

**(1) Govt. to...**

it will release its view as soon as possible."

On November 2, the lower house summoned 16 ministers and impeached the ministers of foreign affairs, labour, public works, education, transport, communication and higher education in absentia.

In protest to the lower house decision, the cabinet in an extraordinary meeting referred the issue to the SC and said the unseated ministers could continue their duties until an opinion from the apex court on the regard released.

The ministers were disqualified 20 days ago, but the SC yet to decide on the regard. (Pajhwok)

**(2) Shavkat Mirziyoyev ...**

Rights.

The election "underscored the need of comprehensive reform to address long-standing systemic shortcomings," the OSCE said in its preliminary findings. (AP)

**(3) Stoltenberg Sure ...**

[US] Donald Trump here to discuss a wide range of issues and I guess we'll also have an ample opportunity to discuss Afghanistan ... I am confident that also the new US administration will continue to support Afghanistan and continue to be part of NATO efforts to provide practical and political support, train, assist and advise NATO forces," Stoltenberg told a press conference. (Sputnik)

**(4) IEC Holds ...**

Ahmadzai, Abdul Qader Qurashi, Maleha Hassan, Wasima Badghisi, Maazullah Dawlati, Rafiullah Baidar and Gul Ajan Abdul Badi Sayyad as IEC commissioners and Gulam Dastagir Hidayat, Abdul Basir Faez, Ali Reza Rohani, Humaira Haqmal and Abdul Aziz Aryae as IEC commissioners. (Pajhwok)

**(5) MPs Question...**

whether they are positive or negative, have implications when reflected in the media, democracy is one of the pillars of the system that serve the people and country," said MP Ghulam Farooq Majroh.

In addition to this, the speaker of the Wolesi Jirga Abdul Rauf Ibrahim asked Ghani to refer the basic structure of law to parliament for discussion.

"Our defense and security personnel including the people, women and children are sacrificed each day, the president as the top person of the country maintains a lot of responsibilities before us," said Ibrahim. (Tolonews)

**(6) Taliban Want ...**

a recent report in Guardian newspaper, quoting Kakazada as saying the Taliban faced financial problems, he said he had been quoted out of context.

"I don't give irresponsible statements," he said, asking media outlets to consider people's trust and honesty as their standards.

After concluding a peace agreement with the Hezb-I-Islami Afghanistan (HIA), the Afghan government has repeated asked the Taliban to prefer an intra-Afghan solution to the conflict. (Pajhwok)

**(7) New Strategy ...**

rights defenders and organizations providing support services to women survivors have themselves become targets of violence and harassment, their statement read.

Delbar Nazari, Minister for Women's Affairs, said the EAW strategy and National Action Plan outlines the way forward when it comes to strengthening oversight and coordination among stakeholders and advocating for the creation of an environment free from violence.

"As a government and a nation we have been making progress when it comes to ending violence against women in Afghanistan, but there is still much more to be done," Nazari said.

"The EAW Law is a landmark legislation and this strategy and action plan are essential

steps in helping us to ensure that it has the required effect on the ground," she said.

The strategy and action plan were designed to address current concerns about women's lack of access to quality services, emergency safety, security, judicial and healthcare responses, as well as the long and arduous trial process, challenges with forensic evidence collection, and the need for forward looking

UN Women provided technical and financial support in the development of the Strategy and Action Plan.

Meanwhile, Elzira Sagynbaeva, country representative for UN Women Afghanistan said: "Around the world we see women who experience violence being victimized twice - firstly when they are subjected to violence and secondly when they are denied access to services and justice."

"That's why this strategy and action

plan are so important; they lay out a clear roadmap for ensuring that the EAW Law remains a meaningful tool in creating an Afghanistan free of violence against women."

The 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence is an annual global campaign aimed at raising awareness about the causes and consequences of violence against women, while also mobilizing action to end it. The campaign runs from November 25 to December 10. (Tolonews)

**(8) Time for...**

Ghani's historic visit to Pakistan in 2014 when multiple agreements were inked, including a halt to the conflict in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, he lamented, the agreements were not implemented.

The former senator urged Afghan and Pakistani leaders to honour their commitments. He asked Islamabad to take the initiative.

