

(1) Modi Inaugurates...

arrived in Kabul, to Afghan security forces later on Friday, according to Ghani.

In a meeting with Afghanistan's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah, Modi reiterated the calls for strengthening democracy and peace in the region. The CEO hailed Modi's milestone visit to Afghanistan and said both nations were bound to a common future.

Referring to the democratic process in the region, Modi said regional nations have to contribute more in order to institutionalize democracy in its real sense.

"Democracy cost much to us and to all those countries where democracy is nourishing. We have been victim of the process of promoting democracy. Because we save our people while confrontations are on its peak and this is a great responsibility," Modi said.

In his remarks, Abdullah announced India as the trusted friend of Afghanistan and hailed New Delhi for its military, economic and education cooperation to the Afghan people.

"We warmly welcome his excellency Prime Minister of India and the generous support offered by India for inaugurating the new building of parliament and also his comprehensive speech relating to bilateral ties, the situations in both countries and future of the two countries," Abdullah said.

The new parliament building, located in the southwest of Kabul, had been built in a period of eight years at a cost of some 220 million U.S. dollars, according to officials. India has contributed more than 2.2 billion U.S. dollars to Afghanistan since 2002.

The Afghan security forces were deployed in all sensitive roads leading to Afghan Presidential Palace and new parliament building to ensure security during the ceremony. (Xinhua)

(2) HPC Renews...

Pakistan smiles toward us, you notice that major killings and attacks happen in our country. We want Pakistan to take practical steps and approve its sincerity in spite of making verbal assurances," Qasimyar said.

"We shouldn't move forward naively. After this, we must adopt similar actions toward Pakistan's policies," he said.

Referring to Taliban's increasing activities in areas where TAPI pipeline is expected to pass through, Qasimyar said that the Taliban has extended their presence in these areas on the order of foreigners.

Meanwhile, the Afghan security institutions have responded to a recent statement made by Russian ambassador to Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov when he said Taliban interests coincide with Russia's interests, asking the group to join a joint campaign against Daesh militants.

"Taliban interests objectively coincide with ours," Zamir Kabulov, head of the department at the Russian foreign ministry responsible for Afghanistan who is also a Kremlin special representative in the country, told Interfax news agency.

"I have said before that we have communication channels with the Taliban to exchange information," he said. "That is very important," added Kabulov, an Afghanistan expert who held negotiations with Taliban leader Mullah Omar in the mid-1990s, when the group seized a Russian transport plane and held seven Russians hostage for a year at the Kandahar airport.

"Cooperation with Taliban, Daesh and Haqqani network creates major threat to the entire region. Because Taliban are a terrorist group like the rest of the terrorist groups and no one must consider a difference between them. More threats could be posed to Russia itself by cooperating with Taliban than any other country," Sediq Sediqqi, spokesman to ministry of interior said.

"The assertions are clear interference into Afghanistan's internal affairs, hence we will not allow anyone to offer support to such groups," Dawlat Waziri, a defense ministry spokesman said. The statements come just days after reports published in Pakistani media that the peace talks are likely to start on initial days of January.

Pakistan, which yields major influence on Taliban resurgent group hosted the first round of formal talks between the group and Afghan peace delegation in July. But these talks were then deadlocked after Taliban belatedly

confirmed the death of group's longtime leader Mullah Omar.

Pakistan has always been blamed for its support of the Afghan Taliban. Former Afghan president Hamid Karzai travelled to Pakistan twenty times as part of his diplomatic outreach to get Islamabad's endorsement and inter-Afghan dialogue. But dreams for peace never became a reality. (Tolonews)

(3) Ghani-Erdogan...

Afghanistan in a NATO-led mission.

he added his country will continue to provide development assistance to Afghanistan. He urged the international community to stand with Afghanistan during its transformation, and provide support in terms of development and security.

"We are extremely grateful for your efforts and for convening the meeting. I hope that this can help to realize the end to the chaotic era of the past and take a new step, a step that could leverage cooperation which can ensure interests of the whole region and the people in the world," Ghani said.

In a question relating to Turkish military presence in Afghanistan, Erdogan said that Turkish troops will continue their mission in Afghanistan and that the world must continue backing Afghanistan in the wake of current challenges.

"International community should not repeat the mistakes committed in the past and do not leave Afghanistan alone particularly during the next ten years which is the transformation decade. They {international community} must continue helping Afghanistan in security and development process," he said.

Turkey has been effectively supporting Afghanistan in various sectors such as security, training of Afghan troops, health and construction sector.

As part of Turkish cooperation to Afghanistan, currently more than a thousand students are pursuing education in Turkish educational institutions.

During the tour, Ghani called on Turkish investors to come forward and invest in Afghanistan, calling it an investment supporting country in the region.

Referring to recently signed Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project, Ghani said that the implementation of the 10\$ billion project will further expand cooperation among the regional nations.

