

(1) Helmand ...

Zazai said he had no comment on the post, but said Helmand would never collapse, while police chief Abul Rahman Sarjang said: "We have strong forces in Helmand. In some places, we leave areas for tactical reasons, but all forces are working together well and very soon we will have major achievements to report."

Ghani's government, backed by billions of dollars in international aid and training assistance from thousands of NATO troops still stationed in Afghanistan, is pushing to re-open talks with the Taliban

Over the past six months, Helmand has been the scene of battles between insurgents and security forces that have complained of being abandoned by the U.S.-backed government.

FOREIGN FORCES

"We don't provide food and ammunition to our forces on time, do not evacuate our wounded and martyred soldiers from the battle field, and foreign forces only watch the situation from their bases and don't provide support," Rasulyar wrote.

Since Thursday, there had been 90 casualties near Gereshk, a junction on Highway 1 near the provincial capital Lashkar Gah, and in Sangin district to the north, a level of losses which was "an everyday issue", Rasulyar added.

He said Sangin was "on the verge of collapse" with 44 casualties overnight.

The Taliban, which has not let a bloody internal leadership battle interrupt its campaign in Helmand, posted statements on its website detailing attacks on checkpoints as well as other operations including a suicide attack against the Gereshk police chief.

With army and police units badly weakened by desertions and lack of supplies, the Taliban has seized the districts of Musa Qalah and Now Zad in the north of the province and has threatened Lashkar Gah.

Government forces said they had recaptured the district of Khanishin on Friday, but by Sunday, the Taliban said it had won back the centre.

Underlining the gravity of the situation, U.S. Special Forces have been reported to have taken part in fighting in Helmand in recent weeks. NATO headquarters in Kabul has not confirmed the reports.

A Pentagon report to Congress last week highlighted major shortcomings with Afghan security forces, despite billions of dollars of foreign aid and training. (Reuters)

(2) Senate Prods ...

faculties through a board. Criticizing this decision, university lecturers recently held protests and warned they would stop the university entrance exam in Kabul and other provinces if their demands are not met.

Raising this issue, senators on Sunday summoned the Minister of Higher Education to brief them on the law and address the lecturers' demands.

Along with the minister, a number of lecturers wanted to attend the session but they were not allowed to. They were made to wait in the Meshrano Jirga's media center.

"I have met with lecturers three times and I have heard their demands. I have selected a representative for them and we have sent a letter to the Presidential Palace by their request in order to address their demands," the Higher Education Minister Farida Mohmand told the senators.

Meanwhile a number of university lecturers criticized the minister's remarks, and said they have ended their protests but they will restart it if their demands are not met.

"If their [lecturers] demands are not met in the near future they will decide to boycott the university entrance exam - which is a national process," said Amanullah Haqyar, a university lecturer. (Tolonews)

(3) Half Million...

Abdul Satar Murad, urged that the findings of the United Nations organization will help Afghan Government to assist the needy

people across the country.

Earlier Human rights committee has announced that from 2009 up to 2015 about one million Afghans have been displaced due to wars, who are really in needs of emergency aids and supports. (ATN)

(4) Ghani Addresses...

According to him three sections of the TAPI line will create a corridor - which will come under construction soon. In addition a fiber optic network system will also launch soon, he said.

Another new development was the 300 megawatt electric transmission line that will also be launched soon to transfer power from Turkmenistan to Pakistan via Afghanistan.

Touching on other new developments, Ghani said that government will soon release funding for the third phase of the building of the Kamal Khan Dam in Nimroz province.

But going back to the TAPI project, Ghani said the pipeline will change Afghanistan from a conflict zone to an economic zone.

In conclusion he said Afghanistan is rich in natural resources so "let's develop this country".

According to reports, more than 750 kilometers of pipeline will pass through Afghanistan. It will start in Kasht district in Herat province, and make its way through Farah, Nimroz and Helmand, ending up in Kandahar before crossing the border to Quetta in Pakistan and on to India.

The implementation of TAPI will earn Afghanistan up to \$500 million USD a year in transit duties and the project will also help Afghanistan purchase 1.5 billion cubic meters of gas for thirty years at a reasonable price. The gas will be utilized in Hajigak iron mine and at the Mes Aynak copper project.

Economic analysts say the implementation of TAPI can leverage extended economic, political and commercial ties within member states, which include Turkmenistan, Pakistan and India. (Tolonews)

(5) It's too...

resumption of talks.

