

**(1) Let us...**

solutions.  
"All that we strive for as a human family - dignity and hope, progress and prosperity - depends on peace. But peace depends on us."  
The former UNHCR chief concluded: "I appeal to you all to join me in committing to peace, today and every day. Let us make 2017 a year for peace." (Pajhwok)

**(2) 1005 Schools ...**

registered in the system receive 5,000 to 8,000 afghanis salaries.  
Mohaqq also said 40 percent of 16,000 schools in the country lacked buildings. The MoE has repeatedly reminded the shortage of budget to the Ministry of Finance, but to no avail, he said. (Pajhwok)

**(3) Afghan Forces...**

amount of the population it secures." The NATO spokesman expressed confidence over the capabilities of ANDSF and said they performed better in 2016 compared to 2015 and expected that would have more gains this year.

He said NATO was working together with Afghan security institutions in areas of countering corruption, leadership training, collective training, distributing new equipment and recruiting and training new personnel.

About the Taliban strategies in the future he said the group failed to execute its planning of capturing provincial capitals, adding they would try the same strategy in the future.

"The Taliban failed to achieve any of their strategic objectives in 2016, namely the capture of a provincial capital. They tried eight times and were unsuccessful every time. So we expect them to make another attempt to seize a provincial capital, he said" He added, the Taliban should know that they would not win militarily and the only path towards peace is a political reconciliation.

The NATO spokesman hinted they expected IS-K, Al Qaeda, and the other terrorist groups to attempt high profile attacks against Afghan citizens and infrastructure.

When asked about Daesh activities in the eastern part of the country Gen. Cleveland said: "Our shared goal with our Afghan partners is the defeat of IS-K, and we will not relent until they have been defeated."

He recalled last year, when as a result of combined efforts of the ANDSF and the US resulted in killing the top 12 IS-K leaders, 500 IS-K members, and reducing their territory from 10 districts to less than three. The ANDSF and the US would continue targeting IS-K wherever they are.

In his message to Afghan forces the NATO spokesman assured them full support, saying decision made in Warsaw and Brussels summits would be honored and the international community was with Afghanistan.

He said NATO would continue providing capability and would make Afghan forces stronger. (Pajhwok)

**(4) Gen. Bajwa ...**

deflect attention from political controversies plaguing the Afghan national unity government and "deteriorating security situation" in the neighboring country.

In a separate statement Saturday, the army also released latest casualty tolls for its counter-militancy operations in volatile northwestern tribal areas on the Afghan border and elsewhere in Pakistan.

The military-led Zarb-e-Azb offensive has killed more than 3,500 terrorists since it was launched in June 2014, while around 600 soldiers have also died and more than 2,000 have been wounded, according to the statement. Afghan officials say that militants fleeing the offensive have crossed to their side of the porous border, adding to the security challenges facing conflict-torn Afghanistan. (VoA)

**(5) Work Starts...**

Shukrullah Atif Mashal, said that he had also reviewed Paktia province's new cricket field and found it to be below standard.

"Unfortunately I have to say that the work process (of Paktia's cricket field) is not up to standard and when I go to Kabul I will check the agreement and then I will talk to the company. I will find the problem and solve it quickly," Mashal said.

Zalmai Wesa, Paktia's provincial governor, said: "I believe that the head of the ACB is very serious in his work and will solve the issues of the stadium because the Paktia cricket field is Afghanistan's international cricket stadium."

"We are also asking the ACB to look into creating cricket academies in the province (Paktia)," Wesa said.

Paktia's stadium was built on 35 acres of land and construction cost about \$1.5 million USD, which came out of the ACB's development budget. (To-

lonews)

**(6) AIHRC Urge ...**

should be ashamed if the allegations are true," said Abdul Wadood Paiman, an MP.

The AGO meanwhile said they are investigating the issue. Dostum nor the Presidential Palace have commented. Institutions defending the law have said the issue should be resolved quickly as it is damaging to Afghanistan's reputation. (Tolonews)

**(7) Rehab Pays ...**

at the center but they can also learn new skills such as tailoring, carpentry and electronics.

Workers at the center meanwhile appealed to the public to help addicts and not isolate them - including recovering addicts. (Tolonews)

**(8) Experts ...**

because neither the people nor us as election observers are aware of their work, we do not know what they have worked on so far," said Habibullah Shinwari, a member of Election and Transparency Watch Afghanistan.

