

(1) US President Assails ...

Trump said in his first tweet of the year.

This is the strongest warning that has come from the US President. Trump in fact has been echoing India and Afghanistan – the two neighbours of Pakistan – that it is using state sponsor of terrorism to serve its national security purposes.

In his South Asia Policy unveiled in August, Trump had called for tougher measure against Pakistan if it did not cooperate the United States in its fight against terrorism. MORE

“We can no longer be silent about Pakistan’s safe havens for terrorist organizations, the Taliban, and other groups that pose a threat to the region and beyond. Pakistan has much to gain from partnering with our effort in Afghanistan. It has much to lose by continuing to harbor criminals and terrorists,” Trump said in his South Asia Policy speech.

Noting that in the past, Pakistan has been a valued partner, Trump alleged that it has also sheltered the same organizations that try every single day to kill Americans.

“We have been paying Pakistan billions and billions of dollars at the same time they are housing the very terrorists that we are fighting. But that will have to change, and that will change immediately. No partnership can survive a country’s harboring of militants and terrorists who target U.S. servicemembers and officials. It is time for Pakistan to demonstrate its commitment to civilization, order, and to peace,” he said.

In December, the Pentagon warned Pakistan of unilateral action if Islamabad did not act. Before Christmas in a surprise visit to Afghanistan, the Vice President Mike Pence had said that Trump has put Pakistan on notice.

“For too long Pakistan has provided safe haven to the Taliban and many terrorist organizations, but those days are over,” Pence told American troops at the Bagram airbase in Afghanistan where he made an unannounced trip on December 21.

“President Trump has put Pakistan on notice,” Pence said, addressing about 500 troops in a hangar decorated with Christmas decorations and massive armored vehicles. (Pajhwok)

(2) Afghan Envoy ...

over the last 15 years, and they have given us nothing but lies & deceit, thinking of our leaders as fools.”

They give safe haven to the terrorists we hunt in Afghanistan, with little help. No more!” Trump said. (Pajhwok)

(3) Afghanistan ...

was in agreement with the Ministry of Finance. “In return the mass media should reduce its cost by 25 to 60 percent while publishing adds on violence against children and women, the fight against drugs, abduction and trafficking. These adjustments will be enforced after their publication in Official Gazette” he added. At the 18th meeting of the High Economic Council on ensuring implementation of session (17) directive on Moheb Group business plan, the beneficiary property plan, the progress report on the implementation of the APS and APS system and scrap metals were discussed. “The executive board of the relevant departments after six months of work determined the price of colorless scrap metal and colored metals “said Abdulrahimzai. “At the High Economic Council meeting, the price of the colored metals was approved by scrap metals sales department” he added. (Pajhwok)

(4) Kabul, Ankara ...

“bilateral cooperation and strengthening friendly relations between the two countries. They also talked about cooperation in increasing higher educational facilities for Afghan police officers pursuing bachelor’s and master’s degrees, the source said.

Technical cooperation in improving MoI detective organs’ capacity and dealing with cyber crimes were other issues discussed in the meeting. The two sides also talked about counter-narcotics, treatment of injured Afghan police and establishing a major police hotline center in Afghanistan. Both sides agreed that a high level delegation from Turkey would visit Afghanistan in near future to prepare plans for implementation of these programs. (Pajhwok)

(5) Water Energy...

Afghanistan’s parliament wanted to impeach Osmani for his poor performance in the construction of dams and his failure to achieve the spending targets of the 2016 fiscal budget. On Sunday other lawmakers opposed the impeachment and accused their colleagues of conspiring against Osmani after he refused to accept their illegal demands.

MPs who insisted on the impeachment, argue that the spending of less than 60 percent of the budget and poor performance in the construction of dams were among key reasons that the lawmakers decided to call the minister.

“The first reason for impeachment relates to the unspent budget allocation as he has failed to meet the index which had been determined by the parliament. The second reason is the lack of work in the construction of the dams which has angered the representatives of the people,” said Mohammad Nazir Ahmadzai one of the MPs.

Other lawmakers say that certain circles in the parliament have conspired the plot against the minister.

“There are certain circles which are trying to create a conspiracy, especially the mafia groups which have not been able to work because their contracts have been annulled by the presidential palace,” said another MP Ghulam Farooq Majroh. (Tolonews)

(6) Over 60 Suicide...

targets of such attacks.

