

(1) Ghani Issues ...

changes in the election system. "Electoral reforms must take place otherwise people will not take part in any future elections," a resident of Badakhshan named Naweed told TOLONews. The UN Secretary-General's Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan, Tadamichi Yamamoto, in his recent meeting with Danish states that once the electoral reforms take place, the body will discuss funding for next elections with the world donors. (Tolonews)

(2) Madrasas in N ...

Pakistan Army had launched operation Zarb-e-Azb in June 2014. Aziz estimated there were 30-40 such mosques with similar kind of infrastructure. Pakistan's tribal areas along the Af-Pak border has seven agencies and North Waziristan is one of them. Aziz, who was here to attend the 6th US-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue, said this while giving details of the steps being taken by the Pakistani army against terrorists.

"According to our estimates, the IED factories in this particular agency if they had gone their way without disruption, they had enough IEDs for next 20 years for the scale of attacks that they were doing. Those have ended now. Communication infrastructure has been disrupted," Aziz said.

He, however, blamed the Afghan refugees for the tribal areas of Pakistan becoming a hub of terrorism. "We inherited this problem of (terrorism), 9/11 onwards when people were pushed into our side of the border and they became a threat to us, because they lost their hold in their part of the world. Our tribal belt between Pakistan and Afghanistan is a very long belt and a very open territory. So they came and established themselves," he said. "Initially they came to seek refuge, but they soon realised that unless they controlled territory and resources they can't survive there. So they started expanding their activities and by 2007-08, they had covered most of the tribal areas. They killed the tribal leaders, then they started establishing their communication networks, IED factories, suicide training centers," he noted.

"It was unbelievable how quickly they expanded and trained themselves in the tribal belt. So we started getting large scale attacks in our cities, suicide attacks and bomb blasts," Aziz said, adding that in these 14 years, Pakistan lost about 60,000 people, including 10,000 security personnel. He estimated the economic losses beyond USD 100 billion. The toughest area infested with the terrorist was the North West Frontier Province, he said. Out of seven agencies that the security forces have cleared, those groups, which could not survive there migrated or shifted their activities to North Waziristan. (Monitoring Desk)

(3) Russia Warns ...

been killed in the conflict. It has brought the country to its knees, with more than 80 percent of the population in dire need of food, medicine or other basic necessities. Russia abstained, but did not veto, a Saudi-backed resolution adopted last year that demands that the Huthi rebels withdraw from all territory seized in their campaign. That resolution, Churkin said, "is being used essentially to continue the military campaign" by the Saudi-led coalition.

UN envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed last month told the council that he was hoping to convene peace talks this month to follow up on a first round of consultations held in Switzerland in January. But the envoy did not announce a date for new talks during his closed-door briefing to the council, diplomats said. Yemen's Ambassador Khaled Alyemany said his government was ready to take part in talks but accused the rebels of failing to fulfill their commitment to release detainees among other confidence-building measures. Alyemany accused the Huthis of blocking aid convoys and looting relief supplies that he said were being sold on the black market. "The putschist militias are acting like war criminals. They are using starvation as a tool of war

against my people in every province under their control," he told the council.

Angolan Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins, whose country holds the council presidency this month, told reporters that "a speedy cessation of hostilities is a must" in Yemen.

Deploing the "extremely grave" humanitarian crisis, Gaspar Martins said the council was considering a new resolution to press for more aid to reach Yemen and to stress the importance of protecting hospitals from attacks.

The UN envoy is due to return to Saudi Arabia on Friday for more talks on the ceasefire and other confidence-building measures, diplomats said. (AFP)

(4) MD-530s ...

went through tough tests in 2015, Dunford said, adding that the enemy forces tested them in many areas and many ways.

He said some people have characterized actions in Afghanistan over the past year as a stalemate, the chairman said. "I would say there were some successes, some setbacks, but overall the Afghan forces at least proved resilient, they stayed in the fight," he said. "Now there are some lessons learned from 2015 that can be applied for 2016." According to Gen. Dunford one area that will receive a lot more attention in 2016 is integrating aviation assets into the Afghan combined arms campaign. The Afghan air forces now have MD-530 helicopters and A-29 Super Tucano fixed-wing close air support aircraft.

"We will see the difference," he said. "Right now [we're] working on getting all the spare parts we need, getting the maintenance, then doing some training that addresses the shortfalls." According to Gen. Dunford met with Afghan chief of defense Gen. Qadam Shah, Defense Minister Masoom Stanekzai and President Ashraf Ghani, the Department of Defense said.

