

(1) Karzai Govt ...

said the recent surge in violence across the country was the outcome of the previous government's failure.

A former caretaker higher education and justice minister, he stressed the need for a transparent and inclusive peace process, but cautioned against compromise on the constitution. He believed equipping and supporting Afghan security forces, ensuring good governance, uniform development and eliminating corruption could help stabilise and develop the country.

The VP stressed sacrifices rendered by the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) should be highlighted and appreciated because peace could be achieved from a position of strength.

Danish warned if the Afghan army lacked defence capabilities, it would encourage the enemy to stage more attacks, calling strong defence the key to peace and stability.

He reiterated the unity government's resolve to eliminate corruption, implement reforms and ensure justice and transparency in all affairs.

A peaceful Afghanistan was in the region's interest and instability could put the entire region in danger, Danish argued.

UN secretary general's special representative Nicholas Haysom said the Afghan-led peace process had some flaws, but added the world body supported the initiative. (Pajhwok)

(2) US General ...

"So there are people vulnerable to the Daesh message, and so we're looking at it very hard."

This comes as officials in southern Helmand and western Farah provinces of Afghanistan have said the signs of the ISIS presence have been noted in parts of the two provinces. Officials in Helmand province have said that a former Taliban leader is currently recruiting fighters for ISIS in Sangin district, while officials in Farah said the terror group has set up training bases in Khak-e-Safid district.

However, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) officials have rejected that ISIS terrorist group is operating in Afghanistan and said there are no signs that the group has infiltrated in the country.

In the meantime, a video was released by ISIS on Saturday purports to show militant leaders who identify themselves as from Afghanistan and Pakistan Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP's) former spokesman Shahidullah Shahid pledging their support to the Islamic State group. The video obtained by the SITE Intelligence Group purportedly showing the beheading of a man whom they identify as a Pakistani military soldier. (KP)

(3) Gen. Raheel,...

Prime Minister David Cameron on issues of regional and bilateral importance, Dawn reported.

Pakistan's crackdown on proscribed organisations and measures to choke terror financing came up for discussion, the newspaper said, adding the COAS also called on Secretary of Defence Michael Fallon and held extensive talks with Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Sir Nicholas Houghton. Military spokesman Asim Bajwa said Gen. Raheel raised the issues of regional security, stability in Afghanistan and defence cooperation. He also met Home Office Permanent Secretary Mark Sedwill and Director General of the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism (OSCT) Charles Farr.

They conferred on intelligence-sharing and anti-terrorism cooperation. The COAS briefed British leaders on Pakistan's war against terror and the ongoing Operation Zarb-i-Azb in Waziristan.

He also sought British government's help against the outlawed Hizbut Tahrir (HT) group and the Baloch dissidents living in exile in the United Kingdom. The issue of UK-based organisations creating security problems in Pakistan was raised in the meetings. (Pajhwok)

(4) Report Questions ...

resolve issues related to Afghan women, peace and security, last year Parliament was overly-occupied with horse-trading and dealings between politicians that key public interest issues went neglected. In one instance, the report asserts that half of the all legislators were absent from open parliamentary sessions. According to the report, Parliament's major deficiencies in the legislative process in 2014 were as follows:

- 53 percent of the legislators remained absent from open sessions

- Lack of transparency in the legislative process

- Shortfall of expertise in the legislative system

- Violations and delays while ratifying laws

- Pursuing traditional and personalized approach in legislative process

- Weakness in Parliament's administrative board

- Impacts of political process on the legislative process

- Lack of creativity in problem solving

- Weak deliberative process and deficiencies among parliamentary commissions

The report also criticized Parliament's oversight of the government over the past year on the following grounds:

- Nonexistence of consistent, coherent monitoring system

- Dramatic but unproductive summoning of government officials

- Showing weakness toward corruption

- Summoning officials for corruption purposes

- Showing weakness directing development policy

- Inconclusive outcomes from summations

"Our findings indicate that absences were one of the major issues last year, and weak monitoring of government actions and lack of concentration of the MPs were other major challenges," said Wazhma Forogh, Chair of the Women Peace and Security Research Institute.

