

(1) Thousands of ...

permanent officials across Afghanistan would also be sacked from their positions, Mohsini continued. They only had today and tomorrow to defend themselves against the fraud allegations. The IECC spokesman insisted it would welcome reforms in line with the constitution and called it mandatory. (Pajhwok)

(2) Ghani Yet to ...

since the introduction of these five nominees, but we don't know either the president has ignored his promise or he is not informed about the nominees," said Haji Kamran Alizai, head of Herat Provincial Council.

This comes as the nominees at a press conference in Herat asked the president to finalize his decision soon.

"We are awaiting the president's decision for almost 50 days," nominee engineer Roz Beh Shuja said. "We are neither approved nor rejected."

The other nominee, engineer Abdul Basir Samimi, complained that have not been interviewed by Ghani as per his past statements.

So far, only the Herat attorney chief has been appointed of those 30 government officials dismissed while the rest of the positions are led by the acting heads. (Tolonews)

(3) Women be ...

indicated efforts to restart peace negotiations, but provided no clarity on government plans to "ensure increased representation of women" in all decision-making and mechanisms regarding conflict resolution, as set out in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and later resolutions. It recalled that during past efforts at peace negotiations, Afghan women's rights activists had repeatedly spoken out about their fears that the government would trade away women's rights in an effort to reach an accommodation with the Taliban.

Previous negotiations have typically occurred with little transparency, with the public often learning of them only after they occurred, it added.

"President Ghani has an opportunity to pursue peace negotiations in a manner that will reassure all Afghans that their human rights concerns will be taken into account," Barr said. (Pajhwok)

(4) MoI Confirms ...

part in relief and rescue operations in several provinces where the force had set up five emergency health clinics in Panjshir.

The death toll from a series of avalanches and flash floods rose to 260 on Friday, with the bulk of deaths coming from central Panjshir province, where above 200 lost their lives, including women and children.

The Afghanistan cabinet announced a three-day national mourning to express solidarity with families who lost their beloved ones to avalanches in several parts of the country, a statement from the Presidential Palace said on Saturday. (Pajhwok)

(5) Protests Demand

of our efforts, but rest assured the government is making efforts to release the passengers safely."

Last Monday, masked men kidnapped 30 Hazara passengers from two buses on the way to Kabul on the Kabul-Kandahar highway. So far, no group has taken responsibility for the kidnapping of the individuals (Tolonews)

(6) Iran Reiterates ...

refugees in last three decades and even helped the country to replace poppy cultivation with other crops.

He went on to say that Iran has always helped maintain national solidarity of Afghanistan and is determined to continue with the policy.

Iran is one of the most important donors to Afghanistan, which has kept its promises to help to the reconstruction of the war-ravaged country.

Iran has built several roads, power transmission lines, border stations and many other infrastructure projects in Afghanistan to better link the two nations.

Iran has also contributed more than \$50mln annually to Afghan anti-narcotics efforts during the last five years. (FNA)

(7) Ghani Pledges...

to the lives and infrastructure and there is dire need for assistance." Ghani on Saturday said in his ad-

dress that latest situation at home and tragic deaths caused by avalanches amid incessant snowfall forced him to postpone his Iran's visit. He said as many as 287 Afghans have been killed, 143 wounded and 1,248 homes destroyed in the natural disasters across the country.

"I prefer to stay at home with my people at this tragic moment," the president said. He thanked his Iranian counterpart for extending him an invitation. He would visit the neighboring country soon.

As a gesture of solidarity, Pakistan dispatched two planes of relief assistance for the Afghan people affected by recent avalanches in different parts of the country.

A statement from the Pakistan's Embassy in Kabul said that two C-130 planes arrived at Kabul airport on Saturday carrying tents, blankets, warm cloths, medicines and essential food items to help the disaster-hit people of Afghanistan on behalf of the government, army and people of Pakistan.

Ghani said that he had issued directives for setting up a relief fund, which would help individuals and global fraternity to donate for affected families.

The intensify of natural disaster suspended electricity supply to the capital Kabul and other provinces near the Salang Pass connecting Kabul with northern part of the country. (Pajhwok)

(8) Azerbaijan ...

gratitude in return by describing Azerbaijan's accomplishments in the last few years as inspiring.

President Ghani mentioned that the Afghan delegation and Azeri delgation would discuss a practical framework that would be put to use for short, mid and long-term cooperation between the two countries and facilitate a productive talk about new investment opportunities in Afghanistan.

The president was also quick to point out that the environment for any private or public investment on the part of Azerbaijan in Afghanistan was completely favorable. (Wadsam)

(9) MoFA Summons ...

Moreover, the Deputy Foreign Minister expressed Afghanistan's concern over harassment of the Afghan refugees by the police in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and wanted it to be stopped.

