

(1) Carter in...

said Islamic State had coalesced over the last five or six months in Nangarhar and Kunar provinces and had been fighting the Taliban for several months.

He estimated there were between 1,000 and 3,000 members of Islamic State in Afghanistan and said its presence had forced the Taliban to re-direct some resources away from fighting Afghan security forces.

"It doesn't have the capability, I believe, to go to Europe and attack Europe and go to our homeland at this point," Campbell said.

"Left unchecked it will. They've said they want to do that." In a report to the U.S. Congress released this week, the Pentagon said that from the beginning of the year to mid-November, there were 27 percent more high-profile attacks in the capital Kabul compared with the same period last year.

Afghan national defense and security forces also had 27 percent more casualties from the beginning of 2015 up to mid-November compared with the same period last year.

"The Taliban's advances in some parts of the country, even if only temporary, underscore that this is a tough fight and it's far from over," Carter said.

Recent setbacks include the brief capture of the northern city of Kunduz by the Taliban, a months-long struggle in Helmand province and an insurgent raid on the airport in the city of Kandahar last week that killed 50 civilians and security personnel.

Campbell said Afghan forces had shown resilience during a "very tough year" but would need assistance for some time.

"I do believe Afghanistan will continue to need our support and the international community's support," he said.

In mid-October, President Barack Obama reversed plans to reduce the U.S. military presence to a small protection force in Kabul, saying he would prolong the engagement by maintaining a force of 9,800 through most of 2016.

The U.S. troops have the missions of training and advising Afghan security forces and conducting counter-terrorism operations. (Reuters)

(2) Afghanistan ...

Amina Mohamed said. She added that Afghanistan's membership in the organization was another sign of the world's confidence in the WTO.

The accession ceremony took place in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi, where economy ministers from over 160 states have gathered for the four-day MC10, aimed at defining the course of multilateral trade relations for the coming years.

Earlier in the day, Afghan Deputy Minister of Trade of the Ministry of Commerce and Industries Mozammi Shinwari told Sputnik that the country's WTO membership will give it "an upper hand" when seeking preferential trade terms with its neighboring states. (Sputnik)

(3) Election Commission...

Electoral Reform Commission (ERC) has said that bringing about reforms in Afghanistan's election management bodies is critical to restoring trust over elections, institutionalizing democracy and maintaining political stability in the country.

"They [selection committee] must make sure the implementation of the reform package is recommended. We strongly value the start of their work, government must continue supporting the process to help the selection committee complete its work within a month so that new commissioners can start their jobs soon," ERC member Farooq Bashir said.

While concerns remain high over the possible meddling of government officials in the work of the selection committee, election monitoring bodies have called on the selection committee to not be influenced by outside interference.

"We hope that the committee works transparently and with neutrality so that trust is restored on the election process. The commission must not allow individuals to influence them, because this would once again harm the process."

The selection committee was due to start work at least a month ago but was delayed after a number of civil society institutions opposed the introduction of three members of civil society representatives in the selection committee. (Tolonews)

(4) Modi to...

moving with utmost urgency as the instructions to wrap up the build-

ing project have come from PM Narendra Modi. In October, Modi had expressed concern over delay in the construction of the building and had directed External Affairs ministry and CPWD to expedite work to avoid further cost and time overruns. The project had been conceived as a Rs 300 crore venture but is likely to cost the exchequer Rs 710 crore.

The Parliament building, which has elements of Mughal and modern architecture, will have Asia's largest dome as its key feature. It is situated between decades-old historic landmarks King Palace 'Darul Aman' and Queen Palace - which bear the marks of the war and tell the story of conflict and devastation. The building has Wolesi Jirga or the Lower House with a seating capacity of 294, a 190-seat Meshrano Jirga or Upper House, Entrance lobby, offices, conference rooms, dining halls, press room, library, auditorium and parking facilities. A water body with 9 cascading fountains is also being constructed in front of the building.

The key reason behind the project was Delhi's willingness to emphasize its position in the region as the main development partner of Afghanistan. When he inaugurates the Parliament building, Modi wants to emphasize India's role as a major player in the region. (Agencies)

(5) Night Raids ...

the government must remove those Taliban who are still active close to the city and bring security back to the city," said Zamarai one of the residents.

"We ask the government to return security to the province because the situation is not good in the province and Taliban are active in every part of Kunduz," said Abdulhaq another resident. (Tolonews)

(6) First Lady...

the moment there are almost 40 million internet users in the country, of this 39 percent of them are women. The ministry did however commit to support programs for capacity building for women to access information and technology.

"We have strong reason to believe in any initiative directed at promoting citizens' awareness in the field of information technology and its use for the purpose of empowering the country, especially for women, and we strongly support this motion," said Abdul Razaq Wahidi the Minister of Information Technology. According to Information and Technology Ministry statistics 32 percent of phone users in the country are women and of the 40 million internet users, 39 percent of them are women. (Tolonews)

(7) Govt. Urged...

serious negative impact on freedom of speech in Afghanistan besides creating a gap of mistrust between the people and the government.

