

(1) MoD Always ...

However, he alleged Afghanistan's enemies -- fighting at the best of outsiders -- were least bothered about civilian casualties. He condemned the rebels for using mosques and homes as trenches.

The enemies forced civilian men, women and children into fighting, Waziri claimed. Whenever surrounded by security forces, the fighters hid in civilian houses, the spokesman said.

The statement said the MoD and Afghan forces were mainly responsible for the protection of people's lives, belongings and honour. They would not allow anyone to play with people's lives, he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(2) Children Must...

while more than 2,500 others were injured. UNAMA recorded 3,498 civilian deaths and 7,920 wounded. The number of children killed and injured hit an all-time high in 2016 -- a massive 24 percent increase in total child casualties and the highest number since the agency began recording casualties in 2009.

Save the Children Country Director Ana Locsin said: "These figures are truly shocking, and represent a sharp decrease in the wellbeing of Afghan children. Almost 1000 children were killed from conflict in Afghanistan last year -- that's nearly three per day".

Locsin added: "This simply isn't good enough. Children are innocent victims of conflict and need to be protected at all costs. They must be seen as off limits no matter what."

The organisation called on all parties to conflict in Afghanistan to do everything in their power to protect children at all times, and especially during times of fighting.

Unsurprisingly, the figures come amid a year in which there was a surge of violence across Afghanistan, including major outbreaks of fighting in Kunduz and Helmand, it said.

Adding to the crisis in Afghanistan where 9.3 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, more than 600,000 Afghans returned from Pakistan last year following a tightening in regulations by Pakistani authorities.

"The humanitarian situation across much of Afghanistan has deteriorated significantly in the past 12 months, and with the start of the traditional fighting season not far away with the end of winter, it could get even worse in the coming months," Locsin said. (Pajhwok)

(3) Ministry ...

Kazakhstan recently reduced the rate to \$268, Pakistan to \$96 and Iran \$144 to ISPs, he said.

The discount in prices in Afghanistan would be effective from today (Wednesday) and the MCIT would monitor the prices of ISPs, he said, adding the discount would be taken from private companies if they did not reduce the internet prices.

The ministry has been trying to pave the ground for fourth generation (4G) mobile telecommunication technology, Sadat said.

Currently four million people in Afghanistan use internet and efforts are underway to increase the number of users to 15 million in the next four years, he added.

He said efforts were ongoing to prevent distribution of illegal SIM cards and a mechanism in this regard was under process.

About collection of taxes from mobile users, he said 5.6 billion afghanis had been collected since September 22, 2016.

Work on a new tax collection system is also underway for more transparency in the revenue. (Pajhwok)

(4) Wet Spell ...

According to his information, 160 people have been killed and hundreds of residential buildings destroyed by snow, mostly in Nuristan, Badakhshan, Parwan and Ghazni provinces since January 20. Government institutions were doing their best to distribute essential aid to the affected people and rescue those buried under snow, the president said. More than a thousand people were rescued in Ghazni and roads and highways reopened in various parts of the country, he explained.

"Natural disasters cause casualties in every country, but it may cause more losses in Afghanistan due to our limited resources. The war imposed on us has naturally curtailed our resources and we may not deliver all the services needed by affected people," he remarked.

Ghani asked charity organisations and well-off individuals to help the

affected families. "People should heed warnings of possible natural disasters and coordinate with government organs," he stressed.

The president added there was a possibility of floods in the spring, an issue people and relevant state organs should be careful about. "We should not rule out this possibility at the end of the winter; we have to be prepared," he said.

Ghani asked all people to save water as climate change posed a serious threat. He urged fateha khwani on coming Friday for those who lost their lives to snowstorms.

A day earlier, officials said 119 people were died and 89 others injured by snowfall in the country over the past 74 hours. (Pajhwok)

(5) Death Toll...

The governor said the 201st Selab Military Corps had delivered first aid to victims through aircraft on Monday morning. A rescue operation by a medical team is still ongoing.

