

(1) NATO Should..

flags hoisting nationwide. He said NATO in line with its promise should leave behind its military gear in Afghanistan instead of other countries so that they could use the equipment for the country's defence.

"Afghanistan is no Iraq. If a war begins here and Afghan forces are not properly equipped, it will be hard to control the war."

Senator Ali Akbar Jamshidi from central Daidkundi province said NATO should support Afghan forces in terms of equipment and funding under agreements between Afghanistan and the alliance.

"The people of Afghanistan are thankful to NATO-led forces that they come here and fought terrorism and rendered sacrifices. It is a separate subject whether or not the people of Afghanistan and NATO reach their goals."

Jamshidi said if NATO countries provided Afghan forces with essential military gear and other assistance, they would be able to effectively fight against the armed opposition.

But MP Khaliqdad Balaghi said NATO should acknowledge its defeat in the Afghanistan war because they were leaving Afghanistan halfway.

He said the NATO combat mission ended at a time when Afghan forces lacked equipment to defend the country alone.

However, he said Afghan forces should assure the people they could strongly defend the country in the absence of foreign forces. (Pajhwok)

(2) Trader Assists...

to ensure that the assistance was transparency distributed.

As many as 547 families, who fled homes due to ongoing clashes in Dangam, have arrived in Asadabad. (Pajhwok)

(3) President...

said locals had serious reservations about the officials who had been made on the go. "If they were pleaded guilty in court they would be punished otherwise they would be set free."

The president was accompanied by a number of acting ministers and members of the National Security Council. Ghani's trip comes three days after he dismissed governor Syed Fazlullah Wahidi.

A week ago, civil society activists in Herat took out protest rallies against growing insecurity, prompting the central government to send a high-powered delegation to Herat on Tuesday to probe the situation.

He pledged new officials would be appointed after passing certain exams. After every three months, all the local officials, including mayor would also be evaluated by people, he said.

Ghani assured residents that work on various projects like industrial town, electricity and creating job opportunities were underway to minimize the scale of joblessness and ensure development.

He said the government was planning to transform Herat into international trade and transit hub. (Pajhwok)

(4) Ghani Yet

specify their financial authorities too.

It is said that Ghani has allowed CEO's office only expenditures from codes 91 and 92 which are the reserved cash on emergency basis. "CEO is allowed expenditures only from code 92 and only 30 percent from code 91," Abed explained. Also, Massoud's office which is consisted of more

than 200 positions have not been approved by Ghani so far.

"The positions need President's approval in order to begin their functions," Massoud's spokesman Rahmatullah Bezhari Poor said.

While, the ministry of finance says it has allocated budget only for those approved positions.

In addition, President's economic advisor's office has also been newly established; however no one from this office answered whether its positions have been approved by Ghani. (Tolonews)

(5) Rebels Using ..

Taliban's designated governor for Kunar, Maulvi Umar Mukhlis and insurgents' chief for the district, Qari Zia-u-Rehman were spearheading the campaign in Dangam, he added.

In addition to other groups from Pakistan, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) fighters were fighting along with militants against Afghan security forces, he noted.

Waziri said that gun fight was still underway in parts of the district in which 157 insurgents had been killed and 120 others wounded so far. Twenty-six security personnel had also been injured in the firefight.

He assured the nation that militants would be beaten and flushed out of the area soon. Brig. Gen. Abdul Habib Sayedkhal said that anti-militants offensives were underway in the district.

He said that a main base for Afghan security forces had been established in the district from where weapons and other reinforcements were being supplied to the forces. (Pajhwok)

(6) Senators ...

diesel 60 afs, but their prices have declined to 56 afs and 53 afs respectively.

Per barrel crude was priced on Sunday at \$58 in Europe and Asia and \$54 per barrel in the US.

International experts say the oil prices started sliding after 2009 and for the first time plummeted to the current level.

For much of the past decade, oil prices were high -- bouncing around \$100 per barrel since 2010 -- because of soaring oil consumption in countries like China and conflicts in key oil nations like Libya. Oil production couldn't keep up with demand, so prices spiked.

By 2014, oil supply was much higher than demand. High prices spurred companies in the US and Canada to start drilling for new crude.

At the same time, demand for oil in places like Europe, Asia, and the US began tapering off, thanks to weakening economies and new efficiency measures.

