

(1) Gov't Failed...

the deadliest year so far for media in the country, the report stated. "We have not seen any action that shows government is trying to reduce attacks and violence against journalists," said Mujibullah Khalwatgar, head of NAI, an organization supporting open media (NAI). According to the report, National Unity Government (NUG) leaders are caught up in a power struggle and HRW senior researchers have warned if the NUG does not bring reforms, the last 15 years' worth of achievements will be lost. Government however said it has made good progress. "Fundamental reforms have been made in legal and judicial centers and Afghan prisons are being monitored fully. Civilian casualties also decreased and government has good cooperation with international powerful countries," said Shahhussain Murtazawi, deputy spokesman for the president. (ToloneWS)

(2) 'Sanctuaries'...

have the responsibility to support the reconciliation process in Afghanistan. Countries in the region he said should increase pressure on the Afghan Taliban and associated militant networks to stop their campaigns of violence in Afghanistan. Of the view that Pakistan has learned some hard lessons because of its dealings with the Afghan Taliban, as violence in that country reflects, Mattis said Pakistan should do more to collaborate with its neighbor. We should urge Pakistan to take further actions against the Taliban and the Haqqani network," Mattis said. Supporting reconciliation process with the Taliban, Mattis said any American role in this should be in support of US national security interests, including the sovereignty of the Government of Afghanistan. He supported the three red-lines of the outgoing Obama Administration on talks with the Taliban. "In the past, the Afghan Taliban were told that they must break ties with al Qaeda, renounce violence and abide by the Afghan constitution in order to be allowed to enter the political process. I believe these continue to be reasonable demands," he said. Responding to a question on conditioning aid to Pakistan, Mattis said he would review "all option" even though this has had a mixed history. Mattis said Pakistan has "learned some hard lessons" because of its dealings with the Afghan Taliban, as violence in that country reflects. "I believe they should do more to collaborate with their neighbor. We should urge Pakistan to take further actions against the Taliban and the Haqqani network," Mattis said. "If confirmed, I will work with the State Department and the Congress to incentivize Pakistan's co-operation on issues critical to our national interests and the region's security, with focus on Pakistan's need to expel or neutralize externally-focused militant groups that operate within its borders," he said. (Pajhwok)

(3) Pakistan Rejects...
In response to media queries regarding allegations of safe havens in FATA, the Pakistani Foreign Office said in a statement that "Pakistan's contribution to the international community's fight against terrorism and the sacrifices that we rendered have been acknowledged by the world, including the U.S. at various levels of their leadership, EU and others." "It is unfortunate that our sincere efforts towards stability in Afghanistan are being maligned," it said. "Pakistan wants peace and stability in Afghanistan. We are engaged in border management which is imperative for effective counter terrorism. Pakistan will continue its policy of cooperation with international community to defeat the menace of terrorism," it said. Pakistan has lost thousands of its citizens and economic losses of over 100 billion U.S. dollars due to the menace of terrorism, adding the successes of the major operation are manifested in the improved security and economic situation in Pakistan, particularly near Pakistan-Afghanistan border, said the statement. (Xinhua)

(4) ANSF Unable...

also stated that reconstruction challenges remain and that the Afghan security forces are not yet capable of providing security for the whole country. It said the Afghan government cannot sustain many of the investments that the U.S. has made and that despite a U.S. investment of \$8.5 billion USD in counter-narcotics, Afghan opium production is at an all-time high. "Despite a \$70 billion U.S. investment

in the Afghan security forces, only 63 percent of the country's districts are under Afghan government control or influence. Corruption has eroded legitimacy of the Afghan government, limiting its effectiveness and bolstering support for the opposing insurgency. After 15 years, Afghanistan still cannot support itself financially or functionally. Long-term financial assistance is required if the country is to survive," the report stated. It also said: "The ANDSF has not yet been capable of securing all of Afghanistan and has lost territory to the insurgency. As of August 28, 2016, USFOR-A reported that only 63.4 percent of the country's districts were under Afghan government control or influence, a reduction from the 72 percent as of November 27, 2015. Capability gaps in key areas such as intelligence, aviation, and logistics are improving, but still hinder effectiveness."