Meanwhile, the governor said 10 people were killed and several others wounded in separate incidents in Mandol district.

Provincial council head Sadullah Payanda's son confirmed the death toll provided by the governor. He asked for the delivery of more aid to the victims in addition to emergency assistance.

Selab Corps officials confirmed a relief and medicine-laden chopper had arrived in Barg-i-Matal. A statement from the army said a medical team had also been dispatched to the area. (Pajhwok)

(6) Restart Taliban...

interests.

There should be consequences for Pakistan if it blocks realistic efforts to begin peace talks, the report says, adding the US must convey its expectation that Pakistan will end support to the Taliban, prevent rebel leaders from living and meeting on its soil and curtailing export of arms, explosives, and ammunition to the militants in Afghanistan.

"The US must also demand deportation of all Afghan Taliban leaders in accordance with Pakistan's declared policy of returning all Afghan refugees," says the report, authored by Lisa Curtis (The Heritage Foundation), Christine Fair (Georgetown University) Col (ret) John Gill (National Defense University), Anish Goel (New America), and Husain Haqqani (Hudson Institute).

Other authors of the report are Polly Nayak (Independent Consultant), Aparna Pande (Hudson Institute), Bruce Riedel (Brookings Institution), David S. Sedney (Center for Strategic and International Studies) and Dr. Marvin Weinbaum (Middle East Institute).

"In addition, Pakistan must invalidate all Pakistani ID cards, passports and special passes for the Taliban to prevent them from easily passing through military checkpoints. Lastly, Islamabad must seize the financial assets and real estate holdings of all Afghan Taliban and Pakistani terrorist groups that support them," said the report which would be formally released here on Friday.

The report says that it would be foolish to keep giving the Pakistanis a pass when it comes to taking action against terrorist groups that are directly undermining US regional interests, not to mention killing U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan.

Whereas US government agencies were divided seven years ago over the nature and extent of Pakistan's support to the Afghan Taliban and other terrorist and extremist groups, today no one in the U.S. government disputes that Pakistan provides such support, it noted.

The report says that as a first step, the US must warn Pakistan that its status as a Major Non-NATO Ally (MNN) is in serious jeopardy. Unless Pakistan takes immediate steps to demonstrate that it fully shares US counterterrorism objectives, Washington will revoke its MNN status within six months.

"Present to Pakistan a list of calibrated actions for ending its support to the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani Network, and make clear that failure to make substantial progress on these steps could eventually result in Pakistan's designation as a State Sponsor of Terrorism," the report recommends.

"If Pakistan does not make progress on the above steps, the US should consider compiling a list of Pakistani military and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) officials, current and former, who are known to have facilitated acts of terrorism, including supporting the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani network, and barring

them from travel to the US," (Pajhwok)

(7) Trump Way ...

remarks during an event on 'Afghanistan at the Crossroads: Implications for Regional Security' at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) in New Delhi.

He welcomed President Trump's recent statement on his country's resolve to eradicate radical forces and said this is the only way to combat terrorism.

Ambassador Abdali further added that he is hopeful that the US government adopts this policy while engaging with the countries in the region.

He also added that Afghanistan has long been suffering in the hands of global and regional players, insisting that there is a need for regional powers to interact with each other in a manner that would bring a positive change in the region.

The remarks by Ambassador Abdali came as President Trump has not announced its Afghanistan policy so far.

However, reports emerged earlier suggesting that Trump has vowed to send more troops to Afghanistan in a bid to prevent further deterioration of the security of the country. The commitment was reportedly made during a telephone conversation between President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and Donald Trump in December last year when he was the president-elect of the United States. (KP)

(8) At Least ...

10 attack.

Afghan government forces control no more than two-thirds of national territory, and have struggled to contain the Taliban insurgency since the bulk of NATO soldiers withdrew at the end of 2014. (Reuters)

(9) Nangarhar...

with the fatal disease.