The Afghan defense ministry has meanwhile said it does not believe that these attacks have been carried out by Daesh.

“We can say that Taliban are behind of most of the suicide attacks which even Daesh do not know about. They (Taliban) carry out the attacks under the name of Daesh,” defense ministry spokesman Dawlat Waziri said.

The Afghan interior ministry said there is a source that supports Daesh and Taliban in their fights in Afghanistan.

“In Afghanistan, the same source supports Daesh and Taliban,” interior ministry spokesman Najib Danish said. Below are some Daesh attacks in 2017 with the number of fatalities and injuries:

- Attack on Tabyan Cultural Center in Kabul, 42 killed and 84 wounded
- Attack on Jawadia Mosque in Herat, 29 killed and 46 wounded
- Attack on Shamsad TV in Kabul, 2 killed and 21 wounded
- Attack on Imam Zaman mosque in Kabul, 50 killed and 46 wounded
- Attack on a mosque in Ghor province, 33 killed and 46 wounded
- Attack on al-Zahra Mosque in Kabul, 7 killed and 21 wounded

Mujtaba who has a shop near the Tabyan center says that transferring the bodies of killed and wounded people took one hour. He urged insurgents not to target civilians.

“When we were carrying the bodies, some had no head, and some had no legs. We urge the insurgent groups not to target civilians. Among those killed and wounded people, none were sons of the president or of MPs,” said Mujtaba.

AHRC spokesman Bilal Sediqqi said killing civilians is a war crime and criticized the government for not investigating the cases of those who have committed war crimes.

When the Daesh group appeared first in parts of the country, the Afghan government said it was not a serious threat. But by the passing of time, the group expanded its attacks which claimed lives of dozens of civilians. (Tolonews)

(7) 81 Journalists ...

s many as 250 journalists were also jailed during the period.

It said media remained in the grip of extreme violence from insurgents in Afghanistan and the ruthless reign of organised crime groups in Mexico. Most of the journalists were killed in Mexico. The level of killings was also high in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.

Countries with the highest numbers of killings are: Mexico (13), Afghanistan (11), Iraq (11), Syria (10), India (6), Philippines (4), Pakistan (4), Nigeria (3), Somalia (3) and Honduras (3). The IFJ said there were journalist casualties in other countries of the world as well.

On the other hand, the Afghanistan-based NAI, a media advocacy group, claims about 21 journalists and media people were killed in 2017. It said about 41 journalists also suffered injuries across the country.

According to NAI, about two media persons were killed and three others wounded on a monthly basis in 2017. The group added 85 journalists and media professionals had been killed since 2001 in Afghanistan.

As many as 1204 cases of violence on journalists had also been recorded during the period, it added.

“We welcome the reduction for the third year in a row in the loss of life suffered by journalists and media staff around the world during 2017,” said IFJ President Philippe Leruth.

“While this represents a downward trend, the levels of violence in journalism remain unacceptably high.

We find it most disturbing that this decrease cannot be linked to any measure by governments to tackle the impunity for these crimes targeting journalists. Instead, the patterns don’t change in the most violent countries such as Mexico and India,” he remarked. (Pajhwok)

(8) Last Year, 48,000 ...

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

As a result of the campaign, the registered individuals will receive Afghan Citizen Cards legalising their stay in Pakistan for indefinite period of time. A million undocumented Afghans are to be documented during the drive.

In order to achieve the registration target, the source revealed, the government could extend the programme for two months. A decision in this regard could be taken on January 5.

He continued the refugees might get two more extensions after December 2018 due to the unstable security situation in Afghanistan and lack of economic opportunities for the returnees. The registered Afghans, whose number is estimated at 1.4 million, lost their refugee status in Pakistan on Sunday. The Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) has recommended a one-year extension for them.

Subject to the recommendation of the federal cabinet, Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi may grant the refugees a new extension within the next fortnight. The refugees have already been given five extensions. (Pajhwok)

(9) 17 Foreign ...

the Islamic State group in its stronghold in a small eastern area of the country.

Two more foreign forces killed in Afghanistan last year belonged to Georgia and Romania.

The US and its coalition partners military intervention back in October 2001 toppled the Taliban government. Only 12 foreign forces were killed in 2001.

