

(1) Afghanistan's...

status. At the meeting, Atmar also said Afghanistan attaches great importance to bolstering cooperation with Iran and called on all regional countries to improve close cooperation in the fight against terrorism and extremism. The Afghan security official is in Tehran for a two-day official visit to meet with senior Iranian officials.

Atmar also met other Iranian officials during his visit. (Tolonews)

(2) Afghan Forces ...

underwent positive changes. He hoped the Afghan forces would soon witness other improvements.

The colonel said Afghan security forces were eager to be trained and educated and NATO and the Afghan government were also paying them more attention in this area.

He said the Afghan forces' achievements during the ongoing fighting season outmatched last year's gains. The Afghan forces thwarted more enemy plans this season than the previous one, he said, adding the Afghan forces successfully survived last year's combat mission and made further gains this year.

The Afghan security forces were in defensive mode last year but they started switching to offensive mode during the current year, he continued.

Colonel Pal said though problems in areas of leadership, logistics and technical side had reduced in the Afghan forces yet a lot of work needed to be done.

He said Afghanistan was a war-devastated country and the RS mission was aimed at training the Afghan forces to become self-reliant and defend Afghanistan by their own.

"We (RS mission) and the Afghan government have a joint purpose which is not to allow Afghanistan to become a terrorist safe-haven again."

He said the RS mission was comprised of 13,000 soldiers from 39 countries, training Afghan forces in five zones including the capital Kabul.

He said the RS, besides training Afghan forces, also helped the ministries of defence and interior in different areas and gave the two ministries advices on various topics.

The NATO's Resolute Support Mission was earlier scheduled to end by 2016 end, but a NATO's summit last month extended the mission for one year. (Pajhwok)

(3) Hostage Crew...

Pajhwok Afghan News the helicopter incident had divided Taliban insurgents into two groups. The source said, Taliban's military council head, Mullah Sadar Ibrahim, had sent a letter to the movement's supreme leader, Mullah Haibatullah, to exchange the seized Pakistani officials with Taliban prisoners.

He said Mullah Sadar, besides other prisoners, had demanded the release of Mullah Berader, Kandahar's Commander Mullah Samad and Qari Ahmadullah's wounded brother, Mullah Dawood, by Pakistan.

The source said Mullah Sadar Ibrahim was among closest comrades of former Taliban leader, Mullah Mansour and Pakistan believed Mullah Ibrahim was involved in Mansour's killing.

Pakistani media outlets reported that Pakistani Taliban's Hakimullah Mehsud group had claimed kidnapping the crewmembers.

However, a source in Logar province said a Taliban commander named Adam Khan Kochi had the crew in his custody and he had close relations with Hakimullah Mehsud.

A provincial council member in Logar on Sunday said a son-in-law of Gen. Raheel Sharif, Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, was among the helicopter crewmembers taken hostage by Taliban.

He said the crewmembers had been seized with hundred thousands of dollars, rupees, weapons, satellite telephones and a GPS device.

However, the Pakistan Army denied the hostages included any of Gen. Raheel Sharif relatives. (Pajhwok)

(4) HIA Optimistic ...

signed a draft agreement, which was later made some changes as directed by Hekmatyar.

But the High Peace Council (HPC), said no changes would be

brought to the draft agreement which had been signed by HPC Head Per Syed Ahmad Gilani and the HIA delegation.

After that, the Hekmatyar's peace negotiating team went back and did not return, but the HPC had said they were awaiting a response.

The HIA delegation has expressed hope the two sides would overcome disagreements during its upcoming visit to Kabul.

The HIA is hopeful about execution of what has been mentioned in the draft agreement soon after the peace deal is signed.

Earlier, HIA political wing in-charge Dr. Ghairat Baheer told Pajhwok Afghan News the HIA delegation would be led by Eng. Amin Karim.

He said peace talks would resume from where they had been stopped and all differences would be hopefully resolved this time around. (Pajhwok)

(5) Herat Court ...

he said.

The court meanwhile ordered that houses owned by the gang members be seized.

Meanwhile, families of the victims said they want justice to be served.

"After kidnapping my son and my brother-in-law, they [kidnappers] called me and asked for three million Afghanis. I did not have that money. They called me again after four days and said they have killed my son. They gave me the address so I could collect the body of my son," said Abdul Salaam, father of one victim.

It is believed that most of those involved in the syndicate lived in internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps in Herat's Shaidae area. (Tolonews)

(6) 29,000 Individuals ...

number of female prisoners. According to a report from the International Centre for Prison Studies (ICPS), the number of inmates in Afghanistan has increased from 5,262 in 2004 to 26,519 in 2014. The report said 718 of the prisoners in 2014 were women and girls. (Pajhwok)

(7) ANA Soldiers ...

been killed in the past few weeks in battles with the Taliban. The hard-pressed ANSF soldiers have pleaded for more food and weapons less than a week after the Taliban released a video purportedly showing at least 20 Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers who had surrendered to the Taliban in Helmand.