SIGAR identified eight high-risk areas that addresses systemic problems facing U.S.-funded reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. The high-risk areas include Afghan Security Forces Capacity and Capabilities; Corruption; Sustainability; On-budget support; counter-narcotics; contract management; oversight and planning and strategy. (ToloneWS)

(5) Rise in...

the weather improves in the next two months. Another half a million undocumented Afghans are expected to be repatriated from Pakistan by the end of 2017. Numbers of returnees have been steadily rising over the past two years, with no letup in sight. Since January 2016, more than 700,000 unregistered Afghans have returned from Pakistan and Iran, up 50,000 on the year before, the IOM said, stretching limited resources in a country still under threat from the Taliban, al Qaeda and Islamic State. In 2016, the U.N. refugee agency, UNHCR, officially repatriated 372,577 registered Afghans. The rise in returnees comes amid a precarious security situation in Afghanistan, which has seen a steady increase in attacks since international troops ended combat operations in 2014, with record numbers of civilian casualties. "There's still a lot of fighting here and it's put a lot of strain on the services and economy," said Graydon. "We're ramping up and scaling up our facilities at the borders to be able to support a lot more families and we are anticipating that a lot more people will come," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in a telephone interview. After the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, more than 6 million Afghans crossed into neighboring Pakistan and Iran. IOM transit centers near the borders are providing basic accommodation, protection for unaccompanied minors, health care, household items such as pots and pans, as well as transport for families to resettle in their desired location. "It's going to take a concerted effort within the humanitarian community and the government to make sure that their reintegration needs are met," said Graydon. (VoA)

(6) Atmar Sees ...
foreign guests who had come to the province to help the people. The advisor called the attack a high-profile and painful incident that targeted Afghans and foreign diplomats. Without naming any country or group, he said after a few days it would be known who carried out the heinous attack. He said the most important question for investigators to answer was how the explosive were carried into the guesthouse. He hoped an answer to the query would be found soon. "Reconstruction work has been ongoing at the governor's house over the past few months and we should know the enemy got the opportunity; whether they exploited the reconstruction project or used some other technique to transfer explosive into the guesthouse." Atmar also acknowledged a security lapse and said: "Yesterday there were attacks in Helmand, Kabul and Kandahar. All of these attacks were coordinated. It was not a coincidence." He asked why the militants distanced themselves from the attack on the Kandahar governor's office when they claimed responsibility for the killing of innocent people in Kabul and Zabul. The enemy, who previously targeted common people, had started attacking the friends of Afghanistan, the advisor said, adding UAE Ambassador Juma Al Kabi and Governor Humayun Azizi were in stable condition. (Pajhwok)

(7) Delay in...

the district had been delayed following unknown reasons and militants had increased their activities and were present in two kilometres from Kunduz City, the provincial capital. Qurishi said the Taliban created training centres in the district which need to be shut and dismantled. Rahmatullah, a shopkeeper in the area, said: "We can't open our shops due to the fear that the Taliban were very close to the city and there was no clearing operation expected." He asked the government to launch winter offensive against insurgents to improve the security situation and avoid further threats and attacks in the spring. Lt. Gen. Sher Aziz Kamawal, commander of 808th zone in the north-eastern part of the country, acknowledged the worries of Imam Sahib residents and added anti-rebels offensive were underway in the district. "It is not possible to conduct offensive in every district at the same time, clearing operation was underway and the militants would be purged of Imam Sahib before spring," he said. (Pajhwok)

(8) Herat Officials ...

