

### (1) NUG Leaders...

candidates," Naeem Asghari, head of Afghanistan Free and Fair Election Foundation said. Neither the presidential nor Sapedar palaces have commented, but the CEO's spokesman on Thursday said they are against the appointment of former members of the IEC.

"We believe that a well-known person who people can trust should be appointed as head secretariat of the Independent Election Commission," said the CEO's spokesman Mujiburrahman Rahimi. The Independent Election Commission (IEC) was however criticized over the delay of selecting candidates for the position and said if the secretariat head is not appointed, parliamentary and district council elections will not be held. "As long as the selection of the secretariat head is postponed, holding elections and carrying out operational activities will also be delayed," Masoom Janan Abdul Rahimzai, executive director of Free and Fair Election Forum (FEFA) of Afghanistan said. (Tolonews)

### (2) IMF Calls ...

country. Moreover, more than one million internally displaced people presently exist in Afghanistan, the number of which significantly increased in 2016 as the insurgency intensified. The Afghan government has put in place policies for returnees and internally displaced people. For example, documented refugees receive cash grants and displaced families receive one-month support assistance. However, with the tight budgetary constraints, Afghanistan cannot rise to this challenge without support from the international community.

The UN has appealed for USD 240mn in humanitarian assistance for the returning refugees as part of the broader 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan for Afghanistan. The IMF is providing support to the Afghan government in this regard through the Extended Credit Facility. The arrangement provides access to USD 45mn over three years with low interest rates and long maturity. The IMF emphasized on supporting the government's efforts to strengthen government institutions, improve public service delivery and support job creation during these difficult times. (Wadsam)

### (3) Afghan Nation...

relations. We have shared historical, cultural, political and social values." "The people and government of Afghanistan will never forget the aids and cooperation of Indian Nation and Government in different sectors," Atmar added.

He also said "We are really thankful for all this and we will firmly stand united and committed against our enemies." India has remained one of the key donors for the reconstruction of Afghanistan following the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001.

Since 2002, the Government of India has committed USD 2 billion dollars to the socio-economic rebuilding of the Afghan state and society in accordance with the development priorities of the Government and the people of Afghanistan. (KP)

### (4) US Hails ...

I am proud the US government and the American people played a crucial role in developing and operating the system."

Since 2008, the US has provided \$39 million of assistance to develop the system with the Afghan partners and deploy it throughout 535 offices in 33 provinces. The system enables the tracking of more than 260,000 individual case histories.

Implementation of the system resulted in the release of thousands of prisoners who were serving time past their sentence dates and updated victims and their families on the status of their cases. It also empowered defence attorneys to advocate for the rights of their clients, and provided more accurate information to the justice institutions for strategic planning. The US pledged continued support for the Case Management System, calling the MoU signing a significant step in the process to fully transition the management, administration, and maintenance of the system to the Afghan government. (Pajhwok)

### (5) HPC Calls ...

led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. "The patience and flexibility of Pir Sahib [Sayed Ahmad Gailani] was always working, particularly in facilitating the [peace] agreement with Hizb-e-Islami," another deputy chief of the HPC, Attaurrahman Salim said. Meanwhile, the CEO's office said government continues to discuss the selection of Gailani's successor.

"The National Unity Government will decide on this matter after discussion and consultation," the chief executive's spokesman Mujib Rahman Rahimi

said. Gailani led the HPC for almost a year. Facilitating the peace deal with Hizb-e-Islami was one of his main achievements as head of the council. (Tolonews)

### (6) Afghan Migrants...

camps because of this worry. Aid groups have warned that migrants in Serbia have been at risk of exposure since extreme winter weather gripped the Balkan country in early January. Some 7,000 migrants have been staying in Serbia's asylum camps or sleeping rough in parks or make-shift shelters. When the nations along the former Balkan migrant route - leading from Turkey through Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia - closed their borders one after another in March 2016, thousands of migrants were trapped along the route. (Tolonews)

### (7) Afghan Health...

disclose data quality limitations, calling into question the extent of achievements claimed, the report said.

USAID reported a 22-year improvement in life expectancy from 2002-2010. The agency didn't disclose that baseline data came from the World Health Organization, which relied on indirect estimating methods.