However, MPs were not entirely sold on the report. Some pointed the finger of blame at the government, arguing the National Assembly was only able to do so much without greater support. "Unfortunately, the disregarding of resolutions of the National Assembly by the government has been among the major challenges and several times the president tried to intervene in the job of the National Assembly and it has had a major impact on the undertakings of the house," Ghazni MP Ghulam Ali Ali Zada said.

The report comes at a time that several long-awaited laws remain pending in Parliament, including laws on higher education, violence against women and banking.

The House of Representatives in 2014 was said to have spent 70 percent of its open sessions on reviewing and voting on laws, while 25 percent of the sessions was geared toward monitoring government actions. (ToloneWS)

(5) President Renews ...

Ambassador Deborah Lyons and welcomed Ottawa's economic, agriculture and capacity-building assistance to Afghanistan.

The ambassador promised Canada would continue to support the people and armed forces of Afghanistan. Ghani thanked Lyons for consistent support from the Canadian government over the past 13 years. (Pajhwok)

(6) US-Funded ...

blaming the US for failing to oversee the project appropriately.

CENTCOM officials allegedly failed to see any of the deficiencies that let water seep into the complex and erode the walls of the dry-fire training range. The roof was built of plastic with a concrete cap, instead of gravel.

The sand bricks that were too small were substituted for the agreed-upon clay bricks, the organisation said, adding support beams were not securely fastened to the structure.

The contract had been awarded to Qesmatullah Nasrat Construction Company to build the training centre for the Afghan Special Police. The firm was slammed for the shoddy workmanship and failure to follow contract requirements.

SIGAR suggested that the Central Command should identify all of the contract officers responsible for oversight the facilities to determine what happened consider taking disciplinary action against them. (Pajhwok)

(7) Ministers should ...

rights and participation in essential areas of the Afghan society, such as economy, education, politics, peace and security.

"The establishment of such a council along with other National Unity Government initiatives to involve Afghan women in society acknowledges their prodigious potential. We must see more of this potential unfold when the newly nominated Cabinet Ministers soon take office. Afghanistan needs stronger representation of women in all sectors of the government and indeed in the private sector, on which the Afghan economy will be increasingly depending", stated Ambassador Franz-Michael Mellbin in his ad-

dress.

"Enabling and empowering women to contribute to the rise of this nation is not only a matter for the Ministry of Women's Affairs. It must be a priority for all ministries. It must be at the top of the agenda of every single minister - male or female - to provide Afghan women with equal opportunities. This is what we expect. Nothing less", concluded Ambassador Mellbin Afghan Olympic Athlete Tahmina Kohistani encouraged the younger generations of Afghan women: "Since I was a child, I had a dream to become an athlete. I followed my dream. I trained hard and gave the best I could to pursue my future in sports. I dreamt of going to the Olympics. I trained harder and I made it. I want to encourage all Afghan girls to follow their dreams. Take control of your life and responsibility for your future - and your dreams can come true as well", she said. (PR)

(8) Afghanistan,...

each other's interests, as well as strengthening the security situation, promoting good governance and further cementing cultural links.

The UAE announced support for the Afghan peace process and return of Taliban to their homes, saying they would cooperate in hosting the process - if needed.

The agreement is also aimed at developing Afghan police capacity, helping the fight against corruption and the struggle for law enforcement.

Based on the accord, both countries will encourage their private sectors, improve businesses and investments, generate job opportunities, ensure rural rehabilitation, beef up transport infrastructure and promote education.

It also envisages the preservation of Afghanistan's cultural heritage and improving civil services. The Presidential Palace said Afghan workers would be able to enter the UAE directly on Afghan passports. (Pajhwok)

(9) Iran to Invite ...

"Pact" between Kabul and Tehran, the source said on condition of anonymity.

