

(1) Cabinet...

and the chief executive officer are said to be at loggerheads over the selection of two people as ministers. (Pajhwok)

(2) ISIS Start...

However, insurgents belonging to a faction of the Hezb-e-Islami led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar said earlier in September last year that they consider to join the Islamic State militants who are currently fighting in Syria and Iraq. A notorious anti-government armed militant commander who is believed to have links with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), has also been arrested by Afghan security forces in Paktia province.

According to reports, around 3,000 Afghan nationals have been deployed to take part in the ongoing Syria conflict.

The participation of Afghan militants in Syria war has sparked concerns among the Afghan officials some will return to fight in Afghanistan under Islamic State's banner. (KP)

(3) President Prom...

in anything."

But that was just in front of the camera. After the event, the House Chairman claimed the president had promised that a cabinet would be announced on Monday.

"We were invited by the president at 08:30 in the morning today, and he told me that their work would end tomorrow and the cabinet will be introduced to the House on Monday, apologizing for delay in announcement of the cabinet," Ibrahim said. MP's have criticized the government heavily in recent weeks for failing to meet the deadlines set by Parliament and the national unity government itself. "They have promised many times, and they have not stood by their promises, now, people don't trust their promises," Balkh MP Abbas Ibrahim said.

Some MPs have accused the president of shirking his constitutional duties by delaying the formation of a cabinet for so long and lobbied Parliament to take legal action. However, President Ghani's legal advisors have brushed off the attack.

"Mr. Muhammadi, legal advisor to president has said that MPs are speaking based on standards of streets and markets, but if he could kindly see articles 102 and 103, he will see," Maidan Wardak MP Ghulam Hussain Naseri said, referring to the Afghan Constitution. "Those who make their way to the presidency tend to get praise, but the job of the MP is to take the side of the people."

According to sources close to matter, disagreements over nominees for the Minister of Interior post are the main reason behind the cabinet delay. (Tolonews)

(4) MPs to Rise ...

A day earlier, Speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahim told the lower house President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani had promised to introduce his cabinet nominees on Monday.

Under Article 107 of the Constitution, the National Assembly convenes two ordinary sessions each year. The term of the assembly in each year is nine months, a period that can be extended when necessary.

Clause 4 of the article states extraordinary sessions of the assembly during recess can take place by the order of the president. (Pajhwok)

(5) 183 Insurgent ...

insurgents in several parts of the area," he noted.

In addition, Syedkhili said the local residents were also standing behind the security forces in pushing back the militants.

Since the beginning of fighting until now, he added six ANSF soldiers and two civilians were killed and 16 other soldiers wounded, mostly as a result of landmines.

Located in the eastern borders with Pakistan, Kunar is one of unsafe provinces of Afghanistan which came under rocket attacks from across the border several times during the past three years. (Tolonews)

(6) CEO Wants...

groups, encouraging female participation in economic activity and helping them acquire business and management skills.

During a meeting with USAID officials and Afghan women, the CEO stressed the need for transparency in implementation of the programme. He hoped the programme would improve the condition of Afghan women.

A fair approach to utilisation of funds was direly needed for the effective implementation of the programme and making sure that all targets were achieved, he said.

Abdullah added although the programme was led by the USAID in collaboration with the Afghan government, there was need for a clear implementation mechanism to achieve maximum results.

He said the construction of a girls' college was important because after a few years, when foreign aid would decline, the college would function as an institution for women's empowerment.

Earlier, some women activists and members of parliament lambasted the international community for the slow progress of the programme. They complained concrete steps for implementation of the programme were yet to be taken. (Pajhwok)

(7) Senate Summo...

Wardak province, stressed the need for the maintenance of law and order, saying development could not take place until security was ensured.

Chairman Fazal Hadi Muslimyar stressed the need for people's cooperation with security institutions in overcoming increasing insecurity.

He said the security officials concerned would be summoned on Tuesday to a general session to brief the house on the current security environment. (Pajhwok)

(8) Critics Blast ...

confused whether or not the unity government would be able to complete its five years term. The president and the CEO are said to be at loggerheads over naming the cabinet.

