

(1) Govt. Controls ...

and take some bread home," said Faisal.

Like Faisal, another child, Haseeb, also has to work for a living. He works at a metalwork shop alongside his brother and father.

Haseeb's father argues that teaching his child metalwork skills is more beneficial - opposed to working somewhere else. However, the father does not know about any possible impact metalwork could have on the boy's health.

"I work to earn some money," said Haseeb.

Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD) claims that the number of street children has decreased in the country.

MoLSAMD said of the 30-odd million people in the country, children represented about 50 percent. However, more than 3.5 million of these children were in need of help. They said more than one million of these children are subjected to manual labor in one form or another. (Tolonews)

(2) Afghanistan Rejects...

were wounded," the report noted. Citing U.S. military assessments, it said that approximately 57.2 percent of 407 Afghan districts are under government control or influence, showing a nearly 15 percent decrease since November 2015. The number of districts under insurgent control or influence rose to 10.1 percent while the rest are contested, the report added.

It cited Uruzgan and Helmand as among the most contested provinces, where five out of six districts and eight of 14 districts respectively are under insurgent control or influence.

Defense ministry spokesman, Dawlat Waziri, disagreed with the report findings, claiming the government is in control of all 34 provinces and last year's casualty toll was not different from 2015, when U.S. military said around 5,000 personnel were killed.

"The figures shown in the report are not correct. Certainly there were more losses in 2015 and 2016, compared to 2014 and you are aware of the reasons. But the report and statistics shown in it are completely incorrect and not factual," Waziri told VOA.

Most of the U.S.-dominated international forces left Afghanistan in late 2014, allowing newly trained ANDSF to take control of the counterinsurgency operations.

Waziri justified the battlefield losses, saying the fighting in Afghanistan intensified only after foreign forces withdrew from the country. But he vowed Afghan forces will show more progress in 2017 because of their experience and better performance in the previous year. SIGAR's report, however, acknowledged that Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's national unity government's anti-corruption campaign has led to a noticeable drop in corruption when procuring goods and services.

The quarterly report is the first since President Donald Trump took office January 20. Sopkoo observed it was a good opportunity for the new administration to reflect on the Afghan reconstruction mission.

The report also warned drug production continued to proliferate in Afghanistan and the U.S. mission will face challenges unless the issue is tackled, because the Taliban insurgency is largely benefiting from the illicit narcotic income. (Tolonews)

(3) Old Banknotes ...

to be careful in protection of their banknotes.

According to a Pajhwok Afghan News report published on January 28, many Kabul residents had complained about increasing old banknotes of one, two, five, 10, 20 and 100 afghanis in the market. They said some moneychangers did not take worn banknotes from people. The Afghan currency notes come in dominations including one, two, five, 10, 20, 50, 100, 500 and 1,000 afghanis and coins of one, two and five afghanis. (Pajhwok)

(4) US Awards ...

fuses that includes a first article test, and 270,528 M783 point detonating delay fuses," a press release by Defense Department.

The release further adds "Bids were solicited via the Internet with one received. Work will be performed in Cincinnati, Ohio, with an estimated completion date of Nov. 30, 2018. Fiscal 2015 and 2016 other procurement (Army) funds in the amount of \$51,852,276 were

obligated at the time of the award. Army Contracting Command, Picatinny Arsenal, New Jersey, is the contracting activity (W15QKN-17-C-0024)."

The Ohio-based L3 FOS specializes in the development and production of fuzing and safe, arming devices as well as the manufacture and integration of ordnance systems for air-dropped, tube-launched, missile and rocket-driven devices, and infantry-employed ordnance products for the U.S. military and our international allies. (KP)

(5) 6,785 Afghan...

January 1, 2016, through November 12, 2016, according to figures provided by the Afghan government to USFOR-A, 6,785 ANDSF service members were killed and an additional 11,777 members were wounded," the report said.

It further added "DOD reported the majority of ANDSF casualties continue to be the result of direct-fire attacks, with IED explosions and mine strikes accounting for much lower levels of casualties."

According to the report, citing USFOR-A, the ANDSF assigned force strength was 315,962 (not including civilians) as of November 26, 2016.

"The ANA is at 86.3% and the ANP at 94% of authorized strength, not including civilian employees. 206 The November 2016 assigned-strength number reflects a decrease of 1,295 personnel over the same period last year," the report said.

The report also added that "Compared to last quarter, the ANP had a decrease of 845 personnel, the first time it has decreased in strength in a year. The ANA (including Afghan Air Force and civilians) decreased by 1,108 personnel."

"When ANA civilians are excluded, the decrease in ANA military strength was 902 personnel," the report said. (KP)

(6) Survey Finds...

countries is (prevalent) in all parts of Afghanistan. This is not only used by big mafia groups across Afghanistan but it also benefits militants," said AACN chairman Khan Zaman Amarkhail.