"Until now there is no clear vision for inter-Afghan peace negotiations. So far we do not know who will meet and where and what topic will be discussed," said one HPC member.

"It seems that the process is moving forward more slowly. We expect the talks would be inter-Afghan dialogue and yield positive outcomes," he said.

Meanwhile, Sartaj Aziz Adviser to Pakistani Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs and National Security has said that a joint commission between Kabul and Islamabad is expected to be formed, stating that the talks will resume soon.

Aziz reiterated that Pakistan will play the role of a good mediator in the negotiation process.

The Afghan government also seems to be reluctant to give details of the peace talks.

"It is too early to comment about the formation of a peace delegation and which sides will sit and talk," a deputy presidential spokesman Sayed Zafar Hashemi said.

Former peace negotiators are also not confident about a breakthrough in the talks.

"There is no assurance that these talks will continue with the Taliban," MP Assadullah Saadati said. Islamabad which allegedly wields influence over the Taliban hosted the first round of formal peace talks between the group and the Afghan government in July. However, the talks were deadlocked after Taliban belatedly confirmed the death of the group's longtime leader Mullah Omar in Pakistan, sparking a power struggle among the group's factions.

Ties between Kabul and Islamabad became strained in the aftermath of deadly attacks on Kabul which officials claimed had been planned in Pakistan, asking Islamabad to launch a crackdown against militant groups operating in its soil.

But tensions eased after leaders from both countries met in Paris at the sidelines of the Climate Change conference in November and once again agreed to resume

the peace talks. (Tolonews)

(6) ANSF Kill ...

according to local political observers, is strategically important for both Afghan government and Taliban outfit. Observers believe that strengthening government control over Helmand would stabilize the entire southern and western regions including Taliban birthplace Kandahar and the western Farah provinces, while Taliban grip over Helmand province would give upper hand to the hardliner outfit in the south and west of Afghanistan, according to analysts. (Xinhua)

(7) Putin Criticizes...

to Russia, Putin stressed this would cause a loss of confidence from foreign partners in the country's solvency, which he said is a very bad signal. (Xinhua)

(8) 1,000 Soldiers...

their people, he added. Since Jan. 1 this year, Afghan security forces have assumed the full security charges from NATO and U.S. forces after the NATO-led troops switched from combat to support role. (Xinhua)

(9) \$28 Million...

a length of 6.4 kilometers in four lines has been constructed with the financial support of Japan with one third of the project already completed.

Urban Development Minister, Syed Sadat Mansoor Naderi, hailed the acting provincial governor Ata Mohammad Noor and other provincial officials for their tireless and continuous efforts for the current achievements and presenting Balkh province, specifically Mazar-e-Sharif city as a developing city and paving the way for the construction of the first ring road. He admitted that Mazar-e-Sharif city is facing problems similar as the other cities of the country, including lack of master plan, lack of housing, land grabbing, lack of employment and several other issues.

However, Mr. Naderi said he is hopeful to overcome the issues through joint efforts and practical steps with the leadership of Balkh province, insisting that construction of standard roads and to overcome with the traffic issues is one of the main factors in developing the cities, and the construction of ring road in Mazar-e-Sharif city has been planned and designed considering the same perspectives.

He also hailed Japan for remaining one of the main contributors in the reconstruction of Afghanistan during the recent years, assisting Afghanistan in different sectors specifically in preparation of master plan of Kabul city, funding of Mazar-e-Sharif city ring road, and awarding scholarships for Masters Degree and other short term courses for skill development of MUDA employees. (KP)

(10) Afghans Should ...

little hardships inside their country instead of illegal migration and defaming the Islamic Emirate by presenting fake threat letters," the statement reads.

Despite the group is blamed for majority of casualties incurred to the civilians, however, Taliban said "The Islamic Emirate is waging Jihad so that the country is developed and our countrymen provided with a prosperous secure life under the shade of an Islamic system. Hence no one should be fooled by the propaganda against the Taliban and Mujahideen. The Islamic Emirate has done and will continue to do everything possible to aid and provide serenity to our countrymen."

There has been a steep rise in the number of Afghan asylum seekers heading towards Europe during the recent months amid deteriorating security and economic situation in Afghanistan.

According to reports, over 146,000 Afghans have reportedly left the country during the current year, mainly due to deteriorating security situation with majority of them departing towards European countries, particularly Germany.

The migrants are facing numerous miseries by illegally travelling through the risky route which is mainly through Iran and Turkey where numerous incidents result-

ing to casualties have been reported.