Critics said this could become an impediment to the government's performances. The president and the CEO have promised new ministers would be named based on competency, accountability and commitment to national unity.

But a list of potential nominees that was published by some media organisations has evoked criticism from political commentators, calling the choices a question mark over government's promises of hiring efficient and professional people.

In a NATO foreign ministerial meeting in Brussels, Ghani had said the new

picks would be fresh faces and commitments to national unity, efficiency and women's representation were the standards being considered. (Pajhwok)

(9) Work on 85 ...

launched in 50 villages of Janikhel district simultaneously, which would improve economy of many families. (Pajhwok)

(10) Greater Sup...

efforts for creating job opportunities inside Afghanistan but steps could be taken to help Afghans find employment in foreign countries.

"Regional countries, such as Gulf states, are interested in hiring Afghan manpower, but the goal can be realised only when the Afghan government enters agreements with them," Afzali remarked.

She said Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Malaysia, Qatar, Iran and Kazakhstan had agreed with the Ministry of Social Affairs to offer Afghans with job opportunities.

"It is extremely painful for me to see children working as labourers and women begging in bazaars. Social welfare has been my dream but, unfortunately, we did not achieve our targets.

"I hope the new government will step up efforts to resolve people's problems," she added, recalling she had shared its problems with the cabinet and former president Hamid Karzai time and again but no attention was paid to it.

Afzali explained the ministry had prepared a draft suggesting the collection of Zakat and Ushr and its distribution to beggars. Currently salaries of the disabled people are paid through banks in 27 provinces but the facility should be available all across the country.

She called for reforms in the ministry and an increase in salaries of disabled people from 3,500 to 5,000 afghanis. Presently serving as a teacher at the Kabul Science University, she is ready for serving Afghans if given a responsibility in the new setup. (Pajhwok)

organisation," he warned Without naming anybody, he said, those involved in graft had been identified. "With the rule of law, we can bring society together. If we accept the rule of law, society will also abide; otherwise we cannot expect the public to accept laws." Mohammad Abde, head of the judicial committee of parliament, asked the president to end the culture of impunity and venality in the country.

"The president has the armed forces and other personnel behind him. He should not be compassionate to those who have committed felony and crime," he remarked. (Pajhwok)

(11) Corrupt Offi....

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(12) Yousuf Karga...

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(13) Afghan's...

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since then he has been doing odd jobs, including selling shopping bags. He said it is an easy job and needs a little capital, while refusing to reveal the cause of his father's death.

In conflict-ridden Afghanistan, thousands of breadwinners have been killed as a result of the continuing violence in the country. Some of these men are either killed by suicide attacks or caught in the crossfire between the armed militants and government forces.

On average some 10 to 15 people, that include combatants and innocent civilians, are killed or maimed every day due to the ongoing conflict and militancy in Afghanistan, according to media reports.

Because of deep tradition and Islamic values, women in Afghanistan rarely work outside their homes and the bur-den of supporting the family is left to the men. Although the status of Afghan women has tremendously improved for the past 13 years, unemployment remains a huge problem in the country that has prevented women from seeking a job.

Abdul's friend, Fawad, also an orphan, is also selling shopping bags.

Fawad said that he sells shopping bags because at his age, he could not work as a porter, mason or carpenter. He said it is easy to sell shopping bags because market-goers need them. (Xinhua)

(14) Protesters...

terrorism, and there is no justification for this brutal act."

At least 12 people were killed after a group of gunmen armed with assault rifles attacked the headquarters of the Charlie Hebdo newspaper on Wednesday.

At least two police officers and four cartoonists of the magazine were among those killed following the attack. The four journalists of the magazine killed in the attack have been named as Stéphane Charbonnier, cartoonists Jean Cabut, Georges Wolinski and Bernard Verlhac.

