

(1) Govt.-Taliban ...

political representatives wrapped up a visit to Pakistan. Pakistan and Taliban confirmed the visit but avoided giving details.

Sources said Pakistan "encouraged the Taliban negotiators to join the peace talks" like Hezb-i-Islami, which struck a peace deal with the Ashraf Ghani administration in late September. (Pajhwok)

(2) Good News ...

province used to be slaked by Hamoun Lake which got its water from Hirmand River in the province.

Hirmand, named Helmand in Afghanistan, is a joint river between the two neighboring countries.

Hamoun Lake is now dry most of the months of a year as Afghanistan has constructed the Kajakai Dam in Helmand province in south of that country. Due to those reasons, Iran's Sistan-Baluchestan province has been suffering from drought since the past eleven years.

According to Iran tourism and touring online (ITTO) website, Hirmand River accounts as the only vital water way in Sistan, and takes its source in the Baba Mountains of Afghanistan. After following a long course enters the Hamoun Lake, and the water requirements of the plains of Sistan is provided by this river. Other water reserves also depend on the capacity of the Hirmand. The said river is divided into two at the borders of Iran and Afghanistan, and the main branch forms a part of the common borderline between the two countries, before entering Afghanistan. The other branch is divided into two on Iranian land, one flowing towards Chah Nimeh and the other towards the region of Koohak and Zahak. Two diverging dams have been constructed in these two areas on the river. In the southern portion of the Sistan plains near the Hirmand, is a large natural pit or hollow which forms a reservoir for irrigation purposes and also is a natural barrier in times of flood, thus preventing damage. The area of this pit is approximately 4,700 hectares. (IRNA)

(3) Russia Should...

the upper house panels on foreign and defense affairs on Saturday, Muslimyar said, asking Russia to prove it hadn't been in contact with Taliban.

However, senator Jumauddin Gyanwal said Russia had even equipped Taliban insurgents with military gear in a number of Afghanistan provinces.

Lawmaker Nazar Mohammad Faqiri said: "Russia through Tajikistan had given Taliban weapons and ammunition." According to him, Russia shouldn't be trusted because the country wants to deceive Afghans." (Pajhwok)

(4) MoF Defends...

projects in order to create more jobs for the people," said Ajmal Hamid Abdul Rahimzai, spokesman for the MoF.

But, lawmakers said that balance has not been considered in the budget, arguing that only a few development projects were included in the draft budget which cannot meet the demands of the people. "Balance has not been considered in the budget for provinces; some provinces are given more money while some others less money," said MP Khalid Pashton. "The next fiscal budget is not transparent; lawmakers plan to reject the budget so that amendments can be made to the budget," said another MP Nadir Shah Bahr.

There are only two weeks to go before the next financial year starts, but parliamentary commissions have not yet concluded their discussions on the issue. (Tolonews)

(5) Corruption ...

complex processes at government departments one of the problems in ensuring good governance and fighting corruption. The governance system should be gradually computerized in order corruption could be prevented in a good manner, Fakhri said.

"The government has other duties and obligations as well like social and economic development and elimination of social injustices in order to discourage tendency towards corruption." (Pajhwok)

(6) Security Forces ...

The security forces made advancement in Talani and Paynawa, the last unclear pockets in outskirts of the city, clearing most of areas from militants on Monday, now, the security threats on Tirin Kot have been zeroed," provincial police chief Wali Jan Sarhadi told Xinhua. The clearing operations will continue until the city and surrounding villages are cleared of the militants, he said. During the ongoing operations, huge quantity of arms, ammunition and explosive were seized, he noted.

The Taliban militants have been on the rampage since April when they launched a so-called annual rebel offensive in different places in Afghanistan, including the capital of Kabul, killing and injuring hundreds. (Xinhua)

(7) Political Uncertainty,...

working climate for women, youth and media, are among the fundamental challenges which Massoud believes are harming the reform process.

According to Massoud, in some cases Afghans are not being provided the right to make decisions regarding major national projects.

"Institutions must be nonpolitical and there should not be nepotism so that they can work in a professional manner and provide services," he added.

Massoud made the remarks during a special seminar under the theme 'Research and Scientific Seminar on Good Governance and Reforms'

The seminar was attended by a number of corruption monitoring groups and oversight commissions.

The participants urged that those involved in corruption must be brought to justice regardless of their positions.

Chairman of the High Office for Oversight and Anti-Corruption, Sayed Ghulian Hussain Fakhri meanwhile raised concerns over the involvement of powerful figures and government officials in the appointments process and said appointments must take merit into account.

