

(1) Ghani's Assurance...

transparency and fairness of the elections. However the IEC so far has not been able to finalize these lists.

"Changing the electoral zones, replacing the voter lists, voting cards and maintaining financial and technical resources are among the key elements which need to be considered," said Shah Mahmoud Mal, member of Election Watch Afghanistan (EWA).

"One of the biggest problems is that until now we don't have the voters list and there is no census," said Jandad Spinghar, head of Afghan Civil Society Election Network (ACSEN).

The deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan is often seen as one of the key challenges that could undermine the participation of the Afghan public at the polls.

"The election is one of the key principles of our democracy and we have public support for it," said Sediq Sediq-qj, spokesman for the Ministry of Interior (MoI).

Ghani's CEO Abdullah Abdullah has however said that in the absence of the electronic national identity card (e-NIC) system, it would be impossible to ensure the credibility and transparency of elections. But government so far has failed to announce a date to start the process. (Tolonews)

(2) Watchdog Concerned...

"It is shameful that foreign newspapers write about the existence of Bacha Bazi among security forces. It does not mean that you do not do Bacha Bazi, but means you should prohibit anyone from doing it," said the head of AIHRC, Sima Samar.

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) however said the reason for police breaking the law was that many of them are illiterate. "Problems exist and we do not ignore it. This is the situation. But the main reason behind this is insecurity," Taj Mohammad Jahid, interior minister said. The Attorney General did not comment on the problem, but said in some insecure districts there are no judicial centers.

"Some of the villages and districts are insecure and police can play a very important role on those areas. By securing justice and maintaining security, we can encourage people to support government," Farid Hamidi, the Attorney General said. (Tolonews)

(3) Steps Taken ...

ranking officers are also among those accused of corruption.

"More than 125 cases have been processed and referred to the relevant courts for further action; fortunately we have received some verdicts from the courts on these cases," said Jamshid Rasouli, spokesman for the AGO.

Speculation surrounds the number of military personnel involved in corruption in the ranks of the Afghan National Police (ANP) - cases were estimated to be 400 this solar year.

It is said that several high profile officers are involved in corruption in the Afghan police.

Experts say that the existence of corruption within the military ranks could endanger the work of the Afghan security forces.

"Corruption causes misconduct within the army, this also helps the enemy to easily infiltrate and it increases casualties and other irregularities including the removal of public trust in the army," said military expert Atiqullah Amarkhail.

Selling of weapons and fuel are at the top of the corruption case list within the security institutions - but so too is the issue of ghost soldiers. (Tolonews)

(4) Nangarhar place for construction of the airport will be selected," said Sayed Ahmadshah Sadat, acting deputy head of Nangarhar.

Provincial council members meanwhile said that a civilian airport in Nangarhar will solve many problems for people living in eastern provinces.

"In infrastructure projects, lots of promises are made by government to the Nangarhar people but are not implemented therefore our residents are disappointed and dissatisfied with the president," said Zabiullah Zamari, a provincial council member.

Nangarhar is a fairly densely populated province and an economic center of the country and a civilian airport would have a positive impact on economic growth in the region. (Tolonews)

(5) Millions of ...

USD of the total outstanding amount has been recovered. He said the NUG has not made significant progress in this regard. "There are no mechanisms in place to collect this money - not only for Kabul Bank, but also for other money taken illegally. Government takes action, but does not follow it systematically," Timori said. The Anti-Corruption Network also said government has failed in its efforts to collect all money from debtors. "No one responds to people. No one says that we have committed this and what we have done about it. They do not feel themselves respon-

sible to the people," Khan Zaman Amarkhel, member of the Anti-Corruption Network said.

Recouping this money was a priority for President Ashraf Ghani and on his first day as leader he put the issue on the table. (Tolonews)

(6) 50pc Female ...

fighting in Kunduz has narrowed work space for media women, there were 13 girls working with us in the television station; but now there are only two because the security situation has completely worsened." She also asked the government to ensure security of media outlets and journalists.

Currently 10 radio stations, two local television stations and a national television channel operate in Kunduz. According to these media outlets officials they face financial and security problems.

Shahbaz Sabiri, Afghan Journalists Safety Committee (AJSC) chairman in Kunduz, called women's role as vital in all fields including media, saying women media activists could more effectively echo problems of other women. However, she said the recent insecurity had a negative effect on the presence of women in media.