Charlie Hebdo has in the past published cartoons of Prophet Muhammad, causing furore among the Muslims and its offices were firebombed in 2011. The newspaper has also been poking fun at popes and presidents. (KP)

(15) Pakistani ...

we have brought together the emirs of 10 groups who want to pledge their allegiance to the Caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi," he said, referring to the IS leader.

At the end of the 16-minute video a man wearing a helmet, a T-shirt and combat trousers, identified as a Pakistani soldier, is seen being beheaded with a machete.

According to SITE, those present during the execution included both Afghan and Taliban militants but nothing was known about the beheaded soldier or how he was captured.

IS's radical ideology appears to have inspired many fighters operating across the region, posing a possible challenge to more established local groups such as the Taliban.

But, while some fighters switched sides to declare allegiance to IS in the past year, most Taliban insurgents re-mained staunchly loyal to Mullah Mohammad Omar, an Afghan Taliban leader who has been at the helm of the movement since the 1990s. (Reuters)

(16) World ...

a 34-year-old Franco-Moroccan draped in the French flag, agreed: "I am here to show the terrorists they have not won - it is bringing people together of all religions."

Among many children brought along to the march, Loris Peres, 12, said: "For me this is paying respect to your loved ones, it's like family ... We did a lesson about this at school."

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, British Prime Minister David Cameron and Italy Prime Minister Matteo Renzi were among 44 foreign leaders marching with Hollande. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu - who earlier encouraged French Jews to emigrate to Israel - and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas were also present.

Immediately to Hollande's left, walked Merkel and to his right Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita. France has provided troops to help fight Islamist rebels there.

While there has been widespread solidarity with the victims, there have been dissenting voices. French social media have carried comments from those uneasy with the "Je suis Charlie" slogan interpreted as freedom of expression at all cost. Others suggest there was hypocrisy in world leaders whose countries have repressive media laws attending the march.

The official estimate on attendance is due to be announced later. A 1995 protest against planned welfare cuts brought some 500,000-800,000 people onto the streets of the capital, while a 2002 rally against the far-right National Front's then leader Jean-Marie Le Pen after he got into the run-off of that year's presidential election drew 400,000-600,000.

Twelve people were killed in Wednesday's initial attack on Charlie Hebdo, a journal know for satirizing religions and politicians. The attackers, two French-born brothers of Algerian origin, singled out the weekly for its publication of cartoons depicting and ridiculing the Prophet Muhammad.

All three gunmen were killed in what local commentators have called "France's 9/11", a reference to the September 2001 attacks on U.S. targets by al Qaeda.

The head of France's 550,000-strong Jewish community, Roger Cukierman, the largest in Europe, said Hollande had promised that Jewish schools and synagogues would have extra protection, by the army if necessary, after the killings.

France's Agence Juive, which tracks Jewish emigration, estimates more than 5,000 Jews left France for Israel in 2014, up from 3,300 in 2013, itself a 73 percent increase on 2012. (Reuters)

(17) Kerry...

leaders," he said. "Global climate change is already violently affecting communities not just across India but around the world. It is disrupting commerce, development, and economic growth. It's costing farmers crops. It's costing insurance companies unbelievable payouts. It's raising the cost of doing business, and believe me, if it continues down the current trend-line, we will see climate refugees fighting each other for water and seeking food and new opportunity."

Kerry met separately with

Modi and U.N. chief Ban Ki-moon, and planned talks with the prime minister of the tiny Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan, marking a rare cabinet-level meeting between the two nations. (AP)

U.S. Supreme Court to weigh new religious rights case

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday will take up a new religious rights case when it considers whether a town in Arizona discriminated against a local church by forcing it to remove signs notifying the public of its worship services.

The nine justices are set to hear a one-hour argument in an appeal filed by the Good News Community Church, which objected to its treatment by town officials in Gilbert, Arizona. The church says its free speech rights, protected by the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment, were violated.

The conservative-leaning court's last decision on a religious-themed issue came last June. The justices ruled 5-4 that owners of private companies can object on religious grounds to a provision of President Barack Obama's signature healthcare law that requires employers to provide insurance covering birth control for women.