is the right of every citizen. Any official refusing to provide information should be treated in line with the law." Hamayun Nazari, head of the Committee to Protect Journalists in the western zone, alleges essential information is not shared equally with reporters. He said local security officials were discriminating whenever they giving information to media sources. "There are a lot of problems in the security sector, particularly in the police headquarters, where some information is given to only to specific reporters," he claims. For example, Nazari says the police headquarters invited a few reporters to cover its press conference, an issue that has created distance between journalists and the government. Most of Herat-based journalists slam the provincial police's media office of showing double standards in sharing information with reporters. However, provincial police spokesman Abdur Rauf Ahmadi insists the police headquarters does not discriminate against any journalist in Herat. On Tuesday, the counterterrorism department at the Herat police headquarters invited a limited number of journalists to covering a press conference. (Pajhwok)

(9) Afghans Have
Two days back, twin suicide bombings took place near the parliament building in the capital, claiming 46 people lives and inflicted injuries on another 100 people. Also on Tuesday, a suicide attack on a guesthouse at the Kandahar governor's office killed 11 people, including deputy governor Abdul Ali Shamsi and five UAE diplomats, and wounded 16 others. There was also a suicide bombing in southern Helmand at the same time, resulting in a dozen casualties. (Pajhwok)

(10) Serious Threats...

week, targeting the parliament staff in Dar-ul-Aman area. At least 38 people were killed and nearly 100 others were wounded in the attack, according to the security and public health officials. The Taliban group also released a video of the kidnapped professors of the American University in Afghanistan. The video was released after the deadly attacks in Kabul, Kandahar, and Helmand provinces. The two professors were abducted months ago from Kabul city and the video purportedly shows the two professors, hailing from US and Australian, making please to three concerned officials for their lives. (KP)

(11) Taliban Find ...

had fallen to Taliban and only two of them had been recaptured. Ghafari said Taliban's access to Russian weapons, night visions and security officials' negligence and delay in sending reinforcements were reasons behind the increased Afghan forces casualties and the fall of security posts. A provincial council member, Dadullah Qanay, said Afghan forces casualties had unprecedentedly increased. "Around 170 security men most of them policemen have suffered casualties in the past two months according to information we have obtained." He also said Taliban's access to Russian weapons was main cause of Afghan forces casualties and security posts' collapse to the rebels. Qanay believed Taliban's coordinated attacks on security posts was also

a reason of the increased Afghan forces casualties. He stressed increase in the number of security personnel and provision of equipment to security posts. He said the government must change security forces from defensive to offensive mode in order to defeat militants widely present in districts. Farah governor's spokesman, Mohammad Naser Mahravi, said Taliban militants stormed 15 security posts in different parts of the province over the past two months. But he said the security posts had not fully fallen to Taliban but were reactivated after the rebels were pushed back. Work on providing more equipment to security posts was underway. He confirmed a letter about casualties had been sent to the governor's house but disputed figures reported by some sources about security forces' fatalities. He said more than a hundred police and army personnel had suffered casualties in militant attacks. Mahravi also confirmed the need for strengthening police ranks in Farah and a major meeting to the issue would be held soon. Without giving details, he said Taliban's access to advanced weapons helped them target Afghan forces from a distance. "We don't know who made these weapons available to Taliban, such advanced weapons are available with Afghan forces," he said, adding that the militants had recently started attacking Afghan forces at night. "This new tactic of militants has raised concerns and the deployment of foreign forces to Farah was based on a request after the increase in security challenges," he said. He said around 200 Italian and US forces were stationed in Farah to cooperate with Afghan forces in air and ground operations against the Taliban. (Pajhwok)

(12) Captive ...

them on August 7. The nearly 13-minute video shows the men pleading to Trump to negotiate a prisoner swap. "Donald Trump, sir, I ask you please. This is in your hands." The Taliban said they wanted to deliver the videos of the "detained invaders to their respective countries so their people understand that their governments will not listen to the reasonable and easy demands of the mujahideen for the release of their citizens." (Pajhwok)

(13) Private Varsities ...

currently employed in universities. He said 3,700 both Afghan and foreign teachers worked at local private universities and colleges. (Pajhwok)