"This is a major opportunity-Afghanistan progressively expanding its relations with central Asia," he said. (Tolonews)

(4) Activists Warn ...

men and commanders who operate in the districts have been creating obstructions in our way, even the district police chiefs and crime investigation departments are not able to prevent the trend or refer them to the attorney general's office and appeal court," she said. Meanwhile, a number of rights activists from Balkh and Jawzjan provinces gathered in Mazar-e-Sharif city to raise their voices against the increasing level of child marriages, tortures, sexual abuse and honor killings.

Rights activists have warned against the surge in child marriages in the villages.

"We recorded increasing number of child marriages, forced marriages and extensive marriage expenditures in remote areas," rights activist Suhaila told TOLONews.

Over the past nine months, 110 cases of violence against women have been recorded in Balkh province which includes cases related to honor killings, sexual abuse, under age marriages, selling and tortures. Reasons Behind The Surge are believed to be poverty, unemployment, security threats and impunity, say activists. They say these appear to be the main aspects of the surge in the increase in violence against the women in Balkh, Samangan, Jawzjan and Sar-e-Pul provinces.

"In the first nine months of 2014, statistics of violence were around 700 cases, but this year it is around 900 cases which shows a 20 percent increase," Sayed Mohammad Same, head of the site office of Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission in Balkh said. Despite efforts made over the last 14 years to curb the trend, rights activists say the efforts weren't sufficient to overcome the issue.

However, the government and other relevant bodies made an

effort to curb the violence, but rights groups argue that the efforts weren't enough to wipe out the menace completely. (Tolonews)

(5) Afghan Authorities ...

spokesperson for the governor of Nangarhar, told VOA that local authorities were successful in discontinuing the radio station's broadcast. He added that authorities are looking into finding the location where the radio was broadcasting. The frequency that Sadai Khelafat Radio was broadcasting is currently airing the national anthem of Afghanistan and other traditional music.

Some officials in the local government say it is possible that foreign forces helped the government shut down the radio. (VoA)

(6) Terrorism, Narcotics ...

violence on the people of Afghanistan and challenge by use of violence and terror against the government of Afghanistan cannot be allowed to exercise control or wield influence over any part of Afghanistan's territory in any manner whatsoever, as that would pose serious risks to the gains of the last nearly one and half decades, and renew those very threats against which the people of Afghanistan and international community had resolutely fought and made great sacrifices," said the statement.

Modi supported the Afghan government's reconciliation process, and said the groups and individuals to be reconciled must give up violence and abide by the constitution of Afghanistan.

The Mi25- choppers India is giving to Afghanistan were also mentioned in the statement, and both sides agreed to expand training opportunities for Afghan security and defence forces.

"...The two leaders pointed out that the Mi25- helicopters provided by the Indian government to Afghanistan and their maintenance facility would address an important requirement".

India has already delivered the first of four planned Mi25- attack helicopters for use by the Afghan Air Force.

"They agreed to increase and expand training opportunities for Afghan National Security and Defence Forces in relevant Indian institutions, based on the requirements of Afghanistan," the statement said.

Modi also thanked Afghan authorities for ensuring the safety of the Indian embassy in Kabul, the four consulates in Jalalabad, Kandahar, Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif, and Indian nationals in Afghanistan, including those working on various development projects. (IANS)

(7) Afghan and ...

Afghan forces in Sangin have been supported by US aircraft, which carried out two attacks in the district on Wednesday, and British forces, which have been deployed to Helmand.

The UK Ministry of Defence said on Tuesday that British troops had been deployed to the province to support local forces after the Afghan defence minister called for a desperate international support and air cover.

This month marks a year since the US-led NATO mission in Afghanistan transitioned into an Afghan-led operation, with allied nations assisting in training local forces.

In a separate development, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani are holding talks in Kabul on Friday.

Modi is expected to hand over four attack helicopters to Afghanistan during his one-day visit. (Aljazeera)

of each of its neighbours," Modi said, adding that Afghanistan will succeed only when terrorism no longer flows across the border and the sanctuaries of terrorism are shut.

He insisted that the world must stand with the Afghan people in solidarity as Afghans take responsibility for their future.

Modi said the Afghan youth have the right to have access to the opportunities of the 21st century as much as anyone else in the world has.

He ended his historic address, saying "India will be with you at every step of your journey to peace and prosperity", calling the suffering of the Afghan people the pain of India, the dream of the Afghan people India's dirty,

strength of Afghan people India's belief and courage of Afghan people India's aspiration. (KP)

(9) Foreign Troops ...

The UK Ministry of Defense has stated that the personnel will train local security forces.

