

(1) Afghanistan ...

forces in Afghanistan and Iraq to fight terrorism and sending training teams to Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, Stoltenberg added.

With NATO AWACS planes supporting the Global Coalition to Counter-ISIL, a new intelligence division has been set up to deepen its understanding of the threats it faced.

In 2016, he said, 23 NATO allies increased their defence expenditure in real terms by 3.8 percent, which added up to 10 billion US dollars. Five allies spent two percent or more of their GDP on defence in 2016.

"It is realistic that all allies should reach this goal. All allies have agreed to it at the highest level and it can be done," the secretary-general added. (Pajhwok)

(2) Senators Ask ...

to suspend from duty the defense and interior ministers and the intelligence chief. He added the president should also order execution of death row inmates.

Sakhi said the president should hire people on merit in security organs so were able to ensure people's security. Senator Baz Mohammad Zarmati said: "The security situation will not get better until Shariah law is enforced, those sentenced to death must be executed so others learn a lesson."

Second deputy chairman Mohammad Asif Seddiqi said such attacks would continue until internal spies were identified and sacked.

He stressed security sector officials should be reassessed and paid attention by the government.

Another senator, Jumma Din Gayanwal, said: "The defense minister should be tied to a rocket like the North Korea's defense minister."

He said the defense minister had promised to recapture all areas lost to Taliban militants during the outgoing winter.

The security situation was worsening in Helmand, Uruzgan, Farah, Kunduz and some other provinces, Mohammad Hasham Alokozay said.

Meshrano Jirga chairman Fazal Hadi Muslimyar said Afghanistan was in an undeclared war with Pakistan. He asked the government to improve detective and intelligence organs.

"We should support the government and should jointly work for reforms to win people's trust, but this does not mean to ignore the negligence of our security organs," he said.

Muslimyar said the enemies of Afghanistan had found a number of mercenaries among Afghan refugees to protect their interests.

He asked the government to bring serious reforms to the military sector as the current military leaders had failed in the fight against Daesh and Taliban. Defense Ministry spokesman Dawlat Waziri responded what the lawmakers said were their own opinions. He added the Operation Shafat-2 was 95 percent successful in winter.

He said only eight districts were currently under Taliban's control and the same districts had been under rebel control during a wide presence of foreign forces. (Pajhwok)

(3) One Million...

European Commission. The IOM has warned that some of these refugees could be exploited by the terrorist organizations or possibly again leave their country unless the Afghan government and its international partners reach out help them once they are resettled in the own country.

"Our joint collaboration under this project marks a critical and much needed step towards providing longer-term, sustainable, income-generating solutions and livelihoods for returnees" said Laurence Hart, IOM's Chief of Mission and Special Envoy in Afghanistan, speaking at today's signing event in Kabul.

IOM will also support 1,000 technical and vocational education and training initiatives and skills development activities in the target project sites, and provide financial assistance to approximately 40 existing micro/small businesses.

IOM has launched a four-year, €18 million project with funding from the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) to support returnees and host communities across Afghanistan.

The project will help foster sustainable reintegration by promoting economic development in communities of high return, building the capacity of government bodies working on migration and providing post-arrival assistance for returnees. Communities in Kabul, Herat, Nangarhar, Balkh, Kandahar, Baghlan, Uruzgan and Laghman will be targeted. (Tolonews)

(4) Fight Against...

closely with the World Health Organization (WHO) on a number of activ-

ities, including best practices to treat drug use disorders as an alternative to criminal justice sanctions.

He noted UNODC would continue to help strengthen access to controlled drugs for medical purposes. (Xinhua)

(5) 11 Suspects ...

who heads the Senate Jirga commission on security and defence affairs, told Tuesday's general session that the delegation visited the hospital to investigate the nature of the attack and discussed it with patients and doctors. Alokozay, who headed the delegation, said they also monitored the incident area and the ways through which the assailants entered the hospital. "The incident occurred due to dereliction of duty by some security personnel at the hospital; because without support from security operatives, the entry of attackers into the hospital with explosives and ammunition was

He said though the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the hospital authorities had been informed about the fact-finding mission's visit to the hospital, however security personnel at the hospital didn't appear before the delegation. (Pajhwok)

(6) Pakistan Has ...

determination or a justification why Pakistan does not meet the legal criteria for such a designation.

