

(1) Ghani Approves

and high education in Balkh receiving higher oil and gas extraction education in England. (Pajhwok)

(2) Angry Fall-Out

be accepted.

Acting foreign minister Salahuddin Rabbani, leader of the Jamiat-e-Islami Party of Afghanistan, who had gone to Greece on a formal visit and was expected to visit Denmark, abandoned his trip halfway because of the tensions between the Jamiat-e-Islami party and the presidential palace. He was returned to the country.

According to the statement of Jamiat-e-Islami Party of Afghanistan will state its position after the return of Rabbani. (Tolonews)

(3) 528,000 Afghan

Repatriation (MoRR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

"For Afghanistan, migration is an opportunity. Five hundred thousand people returned to their homeland this year. We're here to help and we're ready for 2018," said Toby Lanzer, acting head of the United Nations in Afghanistan at the Migrants Day in Kabul.

The event, held in the Government's Media and Information Center (GMIC) brought together representatives from the government of Afghanistan, UN agencies, international organizations, humanitarian actors, embassies, parliamentarians, Afghan civil society and members of the migrant communities. Speaking at the event, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah said "our joint work with the EU was fruitful and the number of the returnees has declined."

"We are also grateful to the governments of Iran and Pakistan for providing needful facilities for Afghan returning migrants in their countries," the CEO said.

Undocumented Afghans, who are not formally registered as refugees in their host countries, face unique challenges both abroad and when they return home. Since the beginning of the year, over 500,000 undocumented Afghans have returned from Pakistan and Iran until December 9.

Migrants face many challenges along their migration route. IOM's Missing Migrants Project reports more than 176,000 migrants safely reached Europe in 2017, over 3,000 migrants died on the way. This figure compares to more than 387,000 arrivals in Europe in 2016, and over 5,000 deaths.

"It is a bitter sweet day remembering those who suffered or died, and those who have been successful," mentioned IOM Special Envoy and Chief of Mission Laurence Hart.

Returns of undocumented Afghans have decreased by more than 60 percent compared to last year, from 248,000 in 2016 to 95,000 until December 9, 2017. Returns of undocumented Afghans from Iran have decreased by eight percent compared to last year, from 443,000 in 2016 to 407,000 until Dec 9, 2017.

Since the beginning of the year, IOM has provided more than 104,000 undocumented Afghans with post-arrival emergency assistance at its Transit Centers in the four border crossing points with Iran and Pakistan. (Pajhwok)

(4) Hakimi, US

the peace process, regional connectivity and distribution of electronic identity cards also figured at the meeting.

According to a statement from the Ministry of Finance, Hakimi welcomed the new ambassador and praised the assistance provided by the United States to the Afghan government.

The minister appreciated the work and activities of Michael McKinley, former US ambassador, during his mission in Afghanistan and wished the new one the best of luck. (Pajhwok)

(5) Receding Water

dam was 49 meters deep and if the level reached 45 meters, they had to stop producing electricity at the dam.

He said the lack of water had brought down the dam's production capacity from earlier 51 megawatts to 30 megawatts, with only five megawatts reaching Lashkargah, the provincial capital. Some 130,000 households in Helmand and neighboring Kandahar provinces are supplied electricity from the Kajaki hydropower plant.

Qani said a number of government departments and power individuals in Helmand owed 220 million afghanis in unpaid electricity bills.

Helmand Valley Authority head Eng. Khan Aqa told Pajhwok that the Kajaki dam had been built for irrigation not power production.

"First we provide irrigation water to people and if some water is left, that should be used for power generation.

Electricity has no value before water." He said the dam's basin had not been cleansed in years and as a result the water level had declined.

The residents of Lashkargah expressed their frustration with the possible halt of power supply to them.

A resident, Haji Mohammad, said they would face many problems if electricity was suspended. "Electricity is supplied to people on their turn, if it is completely stopped, it would affect businesses." (Pajhwok)

(6) Stay out of

who also introduced as an advisor to the president and to the NSA, Yasin Zia, the former governor of Takhar province and Atiqullah Nawsher, the former deputy head of president's administrative office.

The national security advisor now has eight deputies. Atmar said that he will try to change the National Security Council to a more serving office for the government and for the people.