Gen. Dunford said all spoke of the things that will be done in 2016 to set the conditions for success in the current campaign plan. (KP)

(5) Iranian Investors ...

customs tariffs for Afghanistan as a means to improve trade turnover.

Iran's export to Afghanistan stands at \$3 billion, comprising 40 percent of Afghanistan's total import. The exported goods include consumer goods such as detergents, food, construction material, fuel, drugs, wood, and plastic.

Afghanistan's major exports to Iran are fresh and dried fruits, herbs, and saffron.

Iran and Afghanistan signed a trade contract worth \$50 million last year.

Afghanistan is seeking to import one million metric tons per annum of gas oil from Iran. Iran is currently exporting 200 thousand metric tons of gas oil to Afghanistan, which is also seeking 200 thousand metric tons of LPG for which the price has to be settled. (TNT)

(6) Obama Expresses ...

the Polish capital Warsaw and the EU-hosted Ministerial in Brussels as forums to reaffirm international support for Afghanistan's peace and stability.

Obama and Ghani "recommitted" to consult regularly this year as the U.S. continues to support Afghanistan's efforts "to strengthen governance and provide security for its people".

Obama also praised Ghani's ongoing commitment to reform Afghanistan and efforts to combat institutional corruption in the country.

The first officially acknowledged peace talks between Afghanistan and the Taliban had been carried out July 7 last year in Pakistan. The second round of the talks - which were planned for July 31 - had to be delayed indefinitely after the announcement of Taliban leader Mullah Abdullah's death.

Last December, both sides were supposed to hold landmark peace talks after an announcement was made by the Fourth Quadrilateral Coordination Group, which comprises of the U.S., China, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Both sides were supposed to hold landmark peace talks earlier this month. However, the Taliban showed reluctance to the move. "For the talks to commence, the 'invaders' [U.S./ NATO soldiers]

should leave the country and give the Afghan people opportunity to determine their fate themselves," the Afghan Taliban said recently.

Another bone of contention that has hindered any headway in efforts for a cease-fire and peace in the country is the Taliban's precondition of dismantling the present Kabul government to establish a new interim set-up.

On the other hand, the Afghan government has been pushing for talks without any such preconditions. (Monitoring Desk)

(7) Women's Prestige ...

Meanwhile, Minister of Women's Affairs, Dilbar Nazari, admitted women are experiencing violence in different parts of the country.

Sexual harassment, abduction, rape and human trafficking are the threats Nazari mentioned the threats Nazari mentioned the threats Nazari mentioned

"Violence against women has turned into a common trend in Afghanistan," said Suraya Subhrang, a commissioner at the Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC). (Tolonews)

(8) 10 Youth Turn...

action against elements involved in drug peddling and smuggling. The governor said those involved in selling drugs were not forgivable and efforts to arrest them would be intensified.

A civil society activist, Sahib Gul Farhad, said the number of drug addicts was on the increase because narcotics were openly sold everywhere.

He said some officials of the counter narcotics departments and others had connections with drug smugglers and they received bribes from them.

Khost counter narcotics head Miran Gul Taniwal confirmed the increase in the number of drug addicts, but said the issue was not confined to Khost only but it was common across the country.

He said they had launched efforts at creating awareness to discourage the youth to quit using drugs but in this regard co-operation from tribal elders and religious scholars was vital.

Reports say Afghanistan is home to nearly two million drug addicts. (Pajhwok)

(9) Taliban Says ...

conditions for taking part in any talks as he struggles to overcome factional infighting, with some breakaway groups opposing any negotiations whatsoever. (Reuters)

(10) Insecurity Affects...

increase and people would face social and economic problems.

Nazar Mohammad, a trader from Kasham district, said there were several reasons affecting business affairs, including insecurity on the Fiazabad-Ashkasham highway.

He said traders could not import or export their goods through Ashkasham port from and into Tajikistan due to insecurity.

The absence of technical resources and business facilities at Ashkasham port was another problem affecting businesses in Badakhshan, Mohammad said.

"Most of the natural resources in the province are under the control of illegal armed men. Traders in the past were able to export precious stones including lapis lazuli to Tajikistan and other central Asian countries, but now they cannot do that," he said.

Badakhshan Commerce and Industry manager Ghulam Masum Mujadadi said only nine business licenses issued this solar year earned the government a meagre amount 64,000 afghanis in revenue. He linked the small amount of revenue to security problems the traders faced.

"Insecurity has affected trade affairs in Badakhshan, businessmen are discouraged," he said, adding roads in Warduj to Ashkasham had been blocked by Taliban and traders could not export or import goods through the routes.

Warduj district was fallen to Taliban militants in October 2015.

