

(1) HIA Demands ...

are some high-profile prisoners. Hizb-e-Islami has given their list to the opposing side so that they are also released alongside other prisoners," said Saeed.

Hizb-e-Islami media officials have said that it has referred the list of Hizb-e-Islami inmates to the government, asking the government to release them all. "The inmates have been categorized. Those who are political prisoners and are not linked with criminal cases or with the Taliban and other terrorist groups, would be separated," said Ahmad Farzan, spokesman to peace accord oversight commission.

Sources say Hizb-e-Islami insists that the government must ensure the release of at least 200 Hizb-e-Islami prisoners including some key figures such as Lotfullah Sadiq, Qazi Rahmandad and Najib, son of Bashir Baghlani. The Allotment of 1000 residential plots for Hizb-e-Islami detainees and the delivery of safe locations for residence of Hekmatyar in one of the eastern province of Laghman or Nangarhar are the main Hizb-e-Islami conditions. (Tolnews)

(2) Growth, Self-...

Abdullah Abdullah. Afghanistan has major water resources but the country is not using its water effectively. The country has the capacity of using only 36 percent of its water and rest is flowing into neighboring countries.

The scale of surface water in Afghanistan is estimated at 49 billion cubic meters with 18 billion cubic meter of underground water. Economic experts say that water management in the country could help Afghanistan to leverage its economic programs and boost the agriculture sector, saying this would also help Afghanistan to be self-reliant. More than 3.5 million hectares of land which are suitable for agriculture are not utilized today.

"If we adopt the best management practices of our water resources, this will help us to get self-reliance. We can also reach a deal with our neighbors about the waters we have," said minister of agriculture and irrigation Asadullah Zamir.

Iran, Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are among the key neighbors of Afghanistan who get a lot of advantage from five river basins in Afghanistan. "So far there is no agreement with other countries about the water resources of Afghanistan. There should be an agreement in this respect and negotiations must start to achieve this. These agreements should not be signed for a long term basis, they should be for a twenty- or thirty-year period," said economic expert Qais Mohammadi. President Ashraf Ghani said on Thursday at the National Land Conference in Kabul that Afghanistan's socioeconomic stability and future development was directly linked with focused management of land and water resources. Participants at the conference asked the Afghan government to review water policy and laws, establish more dams to control the waters and further develop water basins. (Tolnews)

(3) IMF Commends ...

situation hurting confidence and growth, while an influx of returning Afghan refugees from neighbouring countries is compounding these challenges," he said.

"However, as demonstrated by the successful Brussels and Warsaw meetings last year, the international community continues to stand by Afghanistan providing it with much needed development, security, and technical assistance support."

Economic growth in Afghanistan is set to reach three percent this year, up from two percent in 2016, largely because of favourable agricultural output. Inflation is expected to pick up to six percent. (Pajhwok)

(4) Herat Girls ...

Group members have to be older 18 and should be students," said Zainab Amini, representative of Technician Challenge in Afghanistan.

Most of the software developed by the Herat girls focuses on facilitating the education process to be introduced at Herat's hotel, public and private hospitals, libraries and Herat's ancient places for the benefit of tourists and visitors.

The most well-known program is named Tourist Software which can be installed on mobiles and helps tourists easily find any places they want to visit in the province. "First we discussed their needs with a few tourists who had come to Herat. We found that tourists spend lots of time and money and they do not enjoy their trip as they should. So, we tried to develop the Herat Tourist software," said Farkhunda Ramazani, a member of technician challenge group. The girls said they also have new plans to work on during 2017. "We are trying to change idea to action and making the most of our software, is our priority. The software that we are going to develop this year, will be very useful for our people," Parwana, member of the group said.

The girls say the Technician Challenge program has big supporter and spon-

sors in other countries, but in Afghanistan no government official has appreciated their efforts and even some high officials even don't know what they are working on.

"We heard that in other countries, the presidents or the vice presidents join in such events and encourage the software developers. But here yet no government official has come to visit our program. Even some government officials do not know about our activities," said Parisa, member of the group. At first three groups started the program and now nearly 100 girls have joined the group. The number of groups have expanded to 14. (Tolnews)

(5) Wolesi Jirga, ...

served as deputy secretary of the Wolesi Jirga.

Nazir Ahmad Ahmadzai, who secured 133 votes from the lawmakers present, was elected as 2nd deputy speaker, replacing Niamatullah Ghafari.

None of the contenders for the post of 1st deputy speaker was able to get the required number of votes during today's election.

