

(1) ANSF Capture...

group and have seized a large number of weapons.

"Daesh rebels were executing and prosecuting people in this military base. Now, they have lost control over most of the area," said Zaman Waziri, the commander of Selab 201 Military Corps.

Nangarhar police chief, Fazel Ahmad Sherzad, said that a large number of Daesh rebels have also been killed in the district.

"Police, army and public uprising groups will jointly work to safeguard the district," he added.

Nangarhar governor, Salim Khan Kunduzi, asked internally displaced people from Achin district to return to their homes. He said that schools and hospitals will soon be reopened in the district.

"I call on the brave people of Shinwari tribe to come to their villages and we will help them to come to their homes," he added. Meanwhile, residents of the district urged the government not to let Daesh rebels return to the district.

A resident from the district said that foreign militants enter from across the border. The resident also said Daesh had planned to fight Pakistan, but then they started brutalizing locals.

Afghan security forces have been fighting Daesh militants in Achin district for the past eight months. Security officials said that they have killed around 1,000 Daesh rebels during this time. (Tolnews)

(2) Major ...

Taliban, Inshah Allah," Salangi said.

The top security officials assured the people of Kunduz of launching a major anti-Taliban operation soon. (Pajhwok)

(3) UNESCO to...

giant Buddha statues in Bamian province were un-Islamic and ordered they be destroyed. They were blown up with dynamite the next month. Under the new agreement, UNESCO will be able to ask the Italian government to make experts available for deployment for the conservation of cultural heritage affected by crisis. (Tolnews)

(4) U.S. and...

Resuming Syrian peace talks on the scheduled date of Feb. 25 is not a realistic option, U.N. Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura was quoted as telling a Swedish newspaper on Thursday.

"We need 10 days' preparation. But the talks ... can be successful if emergency aid continues and we get a ceasefire," de Mistura told the Svenska Dagbladet. (Reuters)

(5) Islamic Banking ...

will help both the country and ourselves," a resident in eastern Nangarhar province Mohammadullah said.

"If an Islamic banking system is initiated in the country, the majority of people will prefer to transfer their cash to banks," another resident Hajji Samad said. This comes at a time that rising insecurity and an uncertain political situation have discouraged many across the nation to put their money in banks and they prefer to keep their money at home which according to experts poses serious harm to the national economy.

Islamic banking refers to a system of banking or banking activity that is consistent with the principles of the Shari'ah (Islamic rulings) and its practical application through the development of Islamic economics. (Tolnews)

(6) Afghan Military ...

Afghan defense ministry spokesman confirmed the unmanned aircraft were on their way, with crews preparing for their deployment. "Afghan army officers are currently being trained on drones in the United States," said Dawlat Waziri. "As soon as their training is complete, they will be able to fly them here." He declined to comment on the numbers being trained, or when training will be completed. Afghan crews will train at a base

in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif, with equipment and parts being positioned ahead of the expected deployment late in March, Davis added.

International contractors will operate the initial aircraft alongside Afghan army mission commanders as well as help in the training for at least three years, the alliance says.

The army will receive eight "systems," each including six aircraft, that are planned to be eventually used in all of the most contested areas in the country.

Taliban operations in the northern provinces of Jowzjan, Kunduz and Baghlan, besides fighting in southern Helmand, have severely stretched government forces and caused heavy casualties in recent days.

The ScanEagle is an unarmed surveillance aircraft that costs about \$100,000 apiece, with a stabilized turret to carry high-definition and infrared cameras with live video feeds, says its maker Insitu, owned by aviation giant Boeing.

ScanEagles use a pneumatic launcher to take off, and are recovered by a system of cables, letting them operate without an airfield. With a wingspan of about 3 m (10 ft), they can stay aloft up to 24 hours, at an altitude of 4,600 m (15,000 ft). (Reuters)

(7) Cameron Struggles ..

would not vote and 23 percent were undecided.

All sides at the summit said the toughest issue remained Britain's drive to restrict welfare benefits for migrant workers from other EU countries, with east European states fighting to preserve the rights of expatriates already working in the UK and elsewhere. (Reuters)

(8) In a Boost...

Presidents of the APJCCI Khan Jan Alokozai and Zubair Motiwala represented their respective teams at the meeting, which allowed the trial run of trucks carrying Afghan exports to India.

By the same token, one participant said, Kabul agreed to allow Pakistani trucks from Torkham and Chaman to Sher Khan Port near the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border.

