

### (1) Afghanistan Ranks ...

Afghanistan at number two, followed by Nigeria, Syria, Pakistan and Yemen – in that order.

GII Indicators on terrorism attacks in Afghanistan for 2016 stood at:

Based on the report, Afghanistan had the second highest number of deaths from terrorism in 2016. However this was 14 percent lower than the previous year, in part due to reduced terrorist activity by the Taliban, the report stated.

While this reduction provides some hope, the number of deaths recorded in 2016 was the second highest recorded from terrorism incidents in Afghanistan since the ousting of the Taliban regime in 2001.

The report indicates that the Taliban was responsible for 94 percent of attacks by known groups in Afghanistan in 2016.

However, the tactics of the Taliban appear to be evolving somewhat from previous years, stated the report.

While the number of battle-related deaths in 2015 and 2016 increased by five per cent to 18,000, the opposite occurred with terrorism related deaths which dropped by 23 percent in 2016.

The report stated that this trend reflects the move by the Taliban to engage in more traditional conflict tactics against the Afghan security forces and focus instead on territorial gains rather than terrorist activities.

As of April 2017, the Taliban had control of over 11 per cent of the country and contested another 29 percent of Afghanistan's 398 districts.

"Terrorist attacks, in the context of an ongoing armed conflict, can serve a range of purposes. Attacks which focus on government, military and police targets aim to discourage support for the Afghan government, dissuade people from joining government organizations and dishearten members of the police and the Afghan National Guard (security forces). Conversely, attacks on civilians aim to illustrate that the government is unable to provide security," the report reads.

Worst Attack

The report states that in 2016, the worst attack was against Hazara protestors in Afghanistan's capital Kabul. Two suicide bombers blew themselves up among a huge crowd killing at least 83 protestors.

The report also notes that the Taliban operatives are now committing fewer attacks on their traditional targets.

There were 38 percent fewer attacks on government, 41 percent fewer attacks on police and 20 percent fewer attacks against security forces. However, attacks on these targets still accounted for just over half of all attacks.

Although the overall number of deaths from terrorism is down, the Taliban has engaged in more attacks that specifically target civilians, the report stated.

In 2016, there were 252 attacks against civilians that killed 1,217 people. This is an increase of 16 percent and resulted in a 24 percent increase in deaths against the previous year. Over half of the deaths from these attacks resulted from armed assaults while bombings accounted for a quarter of all deaths. The remaining fatal attacks resulted from kidnappings and assassinations.

Nearly a third of attacks targeting civilians occurred in the four northern provinces; Baghlan, Faryab, Samangan and Sar-e-Pul. Deaths from terrorism doubled in these provinces from the previous year.

The report concludes that Daesh continued to be active in Afghanistan in 2016. The group undertook 51 attacks that killed 505 people. This is a significant escalation from 2015 when 120 people were killed by the group. The report stated this was a trend that is likely to continue as more former members of Tehrik-e Taliban (ITP) join the chapter.

The report states that globally, the downward trend in the number of terrorism deaths has been driven by significant declines in four of the five countries most impacted by terrorism. Syria, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria all recorded 33 percent fewer deaths.

"The largest reduction occurred in Nigeria where deaths attributed to Boko Haram decreased by 80 percent in 2016. This decline has been in direct response to the mounting pressure faced by the group from the Multinational Joint Task Force.

This military intervention is also having a positive ripple effect on neighboring countries with Cameroon, Chad and Niger collectively recording 75 percent fewer terrorism deaths," says the report.

The report was released however at a time that Daesh in Afghanistan has significantly increased attacks – particularly on mosques and other civilian targets.

The Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP) is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit thinktank dedicated to shifting the world's focus to peace as a positive, achievable, and tangible measure of human well-being and progressive achieves its goals by developing new conceptual frameworks

to define peacefulness; providing metrics for measuring peace; and uncovering the relationships between business, peace and prosperity. (Tolonews)

### (2) Circles within ...

the government, known as the fifth pillar, were behind such attacks, but he did not name anyone.

Because these elements feared upcoming elections and were involved in such incidents, but they would never succeed, the governor said. (Pajhwok)

### (3) Suicide Blast ...

gathered to "honor" his national services. But Mujahid said tight security around the venue prompted the attacker to blow himself up at an outer security post.

Afghan media, quoting security sources, put the death toll at more than 18, including civilians.

The Islamic State terrorist group claimed responsibility for the attack.

Noor, a notorious warlord and powerful regional leader, is a longtime stalwart in the Jamiat-i-Islami party, which is part of the Afghan national unity government.

