

(1) Election Commission ..

Hashemi has worked as member of the Afghanistan's Constitutional Loya Jirga, the grand assembly, member of the elections organizing joint office and financial and administrative official of the President's Office.

"They will inevitably bring required changes in the commission to show their work to the people," Yusuf Rasheed, CEO of Free and Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan, said.

"The gap between the people and the commission should get closer, the lost trust must be restored and the impartiality and independence of the electoral bodies must be maintained," Head of Afghan Civil Society Election Network JandadSpinghar said.

The selection committee last week shortlisted three candidates - Sayed HafizullahHashemi, Awal Rahman Rodwal and Abdul QaderZazaiWatan-dost - from amongst 57 candidates for the post.

This comes after Independent Election Commission is preparing for the upcoming parliamentary and district councils' elections scheduled within the next few months. (Tolonews)

(2) UNSC Members, ...

in the past," said one resident in Kabul Mohammad Yaqub.

"Our people never tried to achieve an agreement when there is a rift. People come from abroad to resolve these issues," Mohammad Rafi, a resident of Kabul, said in reference to ongoing political scenario between government and Jamiat-e-Islami Party.

According to government sources, the delegation includes 15 members of UN Security Council and US ambassador to Afghanistan.

"Government's leadership should inform the delegation about the overall issues in Afghanistan. Government should also inform the delegation about the bases of insurgents and clarify that who are really sponsoring them so that a firm and comprehensive action is taken about it," Gul Ahmad Azimi, a senator, told TOLONews.

"They (UN Security Council members) are here (in Kabul) to have a real image from the political and security situation in Afghanistan," said NajibaHus-saini, a senator.

The UN Security Council members are likely to ponder on the complaints of Afghanistan on the issue of terrorist groups operating in Pakistani territory including Pakistan's deliberate missile attacks on the border regions of Afghanistan. (Tolonews)

(3) US presence Should be ...

polices in Afghanistan and work on large scale for bringing peace to Afghanistan thus Afghan migrants could easily return to their country. This co-operation, he said, would pull out Afghanistan from crisis and convert it into the area of mutual cooperation. (Pajhwok)

(4) Faryab Power ...

Andkhoy transmission line. On the other hand, Hamid said several government departments and the general public owed DABS 194 million afghanis. Efforts were ongoing to recover the dues, the official continued.

Meanwhile, residents said their day-to-day affairs were linked to power supply, whose disruption led to losses in terms of work, economic activity, throwing the city into darkness and facilitating robberies.

Mohammad Rassoul, a government employee, agreed the power line was frequently affected by the war. Getting a monthly salary of 10,000 afghanis, he complained it was hard for him meeting family needs. Gas and wood purchases added to his burden, he grumbled.

Tawab, keeping computer service shop, told Pajhwok as a result of frequent cutting of the power line had forced him to buy a generator for 25,000 afghanis.

MetalsmithYar Mohammad said that when electricity supply was suspended, he could neither meet customer demands nor pay trainees wages, nor shop rent. He urged security forces and Taliban to avoid damaging power pylons.

Meanwhile, an official held militants responsible for 20 percent of damage to the power infrastructure and security force for 80 percent. Wishing not to be named, he said large areas of KhwajaSabzposh, SherinTagab and Dawlatabad districts were under Taliban control. The security forces -- placed near the main power transmission line during clashes -- failed to hit the rebel targets, he said, adding they often struck power pylons.

With the Taliban yet to comment, police spokesman Abdul Karim Yourish confirmed the cutting of the transmission lines. However, he alleged, most of the losses happened due to gunfire from the insurgents.

He said the security forces had been directed not to damage facilities during fighting. (Pajhwok)

(5) Taliban Weakened...

he hoped this issue would be overcome to some extent this new year. He also informed about possible launch of a major military operation against militants in the province, saying civilians would be paid special attention.

On the other hand, local residents expressed their dissatisfaction with the outcome of previous military operations in the province against militants. A resident of Nad Ali district, Sardar Mohammad, told Pajhwok Afghan News security forces often conducted operations in the province and only civilians bore the brunt of the situation.

"If we give food to security forces, we invite the Taliban's wrath and if Taliban use our homes as their bastions, it lands us in trouble with the security forces." (Pajhwok)

(6) Work On Teachers' ...

However, no teacher could sell their plots.

If a teacher did not construct a house within three months of the allotment or tried to sell the plot, then department reserved the right to take back the land, he warned.

