

(1) Politicians Urge...

Abdullah Abdullah, former president Hamid Karzai, High Peace Council (HPC) head Pir Sayed Ahmad Gilani, Abdur Rab Rasul Sayyaf and Chief Justice Mohammad Yousuf Halim were also present in the meeting. Meshrano Jirga chairman, Fazal Hadi Muslimyar, deputy CEOs Eng. Mohammad Khan and Mohammad Mohaqiq, National Security Advisor (NSA) Mohammad Hanif Atmar, Hedayat Amin Arsal, Mohammad Karim Khalili and a number of political and jihadi figures were other participants. The president once met these individuals on Wednesday last. (Pajhwok)

(2) Plight of ...

been given a substantial enough role in the peace process and stressed that women need to play a bigger part in the decision-making process.

"We should try to bring sustainable and justice-based peace to the country. Short-term political agreement cannot bring peace to the country," she said.

Reports indicate that two percent of the police force is made up of women and only 0.7 percent of army personnel are female.

There are 187 women judges and out of 2,897 attorneys, 677 of them are women.

The first lady of the country, Rula Ghani however said government has made good progress in helping women lead better lives and that 75 women are employed in peace councils in the provinces.

"Afghanistan is trying to implement the 1325 program. We are trying to bring positive changes in the country," she said. (Tolonews)

(3) NPC Approves ...

The MoUD was tasked with comprehensively monitoring of project implementation. The meeting was also attended by some members of NPA, transparency observers from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), Meshrano Jirga's economic commission, Wolessi Jirga's defence panel, anti-corruption parliamentary caucus and the Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan (CSTC-A) of Resolute Support mission. (Pajhwok)

(4) Afghan Army ...

against the Taliban in northern provinces," said Katawazai.

"Military practices will help us to enter the battlefield with more potential and better experience," said an ANA officer in the Baghlan military corp, Mohammad Omar.

"We are determined to defend the nation until the last drop of our blood; but for this we need the support of our people so that we win our battles," said another officer, Sayed Hussain Hussaini. Katawazai pledged to recapture Baghlan's Dahana-e-Ghori district that fell to insurgents four months ago.

This comes as security continues to deteriorate in a number of now volatile areas in the country. (Tolonews)

(5) Certain Elements...

Faizi, a member of the National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan, said that Gen. Dostum had been elected by the people as 1st vice-president and no one could remove him from that position. Faizi asked the president to contain what he called baseless allegations against Dostum; otherwise they would not remain silent. In case of need, they would lay down their lives in defence of the VP, he said.

He urged the international community not to play with Afghanistan's destiny and eschew meddling in its affairs.

Maulvi Gul Ahmad Latifi, religious affairs director in Faryab, also said some elements were trying to find a rival to Gen. Dostum and divide Turkic ethnic groups. "They should know that have only one leader and he is Gen. Dostum."

Latifi insisted Gen. Dostum, for the sake of protecting Afghanistan's sovereignty, was fighting against Daesh, Taliban and Pakistan. He was trying to bring peace and security to the country and should be honoured for his services.

Earlier, Eshchi, a former Jawzjan governor, told reporters that Gen. Dostum's guards sexually

assaulted and beat him in captivity. The incident has sparked calls for investigations against the VP. (Pajhwok)

(6) Eshchi Rejects ...

Dostum defends the rights of the Afghan nation; He is the only person who offered an apology to the faithful people of Afghanistan over events of the imposed war," said a member of Faryab provincial council, Abdul Ahad Baig.

"The opposing side is the person who has committed this crime against me (Dostum); he should be placed in our position so that we can commit the same action against him; otherwise, we cannot ignore our rights; how would a Jirga be able to resolve the problem? What problem can be resolved through a Jirga? What are they going to give us? Money? We want the law to prevail," said Eshchi.

"If the president and the United Nations do not address our demands, supporters of the leader of Junbesh exist in all provinces of Afghanistan and they will come out for a mass demonstration," said a supporter of the Junbesh party, Ehsanullah.

However, the Attorney General's Office (AGO) has said that it has already started assessing the case. Last week Eshchi underwent forensic medical tests at the NATO hospital at Bagram airbase and at the Wazir Akbar Khan Hospital in Kabul. However the results of the medical tests have not yet been released.

On Friday, spokesperson for Junbesh-e-Milli party, Bashir Ahmad Tayyanj said the issue between Eshchi and Dostum should be resolved through a Jirga.

