

(1) Ghani Intervenes...

were brought down from billboards in Mazar-i-Sharif, the capital of northern Balkh province, on the new year's night.

Some protesters had accused men linked to the governor of Balkh of having hand in the move. However, Noor had rejected the assertion amid protests by his supporters.

Meanwhile, Noor on his Facebook page said their silence did not mean they were afraid and Dostum wrote the protests spilled over to other provinces after the Balkh leadership failed to respond to people's demands.

Noor said he had asked his supporters to be calm. "But those who insult us on a daily basis and even throw fires in front of our people think our silence is because we're afraid."

The governor said he had advised the people of Kabul and Kohdaman to be patient and the brave people of the north to be calm.

Dostum on his Facebook wall urged his supporters to give time to the central and local governments to respond to their demands and call off protests until they received a positive response.

Noor said the peoples living in the laps of Hindu Kush mountains, Panjsher, Loye Kandahar, Kunar, Helmand, Khost, Paktia, Paktika and the entire people of the north and the northeast were awaiting his response to the protests and were expecting the "conspiracy" to be thwarted, otherwise they would also arise.

He said his supporters were expecting the Balkh leadership would take urgent measures to address people's concerns, but the delay in doing so expanded the protests to other provinces. He said it was people's right to take forwards their complaints through protests and in an independent way.

Dostum asked his followers to be clam while pursuing their demands and said Afghanistan at the moment needed brotherhood, peace and stability and urged the Afghans to stay firm on the path to peace and stability. (Pajhwok)

(2) Special Envoy...

solar year in Afghanistan and said the UN understood problems of the Afghan people and was helping them in difficult times. He stressed the world's body would continue supporting the Afghan peace process, the fight on corruption and cooperation with the Afghan government.

President Ghani thanked the UN for its support with Afghanistan in different areas and said cooperation of the international community with Afghanistan would become effective with improvement in the Afghan government's performance. Ghani also asked Yamamoto to continue cooperating with the Afghan government with regard to the electoral process.

He said his government would soon send a request letter to UNAMA to seek its technical cooperation for election process.

Yamamoto said the UN and its international partners were flexible when it came to Afghanistan's political and social situations and were ready for any kind of cooperation. (Pajhwok)

(3) Afghanistan, ...

of trade and cultural transmission routes, were vital to cultural interaction through regions of the Asian continent connecting the West and East by linking traders, pilgrims, soldiers, nomads and urban dwellers from China and India to the Mediterranean Sea. (Pajhwok)

(4) Japan Contributes...

disaster. The project supported by the Japanese fund will also facilitate protection of about 22,000 children and parents in emergency situations and reintegration of about 4,800 unaccompanied Afghan children repatriated from Iran to Afghanistan.

3) United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) - USD 2,000,000 Funding from the Government of Japan will support demining activities in Kandahar, Kunduz, and Farah provinces, where many communities remain affected by landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW). It is expected that a total of 1.76 square kilometres of land will be cleared of landmines and ERW, directly benefitting 13,198 people who reside within 500 meters from contaminated areas, with indirect beneficiaries estimated at 456,885. The assistance will contribute to socio-economic development as well as an overall reduction of civilian casualties.

Similarly, WFP has received \$8,000,000 for addressing the issue of food insecurity and malnutrition

and providing humanitarian air services.

WFP will procure, transport and distribute over 6,850 metric tonnes of food to about 100,000 vulnerable people for two to nine months.

In addition, it will operate air transportation services for passengers and cargos to facilitate humanitarian and development activities in Afghanistan, including timely medical and security evacuation as required.

IOM has been given \$5,000,000 to help provide humanitarian assistance to 26,720 highly vulnerable undocumented Afghan returnees from Pakistan and Iran. The project will establish and pilot a reintegration tracking mechanism for vulnerable returnees in Kabul, Nangarhar, Herat, Nimroz, Khost and Paktika.