"Earlier about 70 women and girls worked in local media outlets of Kunduz; but now their number has reduced by 50 percent, which is worrisome. If threats and insecurities continue, women's presence will further reduce in media and in other sectors."

Meanwhile, security officials said they wouldn't hesitate from providing any kind of support to media persons especially women.

Brig. Gen. Abdul Majeed Hamidi, provincial police chief, said the presence of women in media depended on their own determination because the security situation had improved compared to the past.

"So far we haven't received any complaint from media and journalists regarding insecurity or other problem; we are supportive of media and will be."

The women's affairs department also said increasing security and the continuation of war in Kunduz barred women from working in government and non-governmental organizations. (Pajhwok)

(7) Anti-Daesh ...

public uprising forces in areas recaptured from the IS and would provide the militiamen with basic instructions on how to protect check posts.

Despite previous operations "Shafaq 2" and "Qahar-i-Selab" still dozens of Daesh militants operative in four districts of the province.

Mashriqiari said some 15 joint and special offensives were conducted this month alone against militants, killing at least 52 and injuring 20.

During the same period, 43 suspected militants and 41 crimes suspects were detained in the province, he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(8) Afghan ...

watches from vendors. The pair had to forfeit the watches, and Pena also had to hand over a Harley Davidson motorcycle he purchased with the cash.

Others named in the rogues' gallery include Donald P. Bunch, a former Navy non-commissioned officer from Pace, Florida who admitted taking \$25,000 in cash bribes while conducting humanitarian assistance. He had been responsible for stocking emergency supplies such as rice, beans, and clothing and took payments from multiple Afghan vendors in return for lucrative contracts.

Far larger sums have been lost through waste, incompetence or suspected fraud that cannot be proven. Nearly \$43 million of U.S. taxpayers' money was spent on building a gas station in what SIGAR's top official, John Sopko, called "one of the worst examples of poor planning and just sheer stupidity." Other blunders include \$335 million spent building a power plant that used just one percent of its capacity.

SIGAR says it has saved U.S. taxpayers about \$2 billion through audits and criminal investigations since the mission began more than 15 years ago. That's a fraction of the \$117.25 billion of tax dollars spent on humanitarian aid, engineering assistance and civilian security - more than the cost of rebuilding Europe after World War II. The cost includes \$8.5 billion spent on counter-narcotics, even though opium poppy production in Afghanistan is at an all-time high. In the latest SIGAR report, Sopko described the reconstruction work as "tenuous and incomplete" and warned that corruption was a major problem along with the "questionable capabilities" of the U.S.-trained Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF). "If these two risk areas are not addressed, I fear that our reconstruction efforts could ultimately fail, to the detriment of our national-security goals in Afghanistan," he warned.

Related: U.S. Spent \$43 Million on Afghanistan Gas Station: Watchdog Report His report also painted a bleak pic-

ture on security, saying that the Afghan government now controlled only 57 percent of the country after local forces retreated from many strongholds amid an insurgency from the Taliban and militants affiliated to ISIS.

Local Afghan forces also sustained heavy casualties, with at least 6,785 soldiers and police killed in the first 10 months of last year, with 11,777 wounded, the report said. (nbc news)

(9) 700 Laghman ...

reclaiming of the occupied land from usurpers; however, the promise could not be honoured.

"Now the government has told us to get ourselves the lands from grabbers, but we don't have such authority."

A civil society activist in Qarghai district, Zahidullah Musazai, said the land plots were right of all teachers and the government had given them official documents.

He asked the government to resolve the issue because continuation of the strike would affect students.

Laghman education director, Mohammad Hazrat Mujadidi, confirmed the strike by teachers, saying he visited the district to oversee the situation. He also sought government's help in this regard.

Laghman governor's spokesman, Sarhadi Zwak, said Governor Abdul Jabbar Naimi had tasked the security organs and the anti-usurpation commission to resolve the issue forthwith. Earlier teachers in Kama district had been on strike for three weeks over a similar issue. (Pajhwok)

(10) Karzai Condemns ...

raids by foreign troops in Sangin district, the statement said.

Local residents in Sangin have claimed US forces had killed over 20 civilians, but foreign forces denied the allegations and said they were investigating the claims.

Separately, seven people were killed and over 20 wounded in a suicide explosion in Lashkargah on Saturday. Karzai strongly denounced airstrikes in Sangin and suicide bombing in Lashkargah in which precious lives had been lost.

