

(1) ICOIC Wants to ...

are at school.

"Last year, the deputy of the commission and I, went (to the education ministry) to discuss the inclusion of the constitution in Afghanistan's educational curriculum," Abdul Rauf Herawi, a member of the commission said.

"In this law, all the Afghans rights are considered equal. No Afghan is better than any other," Mohammad Ibrahim Shinwari, acting education minister said.

Some lawyers have said the constitution was not being fully implemented, adding that most of the articles of the constitution remained only on paper and have never been put into practice.

In terms of the National Unity Government's (NUG) political agreement, the government, within two years, should have considered an amendment to the constitution in the Loya Jirga to decide on creating the position of prime minister.

It also failed to hold the parliamentary election on time, continuing the tenure of parliament members without holding the election. There a lack of the prescribed number of members of the Supreme Court, along with dozens of other examples of obstacles that have prevented the full implementation of the constitution.

"The elections of village and district councils were not held by the former government although there were opportunities to do so. The failure to hold the parliamentary election in 2016, the scandalous election of 2015 and the stalemate that followed and the establishment of the NUG based on a political agreement, all indicate violations of the constitution," Abdul Wahid Farzaie, a lawyer said.

Although the ICOIC insists on the implementation of the constitution, reports say that the commission also has some internal disagreements. For instance, in the past months members of the commission had tried to dismiss the chief of the commission. "Today, most of the commission members, including the chief, have been working together and have decided that we do not want the commission to face any further stalemate," Abdul Rauf Herawi, a member of the commission said.

Efforts have been ongoing for nearly one century to prepare a constitution that addresses all the needs of the country and its people, but due to tensions, disorder and law-violations in the last few decades, the constitution, also like other things has suffered. (Tolonews)

(2) GDP Just 11%...

the domestic sources. The reason that the low figure pertains to issues such as tax evasion. The government has also been weak in its collection of tax revenue.

In neighboring countries such as Pakistan, the revenue collected from the domestic sources is about 18 percent. Despite Pakistan being a country where informal economic activities and illegal businesses are at a peak, Pakistan's situation is much better than that of Afghanistan.

The figure in impoverished countries in Africa are estimated to be 15 percent, still they are better off than Afghanistan.

The Afghan ministry of finance says Afghanistan needs to increase its GDP from the current 11 percent figure to at least 18 percent.

According to the finance ministry, income received from domestic resources has been between ten to eleven percent of the GDP and that it strives to improve the trend. However, the MoF says it has not been able to achieve this target so far. (Tolonews)

(3) ETWA Expresses...

trust on these institutions, especially in ensuring the principle of separation of powers, respecting the Constitution, human rights and the democratization process in the Afghanistan.

ETWA calls on NUG leaders to stop the work of Selection Committee as soon as possible and seek legitimate ways to the selection of new Election Commissioner through consultations with civil societies, political parties and other political elites.

If the Presidential Office believes that eligible individuals are unavailable in the previous list it had received from the Selection Committee, the way to establish a new committee and introduces a fresh person as a commissioner of IEC is possible through the amendment of provisions relating to Selection Committee and member's terms in the electoral law. In this case, an illegal process can be turned into a legal process. (Pa-

jhwok)

(4) US Weighs...

of Osama bin Laden, the al-Qaeda leader, who was living in the Pakistani city of Abbottabad.

But Washington has only just begun to work through its new plan to suspend up to roughly \$2 billion in US security assistance, announced on Thursday.

It came days after US President Donald Trump tweeted that Pakistan had rewarded past US aid with "nothing but lies and deceit."

The senior Trump administration official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Washington hoped that the aid suspension would be enough to communicate its concern to Islamabad, Reuters reported.

But the official cautioned that the freeze was also not the only tool that America had to pressure the country — suggesting it might resort to other measures if needed.

"We are considering many different things, not just the (financial) assistance issue," the official said. "We are also looking at Pakistan's potential response ... and we are looking at ways to deal with that and to mitigate the risks to the relationship."