On their return journey, Afghan trucks will be allowed to carry Pakistani exports to the landlocked country. Pakistani vehicles will carry Tajik and Central Asian export cargo on their return journey.

For the movement of trucks, Afghanistan suggested finalizing a bilateral transport agreement. Pakistan agreed to provide the draft agreement through diplomatic channels within a month. The draft accord will be discussed at the 7th APTCA meeting to be hosted by Afghanistan in the last week of March. A joint committee will be set up to discuss issues like visas and road permits.

Recommendations of the committee will be sent to the focal points of the APTCA for consideration. The first meeting of the committee will be held in the second week of March in Karachi.

The neighbours also decided to review the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA) in light of the convention on the International Transport of Goods (TIR) to make the accord more appropriate.

Pakistan will consider Afghanistan's proposal to waive off guarantee requirements for items not prone to diversion and to abolish the current negative list for Afghan transit trade.

It was agreed the provisions of the present agreement would be revised and amended appropriately with a view to further facilitating the transit trade. The two sides agreed in principle that the provisions of TIR Convention will be adopted in APTTA. (Pajhwok)

(9) President ...

The president praised officials of the military corps and thanked security forces for defeating Taliban and Daesh insurgents in their provinces. He also ordered that the displaced families who

left their homes due to atrocities of terrorists in some districts of Nangarhar, should be provided with urgent assistance.

He also instructed officials to provide urgent assistance to families affected and displaced by the recent war in Dand-i-Ghori and Dand-i-Shahabuddin areas of Baghlan, the statement said.

The president also insisted that the situation of locations where checkpoints existed, their effectiveness and the presence of personnel should be assessed in order to create reserve forces from some of the personnel where there was no need for checkpoints. (Pajhwok)

(10) Mangal Seeks ...

situated on the Durand Line with Pakistan. He said he would talk to the tribal elders of these areas to ensure the protection of TAPI gas pipeline.

Few months back, TAPI countries finally inked the implantation accord of the projects and the construction work of the pipeline was launched. (Pajhwok)

(11) Military ...

coordination and security measures on their respective sides of the border. The visiting officials laid a floral wreath at the Shuhada monument and praised the sacrifices of the Pakistan Army in the fight against terrorism. (Pajhwok)

(12) Number of ...

all seminaries and introduce a standard curriculum, Mukhlis said, hoping the religious education system in Takhar would measure up to public expectations.

Munsif Rahman, the founder of Tahseen-ul-Quran madrasa in Taloqan, said he had founded the seminary to offer a sound religious education within the province. He confirmed some Afghan in Pakistan were trained on terror techniques.

Rahman, who has also studied at a Pakistani madrasa, claimed: "I was urged by teachers to join jihad and conduct suicide attacks in Afghanistan. But I told them the Quran doesn't enjoin suicide attacks -- an un-Islamic act."

Without giving further details about Pakistani seminaries, he said: "I decided to build a madrasa in Takhar after hearing such things from Pakistani teachers." He added tens of students were currently enrolled in his madrasa, where the poor are exempted from paying a monthly fee of 300 afghanis. "I use this money to pay my house rent and teacher salaries."

A girl student of Tahseen-ul-Quran, Nasima Taqwa, said she was memorising the Quran in line with tajweed (the right pronunciation).

"I am happy I am attending this madrasa near my home. Getting education is the duty of all of us," she said, calling ignorance and illiteracy the main cause of violence in society.

Parliament members previously said Afghan students in Pakistan were taught terrorist techniques instead of religious education. They Islamic madrasas be built inside Afghanistan to prevent Afghan youths from travelling to Pakistan. (Pajhwok)

(13) Refusal to...

Noorullah, an eyewitness. He added that the issue led to a dispute and then guns were fired.

Kabul residents expressed their concern over the incident and said that when an official from the MoI is not ready to abide by a presidential decree then how can they expect ordinary people to do so.

"This campaign is only being implemented on common people, not on powerful people. I don't believe that the campaign will be a success," said Shayan, a resident of Kabul city.

Kabul police declined to comment in this regard. However, the MoI said that police should know how to behave with high-ranking officials. "The police are investigating the incident. However, police should know how to behave with high-ranking officials from the

ministry," Sediq Sediqqi, the spokesman for the MoI, said. He added that the MoI is committed to investigating the incident. (Tolnews)

(14) 45 Militants ...

wracked country, are yet to make comment.

However, Taliban fighters, according to local observers would further speed up activities amid the ongoing peace efforts to have upper hand if agreed to sit on negotiating table with Afghan government.