The SIGAR report noted that a later WHO report showed only a 6-year increase in life expectancy for males and an 8-year increase for females.

USAID cited a decrease in maternal mortality, to 327 deaths per 100,000 live births, down from 1,600 deaths per 100,000 live births, from 2002-2010.

But the baseline survey used by USAID was conducted in only four of the 360 districts that existed in Afghanistan in 2002.

It said USAID relied on data from Afghanistan's Ministry of Public Health. But MOPH officials indicated their data were "not 100 percent complete," and the World Bank found that officials rarely traveled outside provincial capitals and rarely verified reports.

The report said USAID's evaluations and performance reports were not linked to the broader health care assistance objectives included in USAID's Post Performance Management Plan for Afghanistan.

In evaluating projects, USAID relied on implementing partners that may have had potential conflicts of interest because they performed the projects being evaluated.

These reports could be biased, increasing the risk that USAID is using inaccurate information to influence decisions about future health care projects.

SIGAR found that according to surveys, Afghans have little faith in their health care system.

The Afghans spend \$285 million annually on health care services in other countries.

A MoPH survey found that 72.5 percent of citizens who traveled abroad for medical care had tried first to receive treatment in Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

### (8) Canada Stand...

newspaper reported that Canada has provided \$117.2 million USD since 2006 to the Education Quality Improvement Project (EQUIP), which is administered by the World Bank through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund. The ARTIF, which is funded by 34 donor countries, including Canada, was established in 2002 as a way to support the government of Afghanistan.

"The World Bank is leading the investigation with the full co-operation of the government in Afghanistan," Bibeau said. (Tolonews)

### (9) British Minister...

NATO combat operations drew to a close in 2014, Britain continues to support Afghanistan by training, advising and assisting the Afghan defence and security forces, as they continue to fight with increasing skill and capability. This year's increase in support brings the total number of the personnel committed to the operation to 500; Britain's second biggest overseas commitment after the campaign against Daesh.

During his visit, the Minister met with Afghan Cadet Behzad Hiedari, who won Sandhurst's Overseas Sword of Honour. The prestigious honour is awarded to the best overseas cadet in each year's class at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst. The award highlights the talent in Afghanistan's security forces, which are being developed by the UK and our NATO Allies and partners.

One way in which British personnel are helping to develop Afghanistan's security forces is through the Afghan National Officer Academy (ANAO). Minister Penning visited the site during the visit and met with the UK personnel helping to mentor the mentors. Just as Afghan forces are in the lead for the security of their country, so are their UK-mentored officers, who are helping to train their country's next generation of leaders.

Britain has an enduring commitment to Afghanistan. This year we're step-

ping up our support to the country, and have deployed 50 extra personnel, some of whom I visited at the Afghan National Army Officer Academy, where the next generation of Afghan army leaders are being trained. The UK, along with our NATO Allies, is committed for the long term to developing the ever more capable Afghan National Security and Defence Forces to ensure Afghanistan is not a safe haven for terrorists. (Agencies)

### (10) Pakistan, ...

that the Trump administration would establish a registry for collecting data about Muslims living in the US brought thousands of protesters out in a New York park on Wednesday night and a former secretary of state said she too would register as a Muslim if Muslims were asked to do so.

Madeleine Albright, the first woman US secretary of state, tweeted: "I was raised Catholic, became Episcopalian and found out later my family was Jewish. I stand ready to register as Muslim in solidarity."

Her message was re-tweeted by about 20,000 people and liked by almost 40,000.

In the ABC News interview, recorded on Wednesday morning, President Trump said he was going to sign an order banning at least some Muslims from entering the United States in two hours. Later he did sign two orders - authorising the construction of a wall on the US-Mexico border and deportation of illegal immigrants - but those did not include the proposed ban on Muslims.

Asked to name the countries whose citizens would not enter the US, the president said: "You'll be hearing about it in two hours because I have a whole list. You'll be very thrilled."

He said he was focusing on the people who came "with evil intentions. I don't want that. They're ISIS [Islamic State militant group]. They're coming under false pretence. I don't want that."

Later, he defended his plan in a tweet as well, saying "as your president, I have no higher duty than to protect the lives of the American people".

