

(1) IEC Unaware...

should not be used, if such things happen, there is no hope for transparency elections," said Naeem Ayoubzada, chief executive of Transparent Election Foundation of Afghanistan (TEFA).

This comes a few weeks after the IEC referred three possible candidates for the secretariat position to President Ashraf Ghani and (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah. However the two leaders apparently failed to reach a consensus in this regard.

The election commission further said that security threats continue to remain a major challenge for Afghanistan's election management bodies - especially in terms of compiling a voters roll.

"Using the old cards will increase chances for corruption and fraud and this will undermine the credibility and transparency of the next elections," the CEO's deputy spokesman Jawed Faisal said.

Based on the political agreement signed between Ghani and Abdullah for the establishment of the National Unity Government (NUG), the leaders pledged to implement systematic reforms in Afghanistan's election system within two years. A process which was badly damaged following large scale fraud in the 2014 presidential elections. (Tolonews)

(2) Escalating ...

the transfer of more than 1,355 mortal remains of fighters and civilians to their families, besides transporting 1,542 war-wounded patients to medical centers. (Pajhwok)

(3) Fear Grips ...

But he gave no figure. Meanwhile, 215 Maiwand Military Corps spokesman, Lt. Col. Mohammad Rasoul Zazi, said the militants attacked Afghan National Army (ANA) posts and the district center. He said the clash was under way but the attackers had been pushed back.

Shamsullah Sehrai, a tribal elder, the incident clash but had no information about casualties.

Qari Yusuf Ahmadi, Taliban spokesman, claimed the fighters captured 20 security posts, seized weapons and killed several security forces.

A number residents of the district said they could face an ugly situation tonight if security reinforcements did not reach there. They said the clash was still ongoing.

Social council head in Sangin, Haji Ghulam Jan, told Pajhwok that there were only 40 army and police personnel and the Taliban controlled the rest of the district except the district administration building.

He said the army personnel were stationed at the residence of an influential person, Haji Lal Jan, but the Taliban were able to enter the building with explosives through a tunnel. The explosives were detonated, he said. He said the Taliban also blew up a private hospital owned by Haji Lal Jan. He said the clash was ongoing and fresh forces should be sent to the district as soon as possible, otherwise the locals would face an ugly fate.

Another elder, Haji Gul Mohammad, confirmed the clash. He said the government should pull out the existing forces from Sangin or send additional forces. "Because we don't want to more youth lost to the conflict."

The governor's spokesman, Omar Zwak, earlier said enough security forces were available in Sangin and the rebels could not advance.

Rasoul Zazi, the Maiwand Military Corps spokesman, said the Taliban had not en-

tered explosives to the military base but to an inn. He said the clash was ongoing, but the attacks had been pushed back.

A source in the commando forces in Helmand told Pajhwok that the commandos had reached the district and the situation would be brought under control soon. (Pajhwok)

(4) Afghanistan...

senior leaders and release of prisoners.

"We are open to any and all opportunities for peace talks. We can find our way with the Taliban if external support to them stops," the Afghan envoy said.

Regarding the Taliban's long-standing call for the withdrawal of foreign troops, he said war in Afghanistan provides opportunity for the foreign troops to stay.

"If there is no war, then there is no reason for their stay in our country - therefore, if Taliban genuinely want the foreign troops to leave Afghanistan, peace, not war will do that," Zakhilwal said.

When asked if he expects rise in violence in the coming spring and summer, he said the security situation will be "challenging," adding that the guerrilla type and terrorist attacks are difficult to prevent entirely, but the Afghan security forces will "endure as they have proven themselves by now."

Taliban traditionally launch their so-called Spring Offensive usually in April that marks the beginning of fighting season in the war-torn country.

A former Taliban minister Agha Jan Mutasim said there could be rise in fighting this year if the Taliban and the government failed to come to the negotiation table.

Mutasim, who was the close confidant of the Taliban founder Mullah Omar, had been involved in peace efforts while living abroad in Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.

Speaking to Xinhua on Skype, he urged Kabul and the Taliban leaders to use the opportunity of the winter lull in the fighting and start political process.

"Rise in violence will diminish the chances of dialogue," the former Taliban minister said.

About the threat of the Islamic State or Daesh in Afghanistan, the Afghan ambassador admitted that Daesh activists operate in some areas but they would not take roots in the country.

"They are in small number but are dangerous. Their approach is not popular among Afghans. Their model does not go with the psyche of Afghans. If Taliban join the peace process, Afghanistan will not have the IS problem," the envoy said. (Xinhua)

(5) IS Group ...

according to local media reports, has set on fire more than 200 residential houses in Kot district, besides killing and kidnapping scores of people including women and children.

Daesh or IS armed group, according to locals have increased their propaganda to recruit fighters. The militant group have their radio to propagate in IS favor and also distribute pamphlets in Nangarhar and the neighboring Kunar and Nuristan provinces to motivate people, especially youngsters to join the armed outfit in the war against government.