The official declined to detail what steps were under consideration, including whether that might include possible unilateral US military action against militants in Pakistan, the report said.

The United States has long blamed the militant safe havens in Pakistan for prolonging the war in Afghanistan, giving insurgents, including from the Haqqani network, a base to plot attacks and rebuild its forces.

"We believe we owe it to the Americans in harms' way in Afghanistan. We simply can't ignore the sanctuaries if we are going to make progress in Afghanistan," the official said. But Pakistan has rejected the claims. (Tolonews)

(5) Nabi...

also playing in BBL for Adelaide Strikers made a stunning debut and won the man of the match award. Both players have shown their worth and keep shining for their teams in the BBL. (Tolonews)

(6) Shahzad Returns ...

Hamid Hassan, the talented all-rounder, has made a comeback into the T20I squad. Hassan, who has bagged 32 wickets at 16.34 in the shortest format, last represented Afghanistan in a 50-over game versus Ireland in 2016. Aftab Alam, the medium pacer, also has returned to the T20I set-up after a gap of more than a year. Asghar Stanikzai will captain both the squads.

The two sides will lock horns in the two-match T20I series on February 5 and 6 respectively. The first of the five ODIs will take place on February 9. The next four games are slated to be held on February 11, 13, 16 and 19. Sharjah will host all the seven matches of Zimbabwe's short tour. (Agencies)

(7) Mangal Wants ...

the Independent Election Commission (IEC) has recently decreased the number of polling stations in provinces where many repatriates have returned. The provinces include Nangarhar, Kandahar, Paktia, and some others.

The Nangarhar governor told the gathering that secured areas had increased in the province and also many returnees had come to the province; therefore, the number of polling places should also be increased.

IEC head for Nangarhar, Zabihullah Wagari, said the gathering was aimed at technically and professionally discussing upcoming elections with civil and military organizations, provincial council members, CSOs, political parties, and other groups.

According to him, about 106 private areas previously designated as polling stations were relocated to public places for preventing possible fraud. He said prior to the elections, the computerized ID-cards would be distributed and there would be a special mark on the cards for voting in order to avoid any kind of rigging.

Meanwhile, the governor said all civil and military institutes in the province were operating in full cooperation with the IEC and they would allow no one to interfere in their affairs.

He expressed concern over the decreased number of polling stations, and called upon the election body to increase the number of polling stations as security had been broadened in the province compared to the past. A provincial council member, Israrullah Murad, dubbed the previous elections as fully-rigged, stressing work for transparency in future polls.

He assured the IEC of full support on behalf of the provincial council. (Pajhwok)

(8) Illegal Extraction ..

afghans in revenue, in 1395 the amount was about five million afghanis, but we have zero revenue this year due to suspension of contracts with the private sector until second order," he said.

Haidar said around 10 tons of lapis lazuli belonging to traders remained locked in Juram, Baharak and Faizabad districts following a presidential order. He said the traders suffered huge losses as a result of the lapis lazuli lock. These traders are still not allowed to take the stone to market for sale, he added.

Mohammad Hanif, a trader of lapis lazuli stone in Badakhshan, said: "I purchased one tone of lapis lazuli three years ago, but a presidential delegation locked it in a depot, I had invested all my money in that."

He said he owed money to local people and suffered a lot of losses due to the locking of his investment. "I do not know where to go and to whom I should complain."

A provincial council member, Abdullah Naji Nazari, told Pajhwok that two major lapis lazuli and gold mines were under control of militants and powerful figures and they were illegally extracting the riches. He said militants took their share from the income.

A number of small mines that contain precious and semi-precious stones are extracted by local people and powerful figures and then trafficked to Pakistan and Dubai, he added.

Nazari said local people who were not professionals worked for months in the mines but they rarely found anything. "If they find something, they sell it at low prices."

The government and local administration have no concern about protection of mines in Badakhshan, he complained.

He suggested the mines department should sign contracts with the private sector for extraction of mines so that the government could earn revenue.

"We have so many mines, if their revenue is legally collected, it would help develop Badakhshan province," he said.