Zonal hospital maternity ward in-charge, Dr. Roshan Ahmadi, said they had only one instrument for uterine cancer, whose information was then shared with American doctors for diagnosis and treatment.

She said they took samples of the uterine cancer through the instrument and then the American specialists diagnosed it and suggested its treatment through the internet. Roshan said this year they sent 100 suspicious women's samples, of which three had been diagnosed having the uterine cancer, which they cured as well.

A survey in 2012 puts the number of cancer patients at 20,000, with 15,000 losing their lives. After that survey, no new survey has been conducted on national level so far. (Pajhwok)

(10) Iraq Needs ...

forces, IS militants have been driven from the eastern half of the city of more than a million people.

"I could see Iraq needing an Afghanistan-style (demining) operation, which at its peak was 15,000 people about five years ago. You could put 5,000 on the ground in Iraq and they would be gainfully employed," said Heslop, a veteran of conflicts from Afghanistan to Angola.

Since 2015, UNMAS has cleared 390 priority locations in Fallujah and Ramadi in Anbar province, removing more than 2,600 explosive hazards from areas reclaimed from the Sunni militant group.

Demining is an investment in stabilisation, enabling people to return to their communities and to cultivate decontaminated land, as well as "an investment in youth at risk", UNMAS director Agnes Marcaillou told a news briefing.

"When we give them a job they are less likely to seek status and income, in a terrorist organisation for instance," she added.

In Syria, more than 6.3 million people including 2 million children are estimated to live in highly contaminated areas after nearly six years of war.

UNMAS is negotiating with the Syrian government and is "pretty optimistic that we will establish an UNMAS office in Damascus sometime in 2017", Marcaillou said. (Agencies)

(11) 12 Children...

increase this much, there is a possibility that these figures could further increase if the war and violence does not stop," said Hafiz Miakhail, media advisor to Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations.

A recent UN report documented a 66 percent increase in the number of IDPs in 2016 compared to 2015. (Tolnews)

(12) 70pc...

cooperation with police was a major achievement

The police chief said local residents kept security for areas which had recently been cleared of militants. The residents of these areas had taken positions in bunkers with security forces, he added.

Provincial officials have claimed pushing away Taliban militants from areas near Tirinkot, the provincial capital, but roads to districts have been blocked over the past six months. (Pajhwok)

(13) Mattis Hails...

he saw during his tour of duty in Afghanistan's southern Kandahar province.

Mattis, who met Sajjan at the Pentagon, said the lives lost to the Afghanistan conflict had strengthened a deep bond between the countries. Commitment to NATO, defence spending levels and peacekeeping operations came up for discussion at the meeting. Mattis had a swing through Asia last week, reassuring traditional US allies. (Pajhwok)

(14) Ambassador ...

that indiscriminately targeted civilians, such as the August attack on the American University in Afghanistan, the triple bombing in Kabul in September, the July bombing of peaceful protesters, and the April attacks on Kabul, he added.

"Meanwhile, thousands of our best and brightest in the Afghan security forces have continued to lay down their lives to protect their fellow citizens. Our government and our people will never allow violence and terror to prevail. We want peace above all else," Mohib said. (Pajhwok)

(15) Pakistan...

Chaudhry also talked on phone with Afghan Ambassador Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal to express his condolences, the APP reported.

Third Secretary, Muhammad Zaki Abdu, at the Consulate General of Afghanistan in Karachi was killed as a result of firing by an Afghan security guard.

The incident took place inside the lobby of the consulate. Police authorities immediately intervened to minimize further loss of life. (Pajhwok)

(16) Pakistan's...

government to prevent Iranian cement inundating Pakistani markets on the strength of massive under-invoicing. It called for vigilance and accountability to curb smuggling.