"Relatives of local lawbreakers, powerful elements and officials have been hired at customs, transport and commercial ports and they do whatever they want," said Fakhri.

Delegates also reiterated calls to support the media and promote good governance. (Tolonews)

(8) Cases of Violence ...

against them." According to her, illiteracy and ignorance about women's rights has resulted in an increase in the number of violence cases in the province.

Civil society activist Farzana suggested the Women's Affairs Department conduct a public awareness campaign on the women's rights.

"People should know that beating women and giving of girls in Badare prohibited in Islam," she added.

Another civil society activist, Kazim Rasooli, said violence against women happened mostly in families whose heads were addicted to drugs.

He believed if drug addicts were rehabilitated and jobless people employed, violence against women would decline to a great extent.

Last year, 80 cases of violence against women, including seven murders, were registered in Ghazni. (Pajhwok)

(9) Farmers Urged ...

unregulated areas have been taking advantage of the situation to grow poppies to fuel the highly lucrative international heroin trade.

The growing of poppies and their by-products have been on a constant rise in Afghanistan since the collapse of the Taliban regime in late 2001.

A survey conducted by the Afghan Ministry for Counter-Narcotics and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) released in October, revealed a 43 percent increase in the amount of drugs harvested, compared to last year. The estimated opium production in 2016, according to the survey, was 4,800 tons, compared to 3,300 tons in 2015 and, similarly, the land used to cultivate poppies in the current year had increased 10 percent to 201,000 hectares compared to last year.

The majority of Afghan opium, the raw material used in the manufacturing of heroin, according to officials, has been produced in the troubled provinces where Taliban militants are active and security is fragile.

Gathering the beautiful purple flowers of saffron on his small piece of land, Ahmadi, the hardworking farmer, said happily that the price of one gram of saffron here in Ghazni is worth 500 afghanis (around 8 U.S. dollars), whereas 1 kg of poppies costs some 10,000 to 12,000 afghanis (150 U.S. dollars to 180 U.S. dollars) depending on its quality.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Zakria Hotak, Director of Agriculture Department in Ghazni province said that his administration has been encouraging the farmers since 2014 to grow saffron on their lands.

"The Agriculture Department in Ghazni has been distributing saffron seeds to the farmers over the past three years and the result so far is promising," Hotak told Xinhua.

Numerous farmers have abandoned poppy cultivation and begun growing saffron over the past couple of years, the official said.

He also added optimistically that three hectares of land would be used to grow saffron next year in Ghazni province, saying that the saffron plantation would be gradually expanded to replace the poppies.

Afghanistan's saffron in terms of quality has been named as the world's "best saffron" by the International Taste and Quality Institute in Brussels and the war-torn country produces more than 4.5 tons of saffron annually. (Xinhua)

(10) 3 Uplift Projects ...

implementation provided transport facilities to thousands of people.

Meanwhile, Minister Durani said the projects were based on people's demand

and needs, adding as the projects were put into service for people, they should help the government protect them.

He said four other rehabilitation projects had also been launched in Pul-i-Alam and Mohammad Agha district at a total cost of 178 million afghanis. The projects included roads' construction.

Durani promised construction of another 80 kilometres of rural roads at a cost of 700 million afis next year

A resident of Mangokhel, Ahmadullah said: "Our village's road was unpaved and we faced problems, but now as it has been paved, we are so happy." (Pajhwok)

(11) Authorities ...

and U.S. special forces in recent months also pushed many Islamic State fighters out of Nangarhar and into neighboring Kunar province, which borders Nuristan.

To prevent them moving further north, security officials said they had provided weapons, ammunition and other support to villages in Nuristan, while also tapping the province's particular culture to try to create a barrier against outsiders. Hafez Abdul Qayum, the provincial governor, has held several meetings with local elders, who enjoy significant powers in a province where central government is weak.

On one recent trip, after a two-hour car journey along mountainous dirt roads, he and his entourage walked the final few hundred metres to the meeting place out of respect for local tradition.

There he sat down with elders young and old, many of them wearing round, woolen "pakul" hats and sporting beards dyed orange, to share a lengthy meal of seared goat meat and urge his hosts to oppose the new threat.

"Whether it is Taliban or Daesh, they both are the biggest misguided people and destroyers of our religious values," Qayum, himself from Nuristan, told elders in Wama district, close to Pech Valley in Kunar where Islamic State fighters have settled.

