

### (1) Afghan Forces...

are well prepared and efforts at further equipping them have been intensified and their war plans are successfully underway." Referring to the peace agreement between the unity government and the Gulbadin Hekmatyar-led Hezb-i-Islami Afghanistan, Abdullah said the Taliban should also follow the suit. He said though Daesh had become an international threat, the Afghan forces had defeated its programmes in Afghanistan. The outfit has been unable to reach its goals in the war-torn country, the CEO added. He said Daesh and Taliban had suffered huge casualties in various provinces during operations against them by the Afghan security forces. (Pajhwok)

### (2) Aziz, EU Envoy ...

commitment made during the Brussels Conference for continued assistance towards Afghan peace, reconstruction and development. Both sides agreed on the need for sustained efforts towards Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace process. (Tolonews)

### (3) UN Agencies ...

through the SMS technology. Pakistan hosts approximately 1.3 million Afghan nationals, one of the largest protracted refugee populations in the world today. Around two-thirds of the total population resides in semi-urban areas, while the remaining one-third lives in 54 refugee villages.

Most of these refugees are second or third-generation children and youth born in Pakistan. Around 64% of the Afghan refugee population is under the age of 25 and 25% are youth between 18 and 24.

U-Report PakAvaz has more than 2.8 million active users in over 28 countries globally, including Pakistan. The platform creates a space for young refugees to have a voice and develop leadership opportunities for them in their community.

UNICEF representative Angela Kearney said: "We are in a country with one of the largest populations of young people. This collaboration will make visible the need and issues of young refugees in the areas of health, education, protection, water sanitation and hygiene and social welfare through the use of technology and mobile phones."

UNHCR representative Indrika Ratwatta said: "In order to respond to rising needs, communicating with this demographic is crucial. Empowered youth are agents of change and U-Report PakAvaz is an important platform to hear voices of young people that will enable us to do our work better."

The initiative will help young people report on issues related to their communities through SMS, Twitter and Facebook. Relevant reports will be sent to decision-makers at different levels to advocate for improvements of services. (Pajhwok)

### (4) Trump Open to ...

stance breaks from the policy of the previous U.S. administration, which only worked with Russia to de-conflict air strikes in Syria.

The remark came after the Russian defense ministry claimed that two jets from the U.S.-led coalition participated in a strike on IS targets alongside Russian aircraft. But the Pentagon on Monday denied the claim.

"The Department of Defense (DoD) is not coordinating air strikes with the Russian military in Syria," Eric Pahon, a Pentagon spokesman, said. (Xinhua)

### (5) US Senate...

would vote for Tillerson earlier Monday.

"Given the uncertainty that exists both at home and abroad about the direction of our foreign policy, it would be against our national interests to have this confirmation unnecessarily delayed or embroiled in controversy," Rubio said.

At a Senate hearing earlier this month, Tillerson, calling Russia a "danger" to the United States, said he favored maintaining U.S. sanctions against Moscow.

"Russia today poses a danger, but it is not unpredictable in advancing its own interests," said Tillerson. "Our NATO allies are right to be alarmed at a resurgent Russia." (Xinhua)

### (6) Afghan, Uzbek ..

the foreign ministries of the two countries, RTA said without giving more details.

An agreement for creating a joint security commission between the two Central Asian countries was also signed by the two sides, the television channel added. (Xinhua)

### (7) Almost 80...

provincial governor Gul Rahman Seyar said.

According to him, the Afghan security forces coordinated the airstrikes that were carried out by foreign troops.

However, he did not provide more details about the airstrikes.

Khak-e-Afghan and Daychopan are insecure districts of the province where Daesh and Al-Qaeda are active. (Tolonews)

### (8) Karzai Urges...

with the administration of George W. Bush, but with Barack Obama they deteriorated, leading him to criticize Washington which he accused of causing civilian casualties, loss of security, the creation of parallel power structures in Afghanistan and the "complete negligence" of Pakistan.