Zahir Qadir grabbed 56 votes, Mohammad Humayun 75 and Yasini got 73 votes, falling short of the required threshold.

Election for the Wolesi Jirga secretary post would be held tomorrow. Abdul Qader Zazai, a lawmaker from Kabul and Abdul Sattar Khawasi from Parwan province were the contenders. Meshrano Jirga

Tayib Atta was elected as the Meshrano Jirga's secretary. He received 33 votes. His rival candidates were Mohammad Gul Rasooli and Najiba Hussaini. Atta replaces Abdullah Qarraq.

Meshrano Jirga chairman Fazl Hadi Muslimyar meanwhile announced the election of Mohammad Ajan Mangal, a Kochi tribe representative, as head of the house panel on tribes.

Abdul Latif Nohzatyar was elected as head of the commission on education and higher education.

Mualvi Mohiuddin Munsif as head of the legislative affairs and judicial commission, Latif Zhwande as international affairs commission head, Shafiq Nawrozkhel as women's affairs head and Mir Hatam Tarakhel as head of the provincial councils and legislators' security commission.

However, heads for five other commissions were elected behind closed doors after an agreement between the members.

As a result of voting, Mohammad Hakim Alokzai was appointed as head of the security and defence affairs commission.

Nisar Haris was appointed as public works commission head, Mohammad Hanif Hanafi as complaints commission head, and Lotfullah Baba as transport and telecommunications commission head.

Mohammad Alam Izadyar was appointed as 1st deputy chairman, Dr. Mohammad Asif Sadiqi as 2nd deputy chairman and Dr. Faisal Sami as deputy secretary of the house yesterday.

Heads of houses

The head of both houses of the National Assembly are selected once in a legislative term. Abdul Rauf Ibrahim, the Wolesi Jirga speaker and Fazl Hadi Muslimyar, the Meshrano Jirga chairman, would remain at their posts until the end of the legislative period.

The article 83rd of the Constitution says, "The work period of the House of People shall terminate, after the disclosure of the results of the elections, on the 1st of Saratan of the fifth year and the new parliament shall commence work."

"The elections for members of the House of People shall be held 30-60 days prior to the expiration of the term of the House of People."

However, the Presidential Palace in Jawza month of 1394 announced that Wolesi Jirga, would continue working until next elections. The elections haven't been held so far.

The work tenure of appointed members of Meshrano Jirga was also extended till next elections of Wolesi Jirga and district councils based on a presidential decree. (Pajhwok)

(6) Ready for ...

victimising the Pakhtuns. While Islamabad allowed entry to thousands of Afghans requiring minimum documents, but the Pakistanis were asked to produce proper documentation, the defence minister said. Urging the opposition parties not to politicise the issue, he said the government believed peace in Pakistan and Afghanistan was interlinked. Pakistan was still ready to cooperate with Afghanistan in the war on terror, he added. (Pajhwok)

(7) U.S. Report ...

abuse in public places. According to the Sikh and Hindu Council of Afghanistan, there were approximately 900 members of the Sikh and Hindu community in the country.

The report says while media reported independently throughout the year, often openly criticizing the government, full press freedoms were lacking.

At times authorities used pressure, regulations, and threats to silence critics,

the report says. "Politicians, security officials, and others in positions of power arrested, threatened, or harassed journalists because of their coverage. Freedom of speech and an independent media were even more constrained at the provincial level, where many media outlets had links to specific personalities or political parties, to include former mujahedin military leaders who owned many of the broadcasting stations and print media and influenced their content," the report adds.

In February, after the president issued a decree to implement current media laws and strengthen freedom of expression, the executive created a committee to investigate cases of violence against journalists. The committee met multiple times in the first half of the year and identified 432 cases eligible for investigation. The committee sent the cases to the appropriate government institutions associated with the violations for investigation, including the Ministry of Interior and NDS forces.

As of September, none of the government institutions had started an investigation or provided a response to the committee, the report mentions. According to the report, girls under age 18 continue to be at risk for honor killings for perceived sexual relations outside of marriage, running away, not accepting a forced marriage, or being a victim of sexual assault.

The report says although pornography is a crime, child pornography is not specifically identified under the law.

Exploiting a child for sexual purposes, often associated with bacha baazi, was widespread, although some aspects of this practice are separate crimes under the penal code.

The report indicates that the Law on Prohibition of Children's Recruitment in the Military became effective last year but despite that there were reports about children used in military and were recruited by Taliban as well as a number of pro-government commanders. (Tolnews)

(8) Pakistan...