He said the killing of innocent human beings was an act against Islamic laws and principles of humanity.

The former president deplored, saying the ongoing war was not Afghanistan's own but it was imposed on Afghans, who had been always victimized by the strange war. (Pajhwok)

(11) Women's...

need commitment from those at a leadership level in government institutions, we cannot rely only on drafting of laws," said MP Fawzia Kofi.

Funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the five-year project to promote women was initially launched in 2015 and is dedicated to empowering Afghan women and expand their presence in government institutions. (Tolonews)

(12) Otto Pfister ...

agreement with Pfister. We have signed a contract with him and I hope that with Pfister and the new technical staff we will be able to fulfill our people wishes," said Kramudin Karim, president of the Afghanistan Football Federation.

"I am glad that I am part of the technical staff and happy to be serving as goal-keeping coach. I hope that once again I will be able to make the people smile," said Faqiryar.

Pfister has many years of experience behind him and has coached Rwanda, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Senegal, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Trinidad and Tobago teams.

"I like a challenge. I was in different countries - Ghana, Cameroon, I was in Beirut, I was in Saudi Arabia... I am not a political man, I don't think about a political situation or something like this," said Pfister.

Pfister who has also coached in Egypt, Lebanon, and Algeria, called on the Afghan football federation and technical staff to work together in harmony so as to develop Afghanistan football. He aims to see a marked improvement in the team's first match against Vietnam on March 28 - in their Asian Cup qualifying match scheduled for Tajikistan. Pfister is cited as one of Germany's most successful coaching exports, and was voted Africa's Manager of the Year in 1992. (Tolonews)

(13) 33 ISIS Militants ...

regarding the report so far. Nangarhar is among the relatively calm provinces in eastern Afghanistan but the some remote districts of the province have been witnessing instability during the recent years.

Signs of insurgency by ISIS loyalists were seen nearly two years ago in this province, forcing the Afghan security forces to conduct counter-terrorism operations besides the US forces based in Afghanistan conduct regular airstrikes to suppress the insurgency by the terror group. (KP)

(14) First-Ever ...

asked all Kunaris to plant at least two seedlings and maintain them.

About 100 water wells and as many reservoirs were dug up this year in rain-fed lands and the water pumps could be run on solar power all the day, he added. (Pajhwok)

(15) Girls' School...

and rural disparities

Analysts say more girls are attending school in urban areas than it is in rural parts of the province.

"The number has risen in urban centers but girls in several remote districts are still unable to attend school," said Malalai Shinwari, an advisor to President Ashraf Ghani and a civil society activist.

Girls in many rural and remote regions are faced with multiple societal and security challenges, including lack of infrastructure for schools in certain areas. "There are no schools for girls in many areas in Nangarhar," Shinwari said. "In some areas girls are only able to attend home-based schools, which receive little support from the government."

"In many areas girls do not go to school because there is no school nearby," Haroon Rashid Sherzad, a civil society activist from Nangarhar and former deputy minister of narcotics, told VOA. "Huge distances to the nearest schools discourage parents from sending their daughters to school."

Increasing security threats have also kept girls out of schools in many areas where educational institutions have been a soft target of terrorist groups. IS militants, who are active in several districts of Nangarhar, have shuttered classrooms, particularly for girls, in areas under their control.

"The situation in remote areas is worrisome. Militants' presence is a serious challenge to girls' education," Sherzad said.

Another issue is the lack of female teachers, as many parents hesitate to send their daughters to school with male teachers.

"The lack of qualified female teachers is a major obstacle to the girls' education in many districts as the socio-cultural pressure that girls be taught by female teachers limits girls' access to education," said Shinwari, who hails from Nangarhar's Achin district where IS has established a strong footprint for the past two years.

"The government should generate enough female teachers in rural and remote areas," the presidential advisor added, suggesting that the government should hire women teachers from nearby areas and arrange for their daily commute to schools. "Parents and local elders too should speak up for their girls' educational rights," she said.

The ratio of female teachers is still low in certain areas of the country. According to Nangarhar provincial government estimates, of the 15,500 teachers in the province, only 1,400 are women.

Education authorities say they are in the process of hiring new women teachers for remote districts in the province. (VoA)

(16) Govt. Takes ...

He said precious stones were smuggled to Pakistan via Laghman and Nangarhar provinces.