The Arizona case is not as contentious, with the town receiving little support and the Obama administration backing the church.

The church's leader, Pastor Clyde Reed, says the town's 2008 sign ordinance treated religious messages differently than other types of signs. The ordinance has different categories, based on content, that determine the size of the sign, where it can be placed, and how long it can be displayed. The church's signs were deemed to be event signs, which meant they received "far worse treatment" than other types, including those displaying political and ideological messages, its lawyers said.

The town's lawyers asked the court not to hear the case, in part because a new, less restrictive ordinance was enacted in 2011. The church is represented by the Alliance Defending Freedom, a conservative Christian group.

Solicitor General Donald Verrilli, the Obama administration's top Supreme Court lawyer, said in court papers that the ordinance was clearly unconstitutional because it favors one type of speech over another.

The only supporters for the town are local government groups such as the National League of Cities that say in court papers the Gilbert ordinance was legal in part because the restriction imposed on the church was the same one that other churches and civic groups advertising public events were bound by.

The Supreme Court will review a February 2013 ruling in which the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals rejected the church's challenge. (Reuters)

Indonesia Confident AirAsia Fuselage Discovered, Zero in on Black Box

PANGKALAN BUN/JAKARTA - Indonesian search teams believe they have found the fuselage of an AirAsia airliner that crashed in the Java Sea two weeks ago, and divers hope calmer waters on Monday will allow them to retrieve the black box flight recorders. Indonesia AirAsia Flight

QZ8501 lost contact with air traffic control in bad weather on Dec. 28, less than halfway into a two-hour flight from the Indonesian city of Surabaya to Singapore. None of the 162 people on the aircraft survived.

Searchers have also been hearing pings, believed to be from the aircraft's two black boxes near where the tail of the Airbus A320-200 aircraft tail was raised on Saturday.

Supriyadi, operations coordinator for the National Search and Rescue Agency, said on Sunday a sonar scan had revealed an object measuring 10 meters by four meters by 2.5 meters on the sea floor.

"They suspect it is the body of the plane. There is a big possibility that the black box is near the body of the plane," Supriyadi told Reuters in the town of Pangkalan Bun, the base for the search effort on Borneo.

"If it is the body of the plane then we will first evacuate the victims. Secondly we will search for the black box."

Forty-eight bodies have been found in the Java Sea off Borneo and searchers are still hunting for the plane's fuselage, which could contain more bodies.

Strong winds, currents and high waves have been hampering efforts to reach other large pieces of suspected wreckage detected by sonar on the sea floor.

Three vessels involved in the search have detected pings about 4 km (two miles) from where the plane's tail was raised on Saturday, in water about 30 meters (yards) deep.

"Three ships have (recorded) the pings so we can confirm the coordinates of the location of the black box," Indonesian National Transportation Safety Committee investigator Santoso Sayogo told Reuters.

If weather conditions are conducive, "hopefully they will recover the black box tomorrow morning," Santoso said. "The coordinates show the bottom of the sea (in that location) is sand so the divers should easily be able to see it."

If and when the recorders are found and taken to the capital, Jakarta, for analysis, it could take up to two weeks to download data, investigators said, although the information could be accessed in as little as two days if the devices are not badly damaged.

On Saturday, teams of divers in rubber dinghies battled the swell to attach inflatable balloons to the tail section, which was later hauled onto a rescue vessel and towed to Kumai Bay, not far from Pangkalan Bun, which has served as the base port for search and rescue vessels.

The aircraft carries cockpit voice and flight data recorders - or black boxes - near its tail but once the wreckage was visible, it quickly became apparent that the flight recorders were still underwater.

While the cause of the crash is not known, the national weather bureau has said seasonal storms were likely to be a factor.

President Joko Widodo, who took office in late October, said the AirAsia crash exposed widespread problems in the management of air transportation in Indonesia.

Strong winds caused the aircraft to roll over, domestic news website Detik.com reported, with no injuries to the three crew members on board. The plane was not carrying any passengers. (Reuters)