Nangarhar province. Last week Pakistan announced that it was closing its borders with Afghanistan amid terrorist threats of attacks from Afghanistan. Later Pakistan also launched missile attacks on the borders provinces in eastern Afghanistan.

According to reports, Pakistan's fresh border policy has caused major problems for the people living on both sides of the borders. There is speculation that some of the people living in the border areas are trying to remain in touch using illegal routes.

Pakistan's rocket shelling of Afghanistan's eastern region follows a recent suicide bombing in a Sufi shrine in Pakistan's Sindh province which killed 75 of people and wounded hundreds of others. (Tolnews)

(9) Defeating Terror...

are trying to move the economy, how we can really do that. What are the resources and assets that Afghanistan has and how we can use those assets in the most effective fashion," he said. With agriculture being the core of the country's economy, he said emphasis had been in the revival of this sector. Towards that end the Ghani government in the last two years have begun the design, development and construction of about 29 dams, some of them on hydroelectric power capability, but most of them for irrigation purposes.

"The total capacity of these dams is the equivalent of about two and a half Hoover Dams, so it's sizable. And that would really in a major way, impact our agriculture," he said, adding that there is renewed emphasis on development of its huge natural resources.

The next important area is movement of goods, in trade particularly. "And when you look at trade, given the location of Afghanistan is a major asset and how we can really try to take that geographic relevance that Afghanistan has, because traditionally we are part of the Silk Road," he noted. In terms of movement of goods, Afghanistan is now part of the main thoroughfare for the one built, one road that China is building, he added. Qayyumi said the whole idea of how they can really use the government purchasing power to create a lot of exports and employment, has been a major effort. "And the government contracts, we're giving 25 percent preference, and as part of that nine to 11 key elements, the country has become self-sufficient," he said. (Pajhwok)

other anti-government groups were responsible for the majority of attacks, the ANDSF carried out at least 35 attacks on medical facilities and personnel between 2015 and 2016. "Targeted attacks on medical facilities have decimated Afghanistan's fragile health system, preventing many civilians from accessing lifesaving care," said Christine Monaghan, research officer at Watchlist who traveled to Afghanistan in November 2016 and wrote the report. "Children suffer as a result — we are seeing more deaths, injuries and the spread of disease."

and two other women from Karizmir area of Kabul were detained with six kilograms of heroin.

Another four women were detained carrying more than 115kg of hashish during various incidents in Nangarhar. Two females were detained in Herat province with 10kgs of heroin, six others nabbed separately with 30kgs of morphine in Kandahar, one woman with 10kgs of heroin in Takhar, two women in Balkh with 10kgs of heroin. A woman belonging to central Maidan Wardak was detained with 24kgs of heroin. Two women from Kandahar were held with nine kilograms of heroin, one woman from Takhar with 1,150 litres of alcoholic drinks, and one from Badghis with 300kgs of hashish. (Pajhwok)

(10) Medical...

(for sex). He told me he will take me to Dubai and no one will be aware of it," she said. Later he tortured my sister and mother in public and threatened to put us in jail, she said.

"I was shopping. He tortured me in public. He also tortured my mother and she became unconscious," said victim's sister. "I went and saw my sister was lying unconscious, I transferred her to the hospital," said victim's sister Karima. According to Ghazni police headquarters, a man reported the

Attacks on hospitals have compounded challenges to children's health, already exacerbated by two years of escalating armed conflict, according to the report.

In Afghanistan, 4.6 million people, including more than 2.3 million children, are in critical need of health care, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

More than 1 million children suffer from acute malnutrition, an increase of more than 40 percent since the beginning of the reporting period in January 2015, according to WHO. Communicable diseases are also up; WHO reported 169 measles outbreaks in 2015, an increase of 141 percent from 2014. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) furthermore reported that child casualties increased by 24 percent from 2015 to 2016. (Tolnews)

(11) Ghani Accepts...

saying: "We want to expand trade ties with Sri Lanka, just like we did with India, by establishing an air corridor." Ghani went on to say Sri Lanka had good institutions to train nurses and it had precious experience in agriculture. Afghanistan was interested in making use of that expertise, he added.

Meanwhile, GP Baluthsinghala expressed happiness over the initiation of his mission in Afghanistan, saying he would make efforts at expanding bilateral ties during his tenure. (Pajhwok)

(12) Pak-Afghan...

out that India was improving its relations with Arab countries, asked: "where do we stand?"

Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions Abdul Qadir Baloch said it was unfortunate that Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan had never been cordial.