"Dear brothers, fighting against this menace is our biggest priority."

'Valley of death' Such outreach is not unusual in a country where the word of traditional leaders often counts for more than directives from central government.

And Nuristan, a province whose name means "the land of light" in Persian, has a history of repelling outsiders, including the Taliban and al Qaeda, by refusing them food and shelter and engaging in combat if necessary.

But Afghanistan's security forces see Islamic State as a fresh menace, because by targeting the minority Shi'ite community it risks making a dangerous insurgency led by the Taliban even harder to contain.

Last month, more than 30 people died in a suicide bombing claimed by Islamic State at a Shi'ite mosque in Kabul. Nuristan is seen as a natural buffer, with its singular culture, rugged mountain ranges and lack of paved roads or electricity.

Known as "Kafiristan", or "land of infidels", before its people were converted to Islam in the 19th century, it has an economy partly based on barter and local languages and dialects unrelated to the main languages of Afghanistan, Pashto and Dari. That has made it difficult for the central government to exert control, and only a few thousand lightly armed police and one army unit are stationed there. The real power in Nuristan is widely considered to be the "Qaomi Shura", or local elders' council.

"If they say to someone 'die', that person dies. This is the power of the council," said a senior government official in the provincial capital Parun.

If elders can be persuaded not to allow Islamic State to settle, security officials believe they will have a better chance of stopping its fighters from crossing from Pech Valley, where the Taliban and al Qaeda are also established.

Officials say Islamic State fighters from different countries have found sanctuary in a part of Kunar that includes an area known by U.S. troops as "The Valley of Death", where they have lost dozens of soldiers. Al Qaeda's presence was underlined in October, when a U.S. airstrike killed Farouq al-Qatari, the movement's top commander in the east.

So far, Islamic State's presence is contained, as it finds its place in an area hotly contested by other militant groups, and locals have been warned against giving help. But it has the potential to grow.

"They moved in with their families some months ago and only appear in mosques and do not roam around very often," said one official in Kunar, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to speak to the media.

"They are trying to win local support and recruit young boys, the same method they used when they emerged in Nangarhar." (VoA)

(12) Hekmatyar ...

Another resident, Ekramullah, said: "I hope Hekmatyar stays this way and that he has left the past behind him."

"I think it is time for Hizb-e-Islami to help the Afghan government. And Hekmatyar should not put pressure on government, because it will take the system

in another direction," said Ajmal Omar, a member of Nangarhar provincial council. (Tolonews)

(13) Treatment of ...

We want the president to help us in this respect so that we can provide him with medical treatment; he is in dire need of treatment," said Eshchi's son Ahmad Eshchi.

The law states that there should be credible evidence when making an arrest.

"According to the law, the person who is going to be arrested must be given notice about the reasons behind his arrest, he has the right to be in contact with his family," said legal expert Ainuddin Bahaduri.

Meanwhile, a number of MPs have also called on the security institutions to clarify the fate of Eshchi and provide his family with the necessary information about his health.

"Access to information law states that media must be aware of the issue," said MP Mohammad Abdoh.

"His family maintains the right to be aware of his location, media also has the right to know, therefore the security institutions must provide the information," said MP Arifullah Pashtoon.

Eshchi was allegedly beaten and then taken into custody by Dostum's guards almost two weeks ago. His exact whereabouts and condition is however still a mystery. (Tolonews)

(14) Laghman Shahi ...

execution of the projects and thus the people of Laghman were disappointed. Later, Governor Abdul Jabbar Naemi traveled Kabul to discuss the issue with the authorities concerned and to remove the sense of frustration among the masses.

Sarhadi Zwak, the governor's spokesman, told Pajhwok Afghan News relevant officials briefed Naemi on the issue. He was told the canal project approval was delayed because the technical study was yet to be completed.

Information regarding technical issues related to the Kala Gosh dam project was accurate and approved by the council, he added.

Naemi hailed the projects as historic and important for the people of Laghman. He said people were ready to render any sacrifice for the protection of the mega projects.

A tribal elder, Haji Wahidullah, the canal project was a matter of survival for the people of Laghman and its cancellation would have been a grave injustice to them.

He hailed efforts of Governor Naemi and his prompt contact with the authorities in Kabul on the key project which, when implemented, would help irrigate 20,000 to 25,000 hectares of land.

The canal is 60 kilometres long, originating from the Alingar River and flowing south of the district. It could irrigate lands in Shakhtari, Sultan Ghazi Baba and Mahtarlam. (Pajhwok)

(15) Youth Get Jobs...

their living standards, he added.