As speculation over the poor leadership of the war in Helmand and other provinces gathers fresh momentum, a number of military experts and members of parliament have said corruption and embezzlement of money in security institutions is the main challenge within the ANSF.

"Issues like these are linked to the actions of some commanders who continue to engage in corruption and sometimes even they are allegedly connected to armed opponents," said senator Mohammad Asif Sediqi.

"How long will these problems continue, this will demoralize the forces, the issue needs to be tackled seriously," military analyst AINUDDIN Baig said.

In addition, the Ministry of Defense (MoD) in reference to the video footage said that it will take action and provide the necessary assistance to the troops.

"The honorable minister and myself have seen the video; the minister has issued guidelines to address the issue soon and find out what has really happened," defense ministry spokesman Dawlat Waziri said.

"I saw the footage on Facebook and I was saddened and shocked to see it," Kabul university student Zabi said.

"They must at least provide the soldiers with necessary weapons and food," another resident Ahmad said.

Security officials have said that insurgents from fourteen provinces have flocked to Helmand in an attempt to take the province so as to move the Quetta Shura from Pakistan to Helmand. (Tolonews)

(8) Qahraman Warns...

"To be true, the enemy has increased its operations and they launched some coordinated attacks on some districts in Helmand; the enemy had a demonic plan to take control of the majori-

ty of districts in Helmand," a defense ministry spokesman Dawlat Waziri said.

Currently insurgents control Musa Qala, Nawzad, Disho, Baghran and Nawmesh districts. Government controls only two districts - Garmsir and Khanashin - while insurgents have also tightened their grip on seven other districts including Khanashin, Kajaki, Sangeen, Nad Ali, Washir, Greshk and Marjah.

"If the government - despite having a large number of forces and alongside the presence of foreign forces - cannot curb the war, this indicates government's weakness," said Qahraman.

The number of Afghan security forces currently deployed and serving in Helmand is estimated to be between 35,000 and 40,000 soldiers; however there are rumors that a number of these soldiers are 'ghost soldiers'.

"Opponents and the Taliban exist there, they have a well-equipped force," said Abdul Rahman Sarjang, former police chief of Helmand. (Tolonews)

(9) Govt. Blasted ...

police chiefs," Akhundzada added.

"The Attorney General's Office [AGO] has the authority to assess such cases if it is allowed by government," said Abdul Ghayur Barsham, head of Afghanistan's Lawyers Union.

The AGO did not comment on the issue. However, the Ministry of Interior said the two police chiefs have been suspended from their duties.

"Relevant organizations are responsible to talk about the findings of the cases," said Sediq Seddiqi, the interior ministry spokesman. Meanwhile, Sarjang rejected the allegations against him.

"I will go with those who claim that there are ghost soldiers [in Helmand]. If they find any ghost forces, I am ready to be executed," he added.

The two police chiefs were introduced to the court last month but the Attorney General's Office has not sent their cases to the court so far. (Tolonews)

(10) Civilian Casualty...

Afghanistan (AIHRC). "Their (Taliban) attacks were less during Ramazan, therefore we also dropped the number of operations, but now we have outlined more robust programs and our activities are moving forward in a good manner," said Dawlat Waziri, a defense ministry spokesman.

Nangarhar, with 134 security incidents, tops the list of most volatile provinces in the country in July. Helmand, Ghazni and Kandahar were second, third and fourth respectively.

Daikundi and Panjsher provinces together topped the most secure provinces.

"The only solution is to mount pressure on Pakistan and resist (insurgency) inside the country," said military analyst Saleh Mohammad Saljoqi.

In July, the insurgents focused their campaigns mainly on Helmand with their first operation being launched on Sangeen district. The insurgents later expanded their offensives on Khanashin and managed to take control of the district for a few hours. But these offensives were not limited to Khanashin and Sangeen as insurgents then attacked Nad Ali. (Tolonews)

(11) Dam Generating ...

Panjsher and Kabul provinces, according to Qaderi. He said the water of Ghorband, Salang and Panjsher Rivers could be stored in the dam and other areas for irrigating crops in the neighboring provinces.

Hussain Sanji, the Provincial Council (PC) head, claimed playing a proactive role in the construction of the dam. The national unity government had executed a number of infrastructure projects in the country, he acknowledged.

He said the construction of Bagh Dara dam in Kapisa was included in the projects and the energy minister had visited the area some time back. He hoped construction work on the facility would kick off soon.