Tayyanj warned that if the issue continued to be debated, Dostum's supporters could lose patience and this may have negative repercussions. (Tolonews)

(7) Casualty Toll ...

Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Dawlat Waziri said in addition to cold weather, severely crushing of rebels by governmental forces in previous months had rendered the insurgents unable to conduct attacks.

"Usually in winter, insurgents go across the border for receiving military training and equipment, thus their attacks decrease," he added.

He didn't did not name the country, but Pakistan has been often accused of assisting insurgents against Afghanistan.

Those killed and wounded last month included insurgents, governmental forces and civilians --including women and children.

However, due to controversial figures provided by different sources, Pajhwok could not publish exact number of casualties as differentiation in all those killed and wounded was impossible.

In November, the bloodiest day 10th of the month, when 34 people were killed and 144 wounded on the day.

One-seventh of last month's casualties happened in Nangarhar and the rest in other provinces. Most casualties that month occurred in Uruzgan, Faryab, Kabul and Balkh provinces and the least in Baghlan, Kapisa, Nimroz and Takhar provinces.

The number of attacks in November decreased and the attacks too were less deadly as compared to October's ones. Some 17 individuals were killed or wounded averagely in every attack in October, while 11 people on average suffered casualties in each attack in November.

Gen. Wardak in this regard said: "Civilians suffer casualties when the fighting area is wider and when multipronged attacks are staged and heavy weapons are used. The decreased casualties and less deadly attacks in November means heavy weapons weren't used and guerilla attacks were carried out by small groups."

The MoD spokesman also held similar views, citing operations especially nighttime raids against insurgents as a reason behind the decreased average casualties in attacks.

He said insurgents were unable to use heavy weapons and conduct deadly attacks in November, thus decreased average casualties in each attack. Manugul, head of a family which

fled fighting in early November from Pachiragam district to Jalalabad, capital of Nangarhar, said he was happy about the deescalating fighting in Nangarhar.

"The de-escalation is temporary, the government should put efforts into permanently ending the conflict. Both the sides should announce ceasefire in order the Afghans do not be displaced like us."

Manugul's family is currently living in a home of his cousin in Jalalabad. Manugul said his wife, a young son and a minor child were killed during recent clashes between security forces and militants in Pachiragam.

He said currently he was struggling with work to eke out a living after leaving behind household and necessary items in Pachiragam. He narrowed escaped and managed to flee his area.

Another resident of Kosakala locality of Khwaja Sabzposh district in northern Faryab province, Mohammad Naem, whose child was killed last month after a Taliban-fired mortar shell landed at the wedding ceremony of his relative. His two daughters and wife were injured in the incident. Naem also calls for ceasefire and wants peace in the country.

Naem said the security situation in his area improved after the weather turned cold. He said if the government didn't make efforts at permanently ending the war, then insurgents would enhance their attacks like they did in the past in summer. (Pajhwok)

(8) India, Tajikistan...

in order to effectively address various concerns, he said.

"The world, and particularly our region, is, today, faced by the growing threat of terrorism.

"Both India and Tajikistan are opposed to this menace in all its forms and manifestations... For us, development and progress of our nations is of utmost importance.

"India recognises President Rahmon's role in ensuring peace and stability in Tajikistan which has a similar salutary effect in the region," Mukherjee said.

The President said India was grateful to Tajikistan for supporting its rightful claim to a permanent seat in the UN Security Council and its membership of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation.

India was among first countries to recognise emergence of Tajikistan on dissolution of the former Soviet Union.

Rahmon arrived here on Friday after visiting Kochi. The visiting dignitary is on a five-day visit to India from December 14. (IANS)

(9) New IEC...

have achieved. At least the internal approaches of the commission should have been reformed; the fate of the voters list should have been cleared up and the secretariat head of the IEC should have been appointed," he said.

Spokesman for the IEC, Gula Jan Abdul Badee Sayyad, said the new head of the IEC is working on how to divide election zones, prepare the voters list and schedule parliament and district council elections.

"We will make a general approach that will include setting election zones, election schedules, issuance of electronic identity cards and holding elections," he said.

The process of nominating the head of the secretariat of the IEC was started last week and is expected to finish this week. The names of three candidates will be sent to President Ashraf Ghani for selection. (Tolonews)

(10) Election Credibility

have failed to achieve this. Meanwhile, the Afghan election management body—the Independent Election Commission (IEC) - has also called on government to support efforts to improve the quality and credibility of the next election.

"Electronic ID cards would help to improve security, election process and many other fields," IEC spokesman Abdul Badi Sayyad said.