The contribution will help facilitate the return of 65 highly qualified Afghans from Iran, 35% expected to be female, to work in and transfer their skills to public institutions in Kabul. (Pajhwok)

(5) Political Meddling...

embezzlement cases to date.

The suspended officials include Ahmad Shah Hemat, Urban Development Director, Gul Rahim Ziarnal, Plan and Policy Director, Mohammad Aminullah Qani, Head of Apartments Cohesion, Mohammad Aminullah Amin, Director of Property and Accommodation and Ahmad Nawaz Bakhtyar, Director of Housing Enterprise, Director Finance Apartments Cohesion Syed Aman Sadat.

Although, initially the government and the legal and judicial institutions all vowed to launch a wide investigation into the issue and to wrap it up within a few months, but a year has passed since the six officials were fired and their cases are still pending.

"Political and ethnic interferences have prolonged these cases and this is a major concern," Fakhri further said.

"Those supporting these individuals have done enough work for them, this has hindered the investigations and cases remain pending, secondly the attorney general does not have enough capacity to prepare these cases in accordance with the necessities and demands of the court," MEC official Abdul Aziz Aryayee said.

The ministry of urban development affairs cases are said to be the second largest embezzlement cases in Afghanistan over the past 15 years after the infamous Kabul Bank corruption cases where more the \$900 million were embezzled. (Tolonews)

(6) Peace Negotiations ...

about the foreign Taliban?" said Nabia Mustafazad.

Meanwhile a number of political analysts have spoken out about reforms within the High Peace Council.

"In order to bring peace the government has to share the information with civil society and the nation and consult with those affected in the war," said Mattiullah Kharotai political analyst. (Tolonews)

(7) Kabul Emergency...

war let's do peace so our country can be rebuilt and people can be educated," said Gulab from Paktiya.

Among the wounded in the hospital, one Afghan policeman said he would however return to active duty once he has recovered.

"I am a policeman and I was wounded in Taliban mine blast and when I recover I will go back to duty and will fight against the Taliban," said Karim the policeman.

However the hospital, which has the capacity to treat 150 patients at a time, said they were concerned about the upcoming fighting season - especially in light of the fact they are already treating up to 300 patients a month. (Tolonews)

(8) World's Stability...

the international community and its strategic plans.

He said the g7+ countries could play a positive way by cooperating with Afghanistan in its economic development and political issues. He asked the international community to continue its support for conflict-hit countries and help them in their development.

On the second day of the meeting, participants also discussed opportunities, economic challenges, joblessness and migration and available solutions to the problems.

The g7+ is an intergovernmental organisation, bringing together countries with a recent experience of conflict. The group aims to draw attention to the special challenges faced by fragile states.

It provides a platform for conflict-affected countries to discuss their shared development challenges, and

advocates for better international policies to address the needs of conflict-affected countries. (Pajhwok)

(9) N Launches...

wider trends, there have been many tragic stories of small groups of families suffering on their journeys towards what they hope will be a safer and a better life."

In the new Population Movements Bulletin, Bowden highlights several significant developments:

- The massive population movement in recent months is complex in nature, with ambiguity about places of origin, making consideration of returns complicated without careful analysis;

- Afghan population movement is not exclusively, nor even predominantly, a European issue;

- In addition to outward migration, internal displacement is a huge issue in Afghanistan;

- Concerns in European capitals are such that some are questioning sustaining their official development assistance to the countries perceived as sources of population movement.

The UN envoy also notes that the debate in Europe overlooks the fact that Iran and Pakistan have far greater numbers of Afghans - 950,000 in Iran and 1.4 million in Pakistan.

In addition to those who have left Afghanistan, there are estimated to be around 769,665 who have been displaced from their homes but remain in the country.

Bowden says continued support for Afghanistan "might be questioned, as countries receiving large numbers may find it necessary to use development assistance to support those people, rather than supporting efforts to strengthen the economy in Afghanistan and - hopefully - helping to address one of the causal factors." (Pajhwok)

(10) Dostum Asks...

it was the right of every citizen, and give a chance to the provincial and central government to conduct its investigation against individuals who brought down the portrait.

reacting to violent clashes between supporters of Abdul Rashid Dostum and Atta Mohammad Noor, President Ashraf Ghani on Thursday said protests were people's right, but those restoring to violence would be dealt with sternly.