On the other hand, Tajikistan has closed its consulate in Badakhshan due to security problems. The traders have to import and export their goods through Sherkhan port in Kunduz province, increasing their transportation costs. The situation has also led to increased prices of com-

modities including food items in border districts of Badakhshan. (Pajhwok)

(11) Scores Killed...

province, an army spokesman in the province, Mohammad Rasoul Zazai said.

"A group of Taliban militants were attempting to storm security checkpoints in Sangin district early Saturday but the security forces acting upon intelligence report laid ambush and killed 45 armed insurgents on the spot and injured 35 others," Zazai told Xinhua.

The Taliban after suffering casualties fled the area, the official contended.

Similarly, an official on the condition of anonymity reported four police were killed by armed militants in Helmand province on the same day on Saturday.

"Taliban militants attacked a security checkpoint in Naqilabad area of Nad Ali district early Saturday killing four police personnel," the official told Xinhua, but declined to be identified.

However, spokesman for Helmand provincial government, Omar Zawak has confirmed the incident but refused to comment on possible casualties.

Meantime, 30 security personnel have been killed in Gawband area of Nahr-e-Saraj district, Helmand province over the past two days, a security official, Satar Khan Norzai confirmed on Saturday.

The official also noted that units of police had been sent to Gawband area to bolster government control there.

Taliban militants, however, claimed that the insurgent group attacked security checkpoints in Shana Gombad locality in the outskirts of Helmand's provincial capital Lashkar Gah late Friday night killing over two dozen soldiers.

Taliban militants, according to local political watchers, have intensified activities ahead of the proposed peace talks with Afghan government expected to be held within weeks in Pakistan. (Xinhua)

(12) MoIC Speaks ...

Afghanistan, we can see our presence is one-fifth," said Najiba Ayubi, deputy head of Afghanistan's National Journalists Union.

Tayeba Noori, who is one of the few female journalists working in southern Afghanistan, said female reporters in Kandahar were seeing plenty of hurdles on the way of their works.

"We receive death threats through letters and phone calls," Noori said, before adding that she had been personally threatened to death too.

"People stand on my way and ask me with threats to stay at home or I will be killed," she said. (Tolonews)

(13) KP Govt....

statement said.

Detained Afghan refugees would be released in confirmation with the Afghan Consulate and they would be not forced into leaving their homes there, the statement said.

A week earlier, Pakistani police detained about 600 Afghan refugees in Nowshera for lacking legal stay documents.

The meeting also decided to allow the Afghanistan education curriculum to be taught at refugee schools.

Afghan students would be given admission into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's medical and engineering universities and refugees would be provided electricity.

The Pakistani officials also agreed that Afghan businessmen would not be asked for paying illegal money.

The meeting also decided to create a special commission on implementation of the agreement. (Pajhwok)

(14) Afghan Army...

volatile provinces located in central parts of the country, some 100 km away from the capital Kabul. The Taliban militants are actively operating in a number of its districts and frequently carrying insurgency activities, including coordinated attacks, kidnappings and target killings. (KP)

(15) 23 Infrastructure ...

its inception in Ghor province, the NSP has disbursed a sum of AFN 2,774,551,115 for imple-

mentation of 3,492 uplift projects in different sectors including transport, water and sanitation, irrigation, power, livelihoods, education, etc while the work of tens of others is currently in progress in various communities.

(16) Prisoner's Escape ...

woman's dress and makeup. He said the mother wore two shawls and gave one to her son in order to help him escape.

But Nadir said he had no connections with the Taliban and had been put behind the bars without committing any crime. He looked for his escape in woman's dress as his last resort, but that also failed.

Nadir said his father had long been trying to get him released through legal ways, but could not succeed.

His father Mohammad Nabi said he was not present at the jail's visiting room with his son and had no information if his son attempted to flee. He said he was arrested when they were leaving the jail compound.

The prison houses 680 prisoners, including 230 shifted there from northern Sar-i-Pul province after a jailbreak incident few years ago.

A number of inmates fled from the jail in Sar-i-Pul after Taliban militants attacked and partially damaged the facility.

A Taliban commander, Ahmad Shah Bilal, serving a 10-year sentence, was killed on the Shiberghan-Sar-i-Pul highway two days after he escaped from the jail in Jawzjan. (Pajhwok)

(17) Militants' ...

declined to be identified.

Meantime, Omar Zawak the spokesman for Helmand provincial administration confirmed the incident but refused to comment on possible casualties.

Taliban militants who have been fighting the government forces in several districts of the troubled Helmand province haven't commented. (Xinhua)

(18) Man Beheaded ...

maternal uncle, Haji Abdul Majeed, alleged his nephew had been killed by his friends who met him last night. However, he did not name anyone. Local officials have so far said nothing in this regard.

