

(1) Kunduz City ...

however killed and four others injured during the operation on Monday after their vehicle struck a roadside mine.

Mohammad Omar, District Governor of Khaja Ghar said: "The security forces are moving forward in Khaja Ghar district towards Dasht-e-Archi district of Kunduz."

He says that the insurgents have sustained massive casualties in the operation and one of their commanders named Hanzala was also among the dead. He said many Taliban members escaped the area.

TOLOnews journalist Karim Amini reported early Tuesday that the situation is back to normal in Kunduz city and said it was "like it was two weeks ago". He said "most of the people have come out into the city and are going back to work."

On Monday, the Afghan acting defense minister Masoom Stanekzai said that al-Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) and other foreign militant groups were involved in the Kunduz attack after Pakistan launched a military operation to oust them from the tribal areas of northern Waziristan.

Pakistan launched a large-scale joint operation called "Zarb-e-Azb" in mid June 2014 which Pakistani officials said was aimed at eliminating militant groups from northern Waziristan, which is along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

The operation however evoked widespread criticism from Afghanistan after hundreds of militants reportedly fled to Afghanistan.

Stanekzai told a media briefing Monday that foreign militants, including those who fled Waziristan were behind the Kunduz attack, which led to the northern city's collapse to the Taliban two weeks ago. (Tolonews)

(2) Winter Could ...

that Taliban supreme leader Mullah Omar had died two years ago.

On Saturday, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said his government was trying to revive the stalled peace process.

The Afghan leadership, however, wants Pakistan to uproot alleged Taliban sanctuaries on its soil before Kabul agrees to any future role Islamabad can play in promoting peace in Afghanistan.

Taliban insurgent attacks slow down in winter when heavy snow blocks Afghan mountain passes, restricting the movement of large groups of fighters and weapons inside the country and from across the Pakistani border.

The Islamist militancy made unprecedented advances during this fighting season, testing Afghan security forces and raising concerns that the war in Afghanistan is not ending soon. (VoA)

(3) Refugees in ...

classes," said Zamir, gazing over a crowd of blue-uniformed students sitting on the floor of a tent. (Reuters)

(4) Senators ...

Ashraf Ghani," he said. "They cannot find facts at all and I strongly ask the government to remove this 50-50 [power sharing] from Afghanistan," Haris said aggressively.

In addition other senators praised the security forces for preventing the fall of Ghazni city to the Taliban on Monday.

Senators also praised Afghan journalists for their work and for keeping people informed especially recently - from the frontline in Kunduz city.

"I request the House to praise those media and journalists who did a good job, especially those who went to Kunduz front line," female legislator Anarkali Honaryar said. (Tolonews)

(5) Afghanistan ...

Pakistan, which is a big challenge for the leadership's earlier commitment to maintain a good neighborly relationship.

Although Pakistani officials have insisted that they do not have control over the Afghan Taliban, many Afghan leaders still believed that Islamabad has a big influence over the Taliban and can encourage the Taliban leaders to restart the intra-Afghan peace dialogue.

One Pakistani official, on condition of anonymity, said the peace process can be fast-track if the Afghan government itself comes forward with its own strategy on how to go about the peace dialogue.

The official said the Afghan government must also be more transparent and should specify the role that Pakistan and other major countries should play in facilitating the stalled talks.

According to the official, Afghan leaders should be aware that there are some groups who are out to derail the peace negotiations. "These detractors with vested interests would keep on trying to sow dissension between Pakistan and Afghanistan and this has complicated the whole process," the official said.

Afghan leaders are right to call for trust with Pakistan, which is a fundamental requirement to push the peace negotiation forward.

Abdullah's comments reflect the current mood in Kabul, indicating that the Afghan unity government continues to recognize the important role of Pakistan in the forging of a permanent peace in Afghanistan.

Afghan leaders had hailed Pakistan after the Taliban agreed for the first time in 14 years to sit face-to-face with the representatives of Afghan government in the scenic Pakistani city of Murree on July 7.

The direct talks were also important as the process had the backing of the Taliban's powerful Rehbari Shura of the Leadership Council.

Afghanistan's deputy foreign minister, Hekmat Khalil Karzai, a senior member of the government negotiating team had admitted that they had discussions with "real" Taliban representatives when he spoke at a post-talks news conference in Kabul on July 8.