The statement said the government should remain delicate with such issues and prevent the terror group from recruitment of the youths through propaganda against the Afghan people and government and misuse of freedom of speech.

The ISIS affiliates are launching the radio station amid growing concerns that the terror group is gaining foothold in Afghanistan with the terror group attempting to establish a regional base in Jalalabad, the capital city of eastern Nangarhar province.

According to the commander of the US and NATO forces in Afghanistan Gen. John Campbell, there are indications that foreign militants from Syria and Iraq had joining the ranks of ISIS loyalists in eastern Nangarhar province as they are trying to consolidate links with the leadership of the terror group based in Syria and Iraq. (KP)

(8) Berlin Extends...

basis of reforms which is known as a self-sufficiency document and implemented reforms in line with the same document which was also endorsed by the world," Sayed Zafar Hashemi, a deputy presidential spokesman said on Friday.

"Recent commitments were made by Western countries during the president's tour to move forward in the light of the same document," he added.

This comes at a time that critics have persistently blasted the national unity government for not taking solid steps to fight corruption and promote good governance.

"When we do not abide by our commitments, this would decrease international aid which will also impact our economic sector and security and the present system," Zaman Khan Amarkhail, head of Anti-Corruption Network (AACN) said.

The international community has on a number of occasions announced that further aid to Afghanistan would be related to the implementation of basic reforms in the country. (Tolonews)

(9) Iran to ...

dropping the lawsuit," he said after the meeting of the commission which is under the leadership of Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev.

Russia and Iran signed a contract for the supply of five divisions of the S-300 missile systems in 2007. In September 2010, then President Medvedev inked a decree to implement U.N. Security Council's Resolution 1929 which banned the S-300 supplies to Iran.

In April 2015, Russian President Vladimir Putin lifted the ban on the delivery of S-300 missile systems to Tehran. (Xinhua)

(10) ANSF Retake ...

success since they were driven from power by a U.S.-led intervention in 2001.

The fighting in Helmand has carried echoes of the campaign that led to the fall of Kunduz, when Taliban fighters established themselves in the surrounding district before moving on the city itself.

In Helmand, where insurgents have threatened the provincial capital, Lashkargah, they already have seized the districts of Musa Qal'ah and Now Zad in the north of the province before taking Khanishin last week.

Since then, they have come close to taking the district of Marjah, about 35 kilometers (21 miles) from Lashkargah. It was the focus of a major offensive by U.S.-led NATO troops in 2010.

Afghan police and army units have complained bitterly that they have received inadequate support and supplies from the government in Kabul and suffered high rates of desertion.

International partners have looked on with mounting alarm. The New York Times reported this week that U.S. special forces had taken part in fighting in Helmand, a rare venture into active combat that underlined the gravity of the situation facing government forces. (Reuters)

(11) 3rd Afghanistan...

"Virulent events of life have split us from our neighbors in various sectors like remote and unwitting islands," Muradian said.

"Afghanistan and Tajikistan have always been alongside each other particularly during hardships they faced during independence when they [Afghans] came to Tajikistan and also when there is conflict in Tajikistan, we only saw cooperation from Afghanistan," a conflict studies expert at Tajikistan's Institute of Oriental Studies Kosimsha Iskandarov said.

The participants said that ignoring Taliban threats has been one of the main reasons behind the emergence of Daesh in Afghanistan. (Tolonews)

(12) China to...

Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, the United Nations, and the United States. (Xinhua)

(13) US Welcomes...

after formal approval by the WTO ministers in the Kenyan capital Nairobi.

Top Afghan government official Khan Rahmani told the conference it was a "historic" event, and that WTO membership was "part of our strategic objectives to achieve economic stability and peace."

WTO Director General Roberto Azevedo said he was "delighted" to welcome Afghanistan.

On Wednesday, Liberia joined the WTO at a similar ceremony at the conference in Nairobi, which wraps up on Friday. (Tolonews)

(14) Multiple-Entry ...

been a high priority for the PAJCCI. He urged business representatives to visit Afghanistan and also help bridge the trust gap, especially in youth of the war-stricken nation. (ANI)

(15) India Condemns ..

the killing and said the attack was carried out by the enemies of the people of Afghanistan. No group has claimed any responsibility for the attack. (Agencies)

(16) Record EU ...

further €300 million to address the essential needs of people affected by crisis in Syria and Iraq. Together with €200 million already contracted in 2015, the Commission will

thereby have delivered on its commitment to provide an extra €500 million over 2015-16 to help meet the humanitarian needs of the refugee crisis.