When the interviewer, David Muir, asked why Afghanistan, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were not on the ban list, Mr Trump said: "We're going to have extreme vetting in all cases. And I mean extreme. And we're not letting people in if we think there's even a little chance of some problem."

Asked if this was the Muslim ban that he had talked about during the election campaign, he said: "It's not the Muslim ban. But it's countries that have tremendous terror.... And it's countries that people are going to come in and cause us tremendous problems."

He said: "It's going to be very hard to come in. Right now it's very easy to come in. It's gonna be very, very hard." Mr Trump said he would also create safe zones in Syria for refugees to live in, as he would not allow them to enter the US.

He said his predecessor Barack Obama and secretaries of state Hillary Clinton and John Kerry had allowed tens of thousands of people to enter the country. (Monitoring Desk)

### (11) UK Pledges....

three Afghan who earlier studied in the Chevening scholarship programme have been serving in Afghan government as deputy ministers.

He said as many as 500 international students got master scholarship under Chevening programme, adding last year 1,000 Afghan applicants applied for the scholarship scheme. (Pajhwok)

### (12) Corruption Must ...

addresses people's problems; therefore, President [Ashraf] Ghani and Chief Executive [Abdullah Abdullah] should hear the voice of the people. We receive many complaints about corruption in public offices whether it is judiciaries or the public health ministry," the IWA chairman Ekram Afzali said. The Presidential Palace would not comment on the corruption issue.

This comes after Transparency International ranked Afghanistan the 8th most corrupt country in the world in a report released this week. (Tolonews)

### (13) MoD Urges ...

universities with funds provided by the Defense Ministry, the MoD said. Meanwhile, Nazifa Zaki, member of Wolesi Jirga's (Lower House of Parliament) internal security commission criticized discrimination against women in the ranks of the Afghan security forces.

"Salaries and other allowances which are paid to men are not paid to women," Zaki said. According to the MoD, 1,575 out of 195,000 female soldiers are serving in the ranks of the ANA.

A female soldier, Zahra Kazimi, meanwhile raised her concerns over the discriminatory approach against female recruits among security forces.

"Those who have relations [with senior officials] are promoted two to three

grades higher than others. Even they do not know how to deal with the system. We tried a lot, but no one heard our voice," Kazimi stated.

Zahra, who joined the ANA 10 years ago, said she never left her job despite pressure from her family.

"I received three letters from Taliban many times and I was ambushed twice, but I did not leave my job. My in-laws also threatened me not to join the army," Zahra added. (Tolonews)

### (14) Peace in ...

urged Kabul to pursue a political settlement.

A framework for cooperation based on positive engagement and politically driven approaches in Afghanistan were more likely to bring about enduring solutions, he believed.

According to a statement from the Foreign Office in Islamabad, the NSA appreciated the role of the UK in maintaining regional peace in countering terrorism. (Pajhwok)

### (15) Mohib ...

years and assured the delegation and the USAID future assistance would be executed in the more effective manner. It is pertinent to mention that Mohib on Wednesday visited the Indiana State of the US to observe the manufacture of Humvees by AM General LLC.

He asked the US to establish a military and armored vehicles' maintenance facility in his country. A statement from the Afghan embassy said John Campbell, ex-US commander in Afghanistan, and other officials including Lawrence Platt, James Thomas and Will Goodman accompanied Mohib. (Pajhwok)

### (16) Salang Massacre ...

He suggested that Afghans should be united against the challenges and stand together always.

"Our unity will be the secret of our pride and our disunity will be the secret of our abjection. Today, there are enemies and competitors who spread disunity among mujahideen and the people under the name of ethnicity, place, language and others," Qanooni stated.

He mentioned that the election system should be changed into an electronic system in order to avoid the repeat of election fraud in future.

He reiterated his call that the presidential system should be changed into a parliamentary one. (Tolonews)

### (17) Media Can ...

and China could come to understand each other better in this case, and the media could help achieve this.

"We haven't heard too much from each other, unfortunately there is no presence of Afghan media in China," said Najafzada.

Najafzada, who was honored with the Kate Webb award by AFP in Hong Kong recently, said the TOLO television channel, which was established in 2005, has faced obstacles and many challenges over the past 10 years in the militancy-riddled and conservative country, to secure its place as the most-watched television channel in Afghanistan.

