although MoD says everything is under control, the Helmand-Kandahar highway has been closed for three days as heavy clashes continue in Nad Ali and Sangin districts - an issue that has raised concerns over the management of the operation.

"Our operations are progressing and we have achieved good results," said Wali Mohammad Ahmadzai, commander of 215 Maiwand Military Corps.

In addition, more than 13 villages and two military bases are under serious threat in Baghlan-e-Markazi and security forces have been criticized for not launching a massive offensive against Taliban.

"We will launch an operation in the near future in Baghlan province," said Ziauddin, commander of the First Battalion, Second Brigade of 209th Shahaheen Military Corps. (Tolonews)

(8) Thousands...

organizations were silent to do something.

He warned the government of a possible humanitarian disaster if no assistance was delivered to the displaced families.

Several women and children lived in terrible conditions due to severe cold weather in a yard in the center of Almar district.

Faryab Governor Sayed Anwar Sadat said a delegation of the Emergency Response Committee had been sent to Almar district. The delegation also carried food items for the displaced families.

Sadat added the delegation transferred bread, milk packs, water and clothes to Almar district. They would report accurate figures of the displaced families in order to be assisted. (Pajhwok)

(9) 45 New ...

Farman Gul Shinwari, a local elder, told Pajhwok Afghan News the security situation in Dur Baba was stable, but no quality education and health facilities had been launched in the district yet.

He said district roads were in dilapidated condition and there were no bridges and culverts. In case of rain, the resident said, they were cut off from other parts of the province.

Regarding schools, he said the school buildings were in bad condition. "Many of the buildings are without windows, roofs and boundary walls." Separately, the Gul Asghar Khan High School was reopened after 18 months of closure in Achin district. The school had been closed by Daesh (Islamic State) insurgents.

A statement from the governor's house said a ceremony was arranged for the reopening of the school. Attended by district officials, religious scholars, tribal elders and residents.

District chief Essa Khan Zwak expressed happiness over the reopening of the school and asked authorities concerned to provide necessary materials including books to the school. (Pajhwok)

(10) Public Support ...

had been a poor country when King Zahir Shah and President Mohammad Daoud ruled it, but progress had been ongoing in various sectors because their governments had public support. "You can see security is better in areas where people back the government." An elder from Arghandab district, Abdul Wahid, said district administrative chiefs should serve the population as their servants not rulers. (Pajhwok)

(11) 8 Policemen ...

Zahir Gul was unaware of the incident, but said a clash took place in the Abdul Rahman Pump locality of Bolan last night. Two Taliban were killed and three others wounded in the overnight clash, he said. The militants have not yet commented on the incident. (Pajhwok)

(12) 'Russia Sees...

Afghan analysts say Russia considers the agreement between with the Afghan government and the HIA as a detriment for itself.

Political analyst Dr. Faiz Mohammad Zaland told Pajhwok Afghan News that Russia had recently increased criticism of US's regional and international policies. He believed a second phase of the cold war was beginning.

He said Russia wanted the national unity government to answer its questions regarding protection of its national interests, fighting Daesh and preventing drug smugglings.

Russians had told the Afghan government that not everything was in US control and Russia also has a force and their interests should be protected, he said.

Another poetical analyst, Mohammad Hassan Haqyar, also said Russia, China and some other regional countries' policies on Afghanistan had changed.

"Russia thinks Hekmatyar is brought by the US to join Daesh in fighting against Russia," he said, adding that Russia and China did not want to HIA members removed from the blacklist.

He said recent statements of Russia special envoy to Kabul, Zamir Kabulov, showed that Moscow was serious about Afghanistan.

Javid Ghafor, another political expert, said Russia was supporting Taliban because it believed the Taliban would be weakened by the US if the HIA joined the government.

"Russia thinks the agreement between HIA and the government has been signed in interest of the US so it considers the move against its national interests," he added. (Pajhwok)

(13) Afghan Female...

is illegal in Afghanistan.

But the public response to her claim has largely aligned with that of the government. Rahmani gained popularity when she first enlisted in 2013, providing hope for women throughout the country who wish to break into careers usually reserved for men. But since filing her claim after completing an 18-month training program in the United States, many social media users said she wasted Afghan money and deserves to be charged with desertion. The Afghan military also has criticized her decision, saying that any military officer should understand and accept the risks that come with the job, and that the threat to women is no greater than the threat to men.

