

(1) NSC Working ...

and winter plan.

About government's developmental programmes, he said: "A number of projects whose implementation is expected by people are being delayed due to various reasons."

He asked the ministries concerned to specify all problems and submit a report in this regard to next Cabinet meeting in order people could know next year that the government was honouring its promises. (Pajhwok)

(2) Ready to Deal...

with Khak-i-Afghan district of Zabul. Matin said Daesh group had settled on the border between the two districts. Some Daesh members lived with families there, he added.

Jaghori residents said they were worried about Daesh presence in Gilan. A tribal elder in Jaghori, Ali Hussain, said: "We have no problem here but Gilan-based Daesh militants want to attack our district."

He urged the government to take serious steps against Daesh in Gilan at the earliest possible.

Meanwhile, provincial police chief Brig. Gen. Aminullah Amarkhel said Daesh affiliates also traveled to Nawa, Jaghto and Andar districts of the province.

"Daesh are stationed in Khak-i-Afghan and Angoor Ada districts. The militants only travel in Ghazni and don't have any specific centres."

He said they were completely ready to deal with Daesh and not let them reach their goals in Ghazni.

Ghazni is the third most insecure province of Afghanistan after Kunduz and Helmand provinces. The province's Nawa district has been under Taliban control over the past 14 years. (Pajhwok)

(3) Kabul ...

Pajhwok Afghan News that overseeing development projects and holding meetings with local officials and people were among responsibilities of the council to address challenges and problems and then share them with the government.

"Kabul would be safer and there will be more job opportunities if government officials share their social, economic, political and cultural plans and programs with each other and particularly with provincial council members," he said.

He criticized government organs and said the ministries and other government institutes had never shared their programs with the provincial council. Hashemi said the provincial council was fully discharging its responsibility of monitoring local government's performance and sharing its reports with the relevant organs.

"We first began overseeing development projects, then we visited prisons after hearing complaints about prisoners' situation, we also visited some hospitals and schools to monitor their performance and share our reports with the Presidential Palace and the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG)," he added.

A number of prisoners, who languished in jails beyond their jail terms for unknown reasons, had been freed in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior (Moi), the public representative said.

He said expired drugs were collected and destroyed as a result of the provincial council's efforts

Hashemi added some hospitals providing standard services had been advised and others were fined by relevant organs.

Problems in a number of private and government schools monitored by the provincial council had also been shared with the education officials for solution, he said.

"Around 1000 cases of tribal, religious, family and violence against women have been solved by the council."

The council also contacted and met with district chiefs, police chiefs and administrative heads to share with them people's problems in order to help reduce the distance between the people and the government, Hashemi said. With the government not allocating budget for overseeing projects and holding tribal Jirgas for solving people's problems, the provincial council members traveled to different parts of Kabul and districts hearing people's problems and sharing them with the officials concerned.

Kabul has 14 districts and 22 police districts. The provincial council is formed of 33 members including seven women. (Pajhwok)

(4) Mosques Can ...

founded.

He said the aim of the group was to counter extremism which he said needed cultural efforts. "Our programs are independent and self-motivated; we are not connected with any political parties," Mansoor said. He asked the government to support the group's programs.

The president, after hearing suggestions from the group, hailed activities of the Culturists and Initiators Group and said mosques were main centers of cultural and religious activities.

Ghani asked relevant organs to promote cultural and religious programs in cooperation with mosques and ulema.

He said the government supported all programs under the framework of the constitution.

The president asked Culturists and Initiators Group to provide a plan about their cultural activities. (Pajhwok)

(5) NUG Probe...

President Ashraf Ghani but as yet no steps have been taken against the ministry.

The 18-page report states that a number of contracts were granted without the minister's approval, that there appeared to be a procurement monopolization by some contracts and the administration department, and that there was a lack of transparent accountability along with other issues. "A number of contracts were given to specific NGOs and companies. Also there were contracts in violation of procurement law," said Ghulam Husain Fakhri, head of the investigative team.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Nasir Timori, a member of Integrity Watch Afghanistan said: "Government lacks a good strategy to clear government institutions of corruption. Thus, a big number of investigation reports remain on file and have not been assessed."