Noor recently formed a three party political alliance, including the Jumbish party of General Abdul Rashid Dostum, another controversial and notorious warlord in the north. Dostum represents the minority Uzbek community.

Both the warlords are highly critical of mostly ethnic Pashtun leaders around Afghan President Ashraf Ghani.

Thursday's violence came amid heightened political tensions as politicians are jockeying for position ahead of the 2019 presidential elections in Afghanistan.

Kabul has witnessed major bombings this year, killing and wounding hundreds of people.

The Taliban and Islamic State have both taken credit for the bloodshed. Taliban insurgents have also intensified battlefield attacks against government forces across Afghanistan in 2017, killing and wounding thousands of them. Stepped up hostilities have also caused record civilian casualties this year. (VoA)

### (4) China Dedicated to ...

international cooperation in terms of counter-terrorism. He announced in his speech that he intends to convene the first-ever UN summit of heads of counter-terrorism agencies next year to forge new partnerships and build relationships of trust.

The UN chief also underlined the "urgent need" for governments and security agencies to collaborate more effectively in fighting terror.

He called on UN Member States to increase international efforts to address terror financing, and improve information exchange among security services.

"I heard this message loud and clear. During the high-level week of my first General Assembly in September, 152 leaders - 80 percent of all Members of the United Nations - highlighted the need to step up the exchange of information," he said.

Noting that at least 11,000 terrorist attacks occurred in more than 100 countries last year, Guterres warned that terrorism had become "an unprecedented threat to international peace, security and development." (Xinhua)

### (5) US Congress ...

should work closely with Afghanistan to promote stability in the region to include targeted infrastructure development and economic investment, means to address capability gaps in country, and improved humanitarian and disaster relief assistance. Payment of \$350.0 million to Pakistan under CSF will be contingent upon certification from the secretary of defense that Islamabad is taking demonstrable steps against the Haqqani Network.

Over the last two years, two successive defense secretaries – Ashton Carter and Jim Mattis – refused to give this certification in the absence of Islamabad taking demonstrable actions against the group.

An accompanying conference report passed by the House and the Senate notes action on the part of Pakistan against Lashkar-e-Taiba, as well as other terrorist groups operating within the borders of Pakistan, remains a priority for the US. (Pajhwok)

### (6) Llorens Reaffirms ...

all forms of corruption and bolster the gains made in health, education, and gender equality over the last sixteen years.

Recalling his past time and recent months the outgoing envoy said: "I have been blessed with being given a second opportunity to devote myself to strengthening our two nations' ties and work toward our shared goals of bringing peace, security, and prosperity to this beautiful land."

"This is a country with a rich past and much to be proud of. From the heroism of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces who stand with us on the battlefield to the skilled craftsmanship of the archeological conservators who partner with us

to restore the cultural heritage the Taliban attempted to wipe out, the Afghan people inspire us each day to work towards a brighter future," he said.

Llorens said: "I have no illusions. I know there are many challenges and difficult times, but I have total confidence in the Afghan people and believe in their struggle. The American people and indeed all of the good people of this world will stand by you and support you as you build on the gains achieved in the past 16 years. As the great Afghan poet Jalaluddin Rumi said, "The moon stays bright when it doesn't avoid the night." So will Afghanistan and the U.S.-Afghan partnership continue to blossom. In solidarity we will achieve a sovereign, unified, and democratic Afghanistan, charting a path to peace, prosperity, and self-reliance." (Pajhwok)

### (7) Career Conference...

to know that there are possibilities for the female student to work as professional lawyers."

"Entering the job market in the justice sector is challenging for female graduates. The conference aimed at informing female law students about the various career opportunities and meeting law practitioners. A series of similar events will follow, supporting access to the job market for female law students."

"According to my experience, individual competence and self-confidence are two factors that will help you to overcome obstacles on the way to your desired career", Balkh's prosecution office's deputy stated. Adding that debating with female role models that were successfully leading a professional career strengthens the students' motivation to acquire additional knowledge and helped them to network. "The legal practitioners that are working as judges, prosecutors, lawyers and professors gave advice and shared their experiences." (Pajhwok)

### (8) Calls for Loya ...

"In the presence of the Loya Jirga which has been included in the constitution of Afghanistan, holding traditional and consultative Loya Jirgas which do not have executive approval are against the law," said legal expert Wahid Farzahyee.

"Today Mr. Karzai calls for a Loya Jirga, their objective is in fact a big Jirga, and it is not the Jirga which has been laid out in the constitution," said Sayed Eshaq Gailani, head of Nahzat-e-Hambastagi Milli Afghanistan party.