Heavy rains and snowfall across the country in January tamped down domestic cement dispatches. But during the first seven months of the current fiscal year, the cement industry posted a growth of 9.52 percent in local dispatches. (Pajhwok)

(17) Woman Jumps...

not speak. The children were also not in good condition but they were under intensive care, Shafiqullah said.

Abdul Jalil, brother of the injured woman, said his sister had mental health issues which was the cause she jumped from the building.

A resident of Aqcha district of Jawzjan province, Jalil said his brother-in-law was driving a taxi in the US to support his family.

"My sister attempted the same thing once she was in Kabul," he said, adding that there was no domestic violence behind the incident. However, Fawzia Hamidi, a prosecutor at the elimination of violence against woman court, said that domestic violence was major cause of the incident.

"Our investigations show that the husband's second marriage forced the woman to commit suicide and kill her children," she said.

She added the husband was living in the US from the past 12 years and had married a second woman there. His first wife back in Afghanistan had several times tried to talk with her husband on the telephone, but he did not respond, an issue that forced the woman to take the extreme step, Hamidi said.

Provincial women's affairs department officials said most such incidents resulted from domestic violence in Balkh this year.

Shahla Hadid, Balkh Women's Affairs director, said that 345 cases of violence against women had been registered this year.

Besides the government, civil society and tribal elders should struggle for elimination of domestic violence in the society, she said. (Pajhwok)

(18) Ghani Condemns ...

of our people isn't cheap & wont be wasted."

The incident happened in the Macrorryan area in Kabul at about 15:45

as Supreme Court staff were leaving work for the day.

Officials confirmed that in addition to the 20 killed, over 40 people were also wounded.

Officials have also confirmed that a number of wounded are in critical condition and have been taken to the Kabul Emergency Hospital. (Tolnews)

(19) 100 Killed, ...

laws and regulations.

Ghulam Ali, a resident of Herat city, who lost his groom son to a traffic accident in Shindand district, said speedy driving was major cause of accidents, an issue the government was not paying attention to.

Provincial police spokesman, Abdul Ahad Wali Zadah, however, confirmed speedy driving on highways and said most of the traffic accidents took place in areas where police were not present.

On the other hand, provincial police head, Humayun Dasgir said most of the accidents took place on the Farah-Zabul highway and their victims were shifted to the Herat zonal hospital.

He said the entrances to Herat City were tightly controlled and drivers disobeying rules were dealt with in accordance with the law. (Pajhwok)

(20) Mobile Helps ...

and forced marriages were behind the surge in elopements.

She asked family members and elders to be careful while allowing their girls to use mobile phones and urged parents to keep watch on their children.

About forced marriages, she lambasted religious scholars for not only keeping mum over such marriages but helping families tie knots by force.

But religious scholars denied attending marriages held against the consent of families.

Mohammad Ghani Farooqi, a religious scholar, told Pajhwok Afghan News: "Whenever I have been invited to a house for Nikah, I ask elders to know the consent of the couple," he said.

But civil society activist Asadullah Karawai said families should know they were ruining the lives of their daughters by subjecting them to forced marriage.

He expressed concern about increased telephonic contacts between girls and boys, asking families not to allow their adult girls to use mobile phones. (Pajhwok)

(21) EU Reaffirms...

discussing the situation on Friday with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and the meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine Ivanna Klymush on Sunday, Mogherini called on the EU foreign ministers to maintain a united front on the issue.

"First of all, the need for de-escalation of violence in the east, also our continued non-recognition policy of the annexation of Crimea," she told the ministers in the meeting.

Replying to the concerns that the U.S. may take a softer line on Russia, the EU foreign affairs head said, "I cannot say where the U.S. administration stands on that but I can say where the Europeans stand on this." (Xinhua)

(22) Not Enough...

Feb. 5. This means that only two cross-line aid convoys have been able to proceed with their deliveries since the start of the year.

"The Special Envoy calls for unconditional, unimpeded and sustained access to all 4.72 million people in hard-to-reach locations across the country, including the more than 600,000 in besieged locations," Sharif continued. (Xinhua)

(23) Putin, Merkel...

capital of Minsk, and a more detailed renewal of the agreement was signed in February 2015.