(14) Injured Kandahar ...

those wounded in the blast and the deputy governor and other senior officials were among the dead. He said an investigative team from the UAE has arrived here and met with officials from the interior ministry and National Security Council (NSC). Khapalwak said the UAE team was equipped with modern tools of investigations and visited the site of explosion as well. (Pajhwok)

(15) UAE Diplomats...

and International Cooperation wished Al Ka'abi and Al Saedi a speedy recovery, while appreciating the sacrifices of the nation's citizens. (Agencies)

(16) Parlimanetary...

to increase cooperation on sports and youth affairs between the two countries. In response, Afghan members promised discussing the possibility of potential collaboration with government. They also proposed a memorandum of understanding between Sindh and the Afghan government. (Pajhwok)

(17) HPC Official

Afghan people on daily basis. Noor specifically pointed towards the recent attacks in Kabul, Kandahar, and Helmand and slammed the official for his irresponsible remarks. In his remarks last week, Mujahid called the Taliban militants angels of peace and endorsed their position in the ongoing violence of remaining in a holy level. Mujahid offered the group's fight against Russia as a justification for his claim and called the former Afghan President Dr. Najibullah a traitor besides calling ex-President Burhanuddin Rabbani as the main factor in the devastating civil war. (KP)

(18) U.S. Probe ...

and in accordance with all applicable regulations and policy," the U.S. military in Afghanistan said in a statement. The raid, involving both U.S. and Afghan special forces, took place dur-

ing operations to push back Taliban fighters from the vicinity of Kunduz, the strategic city they had come close to overrunning in October.

The unit came under heavy fire from Taliban fighters using civilian houses as firing positions and suffered several casualties before calling in air support, the military added. "Regardless of the circumstances, I deeply regret the loss of innocent lives," Gen. John Nicholson, commander of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan said in the statement, adding that "all possible measures" would be taken to protect Afghan civilians. While the investigation concluded that more than 30 civilians had been killed, it said aircraft providing support had used "the minimum amount of force required to neutralize the various threats from the civilian buildings".

It also found that no civilians were seen or identified, and the dead and wounded were probably inside the buildings used by Taliban fighters. Some of the casualties may also have been caused by a Taliban ammunition dump that exploded.

Two U.S. soldiers and three Afghan army commandos were killed and another four Americans and 11 Afghan commandos wounded, with around 26 Taliban fighters also killed. (Reuters)

(19) Ghazni Residents ...

Meanwhile, an inhabitant of Qara Bagh district, Naqeebullah, said there was also a lack of doctors at their district's health centre. "Another problem is expired medicines. A few days back a patient was given medicines which were expired in 2012." A resident from Giro district, Naemullah, said due to unknown reasons the health centre in their district remained shut over the past 10 years. "Though Taliban have no problem with health centres, yet we have long been asking the governor's house but no one came to address our problems."

Ghazni residents asked the local administration and government authorities to resolve their issues with regard to health facilities. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) ran small health centres in several areas of the province, ICRC head in Ghazni, Samiullah Sidiqi, said. "These health centres are very small and can only provide first aid to people. Other services should be provided by the government." Ghazni public health director, Zia Gul Asfandi, said except Giro district, there were no problems in other districts in connection with health services delivery. "We have doctors and doctresses in every district. There are also nurses and we don't have any problem."

According to him, no one has the right to take fees from people in state-run hospitals or sell expired medicines. Violators would be brought to justice. (Pajhwok)

(20) Taliban Widely...

"We arrived here at Anar Dara area and we know who killed the coalminers. We continue our efforts to recognize and arrest the perpetrators," said Colonel Safi, administrative deputy head of Baghlan Police Headquarters. Meanwhile, a number of tribal elders said the only way to arrest the killers of the coalminers is to launch a special military operation not a large-scale operation.