"Dozens of civilians have been languishing in the custody of Daesh (IS) insurgents in Nangarhar. Availing the opportunity the armed outfit has been recruiting the jobless youngsters into their ranks,"

member of Nangarhar provincial council, Zabihullah Zamarai told local media.

Zamarai also warned that "negligence by government to take necessary steps against enemies" would prove catastrophe. (Xinhua)

(6) CEO States...

who were in insecure districts, it was impossible to reach them," Qasim Haidari, deputy state minister said.

Statistics given by the state ministry on disaster management also shows that in 2016 nearly 296 schools, 47 health centers, 72 mosques, 6,392 residential houses, 1,500 shops, 12 government building, 212kms of roads and 33 wells were destroyed in the ongoing war. (Tolonews)

(7) Tax Problems...

the traders will stop trading," Siam Pesarlay, spokesman of ACCI said.

Pesarlay also said government had promised the chamber that it will provide electricity to factories for at least eight hours a day - however, this has not happened and many factories face ongoing power cuts that can last for days.

According to some businessmen, however, one of the key reasons around the tax issue is that they have to pay tax to customs officials when bringing goods into the country - something they are not happy about.

They are also against the current income tax structure. (Tolonews)

(8) Afghan Army ...

there, but the combined units will represent their nation's best trained, led, and equipped combat-ready fighting force," said U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Sims, commander of Task Force Forge, the unit advising the Afghan soldiers. According to advisors from Task Force Forge, the Afghan soldiers graduated the training as a formidable force. They built up from individual readiness to squad and then platoon events, demonstrating and proving their battlefield capabilities.

"We swear on the Koran that we will protect civilians and land from the enemy, and be a force for good. We would like to thank the corps commander, instructors, and RMTC advisors for the training," said Lt. Col. Sabaudin, 2/3 Kandak commander. (KP)

(9) Go After....

to study how explosive material got inside the governors house, why security was lax. There are too many painful questions and need an in depth inquiry." (Pajhwok)

(10) CEO's Office...

stable. The billboards can have two meanings; first it emphasizes the implementation of the NUG agreement, and second it shows political disagreements between the Presidential and Sapedar palaces," Asif Ashna, a political analyst said.

Some people also believe that the NUG lacks the political will to hold the promised Constitutional Loya Jirga.

"First they should provide the context for holding a transparent election and once parliamentary and district council elections have been held, they can hold the Constitutional Loya Jirga. By that time the changing of the political system could be possible," said Nazari Pariani, a journalist. Despite the NUG having been established more than two years ago, rifts between the leaders have not yet been completely resolved and analysts claim many of the country's problems are rooted in these disputes. (Tolonews)

(11) Afghan Family...

do. Last week I quit my job, so I was planning to come on

12th of February to the United States. But after Friday's executive order, I had to rebook and pack my bags, don't look back, and come to U.S.A. And it was like 18 hours of flight, and I was not sure if I was going to make it, if I would be able to enter. But luckily there was nothing wrong happened so me and my family were able to get through.

"So I'm really, really happy and I don't know what's going to happen next because it's so unpredictable. My recommendation to my fellow Afghans who are holding SIV (Special Immigrant Visas) visas right now is that they have to come and don't wait for anything to happen. I just want them to pack their bags and come because you don't know what's going to happen next. And I'm so happy," Razayy said.

Amber Murray, a human rights attorney, said: "It's such a relief because anybody who's coming in on an SIV, they faithfully serve the United States government for at least two years for them to come here and their life is in imminent danger and so of course we're worried that anybody who serves our government and our troops and gives mission critical information and assistance, we are worried about them facing a ban."

Murray went on to say: "Although Afghanistan was not affected directly, SIVs come through, sort of through

a refugee processing, so it would've subjected them to that 120-day ban, which is what we didn't want. Because 120 days, they could be killed. There's been a number of translators whose families have been killed and they've been under imminent threat and I have a number of translators' families who are living in safe houses and just waiting for their visas to come here."

The Republican president on Friday put a four-month hold on allowing refugees into the country, an indefinite ban on refugees from Syria and a three-month bar on citizens from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. (Tolonews)

(12) Taliban Attack...

report so far. Nangarhar is among the relatively calm provinces in eastern Afghanistan but the anti-government armed militant groups are active in some of its remote districts.

Both the Taliban insurgents and militants affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group are operating in this province.

Bati Kot is among the remote districts where both the Taliban insurgents and ISIS loyalists are actively operating and often clash among each other besides conducting insurgency against the government. (KP)

(13) 2 Uprising...

were not provided with work opportunities.

Mohammad Ullah, one of the rehabilitated men, said that he was out of humanity and people viewed him as a bad person when he was using drugs. But he thanked Commander Abdul

The Faryab public health director said around 20,000 people were addicted to drugs in the province and more than 5,000 of them were registered. At least 2,000 of them have been treated at the centre. Most of the addicts are youth and those having lived in Iran for work.

On the other hand, Col. Abdul Hafiz Khashi, police chief for Jawzjan, said more than 80 people addicts had been collected by police from different parts of the city. The

objective is to treat them at a healthcare centre and curtail their movements.