According to Eng. Sanaullah, general manager of geo-science in Badakhshan mines department, 38 mines, including precious stones and metals, exist in the province. He cited primary surveys done by professional personnel of the department.

He said these mines included gold, lapis lazuli, tourmaline, ruby, aquamarine, coal, mica, iron, emerald, sulfur, copper oxide, marble, phosphate, serpentine and zinc which are currently extracted by militants or powerful figures.

However, Mines and Petroleum Ministry spokesman, Abdul Qadir Mutfi, said that the ministry had developed a new roadmap for accountability, transparency and utilization of natural resources.

He said one important point in the roadmap was management of contracts and discussion of the contracts in the Economy Council and the Presidential Palace for more accuracy.

"We have two types of contracts, small, vocal and big contracts, in small contracts, suggestions are sent from the mines and petroleum ministry to the Economic Council, but there is still no final decision in this regard as to when to start small contracts," he said.

Mutfi said the ministry was trying to sign contracts as soon as possible because the government's revenue source was mines.

Calling illegal extraction of mines a major challenge, he said that the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum used to share its reports of mines monitoring with security organs and security forces had devised special measures for protection of natural resources.

But he acknowledged monitoring, prevention of allegation extractions and trafficking was difficult in areas under militants' control.

Badakhshan is a mountainous province and is rich in natural resources, particularly gold, ruby and lapis lazuli. The province shares border with China, Pakistan and Tajikistan.

Local officials believe legal extraction of mines would contribute to high revenue collection besides creating job opportunities for thousands of people. (Pajhwok)

(9) No Afghan ...

Nusrat Rahimi said. "Anyone participating in armed conflicts of other countries will be jailed for five up to seven years," Gul Ahmad Madadzai, deputy head of Af-

ghanistan's Lawyer Union said. (Tolonews)

(10) 73pc Afghans to...

Kandahar, Zabul, Uruzgan, Khost, Paktia, Paktika, Ghazni, Bamyan, Daikundi, Kapisa, Nangarhar, Kunar, Laghman, Nuristan, Herat, Badghis, and Ghor provinces.

He said training workshops for engineers stationed in capital Kabul and provinces were also considered for their capacity building in spheres of surveying and designing. The training programs would be carried out by the Irrigation Departments.

Constructing water supply networks, digging up deep water wells in villages, schools and clinics constituted another part of the scheme, he added. Employees in provinces would also receive vocational trainings in controlling the quality of water, the minister said, adding the initiative would cover villages and districts on a priority basis where incidents paralytic among children had emerged. According to him, currently 53 percent of people have access to healthy and drinkable water and the figure would reach 73 percent in the next two years.

Meanwhile, UNICEF chief in Afghanistan Mrs. Adele Khudr, who was present on the occasion, expressed happiness over the signing of the plan, saying one of the UNICEF's responsibilities was children's safety. She said children had the right to hygienic water; therefore, the plan was signed with MRRD. (Pajhwok)

(11) Taliban Set...

order police.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said the freed policemen had been captured in Janikhel district and two of them had already been released and the remaining 14 were freed yesterday night after the guarantee that they would not again join the forces. (Pajhwok)

(12) In Nangarhar, ...

demanding emergency assistance, the displaced families want the authorities concerned to pave the ground for an early return to their homes.

The IDPs say the aid provided to them is far from enough, particularly during the current harsh winter.

Refugees and Repatriation Director Ghulam Haidar Faqirzai told Pajhwok Afghan News that 15,314 families had been displaced by war in Nangarhar this solar year.

He said more than 60 percent of the IDPs belonged to the Khogyani district of the province -- affected by recent clashes between Taliban and Daesh militant groups.

He added: "8,169 displaced families are from Khogyani, 85 from Kot, 510 from Achin, 198 from Haska Mina, 1,789 from Pachiragam, seven from Sherzad, 574 from Chaparhar, eight from Surkh Rod and 455 from Lalpura districts."

Six displaced families from Ghazni and Baghlan provinces are also living in Nangarhar, according to Faqirzai, who indicated the number of IDPs might be higher.