Conflict did not know borders, he remarked, claiming 40 percent of Karachi, commercial hub of Pakistan, was under Taliban's influence. Pakistan would suffer more than Afghanistan if the conflict was not resolved, he warned.

After the installation of the national unity government, Afghanistan renewed its relations with Pakistan, which pledged playing sincere role in resolving the decades-old Afghan conflict.

Zaland Momand, head of the Bacha Khan Research Foundation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, commented Pakistan should not consider Afghanistan its fifth province and stop interfere in its internal affairs.

He said war was not the solution and hoped heads of both countries would reach an agreement on resolve all outstanding bilateral problems. (Pajhwok)

**(9) Kabul Has ...**

at supplying the Afghan army with Black Hawk helicopters to replace the fleet of Russian Mi-17s. Apparently, the plan has been prompted by Western sanctions against Russia.

The curbs have created problems in maintenance of Russian military equipment. A pilot needs four years of training on operating a Black Hawk as part of US requirements.

Kabulov told reporters: "Does Afghanistan have time to wait four years? I do not think that there is enough time. That is why Afghanistan has no alternative to Russian arms..."

The Afghan army was used to Russian military equipment, helicopters in particular, the special envoy argued, days after the Pentagon requested funding to update at least 53 UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters for the Afghan forces.

"The Department of Defense has determined that procuring US-made helicopters is a more sustainable long-term solution to meet the requirements," DoD spokesman Adam Stump recently told Reuters

The \$814 million request, made in a budget amendment submitted this month, would also provide money for other new

attack aircraft for the Afghans. (Pajhwok)

**(10) Afghan Migrant's ...**

possible act by one Afghan refugee, not a whole group of people who, like him, are Afghans and refugees," he told reporters in Berlin.

While many Germans have welcomed refugees, there has been strong opposition from a vocal minority. A string of sexual assaults and robberies on New Year's Eve in Cologne blamed primarily on foreigners also fed fears.

One of Germany's public television stations, ARD, drew criticism for not featuring the Freiburg arrest in its evening news bulletin Saturday, the day it was announced. The broadcaster said in a blog that it hadn't considered the case to rise above other killings to be "nationally and internationally relevant." (AP)

**(11) No Daesh ...**

some far-flung areas.

He confirmed receiving reports about Daesh's recruitment efforts in Chapa Dara, Noorgal and Shegal districts, but vowed security forces would take strong action against the individuals involved such activities.

The state's writ had been established in all districts, where good governance had also been introduced, Gen. Himmat added.

But some areas on highways in Narai and Ghaziabad districts remained dangerous, where incident of insecurity were reported. The police personnel would soon initiate action to address the issue, he promised.

He chief acknowledged 10 militants -- groups most of them foreigners-- such as Afghan Taliban, Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, Al Qaeda, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, Lashkar-i-Taiba, Southern Khurasan, Jaish Fidayan and Al Nasar were active in the province. He said 2,650 Afghan Local Police (ALP) personnel deployed to the province were playing active role in stability. (Pajhwok)

**(12) ANA Soldiers...**

of the district in the near future. Meanwhile, Akhtar Mohammad Hamdam, a senior military official at the 207th Military Corps, said that clashes between the Afghan forces and the Taliban were still underway in the district, and as result, 10 militants were killed and 20 others wounded.

Orain, Shahr-i-Abad and a part of Parmakan villages had been cleared from insurgents and security forces were advancing, he said.

He acknowledged that two Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers were also killed and five others wounded during the battle.

Taliban Spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid confirmed the clash and claimed that 30 ANA soldiers were killed and 32 others wounded.

He said a tank of Afghan forces was also seized by Taliban. Mujahid confirmed the death of only three militants and injury of five others during the fire-fight.

Shindand is one of the most unstable districts of Herat where Taliban militants have a wide presence. (Pajhwok)

**(13) 3 Killed, as...**

were playing with the Improvised Explosive Device (IED). However, he did not provide more details about the incident. (Pajhwok)

**(14) Howls of ...**

were unable to afford such high rates, he said, adding they were faced with problems.

"Most of the people are in poor financial position condition and cannot purchase firewood or other fuels at high prices. We want the government to control the market," he said.

Another resident of Taloqan, Mohammad Nazir, alleged the prices were regulated by fuel traders and the government had no control.