In a terrorist attack in Kabul last year, for which the Taliban outfit claimed responsibility, seven personnel of TOLO television were killed and 17 others wounded.

Lauding the role of media in society, Najafzada said, "today we have over 70 TV channels, 200 radio stations and several hundred newspapers at both national and provincial level."

"It is a new thing in Afghanistan as we have never had such an enormous media presence in our society." (Xinhua)

### (18) International...

visited Pakistan and discussed with Pakistani authorities the importance of close relations between the neighboring countries. A statement from the British Embassy in Kabul said Jeremy during met Pakistan Prime Minister and his advisor on foreign affairs, Chief of Army Staff, foreign minister and intelligence advisor during his visit on January 24-25 to Islamabad.

The British ambassador shared his opinions with Pakistani authorities about Britain's role in Afghanistan and discussed with them improving trade relations and better border management between the two countries.

Jeremy said good relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan were essential for stability in the both countries and the region. (Pajhwok)

### (19) UN Launches...

A UNICEF spokesman, however, said that the programme used (U-report-Pak-Avaz) "has no capacity or purpose to report on potential abuse cases by Pakistani authorities. It has not and cannot be used in such a way."

"It is a youth engagement tool based on SMS technology promoting real-time monitoring and youth engagement to improve development programmes and disaster response for youth and children, including Afghan refugees in Pakistan," the spokesman said. (Moni-

toring Desk)

### (20) Afghan Army ...

statement issued by 201 Selab Corps said.

In addition, the army's personnel of Selab Corps also found and defused a command-wire IED in Tagab district of eastern Kapisa province during the same period, according to the statement.

The leadership of the Corps has praised the army's soldiers for their success in finding the IEDs, the statement said, adding, "the timely recovery of the deadly weapons has foiled major attacks and saved people and security forces from possible tragedy in the mountainous provinces, the statement said.

The Taliban militants and other insurgent groups use the home-made IEDs to target security forces but the lethal weapons also inflict casualties on civilians. (Xinhua)

### (21) Snow Leaves...

blocking a number of highways.

He said the snow had also blocked the road connecting Paroon, the provincial capital, with neighboring Kunar province.

He said they had recorded 1.3 centimeters of snow that created problems for local residents and the road blocks had sent commodities' prices soaring.

The public representative urged the central government to provide snow-clearing machinery to Nuristan to keep highways and road cleared of snow in winter.

Nuristan governor Hafiz Abdul Qayum said the heavy snowing had not only blocked roads but had also caused financial losses and deaths.

He said three persons were killed in a roof-collapse incident in Want Weigal district and another two persons died in a car-plunge incident in Want area following heavy snowfall.

The governor said the snow had blocked the Paroon highway until Staf area where avalanches had also occurred.

The governor said they lacked enough resources to clear highways of snow and the only snow clearing vehicle they had was faulty and needed repair.

He said Nuristan received nothing from last year's donation of machines by Japan to the Public Works Ministry. (Pajhwok)

### (22) Weapons Seized,...

district were made in Pakistan and some in Russia.

He said the weapons included 36 Kalashnikovs, 173 pistols, one machine-gun and others. The seizure prevented a terrorist bid, the governor said.

He said two suspects had been arrested in connection with the weapons and they were being interrogated.

Lazha Mangal is an insecure district where clashes between security forces and militants are not uncommon. (Pajhwok)

### (23) Youth Escapes ...

Pajhwok Afghan News Rahman had been held captive in a remote area of Janikhel district of neighboring Paktia province.

He managed to escape on Wednesday when the kidnapers were asleep. He then reached Zazai Maidan district of Khost.

"Last night after night prayers, Rahman noticed one of his chain's circles was open, availing the opportunity he fled the area."

Ghairat said previously one person had been detained two years back on the accusation of kidnapping Rahman. The detainee has been currently held at the Khost central jail. A probe is underway to arrest other perpetrators.

Meanwhile, Rahman expressed happiness over his escape. Narrating his ordeal he said: "Seven men would keep guard on me. I was transferred to Tango area and then to Ghonzai area where I was held captive for five years in a house."

