

### (1) Consulate Attack...

a guard at the building where the attackers took cover, managed to escape on the night the attack started. He said: "I saw two people and they were talking in a language I did not understand I was in the basement when they went upstairs and then I run to the yard and escaped from the building."

The attackers were holed up on the 4th floor in the kitchen of the building and wrote messages in what appears to be blood on the wall. The messages were in Urdu and warned of suicide attacks and of revenge. (Tolonews)

### (2) Pathankot, ...

are a stark reminder of the ongoing danger terrorism poses throughout much of the world. The United States should continue to assist these governments and ensure they can combat this scourge," he added.

An intense 25-hour gun-battle between security forces and terrorists outside the Indian Consulate in Mazar-e-Sharif came to end last night with the killing of all the attackers who attempted to storm the Mission building. Heavily-armed Pakistani terrorists on Saturday attempted to storm the Indian Air Force base in Pathankot. The attackers were believed to have infiltrated from Pakistan and there was speculation that they may belong to Jaish-e-Mohammad headed by Maulana Masood Azhar of the Kandahar hijack episode. (Monitoring Desk)

### (3) Ghani Receives ...

Hashemi, spokesman to President.

He added: "The purpose of the technical team was to assess the exact numbers and specific cases. The delegation presented its report to the president yesterday [Monday] and the president took a proper decision in this regard," said Hashemi. According to the findings of the team, there is no accountability in the current strategy of fighting the endemic corruption in public offices.

"The education leadership in the light of the president's orders will take measures and will bring reforms that you [media] will be informed about," said MoE spokesman Mujib Mehrdad. According to reports, three MPs, a representative from the Attorney General's Office and two members of the National Directorate of Security (NDS) were members of the first fact finding team which was assigned four months ago.

Ghani was reportedly aware of the findings by the first team but the details about the findings were reportedly kept secret from the media. "After realizing this [keeping secret the report] we should not remain reluctant towards such a corrupt case. We should summon the MoE leadership ahead of our summer recess," said Nisar Haris, a senator.

According to the report of the fact finding team, most of the corruption cases happened in the MoE when it was led by Farooq Wardak, the former Education Minister.

The first delegation started its work over corruption in the education ministry in August last year but experts criticized the government and questioned it over why the report was kept hidden from the media so far. (Tolonews)

### (4) Militants Still ....

of army officials in the province said that they are still

on the defensive especially as the Taliban has armored vehicles.

But another problem Kunduz locals face is the lack of telecommunication services at night.

"Our cell phone coverage is disconnected at 6pm in the evening until 6am in the morning," said Farhad, a resident of Kunduz city.

In addition, residents said the militants wield so much power in the city that if telecommunication service providers do not follow their orders, the insurgents challenge their activities.

The acting governor of Kunduz, Hamdullah Danesh, said: "The decision to disconnect cell phone coverage was taken after night operations started by security forces in order to make our operations effective."

Even though it has been 100 days since the fall of the city to the Taliban, the tragic incident still haunts its residents and living in peace, they say, is still a dream.

Samiullah, a resident of Kunduz city, said: "We cannot get out of the city but the president [Ashraf Ghani] speaks out about security in our province."

After the fall of Kunduz city, President Ashraf Ghani paid a visit to the province and made a number of promises to residents. One of the main promises he made during his visit to Kunduz city was to bring back security to the city.

"The president has not fulfilled even one of his promises he made for Kunduz. We hope the government implements its promises," said Muhammad Nasim, a tribal elder.

After the collapse of the city to the Taliban, Ghani assigned a fact-finding commission to explore reasons behind the crisis. The team, in a 200-page report, explained the reasons behind the collapse; however, the report has still not been made public. Instead, a 40-page abbreviated version was released.

To answer the question as to why the team did not release the report, Amrullah Saleh, head of the fact finding team, wrote on his facebook page that he did only what he was assigned to do. Fatema Azizi, a lawmaker from Kunduz, said: "It is not clear yet where the report of the fact finding team is. The report said there are some figures in the Presidential Palace that were involved in the fall of Kunduz city. Why has government not yet taken a decision in this regard?"

Taliban seized control of Kunduz city in September 2015 for three days before security forces moved in and retook control of the city. (Tolonews)

### (5) Yemen War ...

on the area since Gulf Arab troops and armed loyalists of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi seized it from the group over the summer. Houthi forces also advanced against government militiamen in the northwestern province of Hajja and the far southern province of Lahj, reversing recent gains made the coalition.

A military coalition led by Saudi Arabia and its Sunni Muslim allies has been fighting Yemen's Shi'ite Houthi movement in Yemen to repel what it sees as creeping influence by the group's ally, Iran. (Reuters)

### (6) Kabul Ready...

price. Both sides also negotiated the prospects of exporting CNG to the neighboring country, he noted.