He also said that until the visit of the Afghan high-ranking delegation to Pakistan and their negotiation with the Pakistani authorities aimed at phased return of the Afghan refugees, there is an urgent need to halt the process of forced expulsion.

The Pakistani ambassador reassured that he would take up the issue with his country's authorities to take necessary measures. (Pajhwok)

(10) India ...

mourning to express solidarity with families who lost their beloved ones to avalanches in several parts of the country, a statement from the Presidential Palace said on Saturday. (Pajhwok)

(11) 400 Rebels ...

ever launched by the Afghan security forces.

Thirty-six were the most wanted commanders and the slain militants, he said, adding that huge arms and ammunition caches have been recovered during the operation.

In addition, at least 283 landmines were defused and most of the areas, including 14 villages in Sangin district, were completely purged of rebels, he added.

One civilian, he acknowledged was died in the offensive despite measures adopted by the security forces to avoid civilian casualties. Siddiqui said that the 14 policemen detained in connection with attack on Logar police headquarters were introduced to attorney office for investigation. (Pajhwok)

(12) MoFA Overrun...

Political Science, Business Administration, Journalism, Economics and Trade is needed for employment in the MoFA.

Being at least 21 or 35 years old (35 should have MA or PHD degree), not being in the MoFA blacklist, speaking both Dari and Pashto languages, having at least 450 TOEFL score or passing another equal test as well as being able to operate computer and other new technology tools, not being morally corrupt and addicted, successfully passing the entry test of the Ministry are other specifications that an employee should be regarded eligible

for MoFA vacancy.

Written test, interview, security clearance, completing the probationary period and graduation from the MoFA institute are all considered during the hiring process.

But during president Karzai's 13 years rule, his uncle, two vice presidents' sons and a number of other close relatives of officials, MPs and Jihadi leaders were hired without conducting any competitive test or going through legal process.

Adeeb Fahim, elder son of Marshal Mohammad Fahim Qaseem, former first vice president, was appointed as deputy head of economics department. In 2013, he was appointed as head of second political department, which is an important position in MoFA dealing with relevant embassies in Kabul and lead the activities of Afghan embassies in Middle East and Africa.

However, he had resigned from his position after the demise of his father in 2014.

But Taqi Khalili, elder son of Karim Khalili, the second former vice president is a diplomat at the MoFA for over 13 years. He has also served as first deputy of the Afghan ambassador in the US and the deputy of the permanent representative of Afghanistan at UN. Since the formation of the unity government, he is serving as Afghan ambassador to Azerbaijan without going through legal process of working for three years in MoFA.

Availing the opportunity in the United States, he sent all his family members via embassy resources in Washington to Canada where they were given citizenship.

According to credible sources, most employees especially the MoFA diplomats are sons and close relatives of government officials that were appointed without conducting entry tests or going through needed legal process.

The following persons are among those working in MoFA without going through test, interview and other official formalities:

Son of Mohammad Younus Qanoni, former Wolesi Jirga speaker and first vice president.

Son of Omar Daudzai, former interior minister.

Son of MP Daud Kalakani.

Daughter of MP Rahela.

Son of Zahir Azimi, spokesman of Ministry of Defense.

Brother of MP Hamida Ahmadzai.

Son of former MP Sayed Hussain Anwari.

Brother of Anwarulhaq Ahadi, former trade and industry minister.

Brother of Ferooz Wardak, former education minister.

Son of Qayamuddin Kashaf, head of Afghanistan's Ulama Council.

Daughter and son of Muhaiuddin Sahibzada, MoFA administrative affairs head.

Son of MP Mohammad Abdu.

Son of MP Qudratullah Zaki.

Daughter of MP Nazifa Zaki.

Nephew of Abdul Rab Rasoul Sayyaf, Jihadi leader and former MP.

Daughter and son of Noor Akbar, former MP.

Husband of MP Nilofar Ibrahim.

Sister of MP Fouzia Raofi.

Brother of MP Aryan Youn.

Daughter of Amena Afzali, former labor and social affair minister.

Son of Mohammad Eshaq Alko, Attorney General.

Two daughters of Torialai Weesa, Kandahar's acting governor.

Apart from the list above, there are a number of other close relatives and cronies of the former as well as sitting officials and parliamentarians that have been hired in MoFA without considering merits or even appearing for the entrance exams.

According to sources, Farid Kazemi who was previously personal assistant to the secretariat of the lower house of parliament and Mujtaba a former employee of the office of the administrative affairs have been employed trampling all rules and regulations.

Abdul Qader Zazai, head of the international affairs committee of the Wolesi Jirga, told Pajhwok Afghan News one of the reasons that Afghanistan's diplomacy was ineffective and useless during the past 13 years was that most of the officials who got appointed on key posts have no relevant qualification and experience.