An Afghan journalist couple lost their 4-month-old baby after their Europe-bound boat capsized in Turkish beach. (KP)

(11) 400k Afghan ...

and only 10 per cent of illegal Afghan children have managed to enroll in schools. "Everyone is responsible for their words and we are not accountable for what they others' comments," Fani reacted to the comments.

Based on an order by Leader of the Islamic Revolution ayatollah Khamenei, Afghan students enjoy free education the same way Iranian students do. (MMA)

(12) Municipality ...

on this but the Afghanistan Investment Support Agency (AISA) has welcomed the move by the Afghan businessman.

Chairman of AISA Mohammad Qurban Haqjo said: "The private sector is ready to take part in this regard as it is an effective move. It is good that the government supports and encourages the plan and decides about its implementation in the near future."

This comes after a recent outcry by Kabul residents over the growing piles of trash in the streets of the capital - which is home to more than three million people.

Garbage has not been removed from most parts of the city for months due to an expired contract with the previous service provider.

Earlier this month, the acting mayor of Kabul promised lawmakers at the Wolosi Jirga (Lower House of Parliament) that he would clear the city of garbage within a week. However, two weeks have passed but the garbage has still not been removed.

In addition, President Ashraf Ghani last week vowed to clean up the city together with residents within two weeks, but again there is no sign of such an initiative. (Tolonews)

(13) Afghanistan Can...

Azerbaijani and Afghan officials, adding the presidents of the two countries met in various international events and discussed the intensive bilateral relations in various spheres.

The political analyst reminded that as part of the coalition forces, the Azerbaijani contingent has been engaged in protection of various civil and military facilities in Afghanistan, ensuring this country's security for many years. During the meeting with his Azerbaijani counterpart Elmar Mammadyarov as part of the 70th session of the UN General Assembly, Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani said that Azerbaijan's political, social and economic development model is an interesting example for Afghanistan, said Sadikhov, adding that this undoubtedly makes the two states closer and meets their interests. (Monitoring Desk)

(14) Concerns ...

Ayoubi also expressed concerns over the continued insecurity in the city and said the Taliban still has control in some parts of the city and in the districts.

Ayoubi said: "The security situation in Kunduz is very worrying. The people are stressed and the war is still ongoing around the city and in the districts. People are being affected - especially as more than 20,000 families have been displaced."

Shir Aziz Kamawal, commander of 808 Spinzar Military Zone has accused local officials for having allowed these weapons to fall into the hands of the Taliban.

Kamawal said people with bad intentions allowed the weapons to fall into the hands of the Taliban. "It is a shame. These people should be punished."

Taliban seized control of Kunduz city in late September for three days before security forces moved in and retook control of the city. However, clashes are still ongoing around the city and in the districts. (Tolonews)

(15) Unidentified...

been requested to secure the release of the hostages. "Their fate is still unknown." He said.

When asked who the kidnappers were, Akbari said "I am sure they were Taliban."

Taliban have not yet commented on the report.

Cases of kidnapping have increased across the country since last two years.

Most recently the loyalists of the Islamic States of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) which also goes by its Arabic name Daesh kidnapped seven civilians from Ghazni province and later beheaded them in southern Zabul province. (KP)

(16) India Hosts ...

satisfied with the support from Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and urged further support, "The BCCI supported us like always and we want their support in future as well. We will have much better relations and ties with BCCI and the Indian community" said Tawaf, Manager of Afghanistan Cricket Team.

BCCI also plans to train the cricketers to hone their skills and improve the state of cricket in Afghanistan. "We can do a lot in Afghanistan to promote cricket. There are problems and our efforts can improve the state of cricket there. Even our secretary Anurag Thakur has said that our senior players can share their experience with this young team because Afghanistan team needs some exposure," said Venkat-Sundaram, Executive Secretary of the Sports Complex.

In the last few years, Afghan cricketers have proved their mettle at the world stage, and perhaps, their move to come India will do them a world of good. (Agencies)

(17) 30 Public ...

as transport, water and sanitation, irrigation, power, livelihoods, education, etc. while the work of another 200 is currently in progress in various communities. (PR)

(18) Medway Marine...

after her late husband Sgt. Daniel Vasselain. Daniel was killed in Afghanistan in 2013. This week marks their six-year wedding anniversary.

"When I saw there was marine who wanted to come home, but couldn't afford it I knew this was the point of our foundation," she said. "We want to help (the) military be with their families."