Asked why he had not taken action as president to put an end to this situation, he said he had in fact done so, by refusing to sign the Bilateral Security Agreement with the US, which allowed US troops to remain on Afghan soil.

"I raised my voice in a very forceful way in 2006," he said, adding that he was not against the US presence and did not want their troops to leave. He assured the Taliban never spoke of war - "nobody wants his family to live forever under threat" - and collectively demanded the exit of foreign troops and the setting up of an Islamic government.

Karzai said that once the situation was ready and those blocking peace began to cooperate, the world would see that through negotiations, many questions, doubts and demands would be answered in a mutually beneficial way.

He confirmed there was a relationship between Russia and Iran and the Taliban due to the presence of the IS in the country.

"Imagine a situation where things have gone so badly, where trust has gone so low, where things in Afghanistan, the US presence and all that is seen with so much suspicion that the Russians and the Iranians would go to befriend the Taliban," he said.

The president rejected the possibility of presenting himself as a candidate in the 2019 elections and insisted that it was important to step aside and allow a new generation of Afghans to lead.

"I've done my best, I was for 13 years the president of Afghanistan and I delivered what I had to the Afghan people," said Karzai. (Pajhwok)

having arrived in Germany since 2015 from the Middle East.

Berlin's decision was criticized by local human rights organizations, which accused the German authorities of sentencing people to death by sending them to the war-torn country.

Afghanistan is suffering from instability, with the Taliban movement operating in the country, seeking to establish Sharia law in the country. (Sputnik)

### (10) Female Engineering ...

of architecture and engineering and are provided with opportunities to strengthen their professional and interpersonal skills in the process.

"The effects of this program will extend beyond the intern's graduation date," said USAID Mission Director Herbie Smith. "We are creating a network of successful and skilled women within Afghanistan who will work to build an empowering future for Afghan women in engineering and architecture, as well as Afghanistan's future."

The interns are provided opportunities that include design and collaborative processes, field visits, program management, and project implementation. They are also assisted with and encouraged to apply for job opportunities within their fields of study. Seven were hired to work on USAID programs after completing their one year internships. Others are working or furthering their education, including a few graduates working outside of Afghanistan.

Mohammadullah Ebrahimi, Lecturer and Vice President of Student Affairs at Kabul Polytechnic University, emphasized his appreciation to USAID for providing opportunities to female architectural and engineering students.

"The Internship Program has given me a clear vision for my professional career," said Zulaikha Ahmadi, USAID intern.

The USAID Internship Program for Afghan Women in Engineering and Architecture is scheduled to run through 2019. The program will continue to provide vital opportu-

nities for female students to enable them to become active future leaders in Afghanistan's government, businesses, and civic society.

With almost \$17 billion spent on development programs in Afghanistan since 2002, USAID provides the largest bilateral civilian assistance program to Afghanistan. USAID partners with the government and people of Afghanistan to ensure economic growth led by the country's private sector, to establish a democratic and capable state governed by the rule of law, and to provide basic health and education services for all Afghans. (PR)

### (11) Taliban Run...

in Syedabad district of Maidan Wardak province and they charged taxes on vehicles passing through the area.

He said around 15 heavy and several light vehicles traveled on the route on a daily basis and their drivers paid money in 'tax' to the insurgents. "Taliban charge a lorry truck 10,000 and 12,000 afghamis," he claimed.

Saleem Saleh, the Logar governor's spokesman, confirmed the Baraki Barak district chief's claim, but said security forces had driven the rebels from the area.

Maidan Wardak governor's spokesman Abdul Rahman Mangal said Taliban militants were running a customs office in Syedabad district.

"Tangai area in Syedabad is unstable but we have not received any complaint from local people about Taliban's customs office," he said.

He said officials in neighboring provinces were planning to conduct clearing operations in the area soon. Pajhwok obtained a copy of Taliban's customs form with words on the top "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's Borders Department."

Vehicle's type, amount of money, date and mobile number are written on the page.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid rejected the fighters had set up a customs office anywhere in Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

### (12) Uruzgan Airstrike...

would be soon revealed to the public.