Malik Sherin, a tribal elder, said they had complained to the government regarding the electricity issue because the province was not supplied electricity from Naghlo Dam.

He said if the dam was built and electricity was made available, factories of juices would be set up and most of youth would get jobs. Kapisa produces a huge amount of grapes, pomegranate, apple and other fresh fruits.

Currently, some areas of Kapisa are supplied electricity imported from Tajikistan but most parts of the provinces remain deprived of the facility. (Pajhwok)

(12) Tehran ...

Working groups will be constituted on economic and trade, energy, water, environment, science, culture, arts, healthcare, transport, communications and transit.

The ministers will discuss ways of enhancing trade and economic ties between the neighbours, regional and international issues of mutual interest.

Chief executive officers and managers of 50 government organisations as well as heads of some corporations will attend the event. (Pajhwok)

(13) Day-Long...

well as provincial representatives of Independent Election Commission (IEC) would participate in the seminar. (Pajhwok)

(14) Research...

capital, in 2008.

Afghanistan Forensic Science Organisation (AFSO), which works to identify, record and protect such mass graves, has recently launched its research to identify bodies of the dead in the mass grave.

Mohammad Ashraf Bakhtyari, AFSO head, told Pajhwok Afghan News the collective grave surfaced after the land owner started digging in the area. With permission from a religious scholar, the land owner shifted the bones elsewhere.

"The land owner without knowing how to exhume the dead bodies created so many problems for us in our research and identification of the bodies," Bakhtyari said.

He said two different stories were told about the mass grave --one was that a Mujahideen commander, Syed Lam Lam, and his 16 fighters were buried in the grave after being killed Dr. Najib's government forces.

But the second story said following Dr. Najib's forces defeat by anti-communist fighters, the Mujahideen killed 16 remaining soldiers of the government and then buried them all together in the area, he added.

However, Bakhtyari said: "The number of corpses will be specified in our research that how long ago they were buried and after identification they will be handed over to their families to bury them again with respect."

He said with support from local administration of Bamyán, the research was launched on four bodies and was underway on the rest. Besides the grave research, AFSO also started a workshop on osteology and bodies' study for prosecutors and employees of judicial institutes.

Stephan, one of the foreign teachers in the programme, told Pajhwok: "We in this workshop teach participants on how to separate male and female bones in such collective graves and we also practically show them this with artificial bones."

He said the Essa Khan Desert's collective grave corpses and bones would also be placed before the workshop participants for information and to learn about the research on bones. (Pajhwok)

(15) Azerbaijani...

The peacekeeping contingent of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces has been serving under the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan since November 20, 2002.

Currently, 90 servicemen, 2 medical officers and 2 sappers of Azerbaijani Armed Forces are participating in a mission in Afghanistan. (APA)

(16) Helmand-Kand...

a lot of problems due to the highway closure as a result of fierce clashes in Lashkargah, the provincial capital, Nad Ali, Marja and other districts.

Mohammad Karim, a 303 public transport bus driver on the Helmand-Kandahar, told Pajhwok Afghan News the road had been closed for the last four days. He said the insurgents had blown up small bridges in some areas and

planted landmines.

The bus driver said hundreds of people made attempts to reach their destinations every day, but they were unable to do so due to the highway closure.

He said a large number of passengers had booked rooms in hotels waiting for the highway's reopening amid financial problems.

Another driver, Feroz, told Pajhwok Afghan News a small passenger vehicle yesterday braved the situation and went ahead on the road, but came under attack from Taliban militants and some passengers suffered casualties.

The driver said the Taliban had told them to use a sub-road for reaching Kandahar from Lashkargah as they would attack vehicles if they plied the main road.

A commuter at the bus stand in Lashkargah, Qudratullah, told Pajhwok Afghan News he wanted to go to Nimroz province, but the road remained closed for the past few days.

He said he had done shopping for home, but no one could travel on the Helmand-Kandahar highway because the route was insecure from Dorahi area to Lashkargah. A 303 bus service official, Syed Ali, told Pajhwok Afghan News there were clashes along the highway and the Taliban had warned people against travelling on the road. "They (Taliban) open fire at vehicles."

Syed Ali urged the government and Taliban to resolve problems passengers faced on the highway in order to help them continue their journey and enable traders to transport their goods.

The governor acknowledged the road had been closed two days ago and said portions of the road damaged in landmine blasts had been repaired.

Hayatullah Hayat told Pajhwok Afghan News security threats on the highway had been reduced and special security forces had also been sent to support other security forces in maintaining security on the highway. (Pajhwok)

(17) Protest Action...

movement emerged during former president Hamid Karzai's tenure - when a group of people started calling for the official burial of former Afghan Amir Habibullah Kalakani, however the Karzai administration, according to movement's supporters, ignored the request.