Eng. Aziz, head of the petroleum and mining department, acknowledged some Kapisa natural resources were being dug up illegally. "Teams of mining and petroleum could not travel to these areas because there was insecurity and no government control," he said.

Police spokesman Mohammad Ayub Yousufzai said militants were driven from the areas as a result of clearing operations and all routes used for smuggling the riches were closed on rebels. He pledged to bring all natural riches of Ala Saei under government control. (Pajhwok)

(17) In Nangarhar, ...

Taliban's frequent visits to schools. Absentee teachers are warned.

Abidur Rahman, district educational official, admitted the rebels regularly visited Waziro Jihadi, Sangi Miagano, Zawi Babu Kas, Hashimkhel, Nokarkhel, Mazkikhel and the Mamli High Schools.

He hailed Taliban's checks as a positive action that had helped seven girls' schools functional in the area.

Education Department spokesman Mohammad Asif Shinwari said the insurgents were watching schools in the Surkhrod, Pachiragam and other insecure districts. He acknowledged the practice had been helpful in promoting the cause of education in volatile areas, where government teams could not go. But Attaullah Khogyani, the governor's spokesman, said they were in favour of government teams - not Taliban - visiting the areas to evaluate the performance of teachers.

He added they were trying to ensure security in all areas. Once the situation improved, the problems would go away, he hoped.

Meanwhile, the Taliban also confirmed visiting schools in different provinces of the country. The group's spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said: "It is the re-

sponsibility of our education commission to observe schools and seminaries. "The presence of students and teacher is very important and we cannot remain silent on this issue because education promotion is among Taliban's core principles," he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(18) Casualties as ...

source said. The official said 20 Pakistani forces suffered casualties. One fighter was also killed and four others were injured.

A security official in the district, requesting not to be named, confirmed the incident in Shamit, bordering Miranshah - the headquarters of North Waziristan tribal region.

"Pakistani forces were attacked by Taliban when they entered Afghanistan's territory during a patrol. Twenty-two security men and five militants suffered casualties as result," he said.

Haji Daud, a commander of Pakistani Taliban in the area, claimed 12 soldiers were killed and five others wounded. He said 18 soldiers fought against them. (Pajhwok)

(19) 4 Spikers...

a verbal dispute erupted among the spikers during a match. Later on, a supporter of one side opened fire, killing four players and wounding a fifth.

"Both sides belonged to the same village and the same family. Every afternoon, people come to the valley to play volleyball, cricket and football," he added. (Pajhwok)

(20) Yuldash Son...

Daesh presence, Wahdat suggested. Officials in neighbouring Jawzjan province said a Taliban commander had joined Daesh along with his 200 supporters in Qush Tepan district.

Mohammad Noor Rahmani, Sar-I-Pul provincial council head, confirmed the emergence of Daesh led by the son of Yuldash in Sayyad district. He said a number of Taliban members had also joined the rebel group.

However, a Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid rejected the claims and said there was no even a single Taliban member that had been joined Daesh in Sar-I-Pul.

Sayyad district has been under Taliban's control for the past one and a half years. Rahmani warned Sar-I-Pul would fall to militants if the government did not launch an operation against the militants in the winter season. (Pajhwok)

(21) Police Seize...

have been the scene of heavy clashes over the past couple of months as Taliban has been trying to challenge the government forces in the once relatively peaceful region.

On Saturday, six civilians were injured after Taliban fired three mortar shells toward the city. (Xinhua)

(22) Couple Killed ...

Abdul Qayum confirmed that scores of people stormed the shelter house in Wama district and started clash with the police forces.

He said a delegation has been sent to the area to investigate the circumstances surrounding the incident.

Qayum further added that the couple was shot dead by the angry mob after they were brutally beaten.

Local officials in Nuristan are saying that lynching and execution of the couple is one of the rarest incident involving honor killing in this province. (KP)

(23) 4 More ...

foreign forces airstrike on Saturday night.

He said his brother's house was attached to the district police building. "One of my brothers, his wife, a girl and two boys were killed and a woman, two girls and a young man were injured in the attack," he said.

Ahmad said the injured were taken to the Emergency-run hospital in Lashkargah, the provincial capital, by Afghan National Army (ANA) helicopters.

A child unharmed in the incident was transferred by ANA forces to a safe place, Ahmad said, adding all the dead and injured were retrieved from under the rubble by Afghan forces.

Fida Mohammad, another resident of Sangin district, said his sister and a brother-in-law were injured in the latest blitz and were currently under treatment in hospital.