"The ANDSF should not only concentrate on war, but they also should work towards on bringing peace and stability," said Ghani.

Ghani said the past has taught Afghans that they will get nowhere without unity. (Tolonews)

(7) US Forces

and 43 ground operations against other insurgent networks, resulting in 36 enemy KIA," the report states.

The report also notes the fighting in the past few months has been more successful than earlier in the year, as the Taliban lost control of several important districts.

"During this reporting period (June 1, 2017, to Nov. 30), the Taliban was unable to threaten any provincial centers, lost control of key districts, and the ANDSF retained control of all major population centers," the report noted.

One of the key changes in the US view towards Afghanistan under President Donald Trump's administration has been the adoption of a conditions-based approach, compared to a time-based approach, that focused on when US forces would withdraw from Afghanistan.

The new conditions-based approach now calls for the war to end "in a comprehensive, Afghan-led political settlement that will include all parties, including the Taliban."

The US commander in Afghanistan Gen. John Nicholson said in late November the war has "turned a corner," though previous military officials have been too premature in making such bold claims, as progress in the past has been accompanied by disastrous roll-backs. Given the recent troop surge, the US has 14,000 service members in Afghanistan. (Tolonews)

(8) Militants Attack

attacks in Kabul and elsewhere in Afghanistan in recent months. IS militants have lately expanded their extremist activities to other Afghan regions from its strongholds in eastern Nangarhar province, which borders Pakistan. (VoA)

(9) All Set for Urgent

Afghanistan remains one of only three countries in the world that is still polio-endemic...

"I call on the authorities and all people with influence, including the leaders of the communities, to ensure this polio vaccination campaign takes place by helping health workers, facilitating their task and protecting them and their supplies so that all children are protected against polio." (Pajhwok)

(10) Diseases Increases

for the children," Masoma, a resident of Kabul said.

"Kunduz has very polluted weather and the war has increased the problem," Samiullah, a resident of Kunduz said.

Kabul municipality has meanwhile said it has prohibited construction of a number of towns because they do not have standard headers and canalization systems.

"Violation in construction is very high in Kabul. We had some efforts to stop these violations and finally we stopped most of the constructions," Kabul acting mayor, Abdullah Habibzai said.

The head of planning department at the National Environmental Protection Agency, Mohammad Kazim Humayun, said burning low-quality fuel during winter is the main reason for air pollution. Preventing low-quality fuel being burnt could decrease pollution levels significantly.

"The coal has heavy metals and radioactive materials. It means these kinds of fuel need special measures that should be managed seriously," said Humayun.

Kabul municipality has proposed a range of solutions to air pollution to the government which includes changes in regulations and standardizing constructions. (Tolonews)

(11) 30 Militants

more security posts would be established in the district in order to ensure permanent security. He said reinforcements had reached the district.

There has been no word from Taliban in this regard. But the group spokesman Qari Yousaf Ahmadi tweeted fighters had killed ANA soldiers in the war-hit district. (Pajhwok)

(12) MTN Afghanistan

this is our moral responsibility to serve our Afghans in all aspects of their lives. The Acting Director for Provincial health coordination Mr. Hakim Noori appreciated such donation for 15 hospitals and thanked MTN Afghanistan for their sincere contribution.

This is not the first time MTN is running such health care project as previously MTN Foundation in addition to other projects such as education scholarship, providing free education opportunity and creating well-equipped and modern Computer labs for orphans and School Teachers, distributing blankets to internal displaced and war affected families and so on, deployed its medical crew along with Mobile Clinic to Nangarhar Province for the urgent medical treatment also assists the needy and underprivileged people with Blood Donation for Thalassemia and kango affected patients and such programs & support will be kept up in the future as well. (PR)

(13) Taliban Collecting

say how he delivered the money to the Taliban, but added his life was under threat.

He said he had informed all security institutions about the Taliban demand but no one helped him.

Other media outlets in Ghazni had also been asked for money, but their owners wished not talk about the issue and even requested not publishing the names of their organizations.

Hassan Raza Yousufi, head of the Ghazni Provincial Council, said the Taliban were demanding similar taxes from businessmen as well.

"Businessmen, Provincial Council members, governor house officials and other individuals give taxes to the Taliban," he claimed.

Yousufi said the Provincial Council members gave money to the Taliban in order to ensure their security while traveling to insecure areas.