Ahmadullah, a resident of the locality who frequently visited Pakistan for work, asked the government to implement similar schemes in all district to create employment opportunities.

"From dawn to dusk, we used to work in Pakistan for a daily wage of 400 rupees, of which 200 rupees we spent daily. At times, Pakistani police asked us for bribes, but now we go to work inside our town and earn reasonable wages," he remarked. Syed Gul, another inhabitant of the district, acknowledged the ministry had launched clean drinking water and footpath projects in the area. "We are happy with these projects, which offer youth work opportunities on the one hand and obviate the need for us going to Pakistan on the other," Gul remarked.

MoRRD Director Eng. Momin said development projects worth 10 million afghanis had been initiated in the district. He added similar projects had been launched in 11 other districts to help youth get work opportunities.

Situated east of Sharan, the provincial capital, Matta Khan is a backward district, whose residents complain the government had not executed enough uplift projects in the past. (Pajhwok)

(16) Bomber Planning ...

been captured during separate operations over the past week. They included three Islamic State (IS) or Daesh fighters, one of them tasked with carrying out a suicide attack on the Indian Consulate in Jalalabad.

He said the second IS man was accused by terrorist attacks and the third had the plan to carry out a terrorist attack in Nazian district.

Harifi said six of the detainees had been active against the government in Nazian, Ghanikhel, Rodat and Bati Kot districts. The NDS official a suspect had been arrested in connection with the killing of a trader and another in connection with the 100 guns. (Pajhwok)

(17)3 Rebels Dead, ...

forces in Bigsar village of the Qoush-Tapa district on Monday night.

He said two women suffer injuries in Taliban fired mortar shell who had been

evacuated to the provincial hospital. The health of injured women was said to be stable.

Sar-i-Pul Governor Mohammad Zahir said one rebel was killed and two others wounded during infighting in Halaka village of Balkhab district.

Taliban have not yet commented about the incidents. (Pajhwok)

(18)2 Held, Drugs, ...

by police, he added.

Meanwhile, two men were also arrested in Momandara district on the accusation of trafficking precious stones, Mashriqiwal stated.

According to him, the precious stones were concealed in a loaded truck and were destined to be smuggled them to other areas.

Anti-terrorism personnel had recovered a number of different kinds of weapons and ammunition as well, he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(19)Zafar-21 ...

Azembabad and others were cleared in which seven rebels were killed and two others wounded.

The governor said 19 landmines and remote controls planted by the Taliban to hit security forces were recovered during the operation.

Separately, one commander of public uprising group was killed, another wounded and the Perkhesha area of Pashtunkot district fell to the Taliban's hand during an overnight attack.

Deputy Police Chief Col. Mir Amanullah Zafir said hundreds of Taliban stormed the area during the Monday night's attack and captured it. (Pajhwok)

(20)Sher Khan ...

Mubashir said the attorney office had asked the provincial court for suspending the acting director on charges of non-cooperation, dereliction of duty and aiding usurpers. On Monday, he was formally suspended.

"Until the acting director does not appear for interrogation at the attorney office, he couldn't continue his duty," the prosecutor said.

But Sarshakhi rejected the accusations, saying: "The land was usurped in 1388 solar year, when I was not acting head, and preventing the practice is not my responsibility."

He called his suspension a conspiracy and he had duly answered to all letters and questions from investigators. He was ready to visit the attorney office for answering the allegations, the director said. (Pajhwok)

(21)Unscheduled...

for Kandahar, which needs more than 150MW, the third turbine will help mitigate people's problems province.

A shopkeeper in the Herat Bazaar says one month ago DABS officials told them the installation of the third turbine in Kajaki Dam had been completed and they would start supply from the facility to Helmand and Kandahar.

The shopkeeper says residents went through the hot summer in the hope that the 3rd turbine at the Kajaki dam would be installed and power supply would increase winter arrived.

Haji Syed Mohammad, an industrialist, is angry over the continued shortage of electricity enhancing their problems. They are provided with 6-8 megawatts of power daily, which is not enough to meet the needs of the industrial park.

As a result, factories in the industrial park are suffering huge losses. The president, during his last year's trip, pledged to resolve the issues facing industrialists and promised establishing a solar energy plant, a pledged that is yet to be implemented.

DABS head for Kandahar, Eng. Syed Rasool, acknowledges public complaints as genuine. Work on installing the 3rd turbine was launched on August 6 and ended on October 17.