The officials have surveyed only those individuals who were entitled to receive aid, he explained, saying 13,665 of the families had received assistance from different organisations.

On the other hand, the affected households complained the aid they received was not enough. They asked the government to ensure their return to their areas.

Hajam Khan, a resident of the Shadal area of Achin district, said he had been visiting the refugees and repatriation department for aid for two months. Finally, he was given some food items only.

He said he was jobless and had to pay house rent. "This aid cannot solve my problems," he commented, urging more concrete steps to resolve their plight.

"Our main demand is an honourable and early return to our own homes. Security should be ensured and we will go back to our areas," the man continued.

Sardar Mohammad, who has been displaced from the Wazir Tangi area of Khogyani district, said they were faced with serious problems due to freezing temperatures.

Living in a tent in Chamtala Township, he was recently given only 9,000 afghanis by the department concerned.

Mohammad said that security should be ensured in their area so they could go back to their homes. He called an early return home more important than aid.

But the governor's spokesman, Attaullah Khogyani, insisted aid was continually being delivered to displaced people. He acknowledged the

amount of assistance was inadequate. About the security issue, he said: "An operation is underway in Khogyani. We will extend it to Achin, Haska Mina, Pachiragam and other districts. But we need time; we will gradually improve security for the people." (Pajhwok)

(13) Afghan Returnee..

at least 30 customers every day.

"This restaurant opened newly and I think it serves good foods for its customers," said Mohammad Jawed, a resident of Kabul.

The owner of the restaurant called on the government to provide safe opportunities for investors. (Tolonews)

(14) Civilians Among...

444th special unit personnel.

Qari Yousuf Ahmadi, the Taliban spokesman, also alleged the killing and wounding of students and civilians in the operation.

Meanwhile, police spokesman Abdul Salaam Afghan confirmed the killing of eight Taliban fighters in an airstrike by foreign force in the Safar locality of Garmser district.

He said the Taliban were attending a meeting when they came under the airstrike, which destroyed two of their Corolla cars, motorcycles and some weapons. (Pajhwok)

(15) UN Security ...

to urge all states to cooperate actively with the government of Afghanistan and all other relevant authorities in combating terror. (Pajhwok)

Arab League to Lobby UN To Recognize Palestinian State

The Arab states will soon embark on a diplomatic drive to persuade the United Nations to recognize a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital on territory captured by Israel in the 1967 war, Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said, Reuters reported.

Six Arab foreign ministers met in Amman on Saturday to follow up on earlier decisions taken by the Arab League to counter US President Donald Trump's move in December to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, a decision that overturned decades of U.S. policy on the Middle East it said.

A committee made up of Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the Palestinians and headed by Jordan was set up after an emergency meeting of the Arab League in Cairo shortly after Trump's decision that called on Washington to abandon its decision.

The Arab League said at the time the move would spur violence throughout the region and described Trump's announcement as a "dangerous violation of international law" which had no legal impact.

Safadi said the ministers would recommend a series of moves to a full ministerial meeting of the Arab League due later this month.

"We will confront the decision by seeking a (UN) resolution, an international one, to recognize a Palestinian state on 1967 borders with Jerusalem as its capital," said Safadi.

He did not elaborate on the timing of the diplomatic moves nor say whether he was referring to a U.N. Security Council or General Assembly resolution.

Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit said the ministerial meeting would also discuss Washington's role in future Arab-Israeli peacemaking that members states said was now jeopardized by what they see as U.S. bias towards Israel. "We want to lessen any losses on the Palestinian side and lessen the Israeli gains," Aboul Gheit added.

Arab states are also to discuss whether to convene an extraordinary summit of their leaders or wait until a scheduled summit in the Saudi capital Riyadh at the end of March, he added.

Trump's recognition of Jerusalem has infuriated the Arab world and upset Western allies, who say it is a blow to peace efforts and risks sparking more violence in the region.

Palestinians claim East Jerusalem as the capital of a future state. Israel regards Jerusalem as its eternal and indivisible capital. (Reuters)