"Based on our reports, unprofessional personnel have been employed in the MoFA. Among them are even medical doctors, engineers, architects who have been hired thanks to their connections with the high ranking officials. Some of them have even become ambassadors and top diplomats at key embassies abroad," he said.

Zazai added that his committee in the Wolesi Jirga has prepared a list of inefficient employees and has submitted it to the Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani. If Rabbani did not take action in the next three months, he warned they would take actions based on legal authorities that they possess. "Some diplomats are even above 80-years old which is against diplomatic protocols."

Based on the information by the Wolesi Jirga committee of international affairs, more than 100 persons had just studied up to 12th class and have been hired on key diplomatic positions and 200 more that have also been employed without pursuing merit policy, Zazai added.

Other members of parliament were also of the opinion that at least half of the lawmakers have their family members or relative hired at the MoFA. They said when the sitting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah was foreign minister then diplomats from Panjshir province were hired in each and every embassy.

In European or North American embassies, majority of the local or technical employees have some connections with top government officials, they added.

They said MoFA has turned into a human trafficking centre where top officials send their relatives to Europe and other countries with diplomatic passports. Some have been sent to Italy as family members of Qais Hassan a lawmaker.

Through such works and connections, former parliamentarian directorate head has now been appointed as the General Consul in Los Angeles through his connections with members of parliament, they alleged.

Atiqullah Atifmal, deputy at MoFA, acknowledged that in the last 13 years, employees have been hired based on their relations but said that this trend was prevalent in all the ministries and MoFA was not an exception. "Some people were hired without entrance exams. We have evaluated the current situation based on President's directions and we submitted our report to Ghani for further action," he added.

Apart from the cronies of the officials, family members and relatives of CEO Abdullah Abdullah, Rangin Dadfar Spanta, Zalmai Rasoul, and Zazar Ahmad Osmani former foreign ministers have also been employed at MoFA.

Those who have recently been hired by Zazar Ahmad Osmani included Shoaib Habibi, deputy chief of staff, Najib Aqa Fahim, director of policy and strategy, Fahim Kohdamani, Abdul Rab Rasoul Sayaf's spokesperson, Hamid Haidari, former Tolo TV journalist, Fahim Abrat, Ahmad Reshad Kohistani and many more.

Serajul Haq Seraj, deputy spokesperson at MoFA, has also been hired without completing any procedures or appearing for any exam.

It is said that when Zazar Ahmad Osmani was minister of counter-terrorism and interior, Fahim was his advisor in both ministries. But when he came to MoFA he created a new directorate of policy and strategy and hired Fahim for the post.

Hamid Haidari, former Tolo TV journalist, who was also Osmani's advisor at counter-narcotics ministry, was brought to MoFA and according to some has poor attendance at work.

Sirajul Haq Siraj, deputy spokesperson at MoFA, however, said that they were employed based on the needs of the ministry.

Without presenting any figures that how many people have been hired without appearing for the exams, he added, based on the new policies people would be hired after presenting their university degrees and passing entrance exams. Critics said one of the main reasons that MoFA and diplomatic mission abroad have been so useless has its roots in employees who have no professionalism or efficiency.

Physical brawls among top diplomats and relatives of these officials in embassies abroad were also hot issues in media. Three years ago, Aklii Hakimi, former ambassador to the US and current finance minister was beaten by Ashaq Alako, son of Attorney General.

Head of Ulama Council Qiamuddin Kashaf's son who was a diplomat at Afghan embassy in Saudi Arabia had brawl with the ambassador and was then sent to Hungary where he created trouble as well.

Salahuddin Rabbani taking vote

of confidence from parliament last month promised to bring reforms to this key portfolio. "When we promise for reforms it is not a promise for a particular group. Our promise is for people."

Rabbani promised to bring reforms, ensure professionalism, evaluate the activities of missions abroad, and pay special heed for gender equality in the ministry.

In the same manner that security forces were sacrificing for peace and tranquility, he added, personnel of MoFA also had obligations in political and foreign relations sphere.

Based on article 5 of the diplomatic and consular law, MoFA should conduct entrance exam on an yearly basis to hire capable youth in various rankings of the ministry.

Last year over 1,330 individuals appeared for the entrance exam and apparently those who have been shortlisted have been waiting for their interviews for months. It is said that Zazar Ahmad Osmani's relatives have been hired instead on the positions. (Pajhwok)

(13) Nangarhar to ...

established branches of local police in Kabul, Ghor, Helmand, Bamyán, Kunduz and Balkh provinces and the next target was Nangarhar province.

"The purpose to build local police force is to bridge the gap between police and civilians," the MoI official remarked. (Pajhwok)

(14) MoD Dispatches ...

The relief goods sent to Panjshir included blankets, edible and non-edible stuff to be distributed among the affected families.