The third round of four-nation talks - Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the United States - was held in Islamabad on Feb. 6 in Islamabad to encourage Taliban to join the peace process, and the fourth round of the talks would be held in Kabul next week. (Xinhua)

(15) Protests Staged ...

well as the outage of power," said Muhiauddin Farahmand, a civil society activist.

He accused government of supporting the Taliban, because it is not breaking its silence over the issues.

Shewa Sharq, another activist, said that Dand-e-Ghori deal was the main reason behind insecurity in northern Afghanistan, particularly Baghlan province.

"We want those who have struck the deal with the Taliban to be punished," he said.

The protestors threatened to continue their protest action if the government does not address their demands.

"If the government continues to be silent, more people will take to the streets to force the government to break its silence. This silence, if continued, will push the country towards destruction," said Zabihullah Naseri, a businessman.

The government has on several occasions in the past promised to restore electricity to Kabul city after insurgents blew up power lines in Baghlan province; however, the presence of militants in Dand-e-Shahbuddin area of Baghlan is making it hard for the government to repair the lines and fulfill its promise. (Tolnews)

(16) Laid off Balkh...

but I have not got my salaries as yet," another dismissed officer, Mohammad Halim, said. "If the government doesn't listen to us, we would carry out a bigger rally," he warned.

The unity government should pay salaries to the laid off officers, the provincial council head, Mohammad Afzal Hadid, said while assured the protesters of conveying their demand to high officials. (Pajhwok)

(17) Pugwash Opens...

the Afghanistan conflict, a participant of the Qatar conference said. They would try to pave the way for direct talks between Taliban and the Afghan government, another participant of the conference said.

The sources said Dr. Anwarul Haq, Mirwais Yasini, Haji Farid, Haji Rohullah Nikpa, Syed Ishaq Gilani and some others were members of the Pugwash office. The organization opens its office ahead of the next round of quadrilateral talks centred on the Afghan peace process on Feb 23 in Kabul. (Pajhwok)

(18) Afghani Dips...

continued devaluation of the afghani which could badly affect the country's economy.

Food traders union, Fazal Rahman, said the price of sugar price increased during the outgoing week when flour rate declined.

The rate of a 49-kg bag of Kazakh flour declined from 1260afs to 1200afs due to an increase in the commodity's imports and its lowering prices in the international market. The same quantity of Pakistani sugar's price aged up from 1800 afs to 1810 afs due to a decrease in its imports.

A 16-litre of Momin ghee was counted for 960afs and a 25-kg sack of rice for 1650 afs, the same prices as last week's, he said.

A kg of Madina green tea was sold for 220afs and the same quantity of African black tea for 240afs, dealer Fazal Ahmad in Kabul food market said.

But a retailer in Dahn-i-Bagh area, Ahmad Javed, sold a 49-kg bag of flour for 1,300afs, a 49-kg sack of sugar for 1,900afs and a 24-kg bag of rice for 1,800afs.

He sold a 16-litre tin of Momin ghee for 1,050afs, a kilo of African black tea for 260afs and the same quantity of Madina green tea for 250afs -- higher than wholesale prices.

Mohammad Fawad, a jeweller in Timor Shahi neighbourhood, said gold prices remained unchanged as one gram of Arabian gold was sold for 2,200afs and the same quantity of the Russian variety at 1,800afs.

Abdul Hadi, a filling station worker in Wazirabad locality, said a liter of petrol was sold at 39 afs and the same amount of diesel at 33 afs, the same prices as last week's.

Mohammad Sharif, a liquefied gas seller in Kolola Pushta neighborhood, sold a kilogram of gas for 40afs, the same rate as last week's.

Per 560 kilograms of unpeeled oak sold for 6,400afs and the same quantity of cedar at 6200 afs, said a firewood stall owner in Charah-i-Shaheed locality, Khan Mohammad. (Pajhwok)

(19) Kidnapped Young ...

was unknown. The official said Mohammad Arif was brother of Khashrod police chief who had been sentenced to jail for negligence in duty.

Khashrod district chief, Mohammad Hasham Noorzai, said the body of Arif was handed over to police by local elders.

The Taliban have not yet commented on the incident, but the group had previously said the kidnapped men were members of a security post in Khashrod district.

Residents of Nimroz province have recently protested against the increasing incidents of kidnapping and have asked the government to improve security and prevent such incidents. (Pajhwok)

(20) Swedish Charity...

to be granted safety according to humanitarian law. SCA is a neutral party in the military conflict that prevails in Afghanistan," he said.