After signing the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) with Washington, the unity government now eyes to ink an agreement with Iran on fight against terrorism and drug trafficking, and also boost mutual economic and cultural cooperation.

However, the lawmakers and political analysts believe the regional countries can play a key role in Afghanistan's peace efforts.

"Definitely, if this agreement has importance for Afghanistan and enjoys sincerity, we will support it," said Abdul Qadir Zazai, head of Parliamentary committee on international affairs.

Also, the High Peace Council (HPC) members believe that insurgency in Afghanistan have roots outside the country; thus the cooperation of regional countries is necessary for Afghanistan's peace efforts.

"One of the key points of this agreement is Afghanistan's peace," said Mohammad Ismail Qasimyar, HPC foreign relations advisor. "I believe the cooperation of regional countries, especially neighbors is important in this respect."

During the past years, Afghanistan has been able to sign security and strategic cooperation agreements with several world countries including the United States, China, India, Turkey, Germany and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

However, the Taliban sharply increased their armed attacks and bombings in Kabul, mainly targeting foreign nationals, after the Afghan government signed BSA with Washington. (ToloneWS)

(10) Civil Society ...

Nasrullah Mesbah, who heads the youth political movement "Etelafi Milli Nahj-i-Naween Afghanistan," told reporters in Kabul the nominees were inappropriate choices and the president and chief executive officer (CEO) had failed to honour their pledges.

He claimed bargaining had undermined professionalism, talent and experience in cabinet formation. Five ethnic groups had been given representation in the cabinet, but the rest ignored, he added, regretting inadequate representation of women. Mesbah called on lawmakers to refrain from reaching secret deals with the ministers-designate and hoped that lower house members would prove their patriotism by voting for only competent and qualified ministers.

Ahmad Zaki, the head of Civil Society Movement for Social Justice, said the Wolesi Jirga should not consider ethnicity or family back-

grounds while granting trust vote to the nominees.

He said qualification and experience should be given priority. The activists warned of bad consequences if the MPs cut deals with the cabinet nominees for personal benefit in return for the trust vote.

Earlier, some Wolesi Jirga members had suggested the majority of the cabinet nominees would be unable to obtain the trust vote because they lacked professional experience. (Pajhwok)

(11) AIHRC, Civil...

discuss the results of the survey. The survey was held in two rounds, where over 6,000 Afghans participated from all 34 provinces. According to those involved in the survey process, the project was designed to gauge opinions on what is fueling anti-government armed groups and increased insecurity in the country. The two most common reasons cited by the survey's respondents for the proliferation of insurgent groups and insecurity were a pervasive culture of impunity among elite and the growing number of illegally armed groups.

g to the survey's purveyors, the views of women, youth, analysts and former members of the Taliban were prioritized. Those stakeholders, it was assumed, would be essential to better understanding the barriers between militants and the government preventing peace.

"Peace cannot be maintained with one sided policies and concessions," said Fazel Agha Sancharaki, Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah's Advisor on Cultural Affairs.

Overall, attendees emphasized a more inclusive approach to peace-building in the country. "These are important and legitimate concerns that need to be addressed in the peace and reconciliation processes," said Nicholas Haysom, a representative of the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA). "UNAMA shares the view that human rights cannot be sacrificed, that women must play a strong and active role and that peace is a both top down and bottom up process for it to be durable and effective."

Participants on the conference concluded that without support from the security institutions, disarming of illegally armed groups, maintaining of human rights, rule of law and increasing women's role in the peace process, insecurity in Afghanistan will only get worse. (ToloneWS)

(12) US Welcomes ...

18 convicts have been hanged so far in the country.

During his recent visit of Pakistan, U.S. State Secretary John Kerry also called upon Islamabad to target all militant groups without discrimination.

Furthermore in a latest move, Pakistan has also decided to strictly monitor religious schools (Madrassa) where a large number of militants possibly exist and receive training. The move, which is approved by the country's Parliament to monitor the financial sources of Madrassas and their activities, has sparked criticisms of the students of these seminaries.