Kharoti said a delegation would be appointed to thoroughly investigate the incident and bring the perpetrators to justice.

The governor said he also received a telephone call from the Presidential Palace and he was ordered to investigate the incident.

The aircraft that hit the family did not fly from Uruzgan and was neither controlled from here, the governor said, adding that it was still unclear where from the aircraft was controlled.

Khoaroti promised seriously injured people would be sent to Kandahar or Kabul for their better treatment.

While the affected family said some individuals had threatened them not to share the incident with the media. Ahmadullah, a member of the family, said he received many telephone calls from unknown numbers, threatening him not to make the issue public.

He asked the central government to investigate the incident and punish the perpetrators.

"It is not something to be hidden, 14 members of my family were injured and I have to share it with the media and officials," he said. (Pajhwok)

comprising of 84 members had arrived from Kunduz in Herat province. They said they were living in terrible condition in Herat's Firqa area.

The families said they had no protect themselves from cold weather and snowfall and asked the government and charity organizations to help them.

A Pajhwok Afghan News reporter, who visited the families in Herat, said the internally displaced persons (IDPs) lacked warm clothes and proper shelter in the face of extremely cold weather.

The families have erected tents near garbage bins. Their children were seen walking barefoot.

Sharifa, wearing a thin dress and shaking due to cold, told Pajhwok Afghan News that five of her family members had been killed in the Kunduz conflict and she left all her belongings and displaced to Herat province.

"Our wheat farms and houses were destroyed and now we even don't have dresses to wear," she said.

Qarib, another displaced woman from Kunduz, said: "We are dying, around eight children aged seven and three years lost their lives to severe cold. We cannot buy breads. We collect leftovers from garbage bins." Zarmina is another woman who lives in Firqa area. She complained they had no clothes and her children

were ill due their exposure to cold weather condition.

She asked officials to help them and other IDPs as soon as possible before they were further affected by cold.

Sarwari, another woman from a displaced family, said: "We have no firewood, quilts and cooking dishes, people give leftover meals to us but they could not meet our needs, the government should help us."

She said the government should implement some decisive programs for resolving IDPs' problems.

The displaced families said their children and elderly men and women could die of cold weather if they not helped.

Meanwhile, Herat refugee and repatriation director, Ahmad Javid Naadim, said that 68,000 people had been displaced from Ghor, Badghis, Farah, Faryab, Daikundi and Kunduz provinces to Herat.

He said 19,000 of the displaced families who were in need of urgent help had been distributed food and other essential items aid by some charity organizations this winter.

A survey for IDPs living outside refugee camps and facing multiple problems is underway by the World Vision organization in cooperation with the refugee department, he said. After the survey, 1,100 families would be provided needed materials, Naadim said.

He said IDPs living in Firqa area were in condition and would be helped after the survey was completed.

According National Disaster Management Authority officials in the western zone, 9,000 families have received aid items and essential materials this year winter. (Pajhwok)

### (14) 'Insufficient' ...

Afghan National Army (ANA) troops in Nuristan. I think it is impossible to secure the entire province with a limited number of police that too equipped with light weapons," he said.

The public representative said security forces, particularly police and border police, should be increased and ANA troops deployed to Nuristan for improving the situation.

A member of the provincial council, Zinatullah Wafa, also said the security situation was worsening in the province and people would face more problems if the strength of security forces was not increased.

"Right now many people are in trouble in districts, they cannot easily find food due to clashes," he said.

A former head of the provincial council and tribal elder, Inayatullah Mazhabyar, said Doab, Bargamtal, Kamdih, Mandol, Norgram, Wai-gal and Wama districts were under serious security threat.

He said central officials did not allow food items to be transported to districts as they believed the food would reach militants. "Currently the food items available in districts are insufficient to meet people's needs."

Governor Hafiz Abdul Qayum confirmed shortage of security forces but said efforts were underway to resolve the problem to some extent in near future.