Earlier, two turbines at the dam had the capacity of producing 23 megawatts of power and as the third will produce an extra 18.5MW. The total electricity-producing capacity of the dam went up to 51.5MW.

Because of the turbine installation work, Kandahar and Helmand provinces were deprived of electricity supply for 68 days. He says power supply to the provinces started on a trial basis a month ago.

However, reconnecting the provinces did not last long due to the war-damaged wires and pylons, which need repairs. The security forces stationed there were engaged in fighting.

According to him, a week ago, they were allowed to fix the problems and power supply resumed.

But power lines between Kajaki and Sangin were again cut off on Monday because of a clash. A technical team has been dispatched.

Syed Rasool says the water level has declined in the Kajaki dam and the capacity of each turbine has declined from 16.5MW to 10MW of power.

Every year, the water level falls in this season, affecting the production of power. During load-shedding, citizens cannot be supplied with power from diesel-run generator.

DABS head office has provided them with 4million litres of diesel this year.

He says they had asked for an additional 11 million litres of diesel, whose supply has been delayed.

Rasool identifies power supply to the industrial park as a top priority, but faults in power generators, late supply of fuel and other technical issues are some of the hurdles.

USAID would establish a solar-power centre at a cost of \$15million for the Kandahar industrial park. The centre was to be functional by summer season, but work on it is yet to be initiated. (Pajhwok)

(22)90 Tons of...

in connection with the drugs, but efforts were underway to find and arrest them.

In overall, Afghan police had seized more than 90 tons of narcotics including heroin, opium, alcoholic beverages and others across the country during the past one and a half months, he said. Ahmadi said the drugs were seized during 104 operations in which 284 people including seven policemen and 10 women had been detained.

Police also destroyed seven heroin and six hashish processing factories during the operations, he said. (Pajhwok)

(23)EU, U.S....

partnership between the EU and NATO," the diplomatic service of the EU said, "as they work together to strengthen defense and security in Europe and project stability among neighbors and partners." (Xinhua)

(24)UNHCR Calls...

light of the resultant breakdown in public trust and the fact that the issue was seized upon by those who wanted to turn refugees into scapegoats, it is important that EU member States show, through collective action, "that Europe is capable of engaging effectively and in a principled manner with refugee movements, helping to stabilize refugee flows over the long term through more strategic external engagement - while at the same time, continuing to welcome refugees in Europe," he added. (Xinhua)

(25)U.S. Asia-Pacific...

"freedom of navigation" and embolden the former Philippine government to initiate a case about maritime territorial disputes with China at a ragtag international arbitral tribunal, which ran from 2013 to July 2016. Carter even boarded a U.S. aircraft carrier in the South China Sea in late 2015 to "show muscle". (Xinhua)

(26)Terrorists Refusing...

Syrian army to take additional security measures to protect hospitals from terrorists after Monday's shelling of a Russian mobile hospital in Aleppo, in which two Russian nurses were killed and one doctor was seriously wounded. (Xinhua)

(27)Syria Says...

resolution on Monday for a week-long ceasefire, with Moscow arguing that rebels used such pauses in the fighting to reinforce, causing more fighting and harm to civilians.

Russia, Assad's most powerful foreign supporter, has conducted a campaign of air strikes against the rebels since September 2015, including in Aleppo. (Reuters)

(28)Merkel Launches...

of her centre-right Christian Democratic Union (CDU).

Next year's polls will "not be a walk in the park" as Germany is deeply polarised, noted the German leader, but urged the population to remain "sceptical about easy answers".

"Rarely is it the easy answers that bring progress to our country," she said, in a clear reference to the upstart anti-Islam and populist AfD, which Merkel had previously criticised as offering no solutions to problems. (AFP)

(29)US, NATO ...

best way to respond to doubts over the future of US commitment to the military alliance.

"Questions have been asked related to the strength of the transatlantic bond," Stoltenberg said as ministers gathered for the two-day talks at alliance headquarters in Brussels. (AFP)

(30)Iran Committee...

reports by the US administration and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which has been tasked with monitoring the technical implementation of the JCPOA, have confirmed Iranian compliance. (Presstv)

(31)Attack on Reporting..

and intimidate the Turkmen people," RFE/RL President Thomas Kent said in a statement.

Allegations of drug possession are one of the Turkmen government's preferred methods for silencing independent reporters. (Monitoring Desk)

(32)China and Russia ...

Tajikistan and China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) were conducted five days of counterterrorism exercises in a region bordering Afghanistan. (AP)