A spokesman for the charity, Khalid Fahim, told VOA that the clinic has been closed following the deadly intrusion, insisting the patients under treatment at SCA clinics have the right to be protected. But, relief operations elsewhere in Afghanistan are continuing, he said.

"Of course, it [the attack] has a psychological negative impact on the people who are seeking medical assistance in the health facilities. Everyone has the right to seek medical assistance and we have the obligation to provide the medical assistance without any discrimination," said Fahim, saying provincial authorities are aware of the incident.

The SCA has been working in 13 of the 34 Afghanistan provinces for more than 30 years, delivering services in healthcare, education and rural development sectors.

Separately, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said Thursday its has suspended relief operations in the eastern Ghazni province after unknown "armed groups" captured five of its local staff.

An ICRC spokesman Ahmad Rameen, told VOA the captives are "safe and in good health," but refused to provide further details. (VoA)

(21) Five Kidnapped...

in the province in the wake of abduction.

Ghazni and the neighboring Zabol province has been the scene of hostage attacks along main roads over the past one year. (Reuters)

(22) Drug Trafficker ...

DCA, says a package of narcotic drug that tested positive to hashish weighing 1.03 kilograms was confiscated from the trespasser. Criminal proceedings have been instituted against the alleged drug trafficker and an investigation is under way. (Asia-Plus)

(23) Senior NDS ...

Wishing anonymity, the security official told Pajhwok Afghan News that Ismail was traveling in his car on the city's ring road when the attached magnetic bomb exploded.

Deputy Governor Abdul Wahid Patan confirmed the incident but did not go into the details of the explosion.

Mohammad Aslam, an eye witness, said the explosion took place in a car and one person on board was killed. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack. (Pajhwok)

(24) Syrian Kurdish...

ago in my meeting with him (Obama), I told him the U.S. was supplying weapons. Three plane loads arrived, half of them ended up in the hands of Daesh (Islamic State), and half of them in the hands of the PYD," he said. (Reuters)

(25) THAAD ...

it had successfully tested its first hydrogen bomb, raised serious concerns around the world as many considered it was a test of a ballistic missile that could be used to launch a nuclear weapon.

Kim said that though the United States cited DPRK move as a pretext for deploying THAAD, it is the DPRK's two bigger neighbors that THAAD is targeted.

The THAAD system was designed to intercept intercontinental ballistic missiles at an altitude of over 50 km, but if the DPRK wanted to use nuclear weapons against South Korea, it would use rockets that fly at much lower altitudes, Kim said. (Xinhua)

(26) Refugee Policies...

wards. "UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) and the World Food Program asked for more money. However the European countries ignored the cry for help," he said.

In addition, a European solution was neglected, Langthaler said, adding most European countries refuse to participate in a distribution program. (Xinhua)

(27) US Warplanes ...

cial said up to 60 militants were present at the camp at the time of the strike by U.S. Air Force F-15E strike aircraft based in Europe. Cook said Tunisian officials in May 2015 had named Chouchane as a suspect in a March 18, 2015 attack on the Bardo Museum in Tunis.

"He facilitated the movement of potential ISIL-affiliated foreign fighters from Tunisia to Libya and onward to other countries," Cook said.

"Destruction of the camp and Chouchane's removal will eliminate an experienced facilitator and is expected to have an immediate impact on ISIL's ability to facilitate its activities in Libya, including recruiting new ISIL members, establishing bases in Libya, and potentially planning external attacks on U.S. interests in the region," Cook added. (AP)

(28) Sri Lanka's ...

into, the shortcomings in the existing Free Trade Agreement with India should be ironed out and bureaucratic blocks that Sri Lankan exporters have experienced in India should be eliminated. "In 2014, we imported 4,023 million USD worth of goods from India and exported goods worth only 625 million USD to India. After more than 15 years of the FTA, Sri Lanka's largest export item to India is areca nut. If the FTA with India was working as it should, nobody would object to further expanding economic cooperation with our neighbor. Furthermore, we believe that a satisfactory solution to the Indian fishermen's issue should be found before going on to other bilateral matters," the opposition said.

The opposition called upon the Sri Lankan business community, professionals, and the general public to oppose the "foreignisation" of the Sri Lankan economy by surreptitious means. The opposition says it believes that any foreign investments in Sri Lanka should be channelled into areas that Sri Lanka is unable to develop on its own. (Xinhua)