The survey has assessed illegal mining in the country's east - particularly in Achin and Khogyani districts of Nangarhar, the AACN members said.

"Insurgents earned at least \$46 million USD from illegal mining in Khogyani district in Nangarhar province last year," said Samir Popal, a member of AACN.

The AACN members meanwhile criticized government over its lack of monitoring of mines in the country.

"The activities have been reported to executive authorities - which are the security agencies. They have been asked to cooperate and they have cooperated in some cases," said Zabihullah Sarwari, spokesman for the Ministry of Mines.

The report meanwhile indicates that a number of smuggling routes are in government controlled areas.

Commenting on this, the Interior Ministry's deputy spokesman Najibullah Danish said: "We don't agree with the issue that minerals are smuggled through the routes which are under our control. We will investigate (these claims)." (Tolonews)

(7) Corruption ...

represented its strong will and seriousness, something reflected in the latest Transparency International report.

The report released last week shows Afghanistan has improved by four points in the global corruption index, climbing from third to seventh position.

Sopko told the president that measures to combat corruption should be increased and reforms should continue to be implemented in various sectors.

He said the United States would support every effort of the Afghan government at overcoming the menace. (Pajhwok)

(8) Envoy Stresses ...

agreement known as Chabahar Trilateral Agreement was signed by the three countries' officials in the presence of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, his Afghan counterpart Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Tehran.

The trilateral Chabahar agreement will considerably increase making use of Chabahar port that will connect India to Central Asia through Afghanistan and instead will provide Afghanistan's access to India

via sea. (FNA)

(9) 600 Foreign...

in a bid to secure their own survival.

Investigations are underway to regain these weapon and to identify those involved, he added.

"Some of our commanders provided weapons and vehicles to powerful persons for their own survival and now they are not able to take them back, it is a major violation," said Baba Jan.

Meanwhile, civil society activists in Balkh have also raised deep concerns over drug smuggling in the northern regions of the country.

"There are some elements who exploit families of those addicted to drugs," said civil society activist Abdul Hamid Sefwat.

"When they get the men addicted to drugs, then the smugglers ask them for their daughters in exchange for heroin," he added.

There are huge concerns among the people in Balkh that the security will further deteriorate in the northern regions of the country if government does not take solid action against drug smugglers and take back the weapons handed over to powerful persons. (Tolonews)

(10) Lashkar Gah...

Taliban militants who are in control of parts of Helmand province and have been fighting to overrun Lashkar Gah city has yet to claim responsibility for firing rockets and harming civilians. (Xinhua)

(11) Ousted for

allowing the banned mining contractors to work."

He said no evidence was available against him and the case was being delayed from one day to another.

He said the revenue of the mining department submitted to the government was 30 million before and surged to 300 million afghanis due to his hard work during his time in office.

"The then appellant court officials acknowledged that earlier the revenue of mining department was 30 million afghanis but with the change of leadership the revenue soared to 300 million."

He claimed most of Nangarhar mines were under the rebels control and they took money from the contractors.

Governor spokesman Attaullah Khogyani rejected the notion that the former mining department head was removed from his post on the bases of personal and political interest.

He said Shukrullah was introduced to the attorney office in the lights of available evidence and charges against him and court had been doing its duty.

Khogyani said Shukrullah was trying to prove himself clear, a practice everyone accused of something tried to do.

Ahmad Wali Hashimi, the appellant court head, rejected the former mining department head remarks on delay in the hearing of his case. He said the court had held two sessions of his case and Shukrullah refused to attend the final session of the court.

He said the third trial was remaining and the decision of two earlier trials could not be disclosed until he appeared in the court session.

Eng. Shkrullah Tolo worked as mining department head during 2011 to 2013 and was removed and referred to the attorney officer by former governor Attaullah Lodin. (Pajhwok)

(12) Rodat Residents...

militant group due to its atrocities and the uprisings would not let Daesh think about a comeback.

Similar uprisings had taken place against Daesh in other districts of Nangarhar. (Pajhwok)

(13) Taliban Kill ...

an insurgent rocket attack killed a civilian in southern Helmand province, which has seen heavy fighting in recent months.

Three other people, including a small child, were wounded in the attack in Lashkar Gah, the provincial capital, said Ghulam Nabi Charkhi, head of the provincial counterterrorism department in Helmand.

The attack took place as Afghanistan's Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah was about to leave Lashkar Gah with other officials after a visit to assess security in the province. None of the officials were harmed.