In a statement from the Presidential Palace, President Ghani insisted such violent acts were unacceptable and stressed "completely peaceful protest demonstrations" in line with the Constitution and said those restoring to violence were violating the Constitution.

The president said the armed clash involving illegal armed men during the protest was clear violation of the country's laws. He said the government not only wanted an end to the violence but it had directed security forces to deal with sternly with elements trying to take the law into their hands. (Pajhwok)

(11) Police ...

the protestors, coming from various districts, rallied in Sar-i-Pul City, the provincial capital, and demanded the punishment for those who brought down two portraits of the VP in Mazar-i-Sharif on the new year's night.

The next day, Supporters of Dostum and Balkh Governor Atta Mohammad Noor took to the streets in Maimana, Faryab's capital, and held rallies which turned violent eventually.

Kaniska Turkistani, head of the Jumbish party's youth union, said personnel of Zabihullah Fitrat, deputy spokesperson of Jamiat-i-Islami political party was involved in bringing down the pictures of Dostum, but police had no power to arrest them.

He alleged that Zabihullah warned us not to post these pictures which were planned to be posted in five locations of the city. (Pajhwok)

(12) Attempts Being ...

ethnic divisions among the Afghan people is successfully being implemented and reports regarding the developments will be provided on monthly basis.

This is not the first time the Afghan officials have slammed Pakistan's ISI for interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and supporting the anti-government armed militants. (KP)

(13) 69pc of Adult ...

2% believe the situation will get better. Three in ten do not know how their lives will be a year later.

More than three-fourths of adults express dissatisfaction with the performance of the country's leadership: 81% say they are somewhat dissatisfied with the performance of the

national unity government.

According to the survey, 76% are somewhat dissatisfied with President Ashraf Ghani's performance, and 86% with Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah.

Asked about 10 selected countries and organisations, Afghans voiced their most favorable opinions of India (62% overall), followed at some distance by China (46% overall), Russia (39%) and Iran (37%).

Major western actors are viewed favourably by about a third of Afghans: both the UK and the US at 34%. NATO/ISAF is also seen positively by just under three in ten (28% overall).

Two in three (67%) Pashto speakers have an unfavourable view of the US, compared to 44% of Dari speakers and 32% of Uzbek speakers. (Pajhwok)

(14) 2,000 TB ...

laboratory to diagnose any kind of diseases had been completed.

Public health director Abdul Qayum Pukhla said besides eliminating TB diseases, they were trying to control other diseases as well.

He said in addition to Kandahar City, most districts of the province had healthcare centers where patients regularly received treatment.

According to the Ministry of Public Health, thousands of people infect with tuberculosis annually in Afghanistan as some of them lose their lives. (Pajhwok)

(15) Feasibility Study...

happiness over the project and called a big project on the national level.

He said the project would have a positive impact on economy, security and trade in Kandahar, Uruzgan, Dai Kundi and Bamyan provinces.

He said the provincial government of Kandahar fully supported the project and would bring into use all available resources for completion of the road.

Shamsi said the feasibility study should be carried out with utmost care in order to avoid any problem in future. (Pajhwok)

(16) Nangarhar ...

were taken off the war.

"In the past the Orange Flower Festival was almost forgotten but now Nangarhar security is improving especially in those areas where in the past Daesh was activate," said Shir Hassan Kamzai university lecturer. "The enemies want to show Nangarhar is an insecure province. There is no problem and you see a good festival is going on," said Akramullah Akram a cultural activist.

Residents of Nangarhar province have called for more such festivals, which also help deliver messages of peace and joy to others. (Tolonews)

(17) Thousands ...

but the offensive was yet to be launched.