He confirmed poor people would face more serious problems if the government re-

mained silent and let market forces continue having their way.

"The government does not care; it is unaware of our economic condition and doesn't know that many people cannot purchase even 20 kilograms of firewood," he continued.

Karimullah Danish, a civil society activist in Takhar, said traders in the province misused the free market system and monopolised everything.

He suggested traders should compete with each other in reducing prices and improving product quality.

"Free market does not mean traders can increase prices as they wish; it means companies and businessmen should compete in cutting prices and offering high-quality products," Karimi remarked.

Meanwhile, the Takhar governor's spokesman, Sunatullah Timor, confirmed the increase in fuel prices. He said they had set up a committee to control the rates.

"The committee has started work and will control the prices of fuel. It would take a day or two to normalise the prices," he hoped. (Pajhwok)

**(15) Migrant Woman ...**

three-year-old son, two-year-old daughter and her mother, who also decided to flee Afghanistan.

The family group left Kabul earlier this year, travelling through Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey before making the perilous sea crossing to Lesbos.

"Now he has found me," Lina says.

"He followed me all the way through Turkey and now he is on Lesbos waiting patiently to reach the mainland and fulfill his promise to kill me. He missed me on the island, otherwise he would have killed me there.

Iris Sequera, a volunteer at the camp from Barcelona, brought Lina's plight to the attention of a Spanish group which works to have refugees accepted by Spain's authorities.

Refugees Welcome in Spain has included her in a list of 22 especially vulnerable cases, but they are still waiting for a decision by the Spanish government.

Meanwhile, Ms Sequera says that Lina's husband has issued threats to the family through Facebook.

"One day someone I didn't know added me as a friend on Facebook and wrote something in Arabic-looking letters. He said he was Lina's husband and asked about her, but I said I knew nothing about it and blocked him," says Ms Sequera.

The young volunteer says that Lina's husband wrote again with a false name saying he knew where his wife and children were because he had applied for family reunification on Lesbos and a charity had given him the information.

"He said he knew the exact caravan she is in," Ms Sequera says. "He also threatened me and said I was a traitor." Refugees Welcome in Spain says that Lina has been given permission to lock her shelter, something that is generally not allowed on her camp.

But Ms Sequera fears for Lina's life if she is not transferred out of Greece soon.

Madrid's left-wing city council has told the Spanish government that it is happy to take in Lina and has accommodation lined up for her arrival. But it is Spain's interior ministry which decides on immigration and asylum cases.

Spain had resettled 867 asylum seekers up to the end of October, after committing to accept more than 17,000 under European Union agreements.

"Please help me escape from this hell and have another opportunity in this life. Before I was a young girl with ambition and dreams of being able to study and be independent, but in Afghanistan those rights were denied to me," she says.

"I beg the Spanish people to accept my family. I want a quiet life without violence and my husband. Escaping from him is

my salvation." (BBC)

**(16) UNHCR Warns...**

could open the gates for a new wave of migrants.

"Support to host and transit countries should be driven by solidarity, not strict conditionality," Filippo Grandi, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, told a seminar in Brussels.

"Caution should be exercised in linking financial aid to other benefits and migration controls. This sets precedents, raises expectations that may not always be met, and can ultimately even allow host governments to use population movements as a pressure point, or even a threat." (Reuters)

**(17) UN Says...**

broke out in South Sudan in late 2013, causing hundreds of thousands of refugees to flee to neighboring countries including Sudan. (Xinhua)

**(18) UN Official...**

certain categories of migrants.

"I call upon mainstream political leaders to denounce and censure this kind of divisive and racist rhetoric particularly when made by members of their own political parties and urge those sections of the media to resist the tempting descent into racist, and xenophobic stereotyping rhetoric and scapegoating." (Xinhua)

**(19) Italian PM...**

Cabinet with no-confidence sessions, and vote on national legislation. Currently, draft bills have to be approved by both houses in an identical text in order to become law.

With all the ballots counted, the reform was rejected with 59 percent of the vote, the Interior Ministry data showed Monday. Almost two-thirds of the 50.8 million eligible voters cast their ballots, which was a very high turnout by Italian standards.