The government and the IEC pledged to bring systematic reforms to the electoral system in order to hold free and fair elections. (Tolonews)

**(9) Afghan Army...**

meanwhile said Afghan security forces are continuing their training exercises in order to prepare for the next fighting season.

"Maneuvers continue in all our army corps and units in preparation for the next fighting season, officers from academies and centers support them," said Farooq Wahidi, a defense ministry commander.

General Laal Jan Zaheer, from the academy, meanwhile said insurgents are plotting to launch an attack on their compound in a bid to disrupt military training.

"The enemy plans to dismantle the process of training at the military center, but we are fully alert to retaliate against an enemy attack," said Zaheer.

One graduate, Shah Wali, who is from Baghlan province, said he is committed to defending his country's independence and sovereignty. Wali said during his training he learned to use several types of weapons.

"We studied for ten months and learned how to use the weapons including M16, M40 and other weapons," said Wali.

Another graduate, Raihanullah said: "We learned how to fight against the enemy by using our training."

Former 209 Shaheen Army Corps commander, General Abdul Hameed Hameed meanwhile said: "Those who stand on the opposite side (insurgents), try to guide them and invite them; if they refuse, eliminate them; those who act against our people and country are the enemy to us."

There are indications that Afghanistan will have another tough year on the battlefields.

Charles Cleveland, a spokesperson for the Resolute Support (RS) mission in Afghanistan, last week warned that the war will intensify next fighting season as the Taliban have already started preparing for it.

"The Taliban's public statements that they are going to reduce the civilian casualty toll and protect infrastructure - the facts on the ground dispute that and the facts on the ground highlight that they just indiscriminately (carry out) violence against civilians and Afghans," he said. (Tolonews)

**(10) 15 NATO..**

14 Americans. The 16 fatalities were the second lowest number since 2002. Only 12 foreign forces were killed in 2001 when the US and foreign forces launched a military campaign against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan.

Following is the number of foreign forces casualties since 2001 in Afghanistan by each year.

Year	Casualties	Year
2002	70	200
9	521	
2003	58	201
0	711	
2004	60	201
1	566	
2005	131	201
2	402	
2006	191	201
3	161	
2007	232	201
4	75	
2008	295	201
5	27	

Helmand has proved to be most deadly province for foreign forces in Afghanistan where 956 foreign forces had been killed most of them British troops since 2001.

In Kandahar, 558 NATO troops had died, in Kabul 191, in Kunar 177, in Paktika 146, in Maidan Wardak 130, in Zabul 124, in Ghazni 115 and in Uruzgan 69 during the decade old

conflict.

During the same period, 5523 Afghan security forces were killed and more than 10,000 wounded, according to a report by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR).

The agency has also warned of eroding gains the war-shattered country has made with the help of the international community.

The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) in its quarterly report published Sunday noted the Afghan government lost 2.2 percent territorial control during this year's fighting.

"Of Afghanistan's 407 districts, 258 districts were under government control or influence, 33 districts were under insurgent control or influence, and 116 districts were "contested."

There were 101 insider attacks from January 1, 2015 through August 19, 2016 in which Afghan National Defense and Security Force (ANDSF) personnel turned on fellow security forces, killing 257 and wounding 125 others.

"The ANDSF lacks a risk-management system and therefore relies heavily on US forces to prevent strategic failure."

The Taliban have intensified battlefield and other attacks since August and came close to recapturing the northern city of Kunduz and the capital of southern Helmand province.

The insurgents continue to stage assaults on these two key urban centers and several other provincial capitals, inflicting heavy casualties on Afghan forces.

The conflict-related incidents have caused more than 8,000 civilian casualties in Afghanistan, including more than 2,500 deaths in the first nine months of 2016, according to the United Nations.

SIGAR reported that the United States has committed at least \$1 billion for projects intended to improve conditions for Afghan women, but support for woman having equal access to education and equal representation in political leadership has fallen since 2006.

"Fifteen years after the United States ousted the Taliban regime, Afghanistan remains one of the worst places in the world to be a woman."

Poverty, unemployment, underemployment, violence, out-migration, internal displacement and the education gender gap have all increased, while services and private investment have decreased, according to SIGAR.