"It is not correct that the Americans stay in their bases and war continues in the country, we do not need this process and this decision," said Karzai last November. (Tolonews)

### (9) Thousands of ...

and terrorist groups, including an Islamic State offshoot that has gained a foothold since most international combat forces left in 2014.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg has said the alliance will also help meet Nicholson's requirement to bring the overall number of NATO troops from 13,000 to around 16,000.

At the height of the war during Barack Obama's presidency, U.S. and allied forces in Afghanistan numbered about 140,000 troops. Obama had set timelines for the drawdown of those forces, intending to complete a full withdrawal by the time he left office.

By Trump's inauguration, Obama had reduced the official force limit to about 8,400. Besides boosting troop numbers, Trump's plan did away with withdrawal deadlines, leaving the U.S. military mission in Afghanistan open-ended. The president also vowed a more aggressive fight, promising the military would not forecast its plans for troop levels or future operations.

"Conditions on the ground – not arbitrary timetables – will guide our strategy from now on," Trump said in August. "America's enemies must never know our plans or believe they can wait us out. I will not say when we are going to attack, but attack we will."

McKenzie said the U.S. also has nearly 5,300 troops in Iraq and about 500 in Syria helping battle ISIS. (SAS)

### (10) Dr. Abdullah ...

strong support for the bilateral partnership, the Pentagon said.

"They discussed measures to implement the president's South Asia strategy and efforts to advance mutual security and counterterrorism cooperation, as well as the importance of continuing crucial reforms," Pentagon spokesperson Dana W White said. US Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator Mark Green met Abdullah to discuss civilian assistance programmes in Afghanistan, and the ongoing implementation of the South Asia strategy. "Green underscored his support for the Government of Afghanistan's efforts to address corruption, and enhance the accountability of Afghan institutions," said USAID spokesperson Clayton M. Mc-

Cleskey. (Pajhwok)

### (11) Pakistan Seeks ...

and Government of Pakistan extend their deepest condolences and sympathies.

"We have also offered help to Iran and awaiting their response weather to accept the international assistance or not," he said.

Muhammad Faisal to a question said Pakistan believes in peaceful neighborhood and desires strong relations with all of its neighbors.

He said that Pakistan wants to resolve all issues with India through dialogue including the dispute of Kashmir.

While condemning a cross border terrorist attack at Pakistani check post in north western Bajaur tribal region he said these attacks on Pakistani forces confirm the presence of a large number of terrorists in the increasingly ungoverned spaces in Afghanistan.

"We expect Afghanistan and Resolute Missions to eliminate the anti - Pakistan terrorist sanctuaries and ensure that attacks against Pakistani posts do not take place," the spokesperson said. (IRNA)

### (12) UNAMA Condemns ...

"At a time when Afghanistan is facing so many challenges, and with so many Afghans yearning for peace, such attacks simply cannot be justified," he stressed.

He said the use of explosive weapons in civilian-populated areas must stop, without exception. "The United Nations maintains that all parties to the conflict must strictly adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian law to take all feasible measures to protect civilians from harm." The UNAMA expressed condolences to the families and colleagues of those killed in the attack and wished speedy recovery to those injured.

It was not immediately known if senior members of the Jamiat were among the victims. Soon after the attack, Balkh Governor Atta Mohammad Noor, also senior member of the party, alleged some elements within the government were behind the attack. But he did not elaborate. (Pajhwok)

### (13) Kabul Bombing: ...

so many challenges, and with so many Afghans yearning for peace, such attacks simply cannot be justified," the UNAMA head said. (Pajhwok)

### (14) Afghan Pilots ...

they become an instructor pilot, a standardization pilot. I have been flying Black Hawk for 10 years and I am still not fully qualified. There is still missions that I am not capable of doing, there is still missions that I am not willing to do. Every one of these guys they will never be done being qualified, they will always be new advanced," Jeff Martin, a trainer said.

The Afghan Air Force MI-17 and MI-35 helicopters will be replaced by the US Black Hawk helicopters equipped with weapons, officials said.

MI-17 helicopters engineers also will be assigned for maintenance of Black Hawk helicopters.

"Our course is not started. When it starts, it will take one to two years or more than that to learn repairing the helicopters," Mirwais, an engineer said.

"I am really interested to learn Black Hawks repairing. My work might be difficult, but I can do that," another engineer, Husain Ali said. The officials said Black Hawks parts are easily available in compare with MI-17 helicopters and that this will prevent the Air Force engineers from facing any big challenge in this respect.