Given the unpredictable nature of disasters, €189 million will remain in reserve in 2016 to respond to sudden catastrophes such as earthquakes and flooding or for allocation to ongoing crises during the course of the year, based on needs assessments.

EU humanitarian aid is impartial and independent, and is entirely based on needs, delivered in accordance with humanitarian principles. The EU's humanitarian assistance on average annually amounts to just over €2 per EU citizen per year, reaching over 120 million people in need across the world. EU assistance is implemented via humanitarian partner organisations, including UN agencies, NGOs and the Red Cross family, who have signed partnership agreements with the European Commission. The Commission is closely monitoring the use of EU funds via its global network of humanitarian. (PR)

(17) Concerns...

is no guarantee the one who has the station does not switch off stations," said Abdul Mujeeb Khilwatgar, NAI Director.

A number of media analysts have meanwhile warned security institutions over the risks arising from media digitization.

"It's utilization is very important in a war-torn country like Afghanistan ... and we should sit and talk to the departments that have the authority over the digitization system," said Faqir Maiwand a media analyst.

International Telecommunication Union announced in 2006 that all countries had to migrate to digital broadcasting by 2015.

Afghanistan media's digitization program began in September last year and the fundamental reason for the launch of the program is to migrate from analogue broadcasting to digital broadcasting.

The migration process is first expected to be rolled out in Kabul before going on to other cities and villages. (Tolonews)

(18) Taliban ...

avoid an internal dispute and instead fight government forces, a source said on condition of anonymity.

It is said that the mediators have managed to get the factions to cease their clashes.

But the Herat police department has vowed to take action against the Herat figures who facilitated the truce between the Taliban factions in Shindand.

"Those who made contact with the enemy and supported them are considered as enemies and will be dealt seriously," Herat police chief general Abdul Majid Rozai said.

According to Herat police department, a former and a serving district governor were among those who talked with the Taliban.

Amid the controversy, Herat Peace Council has said that a number of Taliban fighters have now realized that the ongoing war has been perpetrated through them by Pakistan and have instead decided to join the peace process.

"There are Taliban fighters who have realized that the war was imposed on them and are willing to join the peace process soon," chairman of Herat's Peace Council Maulavi Ghulam Rasol Sarwar said.

Referring to the ongoing turmoil between the Taliban factions, deputy governor of Herat has said that the dispute within the Taliban itself reveals that the group has now realized that this was not a genuine war.

"I am sure there is a change happening, Taliban seems to be weak enough now but our security forces are stronger. I firmly believe that the people will be the winner," deputy Herat governor Asiluddin Jami said.

Rival Taliban factions were engaged in an armed confrontation for ten days in Zerkoh area of Shindand district leaving more than a hundred Taliban fighters killed and wounded including some key commanders. (Tolonews)

(19) Afghan ...

in this regard. "I am very much disappointed only nine out of twenty eight member states have accepted to be part of the relocation scheme and I want to commend Germany because from the very first moment they showed the way," said Dimitris Avramopoulos, European commissioner for migration.

Meanwhile, Afghanistan's Presidential Palace emphasized that addressing the Afghan asylum requests in Europe was President

Ashraf Ghani's main focus during his recent trip to some EU nations.

"Our emphasis was always that all the Afghanistan citizens' asylum requests should be legally followed according to host countries' laws and rights for refugees but the only thing we cannot interfere with is the decision that the host countries are going to take," Ghani's deputy spokesman Sayed Zafar Hashemi said.

Among 640,000 asylum seekers in European countries by August, more than 15 percent of them are Afghan citizens. (Tolonews)

(20) Differences ...

However, neither Mullah Akhtar Mansour's faction nor rival Mullah Mohammad Rassoul Noorzai's have close relations with Taliban's political office in Qatar, an issue that makes it difficult to predict the Taliban's political future in Afghanistan's politics, security sources speaking on condition of anonymity have said.

"There are benevolent elements among Taliban who mostly support Mullah Akhtar Mansour. There is the possibility that Mansour's loyalists convinced a third faction who doesn't pursue a military confrontation with Mullah Mansour to seek allegiance with Mansour," ex-Taliban regime's minister of mines Hassan Haqyar said.

"Initially, Mullah Omar's son and his brother disagreed with Mansour as successor. But the same benevolent elements who have sympathy with the Taliban came forward and conducted mediation and pushed Mullah Omar's son Mullah Yaqoub and his brother to obey Mansour," he added.

This comes a few weeks after a top Taliban commander and spokesman to Mullah Mansour's rival faction, Mullah Abdul Manan Niazi accused Mullah Mansour of having plotted the murder of Mullah Omar. He claimed that Mullah Mansour was killed by Mullah Mansour before the inauguration of the Taliban's political office in Qatar and Mullah Mansour kept his death a secret.