The report says more than 85,000 Afghans sought asylum for the first time in the European Union in the first six months of 2016, noting that the number of asylum applications from April to June was 83 percent higher compared to the same period in 2015. (Pajhwok)

**(11) Sangin, Marja...**

told Pajhwok Afghan News that Iran had provided new weapons to the Taliban to destabilize some parts of Afghanistan.

Abdul Hamid Akhonzada, deputy provincial council chief, scolded official claims about improvement in security situation of the country, saying no progress had been made.

He claimed militants defended areas they had captured and no progress had been made in retaking the areas.

Governor spokesman Omar Zwak confirmed clashes were ongoing in Sangin and Marja districts, denying Taliban's advance after heavy clashes. He said the Taliban did not capture new areas and would be defeated soon.

Helmand province is comprised of 13 districts and provincial capital Lashkar-gah. Six districts are being controlled by Taliban.

Few months back, Taliban intensified their attacks in Helmand, reaching close to the governor's house, but they were pushed back and the provincial capital was rescued. (Pajhwok)

**(12) HIA Commander ..**

the past one month. No one prevented him from doing so.

"The commander has grabbed more than 50 acres of land forcefully in the area. Mirwais pocketed millions of Afghans while selling every 600m2 land for 120,000 Afghans to people."

Haji Mohammad Nabi, another tribal elder from Baghlan-i-Markazi, claimed following the peace agreement between the government and HIA, the group's members were independently commuting government areas, whereas government officials were not permitted to go to areas.

He said HIA members sold pieces of the grabbed land and distributed to people in Salamkhel and Walikhel areas, an act which brought law enforcement and governance into question and also paved the way for land grabbers to occupy more lands.

He blasted the government's silence in this regard, saying attitude state machinery encouraged usurpers to grab lands freely and without fear.

However, District Chief Gawhar Khan Babari, told Pajhwok Afghan News nearly 1,000 Afghan migrants repatriated from Pakistan this solar year who

had been settled in Salamkhel, Walikhel and other parts of the province.

He said the repatriated families had recently started building shelters for themselves in the areas. "A number of people have informed the district centre that the returnees purchase the land from HIA."

However, he added, the security wasn't ensured properly in Salamkhel and other areas and government officials couldn't visit the areas to look into the issue from close. "It is the reason we can say nothing specific about the matter."

However, Col. Mohibullah, the provincial police chief, confirmed the HIA Commander Mirwais had sold state-owned land including the area allocated for a prison.

Meanwhile, Baghlan-i-Markazi police chief, while admitting that police couldn't solely prevent the practice said they had kept the governor house and provincial police headquarters in the loop but no step had been taken in this regard as yet.

On the other hand, Abdul Qayoom Niazi, deputy governor of Baghlan, said they received the information about the HIA commander distributing government lands. There were discussions over the issue, which would soon be resolved.

"Land sold by the HIA commander situated in insecure area. We are trying to prevent the land distribution without being engaged in fighting. More troops will be dispatched to the area in case of need," he said.

Pajhwok tried to seek comments from the HIA commander in this regard, but repeated calls to him went unanswered. (Pajhwok)

**(13) Taliban ...**

the report so far.

Herat is among the relatively peaceful provinces in western Afghanistan but the Taliban insurgents are active in some remote districts of the province.

The group often conducts insurgency activities by carrying out direct attacks, road side bombings, and establishing check posts to kidnap those working for the government.

This comes despite the provincial governor of Herat Mohammad Asif Rahimi's earlier statement where he said the abduction cases have reduced by almost 40 percent in this province.

In the meantime, the Afghan forces are busy conducting their annual counter-terrorism operations which were launched in response to Taliban's annual spring offensive. (KP)

**(14) Students ...**

the issue and evict those who don't belong," said Mujib Mehrdad, spokesman for the MoE.

According to the regulations, a student who achieves a total aggregate of 65 percent can live in a hostel for nine months of the year. (Tolonews)

**(15) Police Beat...**

under investigation.

A number of journalists of in Heart dubbed the incident and said any disrespect to Afghan citizens, particularly to journalists was unacceptable. They asked the government to investigate the incident.

Governor's spokesman, Jailani Farhad, confirmed the incident and said an investigation was underway into the incident.