"Afghan officials are also interested in importing 200,000 tons of LPG. This needs to be finalized in terms of price," the Iranian minister added.

Rasa is accompanying Afghanistan's Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah who arrived in Tehran on Monday for a three-day visit.

Bilateral ties as well as regional developments are on the agenda of talks between officials of the two neighboring countries. (Agencies)

### (7) IS Territory ...

north of Baghdad, and Ramadi, to the west last month. In Syria, Islamic State is fighting the army of President Bashar al-Assad and other rebel groups opposed to his rule. It is facing air strikes by the U.S.-led coalition and by Russia which has sent warplanes to support its ally, the Syrian government. Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi last month said 2016 will be the year of "final victory" on the hard-line group. (Reuters)

### (8) 15 Daesh ...

propaganda against the establishment.

Moreover, a bomb blast in Nangarhar's provincial capital Jalalabad on Tuesday has damaged several houses and vehicles.

"An explosive device planted by militants went off in Jalalabad city at around 10:30 a.m. local time today," a police official told Xinhua but declined to be identified, saying authorized officials would brief the media after completion of investigation. However, the official added that the Iranian consulate, Indian consulate and a guesthouse of Pakistani consulate are located at nearby of the blast site.

Several houses and cars near the blast site were also damaged, the official added.

A group of militants targeted the Indian consulate in the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif on Sunday night; while two more car bombs hit the capital city Kabul on Monday, killing at least two people and injuring three dozen others, all civilians, according to police and hospital sources. (Xinhua)

### (9) Taliban Captures...

dozens of militants linked to the Middle Eastern terror group.

Rana Sanaullah, law minister of the country's populous Punjab province, revealed on Monday as many as 100 suspected extremists have left Pakistan for Syria to take part in the conflict there.

The revelation contradicted repeated claims by the federal authorities that IS has "no organized presence in Pakistan." (VoA)

### (10) SpiceJet ...

galore-Vijayawada (second direct flight added) Kochi-Chennai (fourth direct flight added) and Hyderabad-Vijayawada (second direct flight added) among others," the airline said in a statement.

The airline has also increased seating capacity on some domestic routes by undertaking aircraft upgradation from Bombardier Q400 which has a seating capacity of 78 seats to Boeing 737 which can accommodate 186 passengers. This upgradation would be operational for 6 days a week on routes such as Delhi-Varanasi and Delhi-Dehradun among others.

SpiceJet senior VP (commercial) Shilpa Bhatia said: "We are always looking at ways to improve our network capacity so that we can continue to offer the best possible

services to our customers while providing them with more flexibility." (Agency)

### (11) New Check ...

along the border. The step has been taken to boost security as militants in Afghanistan would enter Bajaur and attack locals, pro-Government elders and security forces. "We have also succeeded in finding militants' weapons dump with the help of locals." (Agencies)

### (12) Indian DM ...

Warnings had been ignored. Six militants and seven Indian air force and security men were killed in the three-day gun fight. (Xinhua)

### (13) Syria's Declared ...

ened US air strikes against Damascus after a sarin gas attack on rebel-held areas near the capital that were blamed by the West and the opposition on the regime in August 2013, in which hundreds of civilians were killed.

Under the agreement, Syria's entire chemical arsenal had been due to be eliminated by June 30, 2014, and all chemical effluent by December 31, 2014. (AFP)

### (14) Reports Say...

garding the Sri Lankans leaving for Syria.

Sri Lanka's Muslim organizations and leaders of the community have condemned the IS and accused its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi of violating the tenets of Islam. (Xinhua)

### (15) British PM ...

he fails to get key changes to Britain's relationship with the bloc.

The British leader is due to update parliament on his EU renegotiation on Tuesday, and a source in his office said he would "give a strong signal" that collective responsibility in the cabinet would effectively be suspended during the EU referendum campaign.

"He will make clear collective responsibility continues to apply all the way up until a deal is done .... at that point clearly the government will take a position on the deal," said the source, who declined to be named.

"If there are some individual ministers who want to campaign in a different way, he will make clear that will be accommodated."

Europe has divided the Conservatives for three decades. It played a major part in the downfall of Cameron's two Conservative predecessors, Margaret Thatcher and John Major. (Reuters)

### (16) Fiji Meets UN...

Minister Bainimarama's vision in building a well-informed society, said Reddy.

"The government has also opened telecenters in rural areas bridging the digital divide for students and all Fijians...We have distributed 5,000 tablets to rural and maritime schools so students there are also able to improve in digital literacy," the education minister added. (Xinhua)

### (17) Charges Pressed...

the border, and after a time they became aggressive.