"Pakistan fosters relationship with terrorist groups as a way to leverage over its rivals in India and Afghanistan," Poe alleged. "All I am asking for in this legislation is a review of Pakistan. Let's get all the evidence and let the US government make that determination. "The evidence that I have seen, just some of the evidence that I have presented to you, calls for a review of Pakistan's position on issue of terrorism. Are they State sponsor of terrorism or they are not? This is what this legislation does," he said.

Poe claimed there were proofs of ISI supporting numerous terrorist acts in Afghanistan, including one at a NATO outpost in Kabul in September 2012. "Pakistan is a safe haven for Afghan Taliban, Al Qaeda and the Haqqani network."

Several top Afghan Taliban leaders had been killed inside Pakistan, the lawmaker said. Due to these activities, he added, the Defense Department had not issued any certificate that Pakistan had taken action against the Haqqani network. (Pajhwok)

(7) Top US ...

came on the heels of disturbing losses across the country," the senators wrote. (They penned the article prior to the recent Daesh attack on a military hospital in Kabul in which more than 50 people were killed).

McCain and Lindsay expressed appreciation for the Afghan security forces role in fighting terrorism.

"Make no mistake: Afghans are fighting ferociously to defend their country from our common enemies. At the same time, we must recognize that the United States is still at war in Afghanistan against the terrorist enemies who attacked our nation on Sept. 11 and their ideological heirs. We must act accordingly."

The senators voiced concern over the US role in Afghanistan.

"Unfortunately, in recent years, we have tied the hands of our military in Afghanistan. Instead of trying to win, we have settled for just trying not to lose.

"Time and time again, we saw troop withdrawals that seemed to have more to do with U.S. politics than conditions on the ground. The fixation with "force management levels" in Afghanistan, as well as in Iraq and Syria, seemed more about measuring troop counts than measuring success," they wrote.

They decried restriction on the US forces in Afghanistan.

"Until last summer, our military was prohibited from targeting the Taliban, except in the most extreme circumstances, taking the pressure off the militants and allowing them to rebuild and re-attack. Indeed, while we were fighting the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, authorities in Afghanistan were so restrictive that it took an entire year before U.S. forces were finally given authority to strike the group's fighters in Afghanistan."

McCain and Lindsay warned that the risk to U.S. and Afghan forces has only grown worse as the terrorist threat has intensified. (Tolonews)

(8) Women ...

priority theme for this year's session is women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuca, Executive Director of UN Women, said virtually all economies rely on the unpaid care and domestic work that is largely provided by women and girls. (Xinhua)

(9) Don't Mix ...

of losses incurred by the business

communities.

Ahmad Shah Yarzada, a member of ACCL, said: "On behalf of the Afghan business community, let me affirm we are entirely in favor of doing business with Pakistan."

However, he added, the abrupt closing of the Durand Line by Pakistan left Afghanistan looking towards other countries that were equally willing to engage in trade with the landlocked nation.

Both sides agreed to call on Pakistan to immediately reopen the border for the clearance of stranded cargo from ports to borders. Both sides reiterated the significance of security and supported all measures their respective governments may take to ensure the same.

But such steps must not hurt the economic and social ties across the border. Around, 3,000 cargo containers in Peshawar and 2,000 near the Chaman border are unable to pass due to border closure.

Muhammad Zuhair Motiwala, chairman of PAJCCI, insisted on segregation of business and politics, saying there were no differences between the business communities of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The dialogue was organised by the Islamabad-based Center for Research and Security Studies in partnership with the Kabul-based Women, Peace and Security organisation. (Pajhwok)

(10) Peaceful,...

positive perceptions, which was imperative for strengthening bilateral ties, restoring trust and effectively dealing with common threats. The Afghan media delegation while sharing Afghanistan's perspective on the current situation, agreed on the need for frequent exchange of visits to help bring the governments and peoples of the two countries closer. (APP)

(11) Taliban Keeps ...

Mohammad a resident.

"The chromium is extracted by the Taliban and exported to Pakistan," said Sardar Khan, a tribal elder.