Mohammad Sadiq Dawlatzai, head of Nangarhar's Independent Land Authority, promised the plot distribution process would get under way in the near future.

Israrullah Murad, a provincial council member, commended efforts of the Nangarhar governor. He vowed to monitor the township's construction.

He also voiced on people and teachers to cooperate with the technical team appointed for the township affairs. (Pajhwok)

(7) Haqqani is ...

"Based on our intelligence, the IS does not have the ability to carry out such attacks in the capital or its suburbs." Radmanesh remarked: "Unfortunately, regional intelligence agencies are trying to portray them as a powerful group. And it is very clear that Haqqani terrorist group is carrying out these activities under the name of IS."

The growing in violence in Afghanistan had also roots in Pakistani-based religious schools, the MoD spokesman said, estimating the number of seminaries across the Durand Line at 10,000. Some of the schools were involved in training militants for jihad in Afghanistan, the official alleged. For its part, Pakistan insists its military operations have targeted insurgents of all hues.

"Military-led counterterrorism operations have targeted terrorists indiscriminately including Haqqani's Network at a heavy cost of blood and treasure," military spokesman Asif Ghafoor told VOA. (Pajhwok)

(8) Afghan Govt...

process," Ghulam Farooq Majroh, an MP, said.

"These meetings and efforts on peace are important," MP Munawar Shah said.

ZabihullahMujahid, a Taliban spokesman, has rejected the meeting, claiming that the participants are not representing the group.

The first and second rounds of government-Taliban negotiations were held in Turkey last year.

This comes after the High Peace Council Chairman Mohammad Karim Khalili at a ceremony in Kabul last year in December said the council is ready to start peace talks with the Taliban without any pre-condition.

He said the Taliban can open their office, for the peace talks, in any part of the world and even in Kabul.

Khalili said the Indonesian vice president and a group of that country's religious scholars will visit Kabul in the near future and are expected to condemn the ongoing war as illegitimate. He said the HPC is optimistic that Indonesia will share its experience for peace with Afghanistan as the country itself has faced major ups and downs in search for peace. (Tolo news)

(9) Afghan Carpet...

Pakistan, spokesman of the chamber of mines RahimullahSamandar said.

"If Afghan government gives subsidy to the carpet exports this will mean that a large amount of Afghan carpet will be exported directly to the world markets," Samandar said.

Officials from the Ministry of Commerce and Industries meanwhile said they continue their efforts to improve carpet industry in the country.

"Besides construction of a special industrial park for carpet weavers, we have developed a plan for the development of carpet industry in the country," said MusaferQoqandi, spokesman for the ministry of commerce and industries.

Recently, government talked about establishing an industrial park and a

special township for carpet industry owners in five provinces, but the carpet association says the plan has been not implemented so far. (Tolonews)

(10) Flu Virus ...

disease in humans yet. However, he asked people to be careful while interacting with birds.

Mangal added the dead crows had been collected by health workers and some were buried in a deep place and others burnt.

Samiullah Nasrat, the provincial agriculture and livestock director, said urged the Public Health Ministry to send equipment used for detecting the virus from Kabul to Khost. (Pajhwok)

(11) Wolesi Jirga...

draft law is not approved." However, NiamatullahGhafari, one of the only four lawmakers who voted against the draft law, said: "Creation of Medical Council has no base in the constitution, its creation would be an interference in the Ministry of Public Health Ministry affairs."

At the end of the meeting, Speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahim asked lawmakers to vote on the draft law. Of 124 lawmakers present, 120 voted in favor of the law.

Public Health Minister Ferozuddin-Feroz had said many people were concerned about the quality of health services but the Medical Council would help accredit the system.

He asked the upper house of parliament to approve the draft law as it would address doctors' problems, prevent violations and protect doctors and patients.

The draft law would be shared with the Meshrano Jirga for approval. If approved by the upper house and endorsed by the president, the Medical Council would be created as a legal organizational unit. (Pajhwok)

(12) U.S. Probes..

trapped in conflict," Gen. Joseph Votel, Commander, U.S. Central Command, said in the emailed statement.

"I can assure you that this video does not represent the professionalism or humanity of the men and women of U.S. Central Command. We reject the unprofessional and callous message this video conveys," he said. (Reuters)

(13) 17 Daesh ...

Sharif Yafтали rejected Kabulov's figures about Daesh fighters in the country as fake and baseless.