"When an officer complains of insecurity and is afraid of security threats, then what should ordinary people do?" said Mohammad Radmanish, deputy spokesperson for the ministry of defense. "She has made an excuse for herself, but we have hundreds of educated women and female civil right activists who work and it is safe for them."

Rahmani was a recipient of the U.S. State Department's "Women of Courage" award in 2015. (VoA)

(14) Nuristan ...

school. She said there were no police-women, female prosecutor and jail personnel in the province.

Faizan asked the government to pay attention to Nuristan - one of mountainous provinces of the country where there is no asphalted road - and work for its development. (Pajhwok)

(15) Former Jihadi...

(HIA) commander, insecurity would increase in the province, he feared.

The police official said a four-day clearing operation had been launched against insurgents in Tagab district. A clash took place between rebels and security forces in Khushalkhel locality early in the morning. (Pajhwok)

(16) Civilians Among

occurred between security forces and the Taliban in Charkh and Baraki Barak districts.

Clearing operations had been launched in Charkh, Baraki Barak and Kharwar districts. Security forces claimed 40 militants had been killed and scores wounded in the ongoing offensive in Logar. (Pajhwok)

(17) Two Policemen...

National Police members and public order police and that three policemen were killed and three others were injured.

No further details have been released. (Tolonews)

(18) Taliban District ...

claimed.

Farhad said a clearing operation had been launched by security forces to drive the insurgents away from the district.

Meanwhile, two rebels were killed and another wounded by own Improvised Explosive Device (IED) in Shindand district, he said, adding the IED was aimed at targeting security troops' vehicles.

The roadside bomb exploded, while the insurgents were planting it in Mank area of the district, killing Mullah Ashraf Fidayi and Mullah Babar

and wounding another fighter.

Abdul Raof Ahmadi, Herat police spokesman, was unaware of the clash an operation in Keshk-i-Kohna district.

There has been no comment from the Taliban over recent incidents of violence in Herat. (Pajhwok)

(19) 5 Insurgents....

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(20) 5 Dead, 4 Hurt ...

the civil hospital in Aibak, the provincial capital, said two injured person, a man and a woman, were in critical condition. He said the victims belonged to central Bamyan province.

In Samangan, local officials say 61 accidents took place in the past 10 months, leaving 37 people dead and 169 others wounded. (Pajhwok)

(21) Syria Rebels...

part of the cease-fire agreement, which excludes extremist factions such as the Islamic State group and al-Qaida's affiliate, known as Fatah al-Sham Front. The text of the document was never released to the public.

The Syrian government says the mountainous region is not part of the cease-fire because of the presence of Fatah al-Sham Front. Local activists deny any militant presence in the area.

Opposition activists, including the Barada Valley Media Center, on Tuesday reported heavy bombardment of villages in the region. The opposition's Civil Defense first responders reported at least nine government airstrikes since Sunday, as well as acute shortages of medical supplies. Six people have been killed and 73 have been wounded, it said. (AP)

(22) US Stocks...

interest rates, and bank stocks made big gains. Citigroup rose 96 cents, or 1.6 percent, to \$60.39 and Morgan Stanley picked up 78 cents, or 1.9 percent, to \$43.04. Banks and energy companies both climbed more than 20 percent last year. (AP)

(23) 386 Civilians...

figures do not include the civilian casualty figures for Anbar province for the months of May, July, August and December.

The figures for December do not include the casualties among the security forces, as the Iraqi military authorities in early December criticized the figures announced by UNAMI about the deaths of the security forces for the month of November. (Xinhua)

(24) Cambodia Expels...

the kingdom's immigration law, any alien living in the country without valid documents such as passports, visas, or work permits are subject to deportation. (Xinhua)

(25) Restoring Production

blocking the crossings or streets between both parts of the city, which facilitate the flow of civilians, who had fled eastern Aleppo for a long time, to return to check on their homes. (Xinhua)

(26) PNA Urges ...

the Security Council members toward the latest Israeli wave of escalation all over the Palestinian territories, which requires more steps to be taken against Israel."

On Dec. 23, the UNSC voted in favor of a resolution that condemns Israeli settlements and calls on Israel to halt its settlement activity in the Palestinian territories. (Xinhua)

(27) Trump to...

whether Jason Greenblatt, Trump's special representative for international negotiations, would work with the USTR or supersede that agency's role, the report said.

Sean Spicer, Trump's senior communications adviser, said last week that the USTR will remain the principal negotiator on trade deals, but Navarro, Ross and Greenblatt will also "be part of that process". Trump has not yet named his pick for the USTR. (Xinhua)