Baloch claimed the present government had made efforts to improve the relationship, pointing out that Pakistan is currently hosting three million Afghan refugees.

Defending the government's decision to seal the Pak-Afghan border, the minister said there was an important reason for it.

"Evidence of Indian and Afghan agencies assisting terrorism in Pakistan is available," he claimed.

"The purpose of closing the border is to pressure the Afghan government to take action against terrorists."

He said peace in Pakistan was related to peace in Afghanistan and while "we are ready to provide Afghanistan with all the required assistance, how many bodies can we bury?" (Pajhwok)

(13) Police in...

government and international partners to cut "ghost police" from payrolls and ensure that wages are not lost through inaccurate records or skimmed off by corrupt officials. Funds from foreign donors to pay police are disbursed through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to the Afghan government and mainly paid direct to individuals' bank accounts.

However, while efforts continue to integrate personnel data electronically, officials say they do not know how many among an authorized force strength of 157,000 are actually serving, or whether they are all being paid properly. In testimony to a U.S. Senate committee last month, General John Nicholson, the top NATO commander in Afghanistan, said corruption and poor support for troops and police in the field was among the main problems facing Afghan forces.

Southern Afghanistan, including the key Taliban heartlands of Helmand and Kandahar, as well as neighboring Uruzgan and Zabul, is likely to see some of the heaviest fighting in the traditional spring offensive. (Reuters)

(14) 25 Women...

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(15) Domestic Violence ...

(for sex). He told me he will take me to Dubai and no one will be aware of it," she said. Later he tortured my sister and mother in public and threatened to put us in jail, she said.

"I was shopping. He tortured me in public. He also tortured my mother and she became unconscious," said victim's sister. "I went and saw my sister was lying unconscious, I transferred her to the hospital," said victim's sister Karima. According to Ghazni police headquarters, a man reported the

death of his son a month ago. Later he accused his daughter-in-law of killing his son.

"Police have helped them in accordance with the law and sent their cases to the attorney," said Ghazni police chief Aminullah Amarkhail.

But, victims have asked the government to act. "I want the government to serve justice and punish the criminal," said Marzia.

"It has been a month since we have been consulting several institutions, but no one is there to hear us. If you have money and power, then your problems are solved," said Marzia's mother Zahra.

"We have been oppressed, they are bullying us, they have links in government," said the victim's father, Ghulam Ali.

Although there are dozens of institutions supporting the women rights, violence against them has dramatically increased. (Tolnews)

(16) Residents Want ...

Mohammad Noor Rahmani, the provincial council head, said though the sale and use of unregistered SIM cards was considered a crime, many people in Sar-i-Pul and other provinces freely used them.

According to him, anti-government insurgents during the cold war also used such SIM cards for propaganda. He didn't go into details.

Rahmani said one using an illegal SIM card couldn't be identified during conversation and thus it was possible such SIM cards were used in crimes. Rahmani asked the Sari-i-Pul telecom department to prevent the selling of such SIM cards.

Hussain Qurbani, acting communications director, said his department had recently disconnected about 450 illegal SIM cards in the provincial capital and districts and the process was ongoing.

"We have warned the private telecom firm active in Sar-i-Pul against the selling of unregistered SIM cards. Violators will have to the law."

Currently, all telecom companies such as Roshan, Afghano Wireless, MTN, Etilsalat and Salaam are active in Sar-i-Pul. Pajhwok tried to seek comments from the telecom companies about people's complaints; however they refused to talk.

Reports say the problem of illegal SIM cards is not only confined to Sar-i-Pul province, but it is common in other provinces as well. A use was recently quoted in a report as admitting to having hundred of SIM cards registered in his name. He distributed the SIMS to shopkeepers and street vendors against 12 and 15 afs each. The vendors sold the card for 50 and 80 afghanis. (Pajhwok)

(17) Afghan Forces...

were given regarding the member of the parliament on whom the militants were supposed to carry out the attack. NDS said the Taliban insurgents as usual have received instructions from the outsiders to assassinate the political and influential leaders. However, NDS said in majority of such cases the suspects are arrested before they manage to execute their plans. (FNA)

(18) A Look at

a habit. "I regret my addiction, but my regret does not resolve anything because there is no clinic here, nor are there medical treatment services," said Amir Mohammad.

Police officials confirm many in Khurma's village are suffering from addictions. "Nearly all people are suffering from addiction in this village including men and women — some due to poverty or unemployment," said Abdul Fatah, the commander of public uprising force.

"Drugs are coming here from Badakhshan and Kunduz and are then distributed and people become addicted," said tribal elder Jabbar Khan.