"It will be better if they launch a special military operation with the help of investigative organizations, because it is winter and the people will be disturbed and it will not be easy for the government forces to arrest the killers," said Mawlawi Sadi-ul-Rahman Azimi, member of Afghanistan Ulema Council.

"The Tala Wa Barfak residents are fully cooperating with security forces in arresting the suspects, but they [the suspects] have not been recognized so far," said Nooruddin Ahmadi, a tribal elder in Tala Wa Barfak. (ToloneWS)

(21) Taliban Suffer ...

insurgents belonging to other militant groups are frequently using Improvised Explosive Device (IED) as the weapon of their choice to target the security forces and government officials. However, in majority of such attacks, the ordinary civilians are targeted as the anti-government armed militants are accused of incurring the most casualties to the civilians. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said late in October that the mission has documented 8,397 conflict-related civilian casualties (2,562 deaths and 5,835 injured) between 1 January and 30 September, representing a one per cent decrease compared to the same period in 2015. Ground engagements remained the

leading cause of civilian casualties, followed by suicide and complex attacks, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). (KP)

(22) Maternal, ...

will improve and all patients will visit hospital on time if the road is constructed," another resident of the district, Sakhi Amin said. Tala Wa Barfak residents warned that maternal and child mortality will surge if the road is not constructed. "More patients and pregnant women will die if government does not construct the road," said Zia Rahman, a resident of the district. Meanwhile, Tala Wa Barfak district governor Faiz Mohammad Amiri said the road was planned to be constructed a year ago.

However, he blamed the central government for a delay in construction of the road between Tala Wa Barfak and Pul-e-Khumri city.

"We discussed the issue with the central government at the beginning of the last year and they promised to construct the road, but nothing has been done so far," he said. (ToloneWS)

(23) 21 Rebels ...

Ayub Yousufzai, however, rejected reports about civilian and security forces casualties.

It was pertinent to mention that operation codenamed Ghubar was launched in the Tagab and Najrab districts of Kapisa province last week. (Pajhwok)

(24) Jawzjan Orchard...

in each district and the aim of equipment distribution is to modernise gardening methods in rural areas," he said.

The equipment included scissors, steps, gloves, boots, baskets and other tools that helped gardeners in collecting fruits, spraying pesticides, trimming trees and taking care of trees, he said.

Argghandiwal added many gardeners picked fruits in a non-professional way, but the new tools would prevent damage to fruits.

Abdul Ghani, a grower from the Baba Ali area of Shiberghan, was happy with receiving the tools. He said the tools were provided by the development section of the agriculture ministry.

More than 300 orchards have been created in Jawzjan province by the Agriculture and Livestock Department in the past four years. (Pajhwok)

(25) 3 Rebels Dead, ...

facility in Shindand. Situated between Masyan and Guzarsang localities, the training centre was being run by Mullah Najibullah, the Taliban's military affairs in charge for Herat, he added.

He said three Taliban had been killed and five arrested during the raid. Security forces and civilians suffered no harm in the overnight offensive.

Taliban have not commented about the incident. (Pajhwok)

(26) Afghan TV ...

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(27) Major Syrian ...

in Astana," Sheikh said. Meanwhile, Afandi said that representatives of the Syrian political opposition would attend the Astana talks as advisors, staying "behind the curtain," while representatives of various "military organizations" will participate in the talks directly. Afandi said that Damascus will be represented by an official from the Syrian Defense Ministry. The Russian Foreign Ministry said the delegation was hosted by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov, who is also Russia's presidential representative on the Middle East and Africa. (Xinhua)

(28) Erdogan Urges...

in case the reform package fails to pass through the parliament. The Republican People's Party and the Peoples' Democratic Party, the other two parties in parliament, have also voiced support for an early election rather than a "regime change." (Xinhua)

(29) Pak Adviser ...

as an attack on humanity itself. Pakistan also condemns this heinous atrocity in the strongest possible terms while reiterating its unwavering solidarity with the UAE in countering terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. (PR)