"The major burden for combating the Taliban will continue to fall on the Afghan army and police. US and other international forces will remain in Afghanistan in small numbers to provide advice and assistance. The Afghan army is likely to prevail in Sangine, as it did in Kunduz, but only after serious fighting," Dobbins, who also was the US ambassador to the European Union, and is now Distinguished Chair in Diplomacy and Security at the RAND Corporation, said.

Dobbins added that foreign troops in the country provide essential advice and assistance, while Afghan forces are doing all the fighting. UK soldiers were sent to Helmand to respond to the latest Taliban attack, just like American advisers were deployed to Kunduz under similar circumstances last month.

The Taliban has recently stepped up its offensive in Afghanistan, seizing entire regions and killing national and foreign personnel. Military casualties had reached 4,000 by August this year, according to Pentagon estimates.

The US-led NATO mission in Afghanistan formally ended its 13-year International Security Assistance Force combat operations on December 2014, 31.

The foreign presence transitioned to a non-combat Resolute Support Mission, with nearly 13,000 foreign training and advice personnel deployed in the country this year. (sputniknews)

(10) Taliban Plan...

have deteriorated rapidly and Taliban control majority of the districts in the province. Taliban plan their war in north from these districts that they control," head of Kunduz provincial council Mohammad Yousaf Ayoubi said.

Alongside Dasht-e-Archi and Imam Sahib, insurgents also maintain influence in Khan Abad, Chardarah and Qala-e-Zal district which is an imminent threat to northern provinces.

This comes three months after the resurgent group seized control of Kunduz city, keeping the city under its control for several days. (Tolonews)

(11) U.S. Airstrikes ...

Thursday as insurgents began taking shelter in civilian homes, he said.

Sangin is an important prize for the Taliban. It sits on crucial smuggling routes for drugs, arms and other contraband which fund the insurgency. Most of the world's heroin is made from opium produced in Helmand's poppy fields. Afghanistan's opium output is worth up to 3\$ billion per year, much of it going to the Taliban which sponsors and polices its production and transport.

Shadi Khan, a tribal elder in Sangin who is also director of the Sangin District Council, said he was trapped in the Sangin army base for three days before government forces arrived.

"Taliban rumors that they have captured the district are not true," he said.

Reinforcements were rushed to the region, the acting Defense Minister Masoom Stanekzai told reporters on Wednesday, after the province's deputy governor, Mohammad Jan Rasulyar, used his Facebook account to plead for help from central authorities. He said the entire province was in danger of falling to the Taliban.

Airdrops of food and ammunition helped boost the defense, said Javid Faisal, deputy spokesman for Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah. Roads around the district center had been mined by the insurgents, he said, adding that "at no time did Sangin fall, Sangin is not going to fall."

He conceded that many important districts in Helmand had been under prolonged Taliban attack, including Khanshin on the Pakistan border and Marjah, and that the provincial capital, Lashkar Gah, also had been targeted by the insurgents.

"Rumors about Lashkar Gah [falling to the Taliban] are totally baseless because we don't have fear of losing the districts, so there is no fear of losing the center," Abdullah said.

He said plans to push back in Sangin had been in preparation for some time, but the government had to prioritize its military assets as the Taliban had been fighting across

all corners of the country since the drawdown of the international combat mission last year.

Helmand-based civil-society activist Sardar Mohammad Hamdard said that at least 200 civilians had been killed or wounded in Sangin in the recent fighting. He said 12 members of the same family were killed by a roadside bomb as they were driving out of the district earlier this week, and rocket fire had landed on a house killing 17 people, including 10 children. (AP)

(12) Lack of Intelligence,...

control while balloons were in the air.

But officials say the situation in Helmand at the moment is serious. They claim the Taliban has made gains on districts in the province. Before the attack on Sangin district, the Taliban is believed to have carried out an attack on Camp Bastion in Shorab district.

"We have always complained about a lack of cooperation between Afghan securities forces in Helmand. In the past we had enough facilities beside balloons to fight Taliban in Helmand - facilities no longer in place," said Bashir Ahmad Shaker the head of Helmand's provincial council security committee.

In the early years up to 855 large and small bases of foreign troops in Afghanistan were engaged in activities against terrorists and in other intelligence activities but with the handover of security responsibility to Afghans a large part of their facilities were transferred out of the country, officials said.

"We have advanced in Sangin district and we have broken the Taliban siege. And Taliban operational head in Helmand Mullah Nasir along with 50 other Taliban were killed," Mol spokesman Sediq Sediqqi said on Thursday.

Meanwhile the Ministry of Defense talked about the advancement of Afghan forces in Helmand especially in Sangin district and said there was good coordination among the security institutions. (Tolonews)

activist Dr. Nisar Ahmad Musaddiq said.

"As the security forces continue to fight the enemies of Afghanistan, we are prepared to donate our blood, we can fight shoulder to shoulder with the security forces if needed," a member of Herat provincial council Ghulam Habib Hashemi said.