According to him, if the Taliban demanded tax from someone and he refused, so his/her life is threatened.

Governor's spokesman Mohammad Arif Noori confirmed the issue. "People should not pay taxes to Taliban because we have told them that we will ensure their security," he said.

The Taliban acknowledged the tax issue. The group said they collected taxes from media outlets 'country-wide through a proper system and plan.' (Pajhwok)

(14) Parents Complain

addressed within the framework of the law," said Yusuf Pashtun, head of Afghan-Turk parents committee.

According to the parents' committee, the Turkish government has asked Afghanistan to handover two Turkish nationals to the Turkish authorities.

Reports say that Afghan officials have also collected the passports of at least two Turkish nationals.

It is said that two of the Turkish nationals have been recognized as asylum seekers by the UN.

"Going to the UN will not be the final door to us, we will knock on every possible door to ensure that the teachers' rights as well as justice and the law prevail," said Fazel Ahmad Manavi, member of Afghan-Turk parents committee.

The parents' committee also handed a letter to the office of Afghanistan Attorney General (AGO) to investigate the issue.

"All aspects of the issue will be clarified once the investigations of our colleagues are wrapped up. When our colleagues reach an outcome, we will share the issue," said AGO spokesman Jamshid Rasuli.

The raid by the Afghan security forces on Afghan-Turk school sparked wide reactions among the Afghan public.

Afghanistan and Turkey have not signed an agreement for the extradition of their nationals.

Sources on Sunday said the fate of two teachers - both Turkish nationals - of the Afghan-Turk school in Kabul were detained by the National Directorate of Security (NDS) last week, remains unknown.

They said that the government has confiscated the passports of family members of the two teachers. (Tolonews)

(15) Paktika Justice

Rasoul and another policeman were killed in a Taliban ambush when they wanted to help the security forces who were under attack," Taj said.

He did not provide further details and the Taliban have not yet commented on the attack. (Pajhwok)

Iran Tells France's Macron Not To 'Blindly Follow' Trump

TEHRAN - Tensions between Iran and France have risen in recent months after Macron said Tehran should be less aggressive in the Middle East.

Thumbnail

Iran on Sunday criticized French President Emmanuel Macron over his tough stance toward Tehran and said Paris would soon lose its international credibility if it "blindly follows" US President Donald Trump, according to Reuters report.

Tensions between Iran and France have risen in recent months after Macron said Tehran should be less aggressive in the Middle East, citing in particular its involvement in Syria's civil war.

Macron, unlike Trump, has reaffirmed his country's commitment to the deal Iran signed in 2015 with world powers under which it curbed its disputed nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of most international sanctions.

However, he has been critical of Iran's ballistic missile tests and wants to raise the possibility of new sanctions over the program, which Tehran calls solely defensive in nature.

"To sustain its international credibility, France should not blindly follow the Americans ... The French president is now acting as Trump's lapdog," Ali Akbar Velayati, the top adviser to Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was quoted as saying by the semi-official Fars news agency.

Velayati also criticized US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley, who last week presented pieces of what she said were parts of an Iranian missile supplied to the Tehran-aligned Houthi militia in Yemen. She described the objects as conclusive evidence that Tehran was violating UN resolutions.

"This claim shows she lacks basic scientific knowledge and decency. She is like her boss (Trump) as he also says baseless, ridiculous things. Iran has not supplied Yemen with any missile," Velayati said.

Tasnim news agency quoted the spokesman for Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards, Ramezan Sharif, as saying on Sunday that "they show a cylinder and say Iran's fingerprints are all over it, while everyone knows that Yemen acquired some missile capabilities from the Soviet Union and North Korea in the past".

France took a cautious stance on Haley's report.

"The United Nations secretariat has not, at this stage, drawn any conclusions. France continues to examine the information at its disposal," Foreign Ministry deputy spokesman Alexandre Giorini said on Friday.

Last month, the Revolutionary Guards warned Europe that if it threatens Tehran, the Guards will increase the range of missiles to above 2,000 kilometers. (Tolonews)

Millions of Migrant Children Encounter Life-threatening Conditions

ENEVA — The UN children's fund is urging countries to do more to ensure the safety and wellbeing of tens of millions of children on the move.