"The vote turnout exceeded expectations, and the No has won in an extraordinary clear way," the prime minister acknowledged. (Xinhua)

**(20) Putin Congratulates...**

presidential elections, becoming the country's head of state after the death of late leader Islam Karimov in September. (Xinhua)

**(21) UK Government ...**

certainty where we can by saying; one - we will trigger Article 50 by the end of March; two, (being) very clear - there will be no going back," she told reporters. (Reuters)

**(22) Army Launches ...**

believed to be a hotbed of Al-Qaeda and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan activities.

This is the first strike against suspected militants in the tribal areas since the country's new army chief Qamar Javed Bajwa took the charge earlier this week.

The military has been carrying out aerial and ground operations in the Rajgal area since August this year to reinforce troops' deployment and effectively check and guard against terrorists' movement along high mountains and all weather passes in Khyber Agency. (Xinhua)

**(23) Russia Promises...**

schedule."

Shoigu didn't provide any additional information about the aircraft. On December 2, the newspaper Asia Plus, citing an unnamed Tajikistan defense ministry source, said that all of the equipment would be new, not used. And it wouldn't be only aircraft. "The forthcoming Russia's armament supplies to Tajikistan will include a large number of aviation equipment, including combat aircraft, as well as armored vehicles and communication means," the source said. (Monitoring Desk)

**(24) Uzbekistan's ...**

Zaamin township in Soviet Uzbekistan.

In 1981, he graduated from the Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Melioration (now the Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Mechanization of Agriculture).

He holds a PhD in Technological Sciences. In 1981-1992, Mirziyoyev worked at the Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Melioration. (TASS)

## Japanese PM to Visit Pearl Harbor to Strengthen Japan-U.S. Alliance

TOKYO - Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced Monday that he will visit the Pearl Harbor later this month to mourn the victims of Japanese surprise attack 75 years ago.

Abe will be the first incumbent Japanese prime minister to visit Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, which was attacked by the Japanese military on Dec. 7, 1941, killing more than 2,400 people and leading Washington's entry into World War Two (WWII). During his visit to Hawaii between Dec. 26 and Dec. 27, Abe will offer flowers at the memorial in Pearl Harbor and also hold talks with U.S. President Barack Obama.

"I want to reaffirm with President Obama what we have done over the past four years," Abe, who took office in 2012, told reporter at his office, adding that "I also want to use the opportunity to convey to the world the significance of further strengthening our alliance."

In late May, Obama became the first sitting U.S. president to visit Hiroshima, since his country dropped an atomic bomb on the city 71 years ago to accelerate the end of WWII, which was partially waged by Japan.

Observers here said Abe's decision to visit the Pearl Harbor aims to consolidate the Japan-U.S. alliance even under the upcoming U.S. administration of President-elect Donald Trump. (Xinhua)

## Austrians' Pro-EU Views Scupper Far-Right Bid for Presidency

VIENNA - Austrians' desire to stay anchored in the European Union outweighed concerns over immigration and security and helped former Greens leader Alexander Van der Bellen defeat his far-right rival Norbert Hofer in Sunday's presidential election.

Van der Bellen, whose win bucks a trend of populist victories across Western democracies, had put Britain's decision to leave the EU at the center of his own campaign, warning voters not to "play with this fire". "I will be a pro-European president of Austria open to the world," Van der Bellen, 72, said in his victory speech.

Hofer, whose Freedom Party (FPÖ) is anti-immigrant and eurosceptic, had suggested at one point in the campaign that Austrians could vote within months on whether to follow Britain out of the EU, though he later rowed back from the comments. Austria's economy is closely integrated with the rest of the EU, the destination last year of about 70 percent of its exports, worth some 91 billion euros (\$96.81 billion).

"Austria, as a small and open economy, profits more than average from free trade and its integration into the European market," said Georg Kapsch, head of Austria's Chamber of Industry, when congratulating Van der Bellen on his victory. (Reuters)

## Merkel Says 'Sad' about Italian Referendum Result

BERLIN - German Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Monday that she was saddened by Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's defeat in a referendum over constitutional reform.

"I am sad that the referendum in Italy did not turn out as the prime minister wished because I always supported his reform policies but it is of course a domestic Italian decision that we must respect," Merkel told reporters. (Reuters)