The volunteers have called on the people across the country to come forward in support of the security forces.

"A blood donation campaign is underway here, I came to donate blood and hope that the rest of our countrymen also participate and donate blood to those who are in need of it," Herat resident Mohammad Taha Sadiq said. Health officials have said that a large amount of blood has so far have been collected and part of it will be donated to provincial hospitals. (Tolonews)

(14) Maimana ...

family. "The aid we gave the family will not last for long," said Dur Mohammad another vendor.

Meanwhile Faryab provincial human rights commission head Sayed Hafizullah Fetrat called on responsible institutions and businessmen to help poor families in order to prevent them from selling their children.

"Every year lots of aid is distributed for poor families from the government institutions, but it often goes to the local powerbrokers not to the real and eligible applicants," said Fetrat.

Poverty and unemployment is one of the main problems in the country, with many families unable to feed their families - even in Kabul. (Tolonews)

(15) IS Video...

being conducted in eastern Afghan provinces Logar, Nangarhar and Paktika, near the border with Pakistan.

Toward the end, the video shows a man saying goodbye to fellow militants before boarding an explosives-laden vehicle and driving it into an Afghan National Army outpost. A massive explosion sends a huge smoke cloud in the air, apparently destroying the entire facility in the district of Azra in Logar.

The authenticity of the video and the dates the violence took place could not be immediately verified. Islamic State, which controls large areas in Iraq and Syria, released a map in January that identified Khurasan as its "province," which includes areas of Afghanistan and

Pakistan.

The video also shows footage of two separate attacks against security forces and pro-government tribal leaders in Pakistan's semi-autonomous districts of Bajaur and Khyber, bordering Afghanistan.

It also claimed responsibility for being behind the attack on a bus in Karachi in May in which gunmen massacred 43 members of the minority Shi'ite Ismaili community. (VoA)

(16) Bus Crash...

roads and deadly accidents are common. At least 18 people were killed in May when a minivan overturned in the western province of Badghis. And in April 2013 a bus hit a wrecked fuel tanker in the southern province of Kandahar, killing 45 people. The World Bank in November signed off a 250\$ million grant to upgrade roads crossing Afghanistan's Hindu Kush mountains, crucial trade links that are often closed in winter by snow. (AFP)

(17) Afghanistan...

attempt on the rival team and ZubairAmiri scored the third goal against the rival team on pass of MustafZazai.

The first half then ended -3nil. Two changes made in Afghan team during the game. Later on, in the last minutes of the game, the two teams played well and both tried to score goals.

Afghanistan will now play its second match against Bhutan on Saturday. (Tolo News)

(18) Pope Calls...

who have carried out numerous attacks in those countries and destroyed many cultural heritage sites. In October, Islamic State militants blew up the Arch of Triumph, a jewel in the exquisite collection of ruins in the Syrian oasis city of Palmyra. (Reuters)

(19) UN must be...

territorial integrity as well as the Syrian people's will.

The Iranian diplomat emphasized that all Syrian parties, including the opposition groups that are committed to a political approach, should engage in the talks about the Syrian conflict. (PressTV)

(20) Refugees Enjoy...

tries, it may be the first experience in many of the asylum seekers' lives.

"In my country, only Christians celebrate Christmas, and we as Muslims celebrate Eid al-Adha," said Karam Mazin, an Iraqi citizen who arrived in Finland three and a half months ago. (Xinhua)

(21) Iraqi Forces...

State militants from the center of Ramadi, the last district under their control in the city they had captured in May. Islamic State seized Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, in 2014, in an offensive that forced government forces to abandon a third of Iraqi territory. The group declared a caliphate over the Iraqi and adjacent Syrian Sunni populated territory it controls. "The liberation of dear Mosul will be achieved with the cooperation and unity of all Iraqis after the victory in Ramadi," Abadi said in a statement on the state media website on Friday. Army commanders said on Wednesday that the battle for Ramadi would take several days. (Reuters)

(22) World Powers...

Last week the U.N. Security Council unanimously approved a resolution endorsing an international road map for a Syrian peace process, a rare show of unity among major powers on a conflict that has claimed more than a quarter of a million lives. The United Nations plans to convene peace talks in Geneva toward the end of January.

Moualem said on Thursday Syria was ready to take part in the Geneva talks and hoped the dialogue would help it form a national unity government. (Reuters)

(23) S. Sudan's...

unconstitutional because it violates the signed peace agreement and because the parliament, not the president, has the power to change state borders, said Lam Akol, the head of South Sudan's official opposition, the SPLM-Democratic Change party. The new states divide South Sudan along tribal lines and the opposition party will not recognize the new states, charged Akol.

Kiir first announced that he intended to create 28 states in October. At that time, the United States and top donors Britain and Norway said the move "directly contradicts" the government's commitment to the peace deal. (AP)