"The government must take steps and start rolling out electronic ID cards so that transparency and justice are protected in the elections," said political activist Hamid Saboori. The e-NIC rollout was due to start in 2015 but was put on hold for as yet undisclosed reasons. According to election observers,

in addition to ensuring transparency at the polls, e-NIC process will also provide exact census data. (Tolonews)

(11) Minister Sets ...

but 24 percent of them do not attend school.

"Our statistics are authentic. Eleven million were not enrolled - not even on the database of the previous government. The media was given the wrong statistics," said Balkhi.

In the meantime, Sediq Patman, a former deputy minister of education said that the leadership of the education ministry exaggerated the statistics about the number of active students, possibly for certain reasons including corruption and misuse of resources. "They (education ministry leadership) calculated the friends of the students ... We told them that these statistics were not credible, that is why we did not approve them. We also informed the president and the ministers about the problem and categorically informed them these statistics were not genuine," said Patman.

According to Patman, many schools in eleven insecure provinces were closed down in 1386 solar year (2007).

The revival of Afghanistan's education sector and enrollment of millions of Afghan children, including girls, at schools has often been slated as one of Afghanistan's biggest achievements in the past 15 years.

However, this issue now raises the question of whether there are ghost schools and ghost students. (Tolonews)

(12) Shelter Remains ...

If they need shelter to spend night, they are provided that facility besides food."

He also said so far more than one million refugees had returned back to Afghanistan, including 660,000 undocumented migrants. Nangarhar deputy governor Mohammad Hanif Gardiwal said the government had paved the ground for giving 3500 afghanis and non-food items in aid to unregistered refugees.

But a member of the provincial council, Ajmal Omar, said problems of the returning families remained unaddressed. Besides lacking shelter, the returnees needed facilities like hospital, schools and others.

He said the Behud township alone would not help accommodate all the returnees and more such townships should be constructed. (Pajhwok)

(13) Neighboring ...

and sons remain unclear," said Raziq.

On Sunday, tribal elders from ten provinces gathered in Kandahar city where they called on the warring factions to end the war and endorse peace talks.

They said that the ongoing war in the country does not support national interests.

"I can say it with confidence that the peace process will move in the right direction," said Mohammad Nadir Naeem, tribal elder from Kandahar.

Raziq called on the Taliban to pursue their objectives through political means.

Kandahar governor Humayoun Azizi also called for tribal elders to play a more effective role in the peace process.

"The name of our beloved country has been tarnished in the world because of terrorism, our honor and dignity has been questioned," said tribal leader Naeem.

"Your meeting in the city of Kandahar could pave the way for peace talks between the Afghans," said Kandahar governor Humayoun Azizi. (Tolonews)

(14) Narcotics ...

international organs to cooperate with each other in doing away with cultivation and smuggling of drugs in Afghanistan.

About drug addicts' treatment, she said currently 116 treatment centers were available in Afghanistan that could treat 40,000 addicts per year.

She added hard efforts were underway for prevention of narcotics cultivation, smuggling and usage. She said the ground was being paved for the youth to find work and engage in entertainment activities.

Ghafor Liwal, acting MoBTA minister, called narcotics a major threat and said influential

individuals could play important role in reducing production, smuggling and using of drugs. For this reason, his ministry was attracting tribal elders' cooperation, he added.

Deputy head of physical training department, Qasim Hamidi, said, "We are trying to promote sports among people and start a decisive campaign against narcotics."

He linked drug addiction to absence of a healthy sports environment, asking the Ministry of Urban Development to add construction of stadiums and sports gymnasiums in its plans.

Based on surveys, 3.5 million people are addicted to drugs in Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(15) War-Affected...

by the World Food Program (WFP).

Mohammad Rafi, a person with disability from Jawzjan, said: "I have six children. I lost both legs in Kandahar where I was serving as a soldier. We are happy with the aid that would resolve our problem for some time."

There are 5,500 war-affected families, including 30 percent of the households who have lost relatives, in Jawzjan province. (Pajhwok)

(16) ANSDF Receive...

Afghan Air Force received several A-29 and MD-530 Cayuse helicopters from the United States earlier this year which are playing a key role in providing close air support to the Afghan forces.

"The AAF's capability to provide airlift, casualty evacuation (CASEVAC), and organic aerial fires continue to improve as the Department of Defense (DoD) fields more aircraft to the AAF and as its pilots and crews gain operational experience. With the fielding of 12 additional MD-530 attack helicopters during the reporting period and several more months of operational employment of the A-29 light attack aircraft, the AAF demonstrated increasing effectiveness in providing aerial fires in support of ANA ground forces," according to the latest Pentagon report, Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan.