The UN children's fund (UNICEF) reports some 50 million children worldwide are on the move. It says many young people are moving safely with their families who are voluntarily migrating in search of a better life. However, for millions of others, it says the move is neither voluntary nor safe.

For example, UNICEF notes conflict has forced about 28 million children to flee their homes at great risk to their lives. In many cases, it says refugees have to use the services of smugglers and traffickers in hopes of reaching safety.

In this regard, UNICEF spokeswoman, Sarah Crowe, says 2017 has been a pretty horrendous year.

"We have seen some 400 children, estimated 400 children who have drowned trying to make their way to Europe," Crowe said. "We have seen an estimated 32,000 children who are currently in detention...in Libya. Of those, 11,000 are unaccompanied. We have seen children, unaccompanied children crossing mountain passes in the winter. We have seen them stuck on islands." Crowe says children on the move face deportation, drowning and detention. She says thousands are abused, exploited and enslaved during their perilous journeys. But, she says, it does not have to be this way. She says nations should look for safe and legal pathways for migrants, such

as granting humanitarian and school visas. She cites other positive measures that can be taken to protect and care for migrant children.

These include the promotion of community-based alternatives to detention, opening schools and health centers to migrant children, and ensuring access to justice and housing without fear of deportation. (VoA)

Ukraine crisis: Russian truce monitors to leave

MOSCOW - Russia is to withdraw its military officers from a joint Russia-Ukraine centre monitoring a fragile truce in the conflict-torn eastern Ukraine.

Russia's foreign ministry accused Ukraine of preventing the officers from carrying out their duties, saying they would leave on Tuesday.

Kiev said the move was a "provocation", seriously undermining deals to end the conflict with Russian-backed rebels.

It said three Ukrainian soldiers were killed by rebel shelling on Sunday. Meanwhile, the separatists accused Ukraine's military of firing hundreds of shells on the rebel-held areas over the past 24 hours. They reported no casualties.

The UN says more than 10,000 people have died in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk and Luhansk regions since the conflict erupted in April 2014, soon after Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimea peninsula. Eastern Ukraine conflict: A new, bloody chapter

In a statement (in Russian), the Russian foreign ministry accused the Ukrainian side of the joint centre of "creating a tense moral and psychological" situation for the Russian officers.

It also cited restrictions on visiting the line of division and bans on contacts with the local population.

Ukraine's foreign ministry responded, saying in a statement (in Ukrainian): "We consider this unprecedented step by Russia as a new provocation which considerably undermines the Minsk agreements", referring to the Western-brokered deals to end the conflict.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's military warned that Russia's decision to pull out its officers could further escalate the conflict.

"The enemy may resort to aggressive offensive actions along the entire line of division," it said in a statement (in Ukrainian), citing information from the country's intelligence officers.

The joint Russia-Ukraine centre was set up in September 2014 to monitor compliance with the ceasefire regime.

Ukraine and Western nations accuse Russia of helping the rebels with regular troops and heavy weapons.

The Kremlin denies that, while admitting that Russian "volunteers" are helping the separatists. (BBC)

Taliban Suffer Heavy Casualties in Sar-e-Pul Airstrikes: Shaheen Corps

KABUL - The Taliban insurgents have suffered heavy casualties during the airstrikes conducted in support of the Afghan during the operations in northern Sar-e-Pul province of Afghanistan, the 209th Shaheen Corps of the Afghan army said Monday.

According to a statement by the Shaheen Corps, the airstrikes were conducted in Sancharak district of the province, leaving at least 50 militants dead.

The statement further added that 36 militants were also wounded during the operations and a Humvee armored personnel carrier along with two soft skin vehicles and several motorcycles were destroyed.

The Shaheen Corps also added that the deputy shadow district chief of the group for Sancharak Qari Sher Mohammad and many other commanders were also among those killed.

The Afghan security forces also confiscated several weapons along with some other type of military kits and motorcycles during the operation, the Shaheen Corps added. The anti-government armed militant groups including the Taliban insurgents have not commented regarding the report so far.

The security situation in Sar-e-Pul province has started to deteriorate during the recent years amid rampant insurgency led by the Taliban and other insurgent groups.

Both the Taliban and loyalists of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group conduct insurgency activities in some parts of Sar-e-Pul province. (KP)