Paktia officials say the Taliban have signed a contract for extraction of chromite with a Pakistani company. (Tolonews)

(12) Farah ...

the war has become regional, beyond the country's borders. It means that the origins of the conflict have roots outside the country," Farah governor Mohammad Asif Nang said.

Security forces in Farah are faced with lack of equipment and weapons. A big part of the forces guard projects run by a Qatari company. The Arab Sheikhs of Jawin, the report says.

It reveals that Arab Sheikhs from Qatar visit Farah once in a year and spend one month in the province where they are protected under tight security by Afghan forces.

The Arab Sheikhs operate in areas bordering Iran where they hunt and distribute food to villages. The Arabs erect their tents in Chakarta region in Jawin district which shares border with Iran every year between February and March.

TOLONews' findings reveal that in this period, 150 police force members ensure the Qatari Sheikhs's safety. Sources say that \$500 USD is given to the police force members as a so-called gift at the end of the mission.

"I am not aware of the reports, we will certainly investigate the issue. We sent a delegation to Farah in winter aimed at further strengthening our forces there," spokesman for Interior Ministry Sediq Sediqqi said.

Besides police, an army unit has been deployed in southeastern part of Farah city to ensure the security for an agricultural farm and a zoo that belongs to Qatari Arabs. This farm has been built on 1.6 hectare of land in an area between a big base of army and the base of Crisis Response Unit (CRU). Date trees and rare animals and birds are kept there. The entire military base near Farah-Bakwa road is occupied by maintaining the security of the highway and army members have not interfered.

"It is only for ensuring the safety of the zoo. If something happens, they go to the unit and take action against it. Army forces have not come out of their base so far. They are at the top of the mountain. They are not taking any action even when fired on by the Taliban," Mohammad Husain, a commander of the CRU told TOLONews. (Tolonews)

(13) Constructions ...

Such construction would remain if it was based on the demand of people and political will.

"Our neighboring country recently pursued a dangerous policy of creating fear among people to leave the Durand Line, but the Afghans are brave people and they would not leave their areas but instead stand against any illegal movement," he added.

He said information they had obtained showed civilian casualties forced residents of border areas to leave homes, with some Pakistani families crossing into Afghanistan.

He said Afghans and Pashtuns were only harassed in border areas, but they were harassed in Punjab, Balochistan and other parts of Pakistan.

"The conflict would continue even if the Durand Line is recognized, because it is multidimensional. Afghanistan's water and interference in our country maybe important than the Durand Line," he said.

He added the government's primary plans included addressing problems of people on the Durand Line and discussing them with tribal elders.

"The MoBTA has prepared a plan to bring about improvement in the lives of people living near the Durand Line and the plan will be shared soon with the government for approval," he said. (Pajhwok)

(14) Kandahar: ...

and where the government's writ prevails," he said.

In areas where insurgents held sway were rife with poppy cultivation and drug smugglers, he said. But added the overall poppy cultivation in unstable areas had also reduced.

Shukran did not say how much land has been grown with poppy this year. However, he said UNODC has launched its survey in this regard. The survey is yet to be completed.

He said the survey would reveal how many hectares of land had been grown with the banned crop in Kandahar. Shukran said Zheri, Panjwai and Maiwand were districts where the poppy was widely cultivated. He informed a poppy-eradication campaign would be launched within few days in at least three or four districts.

He said the Ministry of Counter-narcotics had set them the target of eradicating the poppy crop on 2500 hectares of land in Kandahar. However, he said the lack of fund and resources for the anti-poppy campaign remained unaddressed.

District chiefs and local security officials said the government should launch operations against militants instead of eradicating poppy.

They said the operations would help get rid of the twin menaces — insecurity and poppy.

Panjwai district chief Haji Fazl Mohammad Ishaqzoy told Pajhwok Afghan News that the entire district was under the government's control and poppy crop in the town had decreased compared to the past.

He said he had met residents of various areas and had warned them against cultivating poppy crop in their fields.

He estimated 60 to 70 percent drop in poppy cultivation in Panjwai district and said the Food Zone Programme had a great contribution to the development.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided \$200 million for the two-year Food Zone Programme in Kandahar. The programme is aimed at encouraging farmers to switch to legal crops by executing development projects, creating awareness about drugs' hazards and others.