Meanwhile, some civil society organizations on Saturday held protest in Kabul against the government luck warm response to the affected families.

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Ghani on Saturday said in his address that latest situation at home and tragic deaths caused by avalanches amid incessant snowfall forced him to postpone his Iran's visit. He said as many as 287 Afghans have been killed, 143 wounded and 1,248 homes destroyed in the natural disasters across the country.

"I prefer to stay at home with my people at this tragic moment," the president said. He thanked his Iranian counterpart for extending him an invitation. He would visit the neighboring country soon. (Pajhwok)

(15) RS Expresses ...

service at Headquarters Resolute Support, we will include an observance for the Afghans who have lost their lives in this disaster and carry them in our thoughts and prayers," he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(16) 2 Afghan Cops

medical treatment when the attack took place. The bodies were shifted to District Headquarter Hospital in Chaman for postmortem.

There was no claim of responsibility for the attack. Chaman is a small town in the southwestern province of Balo-chistan bordering Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(17) Iraq Violence...

northern Iraq last year. According to UNAMI, last year was the deadliest in Iraq since the peak of the country's sectarian conflict in 2006-2007, with a total of 12,282 people killed and 23,126 wounded. (AP)

(18) Ukraine Military...

would check daily to see if the weapons remained in the areas they had been pulled back to.

It said it had also observed the withdrawal of two convoys in Luhansk region, but separatists had "prohibited the special monitoring mission from following either of these convoys to their endpoints." (Reuters)

(19) U.S. Deserves ...

ought to be after you have exhausted all the diplomatic rem-

edies."

Kerry added that "I can't promise you we can" reach a nuclear deal with Iran, "but we are going to test whether or not diplomacy can prevent this weapon from being created so you don't have to turn to additional measures including the possibility of a military confrontation."

"Our hope is diplomacy can work. ... Given our success on the interim agreement, I believe we deserve the benefit of the doubt to find out whether or not we can get a similarly good agreement with respect to the future," he said.

Kerry did say that Netanyahu is "welcome to speak in the United States, obviously," referring to the controversy over Israeli leader's speech, which comes just two weeks before elections in Israel.

Signs are growing that the speech could damage Israel's country's broad alliance with the United States. (Reuters)

(20) Israeli PM Heads...

aimed at peaceful purposes.

The planned speech caused resentment in the White House. U.S. officials said the speech would be "destructive" to the U.S.-Israel relationship, and several dozen U.S. democrats are planning to boycott it.

U.S. President Barack Obama will not meet with Netanyahu during his visit to the U.S., nor will Secretary of State John Kerry do so.

However, Netanyahu insists that his speech is important amid the danger of nuclear Iran.

"I respect the U.S. President Barack Obama," Netanyahu said when visiting the Western Wall in Jerusalem.

However, he reiterated that as prime minister of Israel, it's his obligation "to see to the security of Israel," therefore, "We strongly oppose the agreement being formulated with Iran and the major powers, which could endanger our very existence."

On the other hand, Israeli center-left politicians urged Netanyahu to cancel the trip, which they dubbed as political propaganda, which would hurt the U.S.-Israel relations.

"What Netanyahu interested in is his political survival and not the state of Israel," former finance minister and head of the Yesh Atid party told Channel 2 on Saturday.

Yitzhak Herzog, Chairman of the Zionist Union and Netanyahu's biggest rival in March 17 elections, reiterated his stance that Netanyahu is motivated by political motives and would cause damage to the U.S.-Israel relations.

"There's no dispute about the Iranian threat, but the speech will not help or change anything, just could cause damage," Herzog told the Ynet news website in an interview on Sunday. (Xinhua)

(21) Iran Warns West ...

showed that foreign military intervention and instrumental use of armed groups is not the solution, and will rather intensify damages, human losses and destruction of economic infrastructures and exacerbates destructive crises," Shamkhani said.

"The world powers lack a serious and real will for fighting the ominous phenomenon of terrorism and use it as an instrument to achieve their goals," Larjani said during the meeting in Tehran. (FNA)

(22) Sanctions Serious...

policy, adding that harmony between the political and military leadership is essential for national security. "Pakistan has the capability to defend itself. Operation Zarb-e-Azb is successfully continuing to eliminate terrorism from the country," he added. Aziz said an environment of confidence building has been restored with Kabul, and cooperation with Afghanistan in intelligence sharing and the defence sector has improved. He said Pakistan would not allow its soil to be used against Afghanistan. (Agencies)

(23) Parliamentary ...

CCER, 30 percent of the 4.3 million registered voters cast their votes within only the first three hours of the elections. (Press TV)

(24) Chinese Diplomat...

to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, Kong said. No organization or person using Chinese territory would be allowed to undermine the China-Myanmar relationship and stability in border areas, according to Kong. (Xinhua)