According to some Pakistani analysts, several Arab countries are financially supporting these schools which provide militancy training and send fighters to Afghanistan.

About 28,000 Madrassas, based on Pakistani reports, are active in the country, of which, 10,000 schools are operating illegally. Most of these seminaries are located in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces. (ToloneWS)

(13) Abdullah Has ...

asked Wolesi Jirga members to use the trust vote in the supreme national interest and avoid cutting deals. (Pajhwok)

(14) Karzai Raises...

"It is very easy, you call 1313 from your phone and it will cost you 35 Afghani, which will go towards curing children with heart disease; please make sure you do this."

Before recording the TV announcement, Karzai was said to have talked to prominent Dubai-based Afghan businessman, Abdul Rahman Alokzai, asking him to donate money to the cause. Mr Alokzai donated 200,000 USD to the campaign, which has already reportedly saved the lives of over 60 kids. The former Afghan president vowed to reach out to other Afghan businessmen for donations, which will be directly transferred to hospitals overseas where the necessary operations are being conducted.

So far, over 20 million AFG has been raised through the telephonic fundraiser. In addition to Mr. Alakozai, other Afghan businessmen have

donated several thousands of dollars. Yet there remain insufficient funds to provide surgeries for all the Afghan children afflicted by VSD. (ToloneWS)

(15) 600 ANA ... borders and we are committed to it," Gen. Karim said.

It is said that 50 Quick Reaction Force (QRF) soldiers of the interior ministry also received this three-month training.

Since the end of combat mission by international troops, the people, from young to old and men to women, have come up to show their solidarity with the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).

Yesterday (Wednesday) around 5,000 religious scholars from across the country gathered in Kabul and announced their support for ANSF. (ToloneWS)

(16) IS Emergence...

she called for a prompt action. However, Abdullah Ansari, the Sayad district chief, said no such elements had been seen in the district, but added there were reports the IS was recruiting in Darz-Ab district of neighbouring Jawzjan province.

Makhdum Sadeq, a resident of Kohistanat district, said there were groups in Asmatk village carrying white flags of the Taliban as well as black flags of the IS. He said the area appeared to be a big centre of insurgent groups in the north.

Another resident, wishing not to be named, said the Taliban had sneaked into Kohistanat from other areas, replacing their white flags with black. The resident had not seen any foreigner among the gunmen.

He said Sher Mohammad Ghazafar, a resident of the Sayad district, announced allegiance to the Islamic State group after escaping from prison.

Governor Abdul Jabbar Haqbin rejected the claims and said they had witnessed no such activities showing the presence of IS fighters in the province. (Pajhwok)

(17) 2014 a Deadly ...

and international partners from commercial and non-profit spheres, with a 26 year history of cooperation that has seen over 23,000 hazardous areas cleared and a resulting decline in civilian casualties by almost 80 per cent. (Pajhwok)

(18) 46 Inmates

two months ahead of his term expired. Currently some 1,674 inmates are being held in the Nangarhar central prison.

Meanwhile, 19 inmates, including four women, were freed from Kunduz central jail. According to officials, 25 more prisoners received three to five years remissions in their jail terms. (Pajhwok)

(19) Afghans Fret...

the group's resurgence are the strongest in the country's war-ravaged West, where two-thirds of Afghans believe their presence will increase. Half of Afghans living in the Central region, which includes the country's capital, Kabul, also believe this, Gallup said.

Meanwhile, Afghans remain highly confident in their own military, which assumed full security responsibility on Jan. 1, 2015. The upward trend in Afghans' confidence in their military ended in 2014, but at 71 percent, the proportion who currently have faith in their military is still much higher than it was even a few years ago, the poll showed.

Although the United States will leave behind more than 10,000 troops for support and counterterrorism efforts, many Afghans likely agree with President Ashraf Ghani's call last week for the United States to "re-examine" its timetable for removing these forces by the end of 2016, Gallup found. (Xinhua)

(20) Kunduz ...

was recently kidnapped by unidentified gunmen but the government had done nothing to secure his release.