"A house just 50 meters from the police headquarters was hit where Taliban and suspected people do not exist," said Mohammad. (Pajhwok)

(24) Residents Tie ...

mobile phone with an unregistered SIM card.

Had unregistered SIM cards been banned in Jalalabad, he argued, the kidnappers would have found it hard to demand such a huge amount from the doctor's family.

Raqib added the kidnappers made the first call from one mobile number and the second from another. The affected family shared the first number with police.

A child selling such cards near the Mukhabirat Square in Jalalabad, shouted: "Come buy SIM cards only for 50

afghanis."

He gets the SIM cards from the sales branch. But would not say where it is located, because if he does so, the agency will no longer sell him SIM cards.

Provincial Council Secretary Zabihullah Zmarai alleged no system had been put in place to check the sale of unregistered SIM cards. The sales had spawned social and political problems besides fuelling insecurity and terrorism, he argued.

Communications and Information Technology Director Abdul Razzaq Saqib confirmed the problem, blaming it on non-cooperation from telecom companies.

He would visit Kabul to discuss the issue with the Afghanistan Telecom Regulatory Authority (ATRA) and find out a way of preventing the sale of illegal SIM cards.

After his return from Kabul, the official promised he would take stringent measures to curb the practice.

Attaullah Khogyani, the governor's spokesman, said a campaign headed by the National Directorate of Security (NDS) was conducted last week to seize unregistered SIM cards. Efforts are still ongoing in this regard.

He said coordination was being forged among telecom networks and a special plan devised in this regard. Pajhwok tried to get comments from telecom communication firms on the issue, but could not establish contact with them. (Pajhwok)

(25) Germany to...

age as the reason. Germany's presidential post is more ceremonial than executive, giving direction to general political and societal debates.

The vote is widely seen as a test for the unity of Merkel's political coalition, as well as a prelude for Merkel's campaign seeking her fourth term in the federal election in September. (Xinhua)

(26) DPRK Test-Fires...

of UN Security Council's resolutions, which ban the DPRK from testing any ballistic missile technology.

The launch, the military believed, was aimed at drawing attention by showing off its nuclear and missile capability and was also part of armed protest against the Trump administration's hard-line stance toward the DPRK. (Xinhua)

(27) S. Korea Denounces...

the entire Japan and the U.S. military base in Guam in its target range as it is known to have a range of 3,000-4,000 km.

Sunday's launch was the first in 2017 and also the first since Trump was sworn in as the U.S. president on Jan. 20. Seoul's military said it was part of armed protest against the new U.S. administration's hard-line stance toward the DPRK. (Xinhua)

(28) Erdogan Vows...

a military offensive and backed by the rebel Free Syrian Army militants, have been battling for IS-held al-Bab, about 30 km from the Turkish border.

In his last remarks in late January, Erdogan reportedly said that Turkish troops would not go any further than al-Bab into the Syrian territory. (Xinhua)

(29) EU Provides...

the country's reform process toward consolidation of deeper democracy.

This EU support is provided through the European Neighborhood Instrument in the framework of the European Neighborhood Policy. (Xinhua)

(30) Italy Says...

of such an arsenal and "interrupt its path of challenging the international community and of self-isolation."

North Korea appeared to fire a missile early Sunday in its first such test of the year. It conducted two nuclear tests and a slew of rocket launches last year. (AP)

(31) 2016 Survey...

(PTI), Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Quami Watan Party (QWP), Awami National Party (ANP), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-F (JUI-F), National Party (NP), and Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) on the results of a nationwide survey of nearly 5,000 residents." (APP)

(32) Turkmenistan...

Saparmurat Niyazov in 2006. Casting his vote at a school in the capital Ashgabat on Sunday morning, the president said the vote would decide "the fate of the people for the coming seven years". The autocrat was accompanied by family members including his son, who was elected as an MP last year. (AFP)

(33) Uzbekistan Signs...

new for fresh, processed and dried fruits and vegetables, as well as beans. Within the framework of the international exhibition, the Uzbek delegation held meetings with the representatives of such companies as Honkong Line Trading CO LTD (China) Ltd, Metro Cash and Carry (Kazakhstan), Euro-torg (Belarus), Chelny-Ileeb, SPAR Tula (Russia), IIP-SUN (Lithuania), Happy Fruits (Mongolia), and others. (AKI)