He also confirmed roads to districts were blocked but rejected central officials had prevented food items from being transported to rural areas.

He said people in districts were purchasing essential items in neighboring provinces such as Kunar and Laghman.

"We have suggested the deployment of Afghan Local Police (ALP) for security in Doab, Norgram and Mandol districts to the Ministry of Interior (MoI), which approved 80 ALP personnel for each district who would be deployed soon after their training is completed," he said.

Maj. Sherin Aqa, 201st Selab Military Corps spokesman in the east, said sufficient security forces were available in Nuristan.

He said some security personnel might on vacation of off duty but enough forces were there to respond to any possible threat from militants. Security forces sometimes suffer casualties in Nuristan due to its impassable routes and remote location to receive needed supplies. (Pajhwok)

### (15) Disabled Security...

work; the president must give us time and meet us to listen to our problems," added Walizada. Fifteen years of war and violence in Afghanistan has left thousands of Afghans disabled - especially members of the security forces.

Matullah is another Afghan in the security forces who was left disabled in a blast. He served in the Afghan National Army (ANA) and lost his legs in an explosion in the southern province of Kandahar.

Matullah now campaigns for the disabled and works for the Afghan Heroes Charity, which was founded by former National Directorate of Security (NDS) chief Rahmatullah Nabil.

"We are searching for all disabled people around the country and will fight for their rights and convey their problems to the responsible authorities," he said.

The Afghan government is responsible for financially supporting soldiers left disabled in the course of duty. However some disabled veterans said in some cases, the government has failed to address their plight. (Tolonews)

### (16) Kandahar Resident ...

the loyalist of the terror group have started advertisements and are spreading propaganda among the residents of Kunar.

Shahwali Salarzai, head of Kunar's labor association, has said the group could attract the jobless youths whose numbers are considerably high.

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) officials earlier said the terror group still pose serious threats to Afghanistan despite their hardly suppressed in counter-terrorism operations.

MoI spokesman Sediq Sediq told reporters in Kabul that the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) continue to maintain pressure on the loyalists of the terror group in East of Afghanistan and prevent ISIS loyalists expand foothold in more Nangarhar districts and other provinces. (KP)

### (17) In Harsh ...

Death is much better than the miserable life we are leading here," remarked Mohammad - frustration writ large on his visage.

He added that their problems multiplied with the advent of the winter and they were unable to purchase firewood. The camp dwellers burn plastic, rubber, old shoes and papers they collected from the city, he said.

Malik, a resident of the Kajaki district of Helmand, is another person living in the camp having 1,377 families. Most of them belong to Helmand province. Four children and two elderly people recently lost their lives in the camp due to severe cold.

Only two humanitarian organisations have distributed food items and fuel to the families this winter, but they were not enough as cold weather had caused them more problems, he argued.

He recalled President Ashraf Ghani had visited the camp during his election campaign and had promised to resolve their shelter problems. But the president had nothing so far, forgetting the plight of the camp inmates after the election, he alleged.

This elder man asked charities and government organs to help the affected families and prevent a possible humanitarian disaster.

The IDPs living in Proja-i-Taimani have similar complaints. Nawab Khan, hailing from Laghman province, was displaced to Kabul along with his family. He said said 140 households were living in the cramped camp.

He added: "The weather is extremely cold and we have no firewood to keep ourselves warm or food to eat. Our tent gets wet when it snows or rains." Pointing to the smokes rising from the heaters of local residents, he said all people burnt plastics, rubbers and other materials.

As the Pajhwok reporter spoke to Khan, around 10 children gathered around him in anticipation of them. Pointing to the children, who coughed, Khan said many of them fell ill with the arrival of winter.

With their families unable to treat the children, mobile health teams also visit the camp but they could not diagnose diseases. All patients are given the same medicines. Only one charity had distributed flour to camp dwellers this winter, Khan said.

Spin Gul, a resident of Sarobi district now residing in Proja-i-Taimani area, said war and insecurity had forced him to leave his home. Lack of shelter, food, firewood, clean drinking water and healthcare are his main problems.