"Hopes over the national unity government have increased compared to Hamid Karzai. There is a need for a goodwill gesture, therefore the government must issue an official order for the burial of Amir Habibullah Kalakani," said Haroon Mutarif, a member of the committee seeking an official burial of Amir Habibullah Kalakani.

"The national unity government has provided this opportunity to the public to raise their voice for their rights anytime and anywhere," said MP Safiullah Salim.

"The president has a good skill in delivering a speech, but in practical manner, he has not fulfilled his election promises, even fifty percent of the commitments," said university professor Hikmatullah Shahbaz.

"Our society has come out of monophonic mode and now it has changed to a society with several voices, this indicates the open democratic climate of the country," said deputy presidential spokesman Shahhussain Murtazawi. (Tolonews)

(18) ALP Commander...

others were wounded in the attack.

Taliban insurgents and militants belonging to other insurgent groups are active in a number of the remote districts of Laghman province where they often carry out insurgency activities.

The latest incidents in Laghman provinces comes amid deteriorating security situation across the country with the rampant Taliban-led insurgency. (KP)

(19) Daesh Seizes ...

released by Daesh show the group seized bags, ammunition, a rocket and several hand grenades among other goods.

A major military operation was launched last month amid growing concerns that the group is attempting to expand its activities in the country.

Last month, Daesh claimed responsibility for the deadly protest rally blast in Kabul that left over 80 people dead and at least 300 wounded. (Tolonews)

(20) HIA Gunmen...

and took away 11 vehicles from the sites. The kidnapped workers were later released with the help of local elders after sometime.

Mohammad Haqmal, the governor's spokesman, confirmed regaining control of the coalmines and said two HIA fighters had been killed and five others wounded during the clash with security forces.

Workers at the coalmines expressed happiness over the operation to drive the militants from the coalmines and said they would be able to resume their work.

The HIA commander could not be reached for comments over the development. (Pajhwok)

(21) Syrian Army...

The TV also stated that the rebels could not take control over the al-Ramuseh town, whose control would enable them to break the government forces' siege on the rebel-held eastern part of Aleppo. (Xinhua)

(22) Entire Russian...

samples from Paralympic athletes being made to disappear.

Russia finished second in the medal standings at the 2012 London Paralympics and had 267 athlete slots for Rio in 18 sports. (AP)

(23) US Releases...

policy document says that "absent extraordinary circumstances," a drone strike on a high-value target will only be taken if there is "near certainty" no civilians will be killed, and says the United States should respect another nation's sovereignty in weighing drone strikes. (Dawn)

(24) Peace Talks...

have another chance and more time in order to discuss their leaderships and the next steps to achieve peace during the upcoming talks.

Yemen's Foreign Minister Abdul-Malik Mekhlafi, who heads the government delegation to the Kuwait-based talks, tweeted that "consultations ended today without achieving the peace that we sought for our people and country due to the putschists' intransigence." (Xinhua)

(25) AU, Somali...

speeding up of lethal and non-lethal support to Somalia National Army (SNA) to enable it operate effectively alongside AMISOM," they said in a joint statement.

The resolutions are also aimed at building the capacity of the SNA and turning it into a professional and competent outfit, capable of handling Somalia's security once the term of AMISOM ends, it added.

The conference recommended that AMISOM and SNA must engage with the UN at the early stages of planning to address logistical challenges, and with partners to expand the paying of stipends to SNA soldiers serving in all the sectors. (Xinhua)

(26) 10 Security...

detonating their vests, the source said on condition of anonymity.

Last month, security forces freed several villages close to the town of Qayyara after recapturing a strategic airbase, considered a significant victory, as the airbase is crucial for both the troops and aircrafts in their attacks against IS as they free the northern city of Mosul, 400 km north of the Iraqi capital of Baghdad.

The troops' advance into Qayyara is part of a major offensive operation aiming to free areas in southern Mosul, including Qayyara, and to surround Mosul from the south and east before advancing into the city and flushing IS militants out of it.

Iraq has witnessed intense violence since the IS took control of parts of its northern and western regions in June 2014. (Xinhua)

(27) Azerbaijan, China...

Aliyev visited China in December 2015. China is a huge opportunity and a priority market for Azerbaijan. More than 50 agreements have been signed between the two countries so far. Azerbaijan Export and Investment Promotion Foundation has recently opened a representative office in China to support and encourage relations between the two countries' businessmen, as well as expand Azerbaijan's exports to the Chinese market and attract China's leading investment funds to the Azerbaijan economy. (Xinhua)