"We confirm the presence of up to 2,000 Daesh fighters in Afghanistan. Mr. Kabulov is sick and it is his habit to utter big things," Yafтали told lawmakers in the Wolesi Jirga, Lower House of Parliament, last year in December.

The US military officials said last week the United States will send in at least 1,000 new combat advisers to Afghanistan as part of its efforts to boost US training commitment to the country.

Besides the combat advisers, the US Defense Department is planning to re-allocate drones and other hardware, US military officials said last week on Thursday. (Tolo news)

(14) Population of ...

becomes healthy after undergoing a 45-day treatment and is then handed over to relevant family."

The health official went on to say that as many as 3,000 women and 8,000 men had been so far rehabilitated and delivered to families in the province; however some of them again returned to the old habit.

According to the public health department, about 80 percent of addicts in the province were workers who had returned from abroad after slipping into addiction there due to various reasons. Meanwhile, Mohammad Ali, acting head for the counter-narcotics department, told Pajhwok nearly half the addicts 5,000 were homeless and street wanderers.

An addict wandering in streets, Faiz Ahmad, while introducing himself, said he hailed from Takhar province and had spent 12 years working in Iran. "I started using drugs due to work pressures and longing for home in Afghanistan. I was recently deported but now I live in Nimroz far away from my home."

"I spend my day and night begging and lying near roads because I don't have money to go back home. Sometimes people help me by giving money and at times they don't."

However, some residents of Zarang complained about house robberies carried out by addicts. Ahmad, a resident of Zaranj city, said drugs were openly consumed in every corner of the city and there was no one to collect the addicts for treatment.

"The issue is that no one can leave homes' doors open; otherwise addicts come and steal stuff. Even they cut aluminum and copper wires of power supply and sell them to obtain drugs." Mohammad Omari, provincial police

spokesman, however, said addicts were always being gathered by police in the city and then handed over to the health department and the Haji Nazir-Nazari Health Centre.

He added this month alone police raided at least 12 places where drugs were sold and them shut down and a number of individuals detained. "The detainees' cases are referred to judicial organs."

Security officials in Nimroz say a large number of people have been arrested in connection with cultivation, smuggling, purchase and sale of drugs. However, they didn't provide exact figures.

Based on figures from the ministries of public health and counter-narcotics, more than 3.5 million people take drugs in the country, including over 30 percent of them women and children. (Pajhwok)

(15) Senators Call ...

people every day," GulalaiAkbari, a senator, said.

"The leaders of the national unity government must consider the interests of the nation when it comes to this matter," Deputy Speaker of Meshrano Jirga Mohammad AlamEzidiyar said.

Meshrano Jirga Speaker FazilHadiMuslimyar meanwhile asked his colleagues not to support Atta Mohammad Noor. "Atta Mohammad Noor is an ordinary government employee... No one in the house should talk about taking side of someone," said Muslimyar.

Last year in December 18, President Ghani removed Atta Mohammad Noor from his position as governor of Balkh. The president's office said in a statement that Ghani has accepted Noor's resignation as Balkh governor. Engineer Mohammad Dawood was appointed as new governor of Balkh by President Ghani.

The decision was rejected by Noor. Atta Mohammad Noor at a gathering in Balkh on Sunday said the talks between Jamiat and government are ongoing. He said he awaits the results of the negotiations. (Tolo news)

(16) Casualties As...

the commander of the 1st battalion of border police.

He said the Taliban was put off stiff resistance by security forces, killing three attackers and wounding nearly a dozen more.

He said four security forces suffered wounds in the battle and one of them was in critical condition.

However, Makhdom Habib Rahman, Taliban's shadow district chief for Pashtunkot district, claimed security forces sustained heavy casualties in the clash in Godai Qala area. He said the fighters used laser weapons against the security forces.

An Afghan National Arme (ANA) soldier was shot dead in Tapa-Qashlaq locality of Khwaja-Subzposh district by militants who used laser weapons. (Pajhwok)

(17) Book Highlighting ...

six-chapter publication carries pictures of noted Pakhtun nationalist leaders and Mughal emperors. (Pajhwok)

(18) No Female ...

midwives have been dispatched to clinics the districts.

Kamal Shah, a resident of Giro district, said there was no female doctor in their locality and he had to transfer his wife to the civil hospital in Ghazni City.

"Forget about female doctor, there is no clinic in our area. For a small health issue, we have to shift our females to Ghazni City or Andar district."