Mohamed Farid Qate, head of the Kunduz Workers Union, concurred traders and workers in the province felt insecure. They could not even send their children to school for fear of kidnappings, he said.

He blamed the security organs for failing to properly investigate the abduction incident. "There is no clue to the kidnappers and their motive remains a mystery," Qate remarked. The traders said insecurity was mounting in the province with each passing day, forcing them to scale down or stop their activity. But the administration, they alleged, had not yet measured up to the challenge.

About two months ago, a Kunduz businessman was killed after being

kidnapped. The murder sparked angry protests by businessmen, but the perpetrators are yet to be brought to justice. (Pajhwok)

(21) Paktika...

, agriculture, etc." Public requirements would be shared with the president, CEO and relevant ministries, Matin said, urging residents to help him put an end to the current problems.

Militants could easily sneak into Paktika, sharing a long porous border with Pakistan, he acknowledged. But he added the security situation would get better if people supported the security forces. (Pajhwok)

(22) Pro-Government ...

was partially damaged as a result of the explosion ahead of Isha prayers. Meanwhile, acting governor Abdul Wahed Patan confirmed the killing of the religious scholar, who repeatedly condemned suicide attacks as un-Islamic. (Pajhwok)

(23) 2 Policemen ...

about Taliban's casualties. Meanwhile, Taliban spokesman Qari Yousaf Ahmadi claimed the fighters had killed and wounded many policemen in Sangin and snatched at least five weapons from them. (Pajhwok)

(24) 30 Afghan...

Tucani aircraft. The wing's chief public affairs officer Sonic Johnson quoted by the local newspaper The Dispatch said Afghans will use the training to help protect their homeland. According to Johnson, the Department of Defense is paying for the training mission which will begin next month and the program is set to conclude in 2018.

The US Air Force received the first of the A-29s from Sierra Nevada Corp and Embraer under the Light Air Support (LAS) program on 26th September. (KP)

(25) Faryab ...

Mohammad Baig, the district chief, said the victim had been involved in an anti-Taliban campaign. In Andkhoi district, Sanjar said, a 22 years old man was found hanged and his body taken to hospital for forensic examination. (Pajhwok)

(26) Baghlan...

resident, said they would walk for two and a half hours to reach the district center, "but now we drive and go there in only 20 minutes". Rural Rehabilitation Director Meh-rabuddin Ibrahim said 2,000 families living in the five villages used the road. The project cost around half a million dollars provided by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development. (Pajhwok)

(27) U.S. Should...

on Jan. 1, Kim said "there is no reason not to hold highest-level talks" with South Korean President Park Geun-hye if right atmosphere is formed.

The DPRK has long regarded South Korea-U.S. joint military drills as a serious threat to its security on a divided peninsula. Starting talks with the United States will be a shortcut for the DPRK to resume negotiations with South Korea.

Despite the rejection, DPRK made a "crucial" proposal on Jan. 9 to the U.S. side demanding a suspension of the U.S.-Korean joint military drills in exchange for a temporary suspension of its nuclear tests, and clarified that it is ready to sit with Washington anytime if the United States needs to hold talks regarding the issue.

Unfortunately, the DPRK's olive branch was rejected once again, as the U.S. side sensed a subtle threat in the initiative.

However, the DPRK has never given up its efforts to talk directly with the United States. A senior Pyongyang representative at the United Nations said Tuesday that the DPRK is ready to explain its intention behind its proposal directly to the United States, if the latter wants "additional explanations about our proposal." Actually, the proposal, if adopted this year, may bring about many changes on the Korean Peninsula, as the DPRK sees the large-scale war exercises undertaken by the United States and South Korea every year is the root cause of the escalating tensions and the danger of a nuclear war on the Korean Peninsula.

On the 70th anniversary of the end of Japanese colonial rule and the division of the peninsula, it is high time for the United States to patiently listen to DPRK's peace appeal to help achieve denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and safeguard its peace and stability through dialogue and consultations. (Xinhua)