The report further added that the use of A-29s and MD-530s in particular were critical to the success of ANSDF offensive clearing operations during Operation Shafaq. After a little more than six months of conducting combat operations, the ANSDF is proving increasingly effective at integrating the A-29 into operations. The AAF is also working more closely with the ANA to improve aerial fires integration through the further development of Afghan Tactical Air Coordinators (ATAC).

The AAF use the A-29 Super Tucano light attack aircraft to attack targets of strategic significance and to provide critical air support, such as aerial fires, to ground forces. The A-29 can carry Mk-81 250-lb bombs, Mk-82 500-lb bombs, rockets, and two .50 cal machine guns mounted in the wings.

The A-29 is also capable of employing laser-guided bombs, but due to low aircrew experience levels, technical issues with front seat targeting and aircraft performance limitations, employment training has been delayed, the report stated, adding that the A-29 pilots however continue to achieve high accuracy with unguided bombs, and there has been no operational impact due to the delay of the laser-guided bomb training.

Eight A-29s are in Afghanistan along with their Afghan pilots and associated maintenance personnel. Twelve more Afghan A-29s are at Moody Air Force Base, Georgia, to support pilot and maintenance training, and will be delivered to Kabul by late 2018. (KP)

(17) Masked Gunmen...

Amarkhel, said so far they had not received any report about the presence of new aliens in the province. But he said there were Pakistani militants in Taliban ranks.

However, Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, rejected the presence of Pakistani fighter in their ranks. He said the presence of masked gunmen in Zankhan district was government's propaganda. (Pajhwok)

(18) Body of Surobi...

search operations in the dam on a number of occasions but have failed to find the body.

"The dam is big and technically it is difficult to find the body. However we hope to take the body out of water," he said.

The Minister of Interior (MoI) said they were not aware of the issue but now that they know they will try to find the body.

"We will do everything that we can. I will contact the relevant departments to help retrieve the body," said Najibullah Danish, deputy spokesman for the MoI. (Tolonews)

(19) Pajhwok...

giving a bottle of water to thirsty person while entering his hand through a hole in a fence.

Mohammad Zubair, a participant of the expo, said the picture conveyed a message of humanity and brotherhood.

He liked the picture by the Pajhwok reporter and expressed his happiness over the photo winning first position.

The Pajhwok reporter Akbari said he always tried to convey a message in his photos. He thanked Pajhwok for facilitating him to continue his work.

Sabir Naqashbandi, who obtained best illustrator award, said his picture conveyed the message of brotherhood between Shiites and Sunnis. (Pajhwok)

(20) Top Police...

choice to target the security forces and government officials. However, in majority of such attacks, the ordinary civilians are targeted as the anti-government armed militants are accused of incurring the most casualties to the civilians.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said late in October that the mission has documented 8,397 conflict-related civilian casualties (2,562 deaths and 5,835 injured) between 1 January and 30 September, representing a one per cent decrease compared to the same period in 2015.

Ground engagements remained the leading cause of civilian casualties, followed by suicide and complex attacks, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

UNAMA further added that the anti-Government Elements caused 61 per cent of civilian casualties - 1,569 civilian deaths and 3,574 injured (5,143 total civilian casualties). (KP)

(21) Moon Calls...

age of 15, according to the UN. In September, 2016, the UN General Assembly adopted New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants to enhance protection of refugees and migrants.

The Declaration reaffirms the importance of the international protection regime and represents a commitment by UN member states to strengthen and enhance mechanisms to protect people on the move. (Xinhua)

(22) Kerry Discusses...

joined diplomats from Britain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates to speak with Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, the United Nations special envoy to Yemen. (AP)

(23) 24,000 People...

it has prepositioned goods, including food packs and hygiene kits, for the displaced families. (Xinhua)

(24) Brexiteer Farage ...

had the contacts and connections, the first thing you would do is to employ that person because that is how the world works."

Farage, who said he did not think he would get a role in the U.S. administration because he had a British passport, said Conservative Prime Minister Theresa May had banned members of her senior team of ministers from speaking to him. (Reuters)

(25) Putin Envoy...

"The liberation of Aleppo brought to light once again the policies of the West and their regional supporters in creating and backing terrorism," Shamkhani said, quoted by Mehr news agency. Shamkhani voiced concern for the Shiite villages of Fuua and Kafra, which are under siege by rebels. (AFP)