"The presence of such people has created problems for Shiberghan residents, who are harassed. Picking them from city streets and roads will definitely lead to a decline in robberies," he remarked.

Public Health Director Dr. Faridoon Habib, said: "We have chosen a shelter for a hundred drug addicts who would be provided with all facilities and treatment." The addicts would remain under care for 50 days.

Niaz Mohammad, one of the addicts, said: "I am happy being here for treatment. I want to be rehabilitated as soon as possible because I lost my joy and belongings consuming drugs."

A 50-bed rehab is operational in Shiberghan and a 20-bed centre in Aqcha district of Jawzjan, where more than 400 people, 30 percent of them women, have been rehabilitated. (Pajhwok)

(14) Herat: 3 Women ...

being investigated.

Separately, police on Monday detained Nasir Ahmad, an alleged rapist who had been at large for four years, in Herat City, the provincial capital.

Provincial police spokesman Abdul Rauf Ibrahim said Nasir Ahmad had allegedly committed rape in Pashtun Zarghon district four years ago. He was arrested on Monday morning. (Pajhwok)

(15) 79 Afghans...

Iran. Chaghai residents blamed the federal government for extending the stay of Afghan refugees. (Pajhwok)

(16) Shaheen Asmayee ...

on a daily basis, we will defeat Hosilot with the support of Allah," said Shaheen Asmayee player Sayed Nasir Hussaini.

"As you are aware, we have continued our practice matches and promise Shaheen Asmayee fans we will defeat Hosilot," said the team's goal keeper Kawoosh Haidari.

If Shaheen Asmayee beats Tajikistan's Hosilot team, they will be one step closer to the Asian championship. But to reach the championships, they still need to beat Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Tuesday's match is expected to be broadcast live on TOLO and Lemar TV. (Tolonews)

(17) 16 US State...

Washington, Massachusetts, Hawaii, Virginia, Connecticut, Vermont, Illinois, New Mexico, Iowa, Maine, Maryland and the District of Columbia.

Under the executive order Trump signed Friday, refugees from all over the world will be suspended from entering the United States for 120 days while all immigration from so-called "countries with terrorism concerns" will be suspended for 90 days. (Xinhua)

(18) Trump's Refugee...

green card holders, some are people with visas, lots of people have families, homes and pets here, they are simply being detained because of the new process. I believe the executive was unconstitutional." Golden told Xinhua.

Janie Lynch, a teacher from Flushing, Queens, said, "we are here because we are all brother and sisters, and the U.S. is supposed to be open to everybody, whether you are tired, are poor, are yearning for free." "I just cannot let this happen, injustice will end to be injustice to everybody, we simply cannot sit back, we cannot remain neutral on a moving train, it's happening." (Xinhua)

(19) Early Elections...

have the same shouting and

finger pointing we saw in Italy last year," Gian Franco Gallo, a political affairs expert with ABS Securities in Milan, told Xinhua. "But don't let that fool anyone. The various sides still don't agree on many things."

Italy's political landscape is divided among three major camps: the Democratic Party led by Renzi and Gentiloni, the Five-Star Movement headed by comedian and activist Beppe Grillo, and Forza Italia, founded by former prime minister and billionaire media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi. (Xinhua)

(20) EU at Odds...

he said, "We have to make choices about the world. We want to live in. We must choose between isolationism, inequality and national egoism on the one hand, and openness, social equality and social solidarity on the other." Under the executive order Trump signed Friday, refugees from all over the world will be suspended from entering the United States for 120 days while all immigration from so-called "countries with terrorism concerns" will be suspended for 90 days.

Countries included in the ban are Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen. The total population from these countries exceeds 130 million. (Xinhua)

(21) New Zealand...

disagreed with it.

"We don't agree with the policy. We have yet to see just what turns out to be the long-term policy for the U.S., because this is a temporary measure," English said in the report.

"It does appear to have created some real chaos in the short term."

The Red Cross, which is the primary provider of refugee settlement support in New Zealand, welcomed English's response and said it would like to see a practical response from New Zealand through an emergency refugee intake.

In the current global climate support for refugees and upholding obligations to protect them had never been more important, said Anne Smith, acting secretary general of the New Zealand Red Cross. (Xinhua)

(22) 28th AU ...

growth being registered by African countries including Ethiopia, DR Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Rwanda, which are also amongst the fastest-growing economies in the world.

She commended 13 African countries for making commitment to lead in launching the single African aviation market in 2017.

Dlamini-Zuma noted that countries such as Rwanda, Ethiopia, Kenya and South Africa have started to open their skies for fellow African countries, while urging more countries to join in.

She also hailed progress on gender equality and women's empowerment, improvements in their representation in the public spheres, reduction of maternal and infant mortality, the push for financial inclusion and economic participation, and for land rights.

Noting with concern that fighting broke out again in South Sudan, she urged the parties involved to honor the agreement to ensure peace, reconciliation and justice. (Xinhua)

(23) U.S. Army ...

European Command, said of the dozens of U.S. soldiers and tanks lined up in the snow, some of which were still painted in desert colors of the Middle East. (Reuters)