But the MoPH said the team had no evidence to prove its findings.

"They do not have any evidence that could prove a number of contracts were given to specific NGOs. If they have proved that, government would have taken action," said Ferozuddin Feroz, the Minister of Public Health.

Another issue the investigative team had was with the number of advisors employed by the MoPH. However, the ministry has stated that the advisors work in different departments to resolve problems in the relevant fields.

The minister said when he was appointed there were "400 to 450 advisors at the MoPH. From the time I was appointed, no more than three advisors have been appointed to the ministry."

Fakhri said however the team's investigation has not been finalized and further investigations are needed to uncover details around the issue of corruption. (Tolonews)

(6) Govt. Asked ...

"Neighboring countries with the help of Taliban are preparing to escalate the war in the upcoming Spring in Afghanistan. The countries are holding meetings for this purpose."

He said regional countries were out to make Afghanistan insecure and pave the way for Daesh to find a foothold and turn Afghanistan into another Syria.

"Unfortunately the government, especially security authorities, is not taking this matter seriously and it is questionable. The government should act with responsibility and criticize how neighboring countries possess Taliban as a pressure tool in their hands, what is their purpose?"

"Heavy presence of terrorists and Al-Qaeda in Badakhshan, Uruzgan, Zabul and Kunduz show we are going to experience a deadlier war next year."

According to him, the government, while utilizing the winter opportunity, should carry out massive operations under proper management to prevent security crisis that would probably grip the Afghans next year.

He lashed out at security organs over failing to ensure security for lawmakers. "According to reports by security institutions, National Assembly members are facing serious security threats."

Ibrahimi didn't go into details but said the National Assembly member's daily received reports that they would be targeted in armed attacks. He said the government should take serious measures for security of National Assembly members.

He also said not claiming responsibility for the attack on Fakkor Behishti was questionable. "No group has so far come forward to claim responsibility for the attack; security organs should give a clear response to the nation and Wolesi Jirga in this regard." (Pajhwok)

(7) Tajikistan Probing...

not rule out the possibility as he vowed to probe the allegations.

Uluhkhajev quoted in a report by RFE/RL said the border guard agency "has been looking into the claim." He said the authorities will study the Afghan media reports, and will report on the results of their investigation.

The former provincial governor of Kunduz Mohammad Omar Safi

claimed late last year that the vehicles and weapons had been repaired by Russian military engineers based in Tajikistan before being returned to the Taliban.

Safi also added that such cooperation between the Afghan Taliban and the Russian military has been going on for nearly two years.

This comes as reports have emerged recently suggesting the growing nexus between the Taliban group and the Russian as well as the Iranian authorities.

The reports have emerged amid concerns that the authorities of the two countries that the loyalists of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group are attempting to expand foothold in Afghanistan, a threat which is seriously taken by the Iranian and Russian authorities who are believing that the terror group eyes expansion beyond the Afghan borders into the Central Asian States. (KP)

(8) Former Jihadi...

creation of a new front between Russia, Iran and China against Afghanistan.

"While uncertainties continue to prevail in the country, those who are within the government also do not have the right policy, therefore we see that the region starts staging against us. We also face weaknesses on the warfront and this takes Afghanistan toward a crisis; therefore my recommendation to government is to call for a national mobilization under the leadership of national personalities so that we can safeguard Afghanistan from entering a crisis next (fighting season)," he said.

He said relations between the Taliban and the Russians are however nothing less than a new crisis and devastating for Afghanistan.

He said western and eastern powers are engaged in battles on Afghan soil.

"Recently we heard rumors about the confrontation between the east and the west, we fear that our oppressed and painful country is changing into Syria's Aleppo; this needs the wisdom and understanding of government and the nation," Khan said.

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin's special envoy to Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov has said that Moscow does not have plans regarding Afghanistan's peace process. He said Russia was not asked to do anything.

Kabulov said Russia "will never tolerate" U.S. military bases in Afghanistan, calling them "very disturbing".