However, the truce has not been strictly observed, and deadly conflicts have flared up in the last two weeks in Donbass, with Kiev and local militias trading accusations of undermining the Minsk deal. (Xinhua)

(24) NATO Chief...

after the first phone call last November.

Trump's comments over NATO had caused concern across the alliance.

In a recent interview, Trump said NATO was "obsolete because it was not taking care of terror", and he complained that various members of the bloc were not paying their dues, which was "very unfair to the United States". (Xinhua)

(25) Russia, Turkey...

with the outcome of the international agreements on peace talks on

Syria, organised in Astana on Jan. 23-24. Monday's meeting became the first meeting of the Joint Task Force and the participants agreed to hold the next meeting on Feb. 15-16. (Xinhua)

(26) EU Council...

Nov. 11, 2016 and due to expire on Feb. 11, 2017.

High-ups of the European Union (EU), including EU foreign affairs chief Federica Mogherini, have recently blasted a travel ban signed by U.S. President Donald Trump that bars citizens from Iran, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Somalia, Libya and Yemen from traveling to the United States for 90 days, stops accepting refugees for 120 days and indefinitely halts refugees from Syria.

Mogherini last week pledged that the EU would not turn its back on anyone who has the right to international protection, because "this is where we stand, this is where we will continue to stand."

But the bloc is on the other hand seeking ways to better control the migrant inflows from North Africa and secondary movements of migrants within the EU. (Xinhua)

(27) Erdogan and ...

Kurdish militia fighting the Islamic State group -- considered as "terrorists" by Ankara because of their links Kurdish rebels in Turkey. (AP)

(28) Pub Rules ...

outstanding budget commitments. EU sources confirmed the figure to AFP. Britain estimates the figure at closer to 20 billion, they added.

Schinus would not confirm the figure, saying that "technical work was ongoing".

But he added: "During the time of its membership the UK has taken and probably will take financial commitments. These commitments should be fulfilled in full.

"This will be an essential element of the negotiations on the orderly separation."

Senior EU negotiators met on Monday to discuss their preparations ahead of Britain's expected triggering of the two-year divorce process in March. (AFP)

(29) EU Top Diplomats...

regardless of U.S. President Donald Trump's pro-Russia stance.

The U.S. Treasury Department on Thursday issued a notice easing sanctions on a Russian intelligence agency that former U.S. president Barack Obama sanctioned over Moscow's alleged hacking activities in last year's U.S. presidential election.

Trump has indicated that he could lift the sanctions against Russia if Moscow proved helpful in battling terrorists and reaching other goals important to the United States.

The sanctions against Russia are not the only issues the EU at odds with the Trump administration. (Xinhua)

(30) Chinese, Australian...

cooperation, people-to-people exchanges, and law-enforcement cooperation.

Speaking positively of the Australia-China relations, Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop said the country is willing to strengthen cooperation with China in various fields and coordination on global affairs. (Xinhua)

(31) Pakistan is...

(GDP). Investments in energy, such as Tarbela, to end constant power cuts, as well as improvements in the business environment, so that companies hire more people, will be critical to success. A more favorable environment for private investment would open up opportunities for women, youth, and the underserved.

A second area is one of the best investments Pakistan can make: investing in its own people. Pakistan's population of 200 million is expected under current projections to double by 2050 and so these investments cannot wait. Currently Pakistan spends only three per cent of its GDP on health, nutrition, and education. (AP)

(32) Iran Deal ...

against the deal since before he was elected US president in November last year. While he has not moved to turn his threats of scrapping the deal into action, speculation continues that he may. (Presstv)

(33) Uzbekistan Approves...

General Ihtiyor Abdullayev for coordination of activity and ensuring of interaction of agencies and organizations participating and engaged in anti-corruption activities. (Trend)