On top of that, the conflict in Libya was slowly easing. By late 2014, world oil supply was on track to rise much higher than actual demand and, in September, prices started falling sharply. (Pajhwok)

(7) NUG Seeking...

form the cabinet soon," chairman Senate Fazal Hadi Muslimyar said. "And we also welcome the move by the Wolosi Jirga to meet the government leaders in this respect." The deadlines for cabinet announcement are coming and going but there has been no sign of progress so far.

Earlier, Ghani assured the cabinet will be announced between two to four weeks. (Tolonews)

(8) NATO Official ...

soon as they have formed a government, they will also take this problem very seriously," he added, referring

indirectly to the cabinet appointment process, which has dragged on far longer than most had hoped.

The senior civilian NATO official acknowledged that members of the international community are guilty of facilitating and exacerbating corruption in Afghanistan, but he stressed that there would be heightened scrutiny on the country in the coming years.

Jochems also called the Taliban a continued major threat to Afghanistan. He emphasized that in order to maintain peace, the Afghan government must increase military pressure to reach a political solution.

"What makes me also more optimistic are the recent visits by President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah in the region and their opening - at least their statement that they are preparing to talk to the Taliban under certain conditions - make me hopeful that, at the end of the day, a political solution will also be reached and that would be the ideal combination," Jochems said. "Reaching a political solution from a position of military strength is the way forward."

Jochems said continuing to train and equip the Afghan forces is critical for keeping the country on the track of progress. He said professionalizing the Afghan Air Force is the top priority. (Tolonews)

(9) Dreaded Com...

8:00 pm.

Confirming the casualties, he said the slain militants were involved in anti-state activities and sporadic attacks on Afghan security forces.

Nawab, a dreaded Taliban commander, was among the fatalities, he confirmed. It merits mention that drone strikes have been intensified inflicting heavy casualties on militants.

Taliban designated Tagab district chief and a notorious commander were among six killed as a result of NATO drone strike in central Kapisa province. Officials told Pajhwok the strike occurred in the afternoon around 4pm and no civilian casualties were reported. (Pajhwok)

(10) Some Nangar....

discharge their duties at the hospital and provide the patients with best medical care.

Gul Saeed, a demonstrator, told Pajhwok Afghan News that tens of people visited hospital on Saturday to launch cleanliness campaign in the hospital and donate blood to the needy patients.

He alleged that head of the blood bank at the hospital told them that the blood donation drive had been completed and he was unable to collect their blood.

Ali Khan who brought his patient from Kapisa said the blood bank refused to give his patient blood for his second surgery. He said that he did not know anyone in Jalalabad and doctors were demanding blood before surgery.

"Though they are doctors by profession but they have hard hearts like stones," Khan remarked.

Muhammad Laiq Ghamsharik, head of Afghanistan United Front in eastern zone, said that tens of volunteers of his group approached the blood bank to donate their blood but the officials on duty flatly refused to collect their blood. He said there were a number of patients on beds in hospital who direly needed blood.

Dr. Humayun Zaheer, head of local hospital in Nangarhar, said that the blood bank department

had the capacity to keep 500 packets of blood in reserve. He said the officials at the blood bank department were bound to discharge their duties from 8:00 am till 2:30 pm and then one official was tasked to discharge his duty till late night who could not collect blood from tens of people. He suggested those who were willing to donate blood should contact the officials concerned in advance so that measures should be taken to collect their blood on time. (Pajhwok)

(11) 51 Welfare ...

proximately 3,254 families benefited from these development projects.

Since its inception, the NSP has disbursed 1,355,975,540 AFN for implementation of 1,500 development projects in various sectors such as transport, water and sanitation, irrigation, power, livelihoods, education, etc. Thousands of residents of Badghis province have benefited from these projects so far. (PR)

(12) New Cabinet ...

House of Representatives had given one week deadline to the government for the introduction of the cabinet to the House which expired on Saturday.

Afghan President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani in his presidential campaigns had said that after reaching the presidential palace in first two months he will have a cabinet.

Now it is over three months and the government does not have a cabinet. (KP)

(13) 2 Civilians

were killed in the attack but Qadari rejected the claim of police casualties.

Taliban have not yet commented on the incident. (Pajhwok)

(14) Gas Price...

competition and said their licenses would be revoked and the company would be blacklisted and banned from importing oil or gas.