A resident of Londyana area, Abdul Raziq, said: "The conflict is ongoing in our area and we have migrated to the district centre. Like us, many families have arrived here."

He said the displaced families were facing numerous problems and the government should assist them in this time of trouble.

The families said they had left behind their household animals and standing crops, urging the government to help improve the situation and facilitate their return to their homes.

A former chief of the provincial council, Amanullah Hotaki, told Pajhwok Afghan News he was concerned about the situation of people in Dehrawud district.

He said if the government did not pay attention to the situation of Dehrawud people, their condition would further worsen.

He said fierce clashes were underway between security forces and Taliban militants, who control most of the areas in the district. (Pajhwok)

(18) Prices of ...

Bagh area, Ahmad Javid, sold a 49-kg bag of Kazakh flour for 1,300afs, a 49-kg sack of sugar for 2,100afs and a 24-kg bag of rice for 1,800afs.

He sold a 16-litre tin of Momin ghee for 1,100afs, a kilo of African black tea for 260afs and the same quantity of Madina green tea for 250afs -- higher than wholesale prices.

Fuel prices also increased. Abdul Hadi, a filling station worker in Kabul, said the price of one liter of petrol increased from 39afs to 41afs and of diesel from 33afs to 34afs.

Mohammad Sharif, a liquefied gas seller in Kolola Pushta neighborhood, sold a kilogram of gas for 40afs, the same rate as of last week's. (Pajhwok)

(19) Conflicts Claim...

spot and injuring his son," Khapal-

wak told Xinhua.

The army general, the official said was coming out of the mosque next to his residence in Dand district Thursday night when two armed militants opened fire and killed him along with one of his bodyguards on spot.

Khapalwak added that both the attackers were killed in the firefight which lasted for a while.

Meantime, Qari Yusuf Ahmadi who claims to speak for the Taliban outfit, in contact with media claimed responsibility, saying two suicide bombers targeted General Achakzai Thursday night killing him along with a few of his bodyguards (Xinhua)

(20) 8 Killed in ...

official. The traffic police have launched an investigation into the incident.

The Afghan officials blamed reckless driving for the traffic incidents, saying reckless driving on congested roads and highways is the main cause of road accidents in the country. (Xinhua)

(21) 3 Killed, 24 ...

Since a cease-fire between the government and the PKK collapsed last July, Turkish security forces have been conducting a major campaign against the group in the southeast of the country. (Xinhua)

(22) France Says ...

been sentenced in Belgium for belonging to a jihadist network. French TV station ITele reported that explosives had been found in the man's house. (Reuters)

(23) Syrian Army...

bring in reinforcements from its strongholds in the northern province of al-Raqqah, but the Syrian army struck the backup forces of the IS. The Syrian military forces are now combing areas between the hills and the ancient citadel of Palmyra in preparation for their entry, said the report, adding that the Syrian army also cut off the IS supply line between Palmyra and the town of Qaryatain in Homs countryside. (Xinhua)

(24) Greece Marks ...

great challenges of our times and ensure a better future for Greece and the later generations of the Greeks." "Today Greece is once again at the forefront of a struggle to defend the universal values of humanism and solidarity. Greek people are demonstrating strength, dignity and faith, while they are also facing an unprecedented financial crisis," Tsipras noted in his message, expressing optimism the future would be better for all. (Xinhua)

(25) S. African...

Power announced a 15 billion rand (about 1 billion U.S.dollar) investment in a solar plant project in the town of Groblershoop in Northern Cape, with the capacity to power more than 200,000 households.

Zuma's visit to the UAE will take place on Monday. South Africa and the UAE enjoy strong bond of friendship and strategic bilateral relations, said the statement. (Xinhua)

(26) Nigeria Vows ...

measures to checkmate any foreigner that is here to disrupt the peace we are enjoying," he added.