A day earlier, the editor in chief of a private radio station, Radio Urooj, was also beaten up in Herat. (Pajhwok)

**(16) Afghan Migrant ...**

minor injuries and was apparently saved by her thick clothes after attacked with the kitchen knife.

The latest incident involving knife attack comes as the Afghan refugees are already facing numerous problems in the European countries besides thousands of them are stranded in eastern European countries.

Earlier, a court in Sweden awarded jail terms for a group of five Afghan teens after they were convicted with gang rape of a fellow refugee.

The prosecutors had earlier urged the court to deport the convicts but the request was overturned considering the deteriorating security situation of Afghanistan. (KP)

**(17) Gang Killing...**

of the Kandahar Airport.

He identified the detainees as Hedayatullah aka Pahlawan, Taj Mohammad, Jumma Khan and Gul Ahmad aka Kuchni Talib.

A fifth person, Sardar Wali, who also was involved in the crime, has managed to escape but police were searching for him, he said.

Atrafi said the men were arrested by detective organs and police forces of 4th police district of Kandahar city.

"These individuals were involved in militant activities under the leadership of a rebel commander in Kandahar City," the police official said, adding the detainees had confessed to killing the five female employees of Kandahar Airport and their driver.

One of the detainees, Hedayatullah, told Pajhwok that the plot was made by their commander Mubarak Shah and a local prayer leader Taj Mohammad. He said that Taj Mohammad was injured in the incident.

"I and Kuchni Talib were guarding on that day, Taj Mohammad, Sardar Wali and Jumma Khan who had a Kalashnikov and two pistols opened fire at the car and killed five women and their driver," he said.

He said he had been promised 5,000 afghanis after the attack, but he did not receive the money.

"Taj Mohammad and Sardar Wali were ahead of me and I was following them, Mohammad had a Kalashnikov and I and Wali had pistols, they opened fire at the car first and then I. Then I was taken to a place on motorcycle and I entered a mosque," he said.

Khan confirmed Taj Mohammad was the Imam of a mosque in the 4th police district and he had been receiving religious education from him.

The women and their driver, who worked in the Kandahar Airport civil terminal, were killed while heading to their duty station from home in Kandahar City on December 17. (Pajhwok)

**(18) Man Gunned...**

wounded by house owner in overnight robbery attempt in Jera Khana locality, said Police Spokesman Munir Rahmi. Two intruders managed to flee the area, while the injured had been shifted to Balkh Zonal Hospital. (Pajhwok)

**(19) Jawzjan Clash ...**

forces escaped unhurt. Mohammad Salih, a resident of Shirkel village, said the clash continued for several hours near their village.

He said a group of security forces, who surrendered to Taliban militants two days back, might be involved in the attack.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid denied the fighters suffered any casualties in the attack, saying security forces sustained heavy casualties in the battle. (Pajhwok)

**(20) Traffic Officials ...**

ply roads.

"Before the end of deadline we asked the Presidential Palace and Ministry of Interior (MoI) to help rounding up right-hand vehicles but no response has been received as yet," he said.

But MoI Spokesman Sedique Sediqui said some issues were clearly interop-rated by laws and the traffic department should not seek permission of other institutions and should act accordingly.

"Our directives for the traffic department are to act according to the traffic laws of the country," he added.

According to the traffic officials the licenses of as many as 6,000 right-hand drive vehicles has been expired last year in April. (Pajhwok)

**(21) 2 Heroin Labs, ...**

National Army (ANA) and National Security Directorate (NDS) special units was conducted on Saturday night in Deh Balal district. A large cache of ammunition belonging to insurgents was destroyed in the operation.

According to the statement, four insurgents were also killed during a firefight with security forces as part of the operation.

Lt. Col. Hazrat Hussain Mashriqiwal, the provincial police spokesman, told Pajhwok Afghan News such overnight operation were being conducted by special security forces stationed in Kabul who didn't keep local authorities in the loop.

The Taliban are yet to comment in this regard. (Pajhwok)

**(22) Taliban Kill ..**

to come to neutralize the bomb near his home."

"Abdul Khaliq was dragged out of his home by the insurgents, who planted the bomb, and after trial by a kangaroo court he was struck to death with weapons butt and barrel."