The number of foreign forces fatalities surged slowly with 70 killed in 2002, 57 killed in 2003, 60 killed in 2004, 131 killed 2005, 191 killed in 2006, 232 killed in 2007, 295 killed in 2008, 521 killed in 2009, 711 killed in 2010, 566 killed in 2011, 402 killed in 2012, 161 killed in 2013, 75 killed in 2014 and 27 killed in 2015.

According to causalities, since 2001 as many as 3,545 foreign forces had been killed in Afghanistan and international military bases. Of them 2,407 were US, 455 British and 683 hailed from other countries.

Afghanistan’s Helmand province had been the deadliest place for foreign forces where 957 foreign forces had been killed since 2001.

In Kandahar, 561, in Kabul 191, in Kunar 177, in Paktika 146, in Maidan Wardak 130, in Zabul 124, in Ghazni 115 and in Uruzgan 69 foreign troops had been killed.

Badakhshan, Sar-i-Pul and Daikundi were provinces where no foreign forces had been killed in the past 17 years. Compared to NATO, Afghan forces fatalities rose tremendously last year. (Pajhwok)

(10) Private Media ...

a proposed draft of MoF exempting all periodical and non-periodical media outlets from tax. (Pajhwok)

(11) Contracts for...

International Financial Corporation. Government institutions including Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat, Ministry of Energy and Water, Ministry of Mines and Petroleum and the Independent Land Authority will also be involved in implementation of the project.

The DLA Piper has been appointed as the consulting firm to assist in agreements with the IMF and IDA on preparation and ownership and the test and evaluation of the projects.

The Shiberghan facility will generate 40 megawatts of electricity while the Mazar-i-Sharif project will produce 50 megawatts of power.

CEO Dr. Abdullah, Vice President Mohammad Sarwar Danish, officials of the National Procurement Commission, ministries and international observers attended the meeting on Saturday evening. (Pajhwok)

(12) Bombing...

one so far had been arrested in connection to this plot, he said.

On the other hand, one person was killed and another wounded during gunfire in Panjsad Famili area of 11th police district in Kabul city.

The incident took place when drivers of two cars opened fire at each other in a street of the area on Sunday night. Mohib Behroz, a relative of one of the involved parties in the shooting, said, “We were in our car and my cousin got off for shopping when a person from a car at our back cursed at us and complained against blocking the

road,”

He said that the men from the car got off and beaten up his cousin that led to gun shooting.

“A person with National Directorate of Security (NDS) uniform opened fire on my uncle and killed him and his son was injured on his feet,” he said.

Police did not arrest the perpetrators of the incident so far, he added.

Deputy MoI spokesman confirmed the incident and said NDS was investigating the overnight incident. (Pajhwok)

(13) Rashid Keeps ...

Strikers captain Travis Head said spin sensation Rashid Khan was an indispensable member of their team’s “bowling barometer” and the key to their BBL campaign.

Rashid produced a man-of-the-match performance in the Strikers’ opening-round win against the Sydney Thunder. Head says his ability to put opposition batsmen in a spin can carry the team a long way.

“He’s the benchmark for us in our bowling,” Head said.

“Rashid is our barometer and set the tone the other night (against the Thunder).”

“He got some crucial wickets and broke the game open, broke it apart, in a match-winning performance.”

“He’s crucial in the middle overs for us and if we can get a couple of wickets early at the top of the order he can break things open for us in the middle of the innings.”

Rashid is first Afghan play in the BBL. “We were probably a little bit rough in our practice matches but we played extremely well the other night and we know how important this game is,” he said.

“If we can go into our New Year’s Eve game (against the Brisbane Heat) with two wins, it will stand us in good stead.” (Tolonews)

(14) Taliban Slay ...

Mohammad, his wife and four daughters.

He said the victims sleep at their house when Taliban broke into the house and opened fire at them.

He said Hafizullah, son of slain Mohammad, was member of a government-backed militia and Taliban had many warned him to leave the uprising but he rejected and a result he lost his family.

There has been so far no word from the Taliban in this regard.

A son in law of Mohammad, Abdul Kahlil, said his father-in-law, mother-in-law and sisters-in-law were killed by Mullah Abdul Rahim, Mullah Nek Mohammad, Mohammadullah, Mualvi Ghaibullah, and Mualvi Rahmatshah, notorious commanders of the group.

He said the motive behind the shooting was their cooperation with the government and his brother-in-law was member of the public uprising group. He urged the government to arrest the killers and bring them to justice. (Pahwok)

(15) Commander ...