The main companies importing gas to Afghanistan include Sun Gas, Kamal Nabizada, Ghazanfar Group, Gas Group, Baradaran-e-Sahrayee, Sarhadi Group, Younas Shekib, Yama Petrol, Walid Haseeb, Rameen Said, Afghan National Petroleum, Farahi Group, Kefayat Group, Anar Darah, Khurasan Gas, Rahmanian, Nabizada, Ekhlas Group, Haji Bismillah, Haidari and several other companies.

The prices of gas and oil would be monitored by the Oil and Gas Directorate, Ministry of Commerce and Industries, ACCI and Oil and Gas Importers Association.

In the meantime, ACCI officials called on the government to enhance customs office work and ensure health competition from the source countries to maintain the 60 AFN price. (Wadsam)

(15) Would-be ...

her back, but she refused to go with them. "I said I would never live with my father anymore." She said her father and the Taliban had told her the suicide attack had great reward in the life hereafter.

Zarina said besides her parents, her siblings included two sisters and five brothers. She said her father had close ties with the Taliban.

Col. Fazl Hadi, the Public Order Police second battalion commander in Nawzad, told Pajhwok Afghan News local residents had informed them in advance about a possible suicide attack by a girl. He said their effort had been to rescue the girl.

To a question if the girl fled

home for some other reasons, the police officer said everyone was allowed to ask her questions. He said suicide attacks in which children were used had already taken place in the area.

A police official in Lashkargah, Col. Syed Rahman Shaiq, said similar incidents had occurred in the past.

In Zarmina case, he said, her father, maternal uncles and Taliban commanders Mullah Baqi, Mullah Nazar Mohammad, Hijrat and Mullah Norkhi were complicit.

Last year, a 12-year-old girl, who was forced by her brother to carry out a suicide attack on police, had surrendered in the Khanashin district.

Meanwhile, police on Sunday shot dead two persons riding a motorcycle in the Marjah district.

The motorcyclists opened fire at the police and were killed after the police returned fire, the provincial police spokesman said.

Col. Farid Ahmad Obaid said the incident took place in the ninth block area. He said one policeman was injured in the clash. (Pajhwok)

(16) 3 Policemen...

hold of motorbikes the Taliban attacked them," he added.

Meanwhile, Capt. Abdul Latif passport department head of northern Jawzjan province was detained after he injured four athletes in a car accident.

Brig. Gen. Faqir Mohammad Jawzjan, the police chief, told Pajhwok Afghan News four boys were on their way home from a football ground in Shiberghan city when they were hit by Latif's vehicle.

One of them succumbed to injuries on his way to hospital but the rests two were said to be in stable condition.

He said Abdul Latif was introduced to Attorney General's Office. (Pajhwok)

(17) 2 Civilians

target was Malak Niaz Mohammad.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the explosion that comes two days after three civilians suffered casualties in a gun attack. (Pajhwok)

(18) Russia...

protests toppled several autocrats in the Middle East, some of whom had close ties with Moscow. (Reuters)

(19) Deir Ezzur...

Friday morning on the Mishta Nur Heights, which resulted in the advance of the Kurdish fighters and controlling the municipality building in Kobani," Mohammad Mullah Omar, the commander of the Peshmarga forces in Kobani said.

Omar said that the Peshmarga and the Peoples Protection Units (YPG) launched a coordinated attack on the Takfiri militants to recapture a strategic part of the city.

"Controlling it (the higher ground) will have positive implications for the conduct of military operations in the future," he said, referring to the fight for an area in the outskirts of the city.

The YPG media center described the retaking of the municipality building as a victory over ISIL on the 102nd day of fighting in Kobani. (FNA)

(20) Turkey...

character," Davutoglu said. "Turkey will not accept any impositions concerning Al-Aqsa and will do whatever needs to be done internationally to protect Jerusa-

lem and Al-Aqsa Mosque." Turkey is a strong backer of the Palestinian cause. Relations between former allies Turkey and Israel broke down in 2010 after an Israeli naval raid on a Gaza-bound flotilla killed nine Turkish citizens. Turkey has become the strongest critic of Israeli actions in Gaza, and reconciliation efforts between the two have repeatedly failed.

Mashaal, a frequent visitor to Turkey, on Saturday accompanied Davutoglu to a regional congress of Turkey's ruling party in Konya, where he addressed delegates. (AP)

Russia Must Influence Separatists to Rnd Ukraine Crisis: Merkel

BERLIN - German Chancellor Angela Merkel appealed to the Russian government on Sunday to use its influence on separatists in eastern Ukraine to implement a ceasefire plan agreed in Minsk in September aimed at ending the conflict.