However, a Taliban commander in the area alleged Khaliq had given refuge to an Afghan Local Police (ALP) member in his home 20 days back. He claimed Khaliq also informed the government about the bomb they placed to blow up ALP personnel.

The insurgent commander said the fighters didn't have the intention to kill Khaliq, but only wanted to punish and jail him for a while. However, the fighters hit him with guns on their way bringing him to the group's leader and he succumbed to wounds after reaching home.

On the other hand, residents say Abdul Khaliq never gave shelter to ALP man; but the ALP personnel entered his home without his permission. (Pajhwok)

**(23) Erdogan Pledges...**

others, with four in critical condition, according to the Turkish authorities.

Foreigners are among the casualties, a fact that is believed to further hit Turkey's flagging tourism.

Istanbul Governor Vasip Sahin described the shooting spree as an act of terrorism. The police are still hunting the gunman who slipped out of the night club in chaos.

Istanbul and other Turkish cities have come under a spate of deadly attacks over the past year, with the last one also hitting Besiktas on Dec. 10, in which twin suicide bombing attacks left 44 dead.

Tight security measures had reportedly been enforced in Ankara and Istanbul for New Year celebrations, including banning entry of trucks, lorries and concrete mixers into some districts. (Xinhua)

**(24) S.Korea ...**

sanctions and pressure if the country adheres to nuclear development.

It called on the DPRK to return to the denuclearization path with sincerity if the DPRK wants peace on the Korean Peninsula and improved ties with South Korea. (Xinhua)

**(25) Islamic State ...**

Turkey seeks to help Syrian rebels unseat the government of President Bashar Assad. The Kurds are a large ethnic minority in Syria and a U.S. ally in the international fight against ISIS, but Turkey views Kurdish fighters as terrorists after decades of conflict in southern Turkey along the Syrian border.

The United Nations Security Council was slated to vote soon on a resolution backed by Russia to end the fighting in Syria. The cease fire calls for talks between the Syrian government and opposition led by Russia and Turkey as a peaceful way to end the war. (Monitoring Desk)

**(26) US General ...**

liberate Mosul and surrounding areas in Nineveh province began in mid-October, but most of the major fighting inside the city has been done by Iraqi special forces, known as the Counter Terrorism Service.

Since the new offensive began, the special forces have pushed forward in at least two neighborhoods in the city's eastern sector, while the army's 9th and 16th Divisions also made headway south and north of the capital, respectively. The 9th Division was joined by units of the militarized Federal Police, while the 16th was bolstered by other army units.

Uribe said the Iraqi forces are "at their peak," and "will continue to improve because of the lessons they are learning on a daily basis." (AP)

**(27) Spain: 1,100...**

Most migrants who try to cross are intercepted on the spot and returned to Morocco. Those that make it over the fences are eventually repatriated or let go.

Thousands more try to reach Europe by crossing the Mediterranean Sea, often in small craft unfit for the open sea.

Also on Sunday, a ship of Spain's maritime rescue service rescued 52 migrants trying to reach Spain's southern coast in a small boat. (AP)

**(28) China's ..**  
services continued to attract the interest of Chinese investors.

The report expected Chinese investment in U.S. to continue experiencing growth in 2017, because Chinese companies are keen to upgrade technology and build out brands and local consumer presence.

Other factors, such as stable U.S. economic outlook and the appreciation of U.S. dollar, also played a role in boosting Chinese investment.

However, the report warned that political realities are likely to pose a major downside risk to the Chinese investment. "Chinese investors also face greater uncertainty and political deal risk in the United States in the aftermath of the Presidential election," said the report.

President-elect Donald Trump's cabinet appointments suggest a more confrontational approach to trade and investment policy toward China, it said. In addition, China is tightening administrative controls on certain types of transactions amid rising capital outflow pressure, which could also pose uncertainty for the outlook of the Chinese investment in U.S., the report added. (Xinhua)

**(29) Iran Hailed...**

Iran sealed with the five permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany - the so-called P5+1 group of countries. Turkmenistan had threatened to stop the gas flow across the border if Iran does not settle a debt which it claims remains outstanding from previous imports until Saturday.

Ashgabat claimed that Iran owed it \$1.8 billion from sales between 2007 and 2008 when freezing winters led to severe shortages across 20 Iranian provinces, forcing the country to raise gas imports from its northeastern neighbor. (Presstv)