The Panjwai district chief said mostly irrigation water projects were carried out under the programme in line with people's demand, which helped poppy cultivation decline.

He said people in some areas had grown the plant due to abject poverty but the plan to eradicate the crop was ready.

He said he had asked the deputy counternarcotics minister when he visited Kandahar a few weeks back to conduct military operations in order to both eradicate poppy crop and insecurity. (Pajhwok)

(15) Security ...

the Taliban have suffered heavy casualties and foreign forces are backing Afghan security forces for air.

Last night Afghan commando forces conducted an operation in the Chah-e-Marz area of Nad Ali district and rescued 32 civilians and 4 local policemen from a Taliban prison.

A source told TOLONews on Monday evening that foreign forces conducted an airstrike in Loye Mandi area of Nad Ali which killed 15 Taliban including their local commander Haji Esmat. Two others were wounded.

Government officials have not commented about the Taliban and security forces casualties.

Taliban did not comment also regarding the operations and casualties. (Tolonews)

(16) Domestic...

with many major stores in Jalalabad city," he said. He said in normal days only a few people worked in his factory but their number reached up to 30 in the holy month of Ramadan.

"When vegetables like cauliflower, tomato, carrot and others grow and

are sold at cheap price in the market, I visit farmers and purchase their produce at fair prices and then we make pickles," he said.

He said their sales had boosted and their products replaced those imported from Pakistan after the Torkham border's closure.

"A store owner in the past would usually order goods from Pakistan, but now they order the same from our factory," he said.

Khiwawal wished a permanent closure of the border as he said there were many factories in Afghanistan that could offer different goods to the market.

However, he said their major problem was the lack of electricity and high rent of the factory's building.

Javid, a worker in the Gift to Zest Factory, said before joining the factory he sold vegetables on a handcart in the city. He was satisfied with his income. He urged traders to establish factories that would help improve domestic products and generate job opportunities for people. (Pajhwok)

(17) Taliban Cut ...

spokesman Gulam Jilani Farhad said the maiming took place Monday in the Obe district. He said Farooq is being treated at Herat's main hospital and that his condition is not life-threatening. District police chief Shir Agha Alkozai blamed the Taliban, without providing further details.

Taliban spokesmen could not immediately be reached for comment. The group governed Afghanistan according to a harsh interpretation of Islamic law in the late 1990s, and has revived the practice of publicly maiming and killing those suspected of crimes in areas under their control.

Elsewhere in Afghanistan, an airstrike on the funeral of a Taliban commander killed 29 insurgents in the eastern Paktika province, said Mohammad Rahman Ayas, spokesman for the provincial governor. He said the airstrike was carried out by "foreign forces," apparently referring to NATO.

In a separate incident, three NATO soldiers were wounded when their vehicle struck a roadside bomb in the eastern Nangarhar province late Monday while they were returning to their base, NATO said in a statement.

"Three soldiers sustained minor injuries and have been returned to duty," it said. NATO formally concluded its combat mission at the end of 2014, but thousands of troops remain in Afghanistan for support, advisory and counterterrorism missions. (KP)

(18) 24 Taliban ...

told Pajhwok Afghan News the operations left 24 insurgents dead and three others wounded, with the joint force recapturing a number of areas in the centre of Lashkargah city and Nad ali district.

A security official told Pajhwok a notorious Taliban commander Asmatullah and his brother were among the dead. Asmatullah was Taliban-designated mayor for Lashkargah and the military in-charge in Greshk district.

Omar Zwak, the governor's spokesman, confirmed Asmatullah's killing and said the Taliban suffered huge casualties in the past 24 hours. Four security personnel were wounded during the period.

Taliban's spokesman Qari Yousof Ahmadi claimed security forces suffered heavy casualties during the joint operation.

The rebels are in control of six of Helmand's 13 districts — a poppy rich region. (Pajhwok)

(19) 11 Rebels ...

a US drone killed a suspected Taliban's car bomber and two motorcyclists attacked in Raasni locality of Gilan district last night.

He said the dead militants wanted to carry suicide attacks in Ghazni City but they were killed before reaching their targets.