But a member of the provincial council, Mohammad Ali Hakimi, said the provincial officials were not discharging their responsibilities and residents were concerned about the increasing insecurity. "Many officials in Sar-i-Pul are away from their duty stations. There is no one to respond to people's problems."

Hakimi said the provincial governor had gone abroad and the provincial police chief had been outside of the province over the past one month. He said the police chief was busy in preparations of his son's wedding.

He said a large number of government and security officials did not come to their offices for days. "In such a situation, people are being beheaded, robberies are being staged and all these things benefit the enemy."

Haji Rafique, who owns a shop in Sar-i-Pul City, said people were concerned about the absence of high officials in the province. "Sar-i-Pul is like a cauldron without a lid. Uncertainly has reached the peak and there is no one to be asked for."

The resident asked the president and the chief executive officer to pay attention to the problems in Sar-i-Pul. "If the absenteeism of the top official is not looked into, Sar-i-Pul will meet the fate of Kunduz."

The security situation in Sar-i-Pul has lately worsened and residents say they are deeply concerned about it. (Pajhwok)

(19) 6 Rebels,...

armed men were killed in Parwan province.

Provincial crime branch chief, Col. Abdul Samad Zalmai said that three illegal armed men were killed during a feuding fight between two rivals in Charikar city, the capital of the province on Friday evening.

"Personal enmities have led to creation of illegal armed men, but these men are hidden from police," he said, adding that four people accused of murdering cases have been arrested in the past one week.

Meanwhile, Parwan Civil Hospital Director, Dr. Abdul Qasim Sangin confirmed receiving two

bodies to the hospital. (Pajhwok)

(20) 160kg of ...

months back had said revenue from Badakhshan lapis lazuli mines reached more than 1.5 billion afghanis during the past one year, but all of the money went into pockets of militants and local illegal commanders instead of the state treasury. (Pajhwok)

(21) 13,000 Refugees ...

Idomeni border crossing, where aid groups report food and tent shortages.

"There are 13,000 people here and nearly 20,000 in this prefecture, over 60 percent of the country's entire refugee and migrant flow," Apostolos Tzitzikostas, regional governor of Greece's central Macedonia prefecture, told Skai television on Saturday. (AFP)

(22) World Leaders ...

"This cessation of hostilities is by no means perfect but it has reduced the level of violence, it has created an opportunity for some humanitarian access," said British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond. (AFP)

(23) IS Blamed...

the nuns as two Rwandans, a Kenyan and an Indian, adding that the mother superior managed to hide and survive while an Indian priest was missing.

Screams of elderly residents echoed from the home during the shooting rampage, witnesses said, recounting seeing the bodies of slain workers with their arms tied behind their back.

No group has yet claimed the attack in the war-torn country, where the internationally recognised government is grappling with both an Iran-backed rebellion and a growing jihadist presence. (AFP)

(24) China, Russia...

also voiced serious concerns over the possible deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, a U.S. Army anti-ballistic missile system, in South Korea. Beijing and Moscow say they strongly opposed the move because it would increase tensions in the region and undermine the security of regional countries.

Considering the many hot issues and key problems in Northeast Asia, as well as the more complicated regional security situation, the two sides agreed to increase communication.

Chinese Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs Kong Xuanyou and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov co-chaired the meeting. The first such meeting was held last April in Shanghai. (Xinhua)

(25) S.Korea Slams...

world by defying the international society's resolution adopted unanimously by UN Security Council member states, the spokesman said.

Cho said his country will make the DPRK awakened from its delusion by responding to its reckless acts with strong and effective measures, urging Pyongyang to return to a path for peace by abandoning its nuclear weapons program. His comments came a day after the DPRK announced two separate statements in the name of government and foreign ministry and said the country will firmly reject the new UN resolution.

Describing the fresh sanctions as the "most heinous provocation" toward an independent state, the DPRK said it will mobilize all possible measures, including "strong and merciless physical responses" against the resolution. It was the first official response by the DPRK to the new harsher UN Security Council resolution, which South Korea said was the toughest and most effective non-military measures in seven decades of UN history. (Xinhua)

(26) Slovakia's ..

attacks in Paris. "We'll never bring even a single Muslim to Slovakia, we won't create any Muslim communities here because they pose a serious security risk," Fico told thousands at a pre-election rally in Bratislava for his Smer-Social Democracy (Smer-SD) party.

Exit polls were set to be published around 2100 GMT when ballots close, while results are expected from Sunday afternoon, according to election officials. (AFP)