In an exclusive interview with the Anadolu Agency, a Turkey-based news agency, Kabulov said that Moscow does not make plans for other nations like Americans. "We do not have bad habits."

"Of course; why should it not be disturbing for anybody? Why in Afghanistan? Where is Afghanistan and where is America? If we did something like that in Mexico, would it not be disturbing for America? In Cuba, we have already experienced and we know the outcome. I think it is old fashioned. Why are they doing that after all this 15-year-old anti-terror rhetoric in Afghanistan? They stupidly try to say that 'it is for training.' Come on! You are not talking to stupid or foolish people. We know the reasons [for the ongoing U.S. military presence in Afghanistan]. Russia will never tolerate this." Said Kabulov.

Kabulov said that his country is not planning to organize conferences on the Afghan peace process because Russia was not been asked. "What kind of a conference? We, as the international community, every year have a conference on Afghanistan. We are skilled at doing excellent conferences, the latest two were in Amritsar, in Brussels. We are skilled at holding conferences, but we failed in making actual results. No conference can bring peace in Afghanistan," he said.

However, Afghans say that government must adopt clear policies on the issues. "The government must adopt a working policy toward foreign countries, if the policies are not tackled properly, Afghanistan will change into a battlefield between foreigners like Iraq and Syria," said civil society activist Susan. (Tolonews)

only 167 Afghans entered through Torkham till the end of October. KP is hosting 62 percent of the Afghans living in Pakistan, but SAFRON Ministry puts the number of registered refugees at 0.650 million and unregistered refugees at 0.6 million. (Pajhwok)

(9) UN Stresses ...

soldiers were killed and nine others wounded in Sangin district. Provincial National Directorate of Security (NDS) chief, Maj. Gen. Mohammad Yaseen, said some neighboring countries supported insurgents but they would not allow them to reach their goals. Without going into details, the intelligence official said some government officials were also involved in the plot and they took money from the

(10) 52 Taliban...

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sides. Qari Yousuf Ahmadi, a Taliban spokesman, confirmed clashes in Helmand and claimed the fighters captured four police check-posts in Sangin district and the fight was still under way. (Pajhwok)

(11) Russian Envoy...

basis, America will need two to four weeks to redeploy up to 100,000 soldiers on the same bases.

"Such a [move] would not be an invasion in terms of a U.S.-Afghanistan bilateral security agreement.

"We warned Afghans from the very beginning it [the bilateral agreement] may have implications for our bilateral relations if Americans use this infrastructure against our national interest. They said the Americans had promised. Well, we know the value of American promises" he said.

On the subject of president-elect Donald Trump, he said: "We expect that Donald Trump will tailor a new American approach to Afghanistan and he should address several issues which are a matter of concern not only to Russia, but important to regional actors, like China, Iran, Pakistan, and others." Speaking on past relations with Afghanistan, Kabulov said that destabilization in the country following the 1979 Soviet invasion might have led to the emergence of radical groups such as al-Qaeda and Daesh.

"One of the main slogans of support for Afghanistan [during the invasion] was that the Soviet Union came to eliminate Islam. So it was a good enough slogan," said Kabulov. Kabulov said such slogans encouraged many people to go to fight in Afghanistan and do their jihad there.

"Osama bin Laden, a Yemeni-origin Saudi citizen, and many others who were unhappy with things going on in the Muslim world wanted to meet the challenges, including the ones that they saw as a threat to Islam."

"Afghanistan became a convenient place for like-minded people to meet," he said, adding that those people "added even more destabilization" to the country.

About the Taliban today being a local entity or an internationally managed group, Kabulov said it is predominately a local force.

"First of all, the Taliban is not homogenous. Within the Taliban, there are different wings with almost different ideological backgrounds."

He said the Taliban was speaking "the same language that Daesh speaks today."

"The same scenario, same ideology, different people," he says, recalling seeing an "Islamic caliphate" map in Afghanistan which he said included Afghanistan, some countries in The Middle East, parts of India, Central Asia, and reached "almost up to our suburbs of Moscow."