There is only one water pump and a well in the area, but the water is not fit for drinking because it is very salty. He said they had to fetch water from a place 300 meters from the camp.

A large number of displaced households living in Kabul are in the midst of similar problems. They are unable to send their children to school. Instead, they have to work hard to earn some money for their families. Mehr Khuda, head of IDP affairs and emergency situations at the ministry, told Pajhwok Afghan News a number of charity organisations in Kabul had distributed cash, food and fuel

to the affected families.

He said that MoRR did not have statistics about those who had lost their lives to cold weather this winter. Some of camp residents made such inflated claims to attract aid, he believed.

Mehr confirmed livelihoods of IDPs were not good in all areas. "It is natural that living conditions of displaced families are not normal," he remarked.

He said MoRR was trying to provide more aid to the affected people and find them permanent shelters. More than a million people have been displaced for various reasons from their areas across the country. (Pajhwok)

### (18) 2 Persons...

area of Burka dustruct a few days back by Taliban militants.

He said the two while in Taliban's captivity snatched gun from a Taliban guard and killed five other Taliban militants before reaching safety.

Tanki March area has been under Taliban control over the past few years, he said. (Pajhwok)

### (19) Overnight ...

bodies were recovered on Monday and a third corpse was found early Tuesday. Two wounded people were shifted to the Pul-i-Khumri Hospital.

The official said hundreds of trucks stranded in Khinjan district would be allowed to move after the situation returned to normal and the Salang Pass reopened. (Pajhwok)

### (20) Police Defuse...

More than 2,560 civilians were killed and over 5,830 injured in conflict-related incidents across Afghanistan in the first nine months of 2016, according to the figures released by the UN mission in the country. (Xinhua)

### (21) Over 161,000 ...

human shields, resorted to suicide car bombings and made mortar and sniper attacks. (Xinhua)

### (22) Turkish Deputy ...

importance for gaining control in northern Syria and the Aleppo countryside currently occupied by IS.

In the last 24 hours, the Turkish army in al-Bab hit the IS targets, killing 13 terrorists, Turkish General Staff said on Tuesday. (Xinhua)

### (23) UN Secretary...

working group to examine whether the policy on protection against retaliation should be further expanded to also provide more protections for consultants and individual contractors. (Xinhua)

### (24) Russia Helps...

necessities, it said.

Syrian rebels captured eastern Aleppo in 2012. Syrian government troops and allied forces retook it recently in a massive offensive.

Russia and Turkey brokered a nationwide truce between government forces and the main opposition groups from Dec. 30 and they also serve, together with Iran, as guarantors for the two-day Astana peace talks that kicked off Monday.

The nearly six-year civil war in Syria has killed more than 300,000 people and displaced nearly 11 million others. (Xinhua)

### (25) Japan Launches...

use of space, allowing non-aggressive defense use of space and overturning a decades-old policy of limiting space development to peaceful uses.

Under the law, the use and exploitation of space should be conducted to serve the security of Japan, relaxing the principle of nonmilitary use based on a parliamentary resolution in 1969 under the war-renouncing Constitution. (Xinhua)

### (26) Trump, Sisi ...

Trump is looking forward to the Egyptian president's visit to Washington, which is in the planning stages, the spokesman added. (Xinhua)

### (27) Syrian Govt. ...

"How can you defend those who are not part of the agreement? So, you defend terrorists, people who use water as a weapon. In addition, this group is included in the list of terrorist groups defined by the U.N. You can not protect terrorists and condemn the actions of the Syrian army," Ja'afari said. He also accused the opposition of misinterpreting the idea of cease-fire. (Xinhua)

### (28) China Committed...

partners, China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Australia, New Zealand and India.

The FTAAP was launched with a roadmap at the 2014 APEC Summit in Beijing. A collective strategic study was subsequently conducted and the result approved at the APEC meeting in Lima. (Xinhua)