About 500 migrants were recently arrested by the NIS in Niger, of whom 300 were declared illegal immigrants and awaiting deportation. (Xinhua)

(27) Singapore

summit. Experts will be trained to protect Singapore from radiation in case a nuclear incident occurs in the region. They should be able to tell whether the radiation will affect Singapore based on the wind directions, wind speeds, and calculate the amount of radiation in the air, NRF said.

ASEAN countries such as Indonesia and Vietnam have showed interest or plans to build nuclear power plants, which some experts here have shown their concern over its security and supply. (Xinhua)

(28) British Politician...

Truce and to raise funds for UNICEF, Lord Bates said.

Prior to the press conference for the walk on Thursday, the 10 Downing Street announced his resignation as a Minister of State at the Home Office. (Xinhua)

(29) Rouhani in ...

avenues for enhancing economic interaction," a Foreign Ministry statement said.

Cooperation on regional and international issues of mutual concern will be discussed, the Foreign Ministry said.

In a message to Pakistani people on the eve of his visit, the Iranian president called for strong economic, trade and political relations with Pakistan in the sanction-free environment. (Xinhua)

(30) OSCE Chairman ...

He has served as the Minister for Foreign Affairs since 2013.

Germany took over the rotating OSCE Chairmanship on January 1, 2016 and Germany's top priorities reportedly include rebuilding trust among participating States and maintaining efforts for achieving a political solution to the conflict in and around Ukraine. (Asia-Plus)

(31) Uzbekista...

constructive partnership on resistance to threats to regional and international security, sustainable economic and social development.

According to foreign experts and observers, Uzbekistan is making a significant contribution to implementing the priorities of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Initiatives of Tashkent are primarily aimed at achieving the statutory goals and tasks of the organization, the development of fruitful cooperation with the Member States, observer countries and dialogue partners.

Our country which is one of the founders of the organization, as the chairman intends to strictly abide by the principles of continuity, as well as the consistent advancement of mutually beneficial cooperation that meets the interests of all members of the structure. In particular, Uzbekistan was in favor of further strengthening the role of the SCO as an effective institution on withstanding such threats for global and regional security as terrorism, religious extremism, separatism, drug and weapons trafficking, transnational organized crime.

In strengthening practical cooperation in the fight with these challenges and threats for security, our country attaches great significance to further improve the activities of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) of the SCO, established in 2004 in Tashkent to coordinate the collaboration of Member States in this direction.

Uzbekistan also supports the preservation of the chosen course of the SCO according to which its activities are not directed against the interests of other countries, and this is enshrined in the Charter and other founding documents of the organization. Stressing the importance of elimination of bloc thinking and prevent transformation of the SCO into a military-political alliance the President of our country Islam Karimov also said about it on the Ufa summit in 2015. President of Uzbekistan also specifically noted the need for further strengthening the commitment to the main principles and goals.

States members have economic potential and necessary experience, resources, and most importantly - the political will for the practical implementation of cross-border infrastructural, high-tech and social programs, the implementation of which will give a powerful impetus to the advancement of all countries in the region.

In this regard, Uzbekistan has a special place in the economic component of the SCO activities, supports the intensification of contacts for the development and implementation of mutually beneficial joint projects, forming the relevant financial instruments for these purposes, including the Development Bank of the SCO. Creating multilateral funding mechanisms for priority socio-economic and infrastructure programs within the organization will allow to solve common tasks more efficiently. (IAJ)

(32) Turkmenistan...

noted that Turkmenistan and Saudi Arabia are ready to actively develop the cooperation in this sphere.

They expressed interest in implementation of joint project in other spheres as well. The trade and economic sphere, transportation and communication, textile and food industry, construction, tourism and sports were named as the priority areas of cooperation. (Agencies)

(33) China, Russia...

at large," Xi said when meeting with Russian Presidential Administration chief Sergei Ivanov. China and Russia are each other's most important partners and developing a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership is the mutual choice of both countries, Xi said. He called on both countries to take the 15th anniversary of the China-Russia Treaty of Good Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation as an opportunity to carry forward friendly bilateral cooperation. (Xinhua)