He said that within today's Taliban there are very influential groups "whose ideology is more radical, closer to Daesh."

However, he added, the current leadership and majority of Taliban now is a local force. (Tolonews)

(12) Nangarhar's ...

hoped for a quality date yield this season.

He estimated two tonnes of dates would be collected from the farm. He promised saplings would be distributed to other eastern provinces of the country as well.

The official said 1,300 saplings had been lost to lack of care and currently 2,700 trees existed in the orchard.

About the delay in the trees yielding dates, he said proper attention was not paid during plantation and growth of saplings. Farmers' inadequate experience and resources also contributed to the delayed date production. Atrafi said they had ordinary equipment while modern machinery was needed to take care of the farm.

He asked the government to pay attention to the farm because its yield would help boost the country's economy and would ultimately make Afghanistan self-sufficient in date consumption. (Pajhwok)

(13) Drive Launched ...

he said, adding motorbikes would be used to convey the message of education in far-flung areas where vehicles could not go.

A small number of schools and closure of many others for different reasons are two major problems in Kandahar. Of 460 schools in Kandahar, 139 are shut due to a staff shortage and insecurity. Not even a single school in Shorabak, Registan and Ghorak districts is functional. Wesa linked the problem to the weakness of the education department and lack of a strong political will. He said the closed schools would be easily reopened if public awareness programmes were conducted and the education department's performance improved.

He listed poor teaching quality as another problem that caused students to stop attending classes. Children were

deprived of education under different pretexts, a brazen injustice to them, he said.

However, Kandahar education officials said they had arranged local classes in areas where there were no education institutes. The classes are gradually converted into schools.

But Wesa said local classes had resumed in areas where schools were located. In the past, Qalam Lar Group campaigned for reopening schools and opening more libraries in different provinces.

A day earlier, acting education minister told the Senate that 1,005 schools had been shut due to security threats across the country. But he said efforts were underway to reopen them. (Pajhwok)

(14) No Pakistani ...

of the security personnel have been deployed at the Torkham border crossing to implement the new policy.

The decision was taken with the view to ensure border management and check the movement of suspected elements to improve security.

Pakistan and Afghanistan share a long and porous border stretching for more than 2,500 kilometers where the movement of people from both sides has remained largely unregulated.

President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah invited new Pakistani Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa to visit the country, the media wing of the Pakistani military said.

The invitation was extended by the Afghan leadership during a telephone conversation with Bajwa, according to a statement by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Major General Asif Ghafoor, Dunya News reported. (APP)

(15) Families of ...

done to bring the culprits to book.

Kunduz governor Assadullah Omorkhel said local government is concerned about the increase of armed men in the province and promised that security forces will arrest the perpetrators.

A number of MPs meanwhile urged government to stop such armed groups.

"The presence of such armed groups creates problems and government should stop them," said Nazir Ahmad Ahmadzai, an MP. (Tolonews)

(16) Illegal Armed...

men were involved in looting, threatening, beating and murdering innocent people.

Khanabad district chief, Hayatullah Amiri, also expressed concern over the presence of irresponsible armed men and said the central government should take collect weapons from them.

"These gunmen do not come from other areas, they residents of Khanabad. Their presence has harmed reputation of the district, we want provincial officials to help us take these illegal armed groups to justice," he said.

Shazia, a 45-years-old woman in Khanabad, claimed that irresponsible armed men broke into her house few days ago and took her son and then killed him. "I want the government to find the murderers of my son and punish them," she said.

A civil society activist in Kunduz also said illegal armed men were a threat to the province's security. He also believed the armed groups had personal jails.

A resident of Kunduz city, Sayed Alam, said, "In the past, illegal armed men would operate in districts only, but they have recently appeared in Kunduz city amid increasing armed robberies and murder cases."

Governor Asadullah Omorkhel, during a meeting with Khanabad elders, said that anyone carrying illegal weapon was the enemy of Afghanistan.

He said illegal armed men should register their weapons or they face a decisive action from the government.

Omorkhel rejected claims that the illegal armed groups ran private prisons but confirmed they kept prisoners in hidden rooms.