The crowd tried to break through the fence and several people began throwing stones at the police on the Hungarian side of the fence. One man picked up a megaphone and tried to organize the mass of people to attack the police. Eventually, they broke through the fence and many people, including the 10 people now charged, crossed into Hungary where they were taken into custody. (Xinhua)

## Palestinians Warn of Israel Debating Possibility of Dissolving PNA

RAMALLAH - The Palestinians warned Tuesday the intent of the Israeli government to debate the possibilities of dissolving the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), official statement said.

The PNA Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in an official statement that these debates "are a kind of fooling the international community and carrying on with the campaign of lying, incitement and disinformation against the Palestinians."

"The Israeli government on the ground is destroying, weakening and undermining the PNA and in the media and in public it tells the world that it kept the PNA existing," said the foreign minister statement. The statement held the Israeli government fully responsible for the current deterioration in the Palestinian territories mainly the current stalemate in the political process that caused the failure in the peace talks.

"The crimes and the violations of the Israeli occupation and of the settlement are the main real reason for the current escalation in the security situation in the Palestinian territories," said the statement.

Earlier on Tuesday, Israeli media reports said that the Israeli cabinet devoted the last ten days in holding two meetings to discuss and the study the consequences of the collapse of the PNA. (Xinhua)

## S. African Govt. Expresses Confidence in Resolving Trade Issues with U.S.

CAPE TOWN - The South African government on Tuesday expressed confidence that outstanding technical issues would be resolved in trade negotiations with the United States. SA government officials have been engaged with their U.S. counterparts during the festive season to finalize all the outstanding technical issues to allow for safe imports of poultry, pork and beef products from the U.S., said Sidwell Medupe, spokesperson of the Department of Trade and Industry.

Medupe was speaking after South Africa missed the deadline of January 4 set by U.S. President Barack Obama in November 2015 to lift the ban on U.S. meat imports or face the risk of losing the agricultural benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGO).

Since the negotiations began South Africa has made significant progress on opening its market for poultry, pork and beef from the United States, said the spokesperson.

This includes an agreement on a quota for bone-in-chicken pieces and a poultry trade protocol on avian flu.

All matters that were on the table for conclusion by November 11, 2015 were concluded, only issues brought to the negotiating table after November 11, 2015, Medupe said.

During the past few weeks, pork health certificates have been negotiated and only requires signature by both sides, said Medupe, much progress has been made on beef with a few issues that can be finalized quickly, he added. (Xinhua)

## Burundi Peace Talks Delayed, no New Date: Government, Opposition

NAIROBI - Rival Burundian factions said Tuesday that peace talks announced for January 6 would not go ahead on time, with no fixed date given for when they might take place.

The small central African country descended into bloodshed in April when President Pierre Nkurunziza announced his intention to run for a controversial third term in a July election that he went on to win.

After talks in Uganda last month, it was announced that talks would resume on January 6 in the Tanzanian city of Arusha.

But the Burundi government delegation said then that "no consensus" had been reached on the date, and presidential press chief Willy Nyamitwe confirmed Tuesday the government delegation would not attend the scheduled talks.

The opposition CNARED coalition also said it would not attend, with spokesman Pancrace Cimpaye saying delegates had "not yet received an invitation" nor been given any date for when the talks might go ahead.

CNARED presents itself as upholding the Arusha peace agreement that ended more than a decade of civil war in 2006, and which it says Nkurunziza has undermined. (AFP)

## Spanish PM Sees New Elections in Catalonia as Inevitable

MADRID - Spain's acting Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy said on Tuesday that a new regional election in Catalonia was inevitable after its pro-independence bloc fractured over who would be the new government's leader. Catalonia has been unable to form a government since an election in September due to disagreements between the pro-independence parties who together gained a majority. If a new candidate is not chosen before Jan. 11, new regional elections will be called automatically, acting regional head Artur Mas told a news conference on Tuesday. The most likely date would be March 6, he said. The failure to form a Catalan government mirrors a political stalemate gripping all of Spain following an inconclusive national election on Dec. 20, and increases the likelihood all Spaniards will return to the ballot box this year.

"I sincerely don't know what could possibly happen in the next five days, but I believe that the best that could happen is that Mas drops his independence drive and, as that doesn't seem possible, there's no alternative to elections," Rajoy said in a radio interview. (Reuters)

## Myanmar, S. Korea to Hold Cultural Concert in Yangon

YANGON - Myanmar and South Korea will hold the first K-Classical Concert at National Theater in Yangon later this week to promote cultural relationship between the two countries, exhibition sources said Tuesday. The two-day concert, organized by National University of Arts and Culture and Korea International Continuing Education Branch Myanmar, will start on Jan. 9. Artists from Myanmar and South Korea as well as university students will participate in the concert. Such concert will be held annually under the Myanmar-South Korea cultural exchange program. (Xinhua)