It is said that drugs are supplied in the village freely. However, no one dared to disclose the names of the drug mafia for security reasons. (Tolnews)

(19) Afghan Family ...

passports and visas and would be interviewed on April 5 in Seattle to determine if they were eligible to use those visas to stay in the US.

US District Judge Josephine Staton said she would retain jurisdiction of the case and that the government could not detain or remove the family from the US without providing a 72 hours notice to their attorneys. (Pajhwok)

(20) 4 Logar...

of the four tribal elders and said Taliban had evidence of their cooperation with government so according to him they committed crime.

Mujahid said, the cases of detained local leaders were being investigated and no decision had been made regarding them. He hinted at their release provided they stop cooperation with government. (Pajhwok)

(21) Inside...

at the women's safe home. "It has been four months that I came to Kabul. I have since been living in this safe home but my case is yet to be de-

decided. My father came only once to see me during this period," she said.

Pajhwok had earlier interviewed Maryam, but no progress has been made in her case. She said: "I wake up early in the morning, offer prayers, recite the Quran and clean my room. I am really unhappy with whatever happened to me and I rarely eat."

Looking off-colour, she added: "I hate this life and always think what good is my life that has already been destroyed. I have lost my direction and think death is better than living a life like this."

Laila, 23, hailing from Baghlan province, fell victim to forced marriage and family violence four years back. "A month after my mother's death, a group of people came to our house. I thought they had come for condolences, but my father married me off to a 37-year-old man."

She said her father also got married after some time and she was beaten and torched by her husband without reason.

She said her husband was a murderer who killed his father and uncle, he used to drink day and night used to beat her regularly. (Pajhwok)

(22) Beach Soccer ...

Mohamed Ashoor strike two minutes into the second period. Jamal added his second in the game when he was one-on-one against keeper Baktash Akbari. Afghanistan finally scored their first goal thanks to Raof Qaderi but it was only a few seconds later when Abdulla Al Malki registered the Bahrainis' fifth following a neat interplay.

The rollercoaster continued when Murtaza Jafari added the Afghans' second goal just before the buzzer.

The third period commenced with even more excitement as Afghan keeper Shabab Alavi also got on the score-sheet with his impressive throw-in before Qaderi's cool header helped the Afghans come close to leveling matters. (Tolnews)

(23) Journalist...

was being investigated. The slain Abdul Khaleq was a civilian and shopkeeper, he added.

Dost Mohammad Nayab, the governor's spokesman also confirmed the incident. (Pajhwok)

(24) Rural Afghan

support us. I have become week. My injured son needs help," Zulheja said. Nikbakht is a teacher in Paktika. She also has come to Kabul to be the voice of Paktika women.

Another woman, Anargul, has come from southern Kandahar province and says that the fighting and conflicts have destroyed their homes.

"No one yet has asked about our situation. Our houses have been destroyed and we live in tents. When a cat crosses over the tent roofs or a dog howls, all the people living under tents get afraid," she said. (Tolnews)

(25) Turkish, US...

with the SDF and wants the alliance to lead the march on Raqqa, where IS militants are believed to have planned international attacks. (AP)

(26) U.S. Republicans

deny coverage to those with preexisting conditions.

The ACA has been heatedly debated in the United States since its ratification in 2010. The Obama administration said the ACA expanded healthcare coverage to millions more of citizens, while some grumble that their healthcare premiums have surged after the ACA was put in place. (Xinhua)

(27) Trump Signs...

direction, it consolidates the strategic alliance between Baghdad and Washington in many fields, and at their forefront war on terrorism." (Xinhua)

(28) EU to Host...

that the talks has yielded tangible progress, and that he plans to reconvene with delegations later this month for a fifth round of negotiations seeking to broker an end to the six-year conflict. (Xinhua)

(29) EU Court ...

stay with acquaintances in Belgium in October. Belgian authorities had refused the visa, leading to a court battle. (Reuters)

(30) AU, UN ...

harmful practices; laws that discriminate women; women, peace, and security; and women in prison.

Speaking during the launch ceremony, Jean Mfasoni, Special Advisor to the Chairperson of the AU Commission, noted that tremendous progresses have been achieved in the area of women empowerment and development in Africa. (Xinhua)

(31) Top Turkish...

for Cavusoglu on the upcoming plebiscite was banned by Dutch officials last Friday. The minister told the foreign diplomats that he received a call from the Dutch authorities stating that his visit was feared to help Dutch far-right party leader Geert Wilders to win in elections. (Xinhua)