Some years back health facilities were destroyed in Giro district due to incidents of violence and conflict. Kamal Shah said security situation on the Giro-Ghazni City road was not good, making it hard to convince drivers to travel on the road.

"You have to spend almost a day to find a car for transferring the patient. When someone agrees he demands high fare while people's economic situation is also not good."

Asadullah, a resident of Andar district, said the lone clinic in their district was without female doctors.

"The government should ensure security of doctors so they could travel to far-flung areas. Only midwives are not enough," he said.

He said they could not shift female patients to the city or other areas during night due to security issues. "This is another huge problem, most of the patients lose lives as they don't reach hospital."

"Sometimes the Taliban don't allow vehicles to proceed to the city and this is another big issue," he said.

Fatima, a resident of Waghaz district, said she a few months back she suffered from a stomachache.

"It was midnight when suddenly I started feeling pain in the low-right abdomen and whatever we had in the house I ate but there was no relief and I

screamed the entire night."

"After the medical examination at the civil hospital it was found I had appendicitis and the appendix was removed", she said.

According to Fatima, the doctor told her that she would have died had she reached a few hours late to the hospital.

Residents of Deh Yak, Ajiristan, Maqur, Qarabagh, Aab Band and Khogyani districts also complain they are facing many problems in access to health services.

The residents have asked officials concerned to resolve their healthcare problems.

On the other hand, Mursal, a midwife from Khogyani district of Ghazni, told Pajhwok that female doctors and midwives could not work in remote districts due to security problems.

"I have duty here in Khogyani, my own district, but if the security situation improves doctors from other areas will also come here," she said.

She said even men specialists could not work in remote areas fearing for their lives. She urged militant groups to shun insurgency so specialist doctors were able to serve people all parts of the country.

Public health director Zahir Shah Nikmal told Pajhwok they were struggling with the shortage of female doctors while there was no shortage of midwives in Ghazni.

"Female doctors are serving only in four districts (Malistan, Jaghatu, Khwaja Omari and Jaghori) while midwives are working in all districts of Ghazni," he said.

"Midwives cannot diagnose all health cases of women but they can help in dealing with patients," Nikmal said.

He also said female doctors had no interest to serve in districts due to security problems.

"We are trying to find a solution to this problem" he said without going into details. He said they were trying to reopen the health center in Giro district. Provincial police chief Brig. Gen. Mohammad Zaman said the security situation was not bad in districts and female doctors could work there.

"The government is responsible to ensure security for the public, we also assure doctors we can provide a safe environment for them and they can work in any district," he said.

But the governor's spokesman, Mohammad ArifNoori, said female doctors were not allowed by their families to work in remote areas and they used security problems as an excuse.

"District centers are in bazaars, so there are no security problems when the district administration is operational there," he added.

"If female doctors face security problems in their movements, they can ask security forces for help."

On the other hand, a Taliban spokesman, ZabihullahMujahid, said the Taliban never created problems for female doctors.

"We have repeatedly asked healthcare officials to employ female specialists as well, therefore we do not pose any problems to them," he said.

Ghazni is one of the most unstable provinces of the country, a reason people complain about lack of basic services. (Pajhwok)

(19) Two Afghan,....

of Pakistani origin, Islam and 20-year-old Tosif Khan were killed in the fire.

Following the incident, fire crews were dispatched to the scene immediately. The fire was extinguished before it could spread to other containers. One wounded Pakistani refugee was taken to the Bağclar Training and Research Hospital for treatment.

Seventeen refugees who were affected by the smoke and who lost their things moved in temporarily with their acquaintances and relatives.

"We collect paper here with our 22 friends. There are seven containers here. Immigrants from Afghanistan and Pakistan come here and try to go to Europe from here. The ones who make enough money try to cross the border again. I was sleeping in the next container when the fire started. We usually light a wood burning stove, we do not turn the electric heaters on at night. Our friends did not turn off their electric heater because they were cold," said SayeedIqram, who was of Afghan origin.

"I came from Tajikistan 15 years ago. I got citizenship here and started to work. Immigration is very difficult, so I will help them. Immigrants are staying in all seven containers. The people here change every four to five months because they stay here for a bit and go to Europe. This group came here five months ago. I spoke with Muhammad Islam, who died in the fire the night before. I advised them not to turn on the electric heater. But they did not listen to me," MübarekÇerman said. (Agencies)