The Taliban have not commented about the incidents yet. (Pajhwok)

(20) Kandahar Governor...

in India and France, has recovered and is expected to arrive in Kabul tomorrow (Wednesday).

Samim Khpawak, the governor's spokesman, told Pajhwok Afghan News the medical treatment of Azizi had been completed. A delegation of elders from Kandahar would go to Kabul to welcome the governor at the airport.

He said the governor is poised to return to Kabul, where he will meet President Ashraf Ghani and other senior officials during his three-day stay. He would return to his office on Saturday. (Pajhwok)

(21) 300 Deep...

would be installed on the wells to irrigate farmlands. Currently, some 300 wells are being dug, a process that will be expanded to other areas in future. Durrani said the project would cost \$1.2 million to be paid by the Kanda-

har police chief and local businessmen. Police has set up a team that will identify areas and farmers faced with scarcity of water.

The police spokesman hoped with the implementation of the project, growers would be able to cultivate their lands and provide their families with food and fruits.

A key objective behind the project is to provide people with work and boost local agriculture. Agriculture Director Hafezullah Syedi called the step beneficial, saying the project had been shared with his department and was being implemented in close coordination.

He said vegetable prices had gone up after Pakistan closed the main border crossings at Chaman and Torkham. The project would encourage people to increase domestic produce, he hoped. (Pajhwok)

(22) 3 US Soldiers ...

were struck by a bomb in the Jalalabad city, the provincial capital. However, it didn't provide further details of the explosion.

The Nangarhar governor and police headquarters' spokesmen said they had no information about the incident. However, a security source, told Pajhwok Afghan News the bombing had occurred on Monday evening between Najmuddin Akhundzada locality of Jalalabad and rain-fed areas of Chaprahar district. (Pajhwok)

(23) Commanders ...

Khan, told Pajhwok Afghan News 10 militants, including dreaded commander Sarhadi Bilal, were killed and two other militants wounded in the airstrike.

No casualties were inflicted on civilians. Two pick-ups belonging to the militants were also destroyed during the raid. The dead bodies of two rebels were seized by police.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) claimed 10 Haqqani Network fighters, including a commander, were killed during the raid. (Pajhwok)

(24) 2 Policemen ...

the incident took place in the Benisar locality on Monday evening.

"The policemen were sitting around of flames of fire to warm themselves when unknown gunmen opened firing at them," he said.

The assailants managed to escape from the scene but search had been launched to arrest them, he added. (Pajhwok)

(25) 2 Heroin...

at a time when few days back security forces destroyed another two heroin factories in eastern Nangarhar province. (Pajhwok)

(26) Turkey, Russia...

Erdogan over the jet incident, things seemed to go back on track.

"Actually only a small portion of the punitive Russian restrictions have been lifted. They are still out there," Deniz Zeyrek, a political commentator and journalist, told Xinhua. (Xinhua)

(27) Assad Says...

Shiite pilgrim practices. When the explosive device went off, passengers of nine busses gathered to see what happened, when a suicide bomber wearing bomb vest detonated himself among the crowds. (Xinhua)

(28) May Free...

vote. Instead attempts were made in the Lords to keep the two amendments, even though they knew that their stand would be overturned by MPs. (Xinhua)

(29) UN Agency ...

sharply as violence across the country saw a drastic escalation of the conflict, said the UN agency. "The depth of suffering is unprecedented," said Geert Cappelaere, the UNICEF regional director for the Middle East and North Africa. "Millions of children in Syria come under attack on a daily basis, their lives turned upside down."

The UNICEF issued the press release in order to announce the study Hitting Rock Bottom — How 2016 became the worst year for Syria's children.

"Each and every child is scarred for life with horrific consequences on their health, well-being and future," Cappelaere added. (Xinhua)

(30) Common European...

equally in all members. This would include discussions over a common interpretation of the Fundamental Rights Charter and the European Convention on Human Rights, whilst also taking into account the right of assembly. (Xinhua)

(31) U.S. Pursues...

and China)," said U.S. State Department acting spokesman Mark Toner on March 7 during the first State Department press briefing since U.S. President Donald Trump took office. (Xinhua)