In the eastern Khost province, five policemen and three small children were wounded when a police vehicle hit a remotely detonated roadside bomb, said Ghani-ul Rahman,

the deputy provincial police chief. And in eastern Nangarhar province, which border Pakistan, seven people - six civilians and a border police officer - were wounded when a sticky bomb attached to a police vehicle went off in the provincial capital of Jalalabad, said Attaullah Khogyani, spokesman for the provincial governor. He added that the officer was the target of the attack.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attacks in Helmand, Khost and

The Taliban have stepped up attacks across Afghanistan since the U.S. and NATO formally concluded their combat mission at the end of 2014, leaving a smaller contingent of troops behind to focus on training and counterterrorism. (AP)

(14) Women Practice

Azimi remembered an incident in which a thief tried to snatch her purse, but with her martial arts skills she fought back and saved it.

Raihana Amiri, also 20, hopes to participate in international Shaolin competitions and bring honor and pride to Afghanistan, which is battered by decades of war.

When they aren't training on the snow-covered hills that surround Kabul, Azimi trains her students in a grungy, dark club financed by a young cinema actor. Azimi said it was difficult to find all the tools needed to train. For instance, she had to order a Shaolin sword from Iran, where she had studied the art for three years. They could not find Shaolin uniforms, but, undeterred, they designed and ordered uniforms made by a Kabul tailor.

While studying in Iran, Azimi competed in two competitions where she won gold and bronze medals. A year after returning to Afghanistan, she decided to train young girls who lived in the Hazara-dominated neighborhoods of the capital. Most of her students are teenagers, while a few of the older students study in universities.

Azimi charges between \$2 and \$5 a month depending on what they can afford.

"Some of my students' families had problems accepting their girls studying Wushu (martial arts)," she said. "But I went to their home and talked to their parents."

In religiously conservative Afghanistan, girls are often discouraged from aggressive sports. Many parents fear a sporting accident could result in a girl breaking her hymen before marriage, which is considered deeply shameful.

While strides have been made for women in Afghanistan, Azimi said there's still much to change. She firmly believes that girls and women can stand toe-to-toe with boys in Shaolin martial arts. In an Olympic Committee competition in Kabul, Azimi took first position among female Shaolin participants. (AP)

(15) Woman Trying...

province, the woman wanted to smuggle the pistol to Herat City, he said.

It was not known for what reason the woman wanted to transfer the pistol to Herat city, he said, adding that investigation into the incident was underway.

Walizada said that it was the first time a woman attempted to smuggle weapons in Herat. (Pajhwok)

(16) Another Kidnapped ..

Works Director Eng. Abdul Aziz Mohammadi told Pajhwok Afghan News one of the hostages had been killed by the militants.

"These workers were busy on construction of Zaranj-Delaram road when the Taliban attacked them," he said.

A local security official, who wished to go unnamed, said the militants opened fire from a car they were in at the truck.

Two days earlier, two workers of the same road construction company were injured in a roadside bombing. The company is contracted to asphalt a five-kilometer portion of the Zaranj-Delaram highway. (Pajhwok)

(17) Freezing Weather...

to protect themselves against the cold.

He said similarly 10 women miscarried due to their lack of access to medical care.

But the governor's spokesman, Mohammad Raza Ghafoori, said the nine people had not lost their lives to freezing temperatures but they had been sick. He said the governor's house had received conflicting reports from the district administration.

Ghafoori acknowledged roads leading to remote villages had

been blocked by snow, but said the provincial government had adopted necessary measures and had the ability to resolve people's problems.

He said they had not yet received a convincing report from the district and the provincial government was ready to support affected families if what the district chief told the media was proven.

But a member of the provincial council, Halima Sadaf, said they had received report about deaths and injuries resulting from freezing temperatures in Darzab district.

She said the authorities concerned had been provided with clear information and documents about the natural disaster but there had been no response.

She said if the people of Darzab were not assisted, the death toll from cold weather could increase.

Jawzjan natural disasters management head Faizullah said they had been sent reports about problems being faced by the people of Darzab district.

He said donors would soon hold a conference on the situation in Darzab and initial steps had been taken to resolve problems of the people.

About two months ago, 20 children were killed by freezing temperatures in the same district. (Pajhwok)

(18) Blast Targeting...

The financial in-charge of Border Police Force was also among the injured, the official added.

Khogiani also noted that an investigation had been launched into the blast. (Xinhua)

(19) Khost Twin ...

wounded in the first blast.

He said the second blast injured three school students. The first one took place at around 10:45am.

Ahmadullah, an eyewitness, said one of the bombs targeted police vehicle in the area in which a number of policemen were wounded.

He said the second blast took place 10 minutes apart the first one and injured school students.

There was no claim of responsibility by insurgents for the blasts. (Pajhwok)

(20) Deadly Car ...

militant groups including the Taliban insurgents have not commented regarding the report so far.

Kandahar, the birthplace of the Taliban insurgents, has been relatively stable during the recent months although the anti-government armed militants attempt to destabilize the province.