As gaps between Taliban factions expand, some Afghan political analysts have called on government to take steps and reestablish contact with the group in the name of peace.

"If the government comes up with an initiative and reestablishes contact with the Taliban Mullah Akhtar Mansour will soon join the reconciliation and negotiation process with the government," political analyst Jawed Kohistani said.

"The second group apparently will continue the war and the third group which has more strength and are loyal to Mullah Omar have major support among the people in western and southern regions and are willing to talk independently without Pakistan," he said.

Analysts believe that the split among the Taliban has pushed the group to a critical stage, compelling the group leaders to take decisions in the past few weeks to ensure their political participation by defeating their rival factions. (Tolonews)

(21) Afghan ...

"Every day there was another suicide attack. The situation is very bad and it's very difficult."

Although many have returned, Afghans still make up an estimated 2.6 million refugees, according to UN statistics. And as of mid-2014, war had left more than 638,000 people internally displaced within the country's borders.

In October, US President Barack Obama announced the extension of the American military presence in Afghanistan. (Aljazeera)

(22) Khyber Air ...

area is off limits to journalists, making it difficult to verify the identity and the number of dead.

These areas have also been considered home to religious extremist organisations including Al Qaeda and the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

Military operation Zarb-i-Azb and the National Action Plan were launched against insurgents following attacks on Karachi's Jinnah International Airport and Peshawar's Army Public School in 2014. (Agencies)

(23) Terrorist Turf ...

there ... I don't think there will be a caliphate in Afghanistan."

Afghan security forces take their positions during a gun battle in Kunduz city, northern Afghanistan September 29, 2015

Though the Afghan government claims its security forces have as many as 400,000 members, they are already engaged in a battle with the Taliban and would have a limited

ability to tackle Daesh, said the expert.

Among the Daesh recruits in Afghanistan are Pakistanis who defected from the Taliban and are now trying to persuade more fighters to join them in the terrorist organization, explained Yusufzai, a noted war correspondent who once conducted an interview with Osama bin Laden.

Attempts to get more support include a recorded message on the internet from a senior Daesh member in Syria who defected from the Taliban, and called on others in Afghanistan to join him.

However, because of the Taliban's dominance, the group's attempts have not made much headway in Afghanistan, while in Pakistan, the terrorist group is challenged by the existence of several extremist groups who compete for influence. (Sputnik)

(24) UNHCR ...

, for example through increased checks, including the use of biometrics such as fingerprints and iris scans.

Its recommendations include practical guidance on ensuring that these and other measures are carried out properly and proportionately and subject to judicial control, and avoiding discrimination, for example based on nationality, race, ethnicity, or religion. Applications for asylum must be looked at individually.

With cases involving the exclusion of people for serious criminal or terrorist acts, UNHCR recommended that a factual and legal assessment be done, if needed, by specialized exclusion units. (Xinhua)

(25) Opposition ...

said Security Council resolutions and the Geneva 1 road map drawn up in 2012 provided for a political transition in Syria without the president and a transitional governing council with full executive powers.

"We are going into negotiations on this principle, we are not entering talks (based on) anything else. There will be no concession," he told reporters on Friday.

Hijab's position highlights the deep differences over Assad's fate and a future political transition in Syria among the parties to the talks. (Reuters)

(26) Yemen's ...

the Iranian-backed Shi'ite Houthis group and seized control of the Yemeni northwest rebel-held border city of Harad, about 15 km from Saudi border, a military official there told Xinhua by phone.

Also, two Saudi-backed Yemeni government battalions advanced from near southern Saudi border and retook al-Hazm, the capital city of the northeast province of al-Jouf. They engaged in intensified clashes against the rebels that led to the collapse of all rebel military camps surrounding the capital city, an official source with the leadership of the Yemeni battalions told Xinhua. (Xinhua)

(27) Russia Begins...

corded the last 40 minutes of the flight, but three of the eight chips from the flight recorder have been damaged and will need to be x-rayed, Andrei Semenov, head of Russian military's information and analytic department, told reporters. The Defense Ministry promised that further work on deciphering the flight recorder will be continued with the presence of international observers.

Russia claims that it has proof confirming that the Russian jet did not violate Turkish air space and posed no threat to the country, Russian Aerospace Forces Deputy Commander Sergei Dronov told a news briefing.

"The information we have provided concerning the situation in the area has not been refuted by anyone, including Turkey," claimed the officer. (Xinhua)

(28) Juncker ...

might read the decision at a time when the EU also wants Moscow's help to resolve the Syrian crisis.

Ukraine under Poroshenko has made ties with the EU a priority and the two sides have signed an association pact which includes a free trade accord that especially angered Russian President Vladimir Putin. (AFP)

(29) Over 380,000 ...

iterated. "Better humanitarian access and more resources can't come soon enough for those who have been deprived for so long. Education is their best hope for the future," he added. (Xinhua)