“Police frequented the route, on which militants planted explosives. However, forces could not reach the site in time.”

Meanwhile, the Taliban confirmed the incident. The group’s spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, claimed Taliban had planted the mine. Commander Faqeer and six others were killed and six weapons captured by the fighters, he concluded. (Pahwok)

(16) Taliban’s Huge

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

Maidan Wardak is among the relatively volatile provinces in central parts of the country, located close to capital Kabul.

The anti-government armed militants are actively operating in its various districts and often carry out insurgency activities, mainly in the districts lying along the highway connecting Kabul with the southeastern and southern provinces. (KP)

(17) Iranian Military ...

activities and coordination with the authorities and freed Hajmalek on December 24, he added.

He also noted that five people have been arrested inside Iran in connection with the hostage-taking.

In the meantime, Mohammad Sami Tasal, governor of Nimroz province, has rejected Marani’s claim over freeing of an Iranian national on Afghan soil.

“The Afghan border forces are not allowing anybody to launch operations on Afghan soil,” Tasal said, adding that: “No hostage was brought into Nimruz province and no operation has been launched in the province.” (Tolonews)

MPs Slam Govt over Failed Policy on Caretakers

KABUL - Members of Afghanistan’s parliament on Monday strongly criticized the government over what they described as a failure to address the issue of caretakers in the government institutions.

There are now three institutions under caretakers in Kabul. These are the Kabul garrison, Kabul police headquarters and Kabul municipality, all run by the caretakers. MPs accused the government of having failed to address the problem.

The MPs argument is that the absence of a commander for the Kabul police headquarters has also left significant impacts on the security situation in the capital at a time that Kabul is also grappling with threats from the insurgents.

Fawad is one of the residents who lost his father on Sunday when unknown armed men assaulted the 500-Family area of the capital city.

“They hit my father by a bullet. What is this government doing, why does it hand out pistols?” asked Fawad, a son of the victim.

Residents say that over the past few weeks the rate of crime and other security-related issues have increased in the city.

“We arrested over 350 criminals in Kabul since last year,” said Mohammad Salim Almas, head of crime investigation department of Kabul police.

Following last June’s deadly attack in Kabul’s diplomatic enclave that killed over 150 people, the government decided to suspend the job of commander of Kabul garrison and police commander under mounting pressures from the members of the Afghan public.

Later the government announced the appointment of general Mohammad Aman Afzal as acting commander of the garrison and Mohammad Salem Ehas as the commander of Kabul police headquarters.

Kabul’s municipality is also one of the organs is run by a caretaker over the past two years. Abdullah Habibi is currently serving as the acting mayor of Kabul

“Whenever these caretakers are fired from the job, then they claim to be able to continue their job and make demands on the government,” said one MP Mirbat Khan Mangal.

“Caretaker issues directly harm the government of Afghanistan,” said MP Fatima Nazari.

Meanwhile, the ministry of defense and interior affairs have expressed their views about the caretakers in this manner.

“There has not been any kind of work deficiency in the daily operations of the garrison,” said Dawlat Waziri, spokesman for the ministry of defense. “Qualified and able people will be recruited,” said Nusrat Rahimi, deputy spokesman of the ministry of interior. Critics say that the work of caretakers in the government institutions have left major impacts on the governance as the caretakers do not feel accountable. The National Unity Government (NUG) under president Ashraf Ghani and CEO Abdullah Abdullah has been under constant criticism from the Afghan public for their inability to end to the woes of weak governance in institutions run by the caretakers. (Tolonews)

12 Nangarhar Schools Remain Close Due to Insecurity

JALALABAD - As many as 12 schools in different districts of eastern Nangarhar province have been closed due to insecurity but the students of these schools had been provided education opportunity in other schools, an official said on Monday. Syed Esa Sadaat, acting director of the Education Department said, 903 schools had been active in Nangarhar in which 12 schools had been closed due to insecurity. In addition, 84 religious seminaries, 17 teacher training institutes, 22 vocational training institutes and 133 private schools were active in the province.

He said of the total government schools, half had no buildings and surrounding walls which may require years to build the infrastructure. Sadaat said: “The education department got budget for the construction of 10 schools therefore there was need for more time to construct building for schools. Buildings for 10 schools were constructed this year.” (Pajhwok)