"A worker of an international organization was kidnapped by one of these armed groups in Kunduz city few days ago, he is still in the armed men's captivity," he said. (Pajhwok)

(17) Initial Work...

on its construction would begin once location for the project was finalized.

A provincial council member, Ajmal Omar, welcomed the project and said all construction process should be performed carefully.

He said mafia groups in Nangarhar were likely to conspire against the airport project.

Trader Haji Tor Malang told Pajhwok construction of the airport was vital for local businessmen and residents.

Traders traveling from Kabul to Nangarhar or from Nangarhar to Pakistan often fell prey to highway robbers, he said.

Haron Momand, a resident of Jalalabad city, said building the airport was

good news for people as it would facilitate traveling from and to Nangarhar. A pre-existing airport in Nangarhar province is used only for military flights. (Pajhwok)

(18) District Police ...

The wounded had been shifted to hospital in capital Kabul with no update about the health condition available.

Iqbal, the resident of the Kandahario locality, said the blast took place in the afternoon in which some policemen were wounded.

Mohammad Agha district located 35km south of Kabul which is one of the unstable districts of the central Logar province.

Militants have not yet commented about the incident. (Pajhwok)

(19) 12 Daesh...

destroyed in the operation.

Attuallah Khogyani, the governor's spokesman, said the operation was jointly conducted by the US drone strikes and Afghan ground forces.

Two notorious Daesh commanders Maulvi Abas and Abu Hanifa were also arrested in Gargarai locality of the district, he said.

Daesh have not yet commented about the incident. (Pajhwok)

(20) Explosion near...

that the health condition of one of those injured in the explosion is critical and is being treated in the hospital. No group including the Taliban insurgents has so far claimed responsibility behind the incident.

Herat is among the relatively calm provinces in West of Afghanistan but the anti-government armed militants have recently increased to their insurgency activities. (KP)

(21) I Killed as...

and central governments to address their complaint.

Rahmatullah, one of the protestors, said: "We are fed up with irresponsible behavior, incompetency and harassment by police especially the police chief. We carried out a protest rally on Sunday evening as our civic right but police opened fire at us."

He said one of the protestors was killed and another was injured in the police fire.

He asked the provincial police chief to address their issue and arrest those protestors, otherwise they would continue their protest.

Noorshah, a resident of Baraka district, said: "A peaceful protest is the right of all citizens. Today we held the protest to raise our voice against dereliction of duty by the district police chief but police instead of providing us security, opened fire at us, killing one and wounding another." He hoped government authorities would investigate the incident. (Pajhwok)

training to Iraqi forces. Hollande's visit to Iraq is his second as French president. He last visited to the country in September 2014. His latest visit came amid a major offensive by Iraqi security forces, backed by an international coalition, to root out IS militants from its last major stronghold in and around Mosul. (Xinhua)

(22) Hollande in...

Jainism. Monday's verdict was split 4-3. The majority ruling by Chief Justice T.S. Thakur and three other judges said that religion "has no role in electoral process which is a secular activity." Three dissenting judges said the issue should be left to parliament to decide. (AP)

(23) Indian Candidates...

preventing her from attending, nor would it say whether the decision might be linked to the truck attack on a Berlin Christmas market that killed 12 people in mid-December. (Reuters)

(24) Germany's ...

the campaign, launched last week following nearly a month of deadlock, has pushed Islamic State out of several more areas in eastern Mosul despite fierce resistance. Iraqi forces have yet to enter the west. "They've got a finite amount of resource that are on the eastern side and the fact that their capability is waning indicates that those resources are starting to dwindle," U.S. Army Major General Joseph Martin, head of ground forces for the U.S.-led coalition fighting Islamic State, told Reuters on Sunday. (Reuters)

(25) US General...

Maybe it was; maybe it wasn't but you have to think about that," Spicer said. Trump is to have briefings with intelligence agencies this week after he returns to New York on Sunday.

On Saturday, Trump expressed continued skepticism over whether Russia was responsible for computer hacks of Democratic Party officials. (Reuters)

(26) Trump Aide...

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