At least 12 people including the deputy provincial governor and five UAE diplomats lost their lives in an attack in this province last month and several others including the UAE ambassador and Kandahar governor were wounded. (KP)

(21) UN Envoy...

ceasefire into Syria, where a political crisis broke out in March 2011 and it was followed by a subsequent civil war.

More than 310,000 people have been reportedly killed in the Syria war. (Xinhua)

(22) UN Pledges...

statements of the International Syria Support Group.

The Security Council members welcomed the International Meeting on Syria held in Astana, Kazakhstan, on Jan. 23-24, as anticipated in the Security Council resolution 2236 (2016).

They welcomed the talks between the Syrian government and armed opposition groups with de Mistura's involvement, expressed their appreciation to the president of the Republic of Kazakhstan for hosting the meeting, and took note of the joint statement by Iran, Russia and Turkey adopted on the outcome of the talks.

The members recognized the International Meeting on Syria in Astana as an important step toward the resumption of intra-Syrian negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations. (Xinhua)

(23) UN Hopes...

control over refugee entry "cannot be based on any form of discrimination related to religion, ethnicity or nationality," Dujarric said.

While acknowledging that "countries have the right, even the obligation, to responsibly manage their borders to avoid infiltration by members of terrorist organizations," the UN chief made the statement because the ban "is against the fundamental principles and values on which our societies are based."

(Xinhua)

(24) UNSC Expresses...

Minsk Agreements.' The members of the Security Council called for an immediate return to a ceasefire regime, the statement says.

Ukrainian forces and the insurgents clashed heavily for a third straight day at a town in eastern Ukraine on Tuesday, which have claimed the lives of at least 13 civilians and fighters on both sides since Sunday. (Xinhua)

(25) Iraqi PM...

must be corrected, and I don't want to cause the same offense to the American people now," Abadi said.

"We are studying all our choices," Abadi said, adding that he hopes the order will be changed.

On Monday, the Iraqi Foreign Ministry expressed "regret" over the latest restrictions by the Trump administration on the entry of Iraqi nationals into the United States, and asked Washington to "reconsider" the travel ban on Iraqi citizens.

"It is very unfortunate that such U.S. decision was issued against an allied country (Iraq), which is linked with the United States in a strategic partnership," the foreign ministry said in a statement. (Xinhua)

(26) UN Agency...

also bars entry of refugees from several mostly Muslim countries, including Syria, until further notice. (Xinhua)

(27) S. Korea, Japan...

hopeful, finished 16th.

"I am not satisfied with my result," said Zhang, "I thought I could fight for a medal. I didn't feel good playing at an outdoor ice rink, but this is not the main reason. I have to train more and be more strong."

In the women's 3,000m on Wednesday, Maryna Zuyeva of Belarus claimed the title in four minutes and 18.26 seconds. Takahashi Nana of Japan took the silver in 4:27.68 while Russia's Elena Sokhryakova was third in 4:27.89.

Wu Dan of China timed in 4:42.86 to rank 17th among 32 skaters. (Xinhua)

(28) Australia Must...

local business as well, governments, businesses and exporters must take advantage of the huge overseas markets with a taste for Australian goods. (Xinhua)

(29) China Plays ...

"There the role of China is really important as a catalyst, and showing the way forward," he said.

"China is a very important country. When it decides to go in a certain direction, a lot of people will follow. It's a leadership role," he added. (Xinhua)

(30) Iran Confirms...

fomenting new tension over the missile program of the Islamic republic. Zarif expressed the hope that Iran's missile program would not be used as an excuse by the new U.S. administration to create new tension for his country.

Iran's tests of missiles fall outside United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231, Zarif said in a joint press conference with his visiting French counterpart. (Xinhua)

(31) Debt Fears...

thus showing no further deterioration, which is a clear sign of improved debt sustainability," the statement goes on to add. (Monitoring Desk)

(32) Early Voting...

Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan nominated chairman of the Commercial Bank Rysgal, Bekmyrat Atalyev, and the Agrarian Party nominated chairman of the Mary province committee Durdygylch Orazov.

Deputy Chairman of Turkmen state association of food industry Maksat Annanepesov, Deputy Head of the Mary province of Turkmenistan Jumanazar Annayev; Director of Seydi oil refinery, MP Ramazan Durdyev; Deputy Head of Dashoguz district Mereturdy Gurbanov; Head of the Economic Department of Akhal province Serdar Jelilov; Director General of 'Garabogazsulfat' association Suleymannepes Nurnepesov and are among the candidates nominated by initiative groups of Turkmen citizens. (Trend)

(33) Uzbekistan ...

living conditions of the population and develop the transport, engineering and communication infrastructure of settlements. (Trend)