Vasselain was contacted by Lauren Eliopoulos, who runs Hero Helpers of America. Lauren helped set all of the commercial and private flights, as well as the big surprise.

"It's what Christmas is about for me. The day my brother joined the military, my life changed," Eliopoulos said.

Bauman was overcome with thankfulness.

"It means so much that people care about veterans. That means a lot to us," Bauman said.

And like any good son, Bauman didn't come home empty-handed. He came baring gifts, including his new wife, Hailey, and their soon-to-be baby boy due in February.

"The fact that he is able to be home...What more can you ask for?" Peter Bauman said. (CBC)

(19) Afghanistan ...

to become world-class players. "It is not easy now because Afghanistan's first-class cricket has to get better. The biggest advantage they have is their love for cricket and hence it is easy to mould players into top class players," he added.

This comes as the Afghan team recorded consecutive historic wins against Zimbabwe in the month of October by claiming series wins both in One Day International (ODI) and T20 series.

Afghanistan will once again play 5 One Day International (ODI) matches and 2 Twenty20 matches against Zimbabwe ahead of the T20 World Cup 2016.

The ODI matches will kick later this week with the first match to be played on 25th December, 2nd match on 29th December, 3rd match on 2nd January, 4th match on 4th January and final match will be played on 6th January.

The two T20 matches are scheduled for January 8th and 10th. All 5 ODI matches and the two T20 matches will be played in Shahrjeh Cricket stadium. (KP)

(20) NDS Arrest...

security situation in Nangarhar following a surge in Taliban attacks and the emergence of Daesh

- leaving hundreds of families displaced.

The radio station reportedly started broadcasting a week ago.

But reports have emerged that the Afghan spy agency - the NDS - has arrested a reporter who allegedly works for the radio station.

"We believe that if actions are not taken against the move, consequences will be enormous to the people. Government has millions of dollars in equipment which is capable of terminating the transmission. So all Afghan intelligence agencies in cooperation with NATO must stop this radio," MujibKhelwatgar, a member of NAI - a group supporting open media in Afghanistan - said on Sunday.

Since its emergence, Daesh has been extremely active in social media in its bid to recruit militants. Reports found that Daesh also has access to equipment which can help the group to establish contacts with its associates in Syria and Iraq.

"We are seriously working with security institutions, because it is a major concern to us. NDS has already arrested one of the journalists affiliated to Daesh radio. The radio operates through mobile equipment, it changes locations whenever we send out troops," the spokesman for the ministry of communication and information technology Yasin Samim said. Residents in Nangarhar said on Sunday that in addition to inflicting security threats, Daesh is also trying to destroy cemeteries and sacred places.

"We want the government to take action soon, because this has a negative impact on the youth in Nangarhar and it strengthens Daesh," Nangarhar resident Mohammad Rassoul said.

"This radio is having a bad impact on the people. Whenever people listen to this, they hear Daesh propaganda and anti-government rhetoric," another resident Mohammad Rassoul said. (Tolonews)

(21) Sri Lanka...

rebels in May 2009 after 30 years of war which saw thousands killed on both sides.

Wickremesinghe, however, said that situations have now changed around the world and the Sri Lankan military must adapt to face those changes. (Xinhua)

(22) British PM...

"where the primary role is to close with and kill the enemy".

A review found "no compelling evidence to prove women impair effectiveness in close combat situations", Fallon said.

However, the study called for further research by mid-2016 into the physiological demands of such roles over time. (AFP)

(23) Iraq Gets ...

Rahman was crowned as Miss Iraq. The winner is a student in the college of management and economics in Kirkuk, some 250 km north of Baghdad.

"This event represents a challenge to us, as we want to prove that Iraq is still a country of beauty and culture in front of terrorism and violence," Rahman told reporters as she was trying to fend off a crowd of admirers who were hoping to win a selfie with her. (Xinhua)

(24) Suspected ...

showed makeshift ambulances rushing with injured civilians through an area where people were searching for survivors among the debris of collapsed buildings.

One local resident, Sameh al-Muazin, said he had seen mangled bodies in the main Jalaa street of the city, adding that people feared a further round of intensive bombing. (Reuters)

(25) 110 PKK ...

the border town of Suruc in the southeastern province of Sanliurfa on July 20, in which 33 pro-Kurdish and left-wing activists were killed.

Tensions have been running high, especially in southeastern Turkey, as the military operations against PKK militants have been under way after the truce failed.

The PKK is listed as a terrorist organization by Turkey, the European Union and the United States. (Xinhua)