Planned talks involving Russia, Ukraine and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe to further the ceasefire arrangements have not yet taken place.

"(Merkel said) A stabilization of the situation can only come if the agreed contact lines are finally implemented," said a spokeswoman in a statement.

"She appealed to the Russian government to use its influence on the separatists to this end," said the spokeswoman. In a phone call with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko late on Saturday, Merkel expressed regret that the contact group talks had not happened.

Last week, Poroshenko had said the talks would take place on Dec. 24 and 26.

Merkel, who has been closely involved in diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis, also welcomed the exchange of prisoners between the Ukrainian government and separatists.

The September truce has been flouted by both sides but violence in eastern Ukraine has decreased during December, raising hopes of further talks.

The uprising by the separatists, who oppose Kiev rule and want a union with Russia, began after Russia annexed the Black Sea peninsula of Crimea from Ukraine in March.

The pro-Western authorities in Kiev accuse Russia of orchestrating the uprising but the Kremlin denies it is behind the revolt. (Reuters)

Islamic State Executed Nearly 2,000 People in six Months: Monitor

BEIRUT - The Islamic State militant group has killed 1,878 people in Syria during the past six months, the majority of them civilians, a British-based Syrian monitoring organization said on Sunday. Islamic State also killed 120 of its own members, most of them foreign fighters trying to return home, in the last two months, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The militant group has taken vast parts of Iraq and Syria and declared a caliphate in territory under its control in June. Since then it has fought the Syrian and Iraqi governments, other insurgents and Kurdish forces.

Rami Abdulrahman, the head of the Syrian monitoring group, told Reuters that Islamic State killed 1,175 civilians, including eight women and four children.

He said 930 of the civilians were members of the Sheitaat, a Sunni Muslim tribe from eastern Syria which fought Islamic State for control of two oilfields in August.

Reuters cannot independently verify the figures but Islamic State has publicized beheadings and stoning of many people in areas it controls in Syria and Iraq. These are for actions

it sees as violating its reading of Islamic law, such as adultery, homosexuality, stealing and blasphemy.

The group, an offshoot of al Qaeda, has also released videos of executions of captured enemy fighters, activists and journalists.

It beheaded two U.S. journalists, and one American and two British aid workers this year in attempts to put pressure on a U.S.-led international coalition, which has been bombing its fighters in Syria since September.

Abdulrahman, who gathers information from all sides of the Syrian conflict, said that Islamic State had also executed 502 soldiers fighting for President Bashar al-Assad and 81 anti-Assad insurgents.

He said that 116 foreign fighters who had joined Islamic State but later wanted to return home, were executed in the Syrian provinces of Deir Al-Zor, Raqqa and Hassakeh since November. Four other Islamic State fighters were killed on other charges, Abdulrahman said.

The overwhelming number of the group's victims have been from the Syrian population. Cracked down on peaceful pro-democracy protests in 2011. (Reuters)

China's Top Legislature Ends bimonthly Session

BEIJING - China's top legislature ended a bimonthly session on Sunday, adopting a law on navigation channels, and giving go-ahead to ease investment rules in three new free trade zones (FTZs).

Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), presided over the closing meeting of the session.

The law on navigation channels aims at ensuring clear passage and security of the country's navigation channels, and boosting the economies for coastal regions.

Zhang said the law will better protect navigation safety and clear passage by establishing assessment mechanism over navigation conditions and clarifying supervision responsibilities.

According to the resolution on temporary adjustment of regulations for administrative approvals in the new FTZs adopted at the meeting, foreign companies will not need government approvals to set up ventures, shut down and merge ventures or change their business purpose in these FTZs.

Zhang said, the resolution provided legal support to the country's deepening reform, opening wider up and transforming government functions.

A draft national security law and a bill to regulate overseas NGOs in China were tabled for a first reading during the session, which was crucial to implementing the "overall national security outlook", Zhang said.

Also submitted for a first reading was a draft amendment to the air pollution prevention and control law. Zhang ordered lawmakers to actively address public concerns and write effective air pollution control laws.

The State Council delivered reports on China's social security system and on building new countryside, among other reports at the bi-monthly session. Zhang urged the State Council to learn and apply opinions raised by the NPC Standing Committee into their work.

The top legislature also appointed Luo Shugang as minister of culture and decided to convene the Third Session of the 12th NPC on March 5 next year. Two new extradition treaties signed with Afghanistan and Iran and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Counter-Terrorism Convention were approved at the meeting. (Xinhua)