According to Air Force engineers, Black Hawk helicopters are better than MI-17 aircrafts for following reasons:

- Black Hawks are faster
- They save 250 liters of fuel in one hour flight compared with MI-17
- They are more sustainable (Tolonews)

### (15) ACCI Says ...

The demand is high, but our production is low. The production should increase. We are committed to getting Afghan saffron to world markets and to do marketing for it and sell it at a good price," ACCI spokesman Siyam Psarlai said.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), saffron production has increased by more than 30 percent in the country in the past year.

MAIL figures show that the areas under saffron cultivation rose to more than 3,500 hectares this year and that it is expected that farmers will harvest over eight tons of saffron. "Our production is improving. Last year, 2,500 hectares of land was cultivated with saffron while this year it is expected that this amount will rise to 3,500 hectares. Last year, at least six tons of saffron was processed while this year we foresee more than eight tons (being processed) so that we become the top producers of saffron in the world," MAIL's senior advisor Mohammad Hashim Aslami said. Meanwhile, investors said saffron produc-

tion in the country is less than other countries that also export the product. They said this has affected the Afghan saffron price on international markets.

According to investors, one kilogram of processed saffron is sold this year for 90,000 AFs, down from 130,000 AFs last year.

"Afghanistan has a small share in the world market. International saffron prices affect the prices in Afghanistan, therefore the saffron prices have decreased due to the change in prices on world markets," said Barakatullah Rahmati, head of Herat Saffron Company.

The agriculture ministry said Afghanistan has the capacity to produce up to 100 tons of saffron eventually. (Tolonews)

### (16) UNCHR Eyes ...

creation of conditions conducive to voluntary repatriation to Afghanistan and support for refugee-hosting communities.

The agency added that it launched "Appeal 2018-2019" which lays out the financial resources that will be required for the agency's program to protect and improve the lives of 68 million people of concern.

The appeal presents the proposed budgets of US\$7.508 billion and US\$7.352 billion for 2018 and 2019 respectively.

UNHCR said in mid-2017, a delegation of 160 Afghan refugees travelled from Pakistan to Afghanistan to advocate for measures to be taken to ensure return is sustainable, including in relation to land, employment, shelter, health and education.

In 2018, data from the UNHCR's protection-based monitoring in Afghanistan will continue to help address protection issues in the country, support the transition between humanitarian assistance and development work, and inform government-led reintegration activities, it said.

According to local media, Pakistan hosts 1.3 million registered Afghan refugees. (Xinhua)

### (17) Winter Diseases ...

Kunduz City more than a month back, no one had since helped us, we have no shelter, food and clothes to cover ourselves against the harsh weather conditions and our children have fallen ill," he said.

He stressed they needed emergency assistance as many children of the displaced families were experiencing winter-related illnesses. Frequent clashes between Taliban and Afghan forces in the two districts have left many civilians dead and injured. (Pajhwok)

### (18) Senior Hajj ...

is a resident of Ghalmin area of Ferzokoh city, the provincial capital. Ghalmin area has been under Taliban control over the past two months. (Pajhwok)

### (19) Afghanistan to ...

All seven matches will be played at Sharjah Cricket Stadium, which is Afghanistan's home ground.

The "two T20Is and five-match ODI series at Sharjah Cricket Stadium will give both sides a valuable opportunity to face each other for competitive cricket ahead of the ICC World Cup Qualifiers in March. Both sides have played closely fought series in the past and this will again ensure that cricket fans witness some great cricket between Afghanistan and Zimbabwe", Afghanistan Cricket Board's Chairman Shukrullah Atif Mashal said in a statement. (Tolonews)

### (20) Chicken Being ...

Development in partnership with Community Livestock and Agriculture Programme (CLAP). According to the director, each of the 2,200 women would receive 15 chickens with 52 kilograms of chicken feed and breeding equipment. The project will take one week to complete. (Pajhwok)

### (21) Suicide Cases ...

and rejected casualties to their fighters. In Kapisa province, three militants were killed and a fourth wounded during a gun-battle between gunmen loyal to a former jihadi commander and Taliban militants in Tagab district on Tuesday, police said on Wednesday. (Pajhwok)

Police spokesman Mohammad Ayub Yousafzai said the injured gunman had been shifted to Kabul for treatment by police. Taliban have so far said nothing in this regard. (Pajhwok)

### (22) 221 Kunar ...

and carpets on Wednesday.

A displaced individual, Mir Salam, said a mortar shell landed at his residence, killing his livestock. "We rushed and rescued our women and children and left everything behind at our home. We are in very harsh condition. We are now 20 people living in a single room."

He thanked the government for assisting them with tents and food items on time.

This comes as Pakistani army a few days back, after relative calmness, has again started a new wave of cross-border attacks from Pakistan. (Pajhwok)