Shir Ahmad Khan, Rahman's father, said he was convinced his son had been killed and now seeing his son alive again, he was very happy. He thanked the Khost police chief for helping him in his son's release. (Pajhwok)

### (24) Nangarhar ...

due to which the baby could not

According to the Kamawal operations of this nature were conducted in private facilities and foreign countries against to 500,000 afghans but doctors of the Zonal hospital conducted the operation without charges and successful. He said the baby girl would be kept at the hospital for a week. (Pajhwok)

### (25) 1 Civilian...

target a government office.

"But the explosive device went off on the way, killing the rickshaw driver and wounding two civilians," he said, adding that police had launched an investigation into the incident.

A doctor at the Ghazni Civil Hospital, Noorullah, confirmed receiving two injured people from the site. He said their

condition was stable. Three cars were damaged and window glasses of nearby shops shattered as result of the blast. A statement from National Directorate of Security (NDS), meanwhile, said intelligence captured four Taliban rebels, in Jalalabad - the capital of Nangarhar province.

The detainees were identified as Ikramullah, Rahmatullah, Qari Mahmud and Syed Mohammad, who were allegedly involved in terrorist attacks.

NDS said a Daesh member named Mohammad Ismail was detained in the Kot district of the province. No group has so far commented on the incidents. (Pajhwok)

### (26) Geneva Talks...

special envoy is heading to New York next week and is going to discuss this issue with the UN secretary-general. We will have a clear image once he is back," he added. (Xinhua)

### (27) Putin, Trump...

U.S. president-elect agreed that the current ties between Russia and the United States "could not get worse" and vowed to help "stimulate a return to pragmatic, mutually beneficial cooperation." (Xinhua)

### (28) NATO, Russia...

President Vladimir Putin.

They both want to begin work on a bilateral trade agreement, which for May would provide proof of stability amid the Brexit breakup and for Trump would support his belief that he can negotiate one-on-one trade pacts.

"They both need this to be a success," said Heather Conley, a European expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank. (Reuters)

### (29) Migrant Children...

responsibilities.

"Some politicians are good at rhetoric, and very bad at doing things. Let's put more pressure on member states to take action," Avramopoulos said.

The EU Commissioner said politicians were at risk of losing sight of the bigger picture if they merely gave in to voter sentiment on the "unpopular" topic of migration. (Xinhua)

### (30) Security in

very important to discuss necessary reforms inside the EU.

According to her, Britain's decision to leave the EU resulted from disappointment with the present functioning of the union. "To avoid further departures, we should begin a debate on necessary changes inside the union to upkeep its coherence," the Polish prime minister said. (Xinhua)

### (31) Turkey Awaits

Turkey had advocated for establishment of safe zones in northern Syria.

The current situation in Jarablus, where Turkish army-backed Syrian rebels launched a military offensive and defeated the Islamic State (IS) members here, is a "good example" for practice of a safe zone, Muftuoglu said reminding that thousands of Syrians returned their homelands after the region was cleared from jihadist fighters.

On Wednesday, Trump said he "will absolutely do safe zones in Syria" for Syrian refugees. The president reportedly will order the Pentagon and State Department in the coming days to prepare such a plan. Turkey launched a military operation, Euphrates Shield, into Syria in August and backed Syrian rebels in a bid to defeat IS militants in the region. (Xinhua)

### (32) China's Lunar...

procedures and more flights. China has been the world's largest consumption country for overseas tourism for four consecutive years, contributing more than 13 percent to global tourism income. (Xinhua)

### (33) General Bajwa...

1991 and the House Listing Operation carried out in 1990 showed abnormal population growth in some parts of the country, which not be justified by normal demographic indicators.

Consequently, the government decided to postpone the 1991 census. Another effort was made in 1994, which could not mature due to pressure by from political and ethnic groups. (Monitoring Desk)

### (34) Turkmenistan...

report. A relevant memorandum on the project's implementation was signed in Ashgabat on March 20, 2013, during a trilateral meeting of presidents of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan. The TAT railway is intended to become an important link in the transportation of the Asian region. The railway's construction started in June 2013. As of today, the railway's Turkmen section is ready. (Trend)

### (35) Tajikistan,...

protocol on resumption of air traffic between the capital cities in the first half of this year. (AKI)