But internal rift within the Taliban over the election of the new leader Mullah Akhtar Mansoor had a negative impact on the peace process. It is widely believed in Pakistani that Mansoor has "strengthened" his control over the militant group. Allegiance by the son and brother of Mullah Omar after their initial refusal gave a major boost to Mansoor, who is seen now in a comfortable position to take key decisions including the Taliban's readiness to restart the peace talks.

The Taliban leadership has said that it was Mansoor who had sent his three senior leaders for the first round of the ice-breaking talks with the Afghan government on July 7.

Mansoor was the acting Taliban chief when the group held initial talks with Kabul.

Another important development is that Mansoor is also in full control of the Taliban political office in Qatar. The former head of the Taliban Qatar office, Sayed Tayyeb Agha, had earlier distanced his team from the Pakistan-brokered talks. (Xinhua)

(6) US-Led ...

and hand grenades. The United States is leading a coalition that has carried out more than 7,000 drone and plane strikes against Daesh in Iraq and Syria since launching operations more than a year ago.

The Pentagon had to scrap a -500million program to train thousands of Syrian rebels in Turkey and Jordan after many failed to pass the screening process and one group gave ammo and other gear to an Al-Qaeda affiliate.

Russia on September 30 began its own bombing campaign in Syria. Moscow claims it, too, is targeting Daesh and "terrorists" but the Pentagon says the vast majority of strikes have been against opponents of President Bashar al-Assad.

Warren said there was little immediate risk of the SAC getting struck by Russian bombs, because Moscow is focusing elsewhere in the country.

"The Russians haven't thus far done much work in that area, because the SAC is fighting Daesh, and only a fraction of the Russian strikes have been in areas where Daesh is operating," Warren said.

On Sunday, Syria's leading Kurdish militia and several Arab rebel groups that have fought alongside it formalized their alliance in a new group called the Syrian Democratic Forces.

Warren stressed that the ammunition drop was only for SAC fighters. (AFP)

(7) Any Attack ...

any other group has complaints, they can adopt peaceful means, because any attack on media and journalists is considered a war crime," he added. "We announce that in the event of such threats continuing or any journalists or media organisations harmed by the Taliban or any other group, our first reaction will be to boycott their news coverage."

He said Afghan media once again emphasizes its commitment to democratic values and professional journalistic ethics, primarily ensuring impartiality and balance in their publications.

In conclusion he said: "We call on the Afghan government, national and

international organisations to extend their maximum support to Afghan media and journalists, making their security and immunity a top priority." (Tolonews)

(8) "Global ...

significant countries in the Muslim world can together play a role, as we see terrorism is starting to move beyond the Muslim world. I hope there will be a larger international sincerity about this."

As per a report published on Monday by UAE's The National, Karzai said with a changing geopolitical landscape in today's world, countries were continuing to apply the same set of old rules.

"In order to confront the menace of terrorism, we must first address the fault lines that can be used to address divisions and violence in the Muslim world," Karzai said.

According to Karzai, terrorism today was state-sponsored and the outcome of poor policies, devoid of ethics. "The terrorism we know today has nothing to do with religion," he said.

"It is not a state of mind nor is it a societal reaction to a so-called clash of civilisations. It is a phenomenon that is more political than social or ideological, and the recent history of Afghanistan in that of the region is a testimony of these observations." (KP)

(9) Moscow Seeks...

webcast of the Russia Calling investment conference.

He said Russia has proposed to organize a meeting in Moscow or in Washington on that issue, and the Russian side could be led by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, which would include top officials from the military and special services.

"But there has not been an answer so far," Putin added.

The president also complained that there has been little cooperation on the part of the U.S.-led anti-terror coalition in terms of intelligence sharing.

"We asked our partners about the targets we shall strike, but they just told us they are not ready for this," Putin said.

He noted that all technical progress achieved between Russian and U.S. military was far from sufficient.

"If we want to be effective, we should not only shoot and launch missile strikes, but reach a political settlement. We should encourage those forces inside the country to work together, as the conflict is complex and multifaceted," Putin said.

Russia's air force has been launching airstrikes in Syria since Sept. 30.

According to a Defense Ministry's latest report, Russia has intensified attacks against the Islamic State, destroying a total of 86 targets in the last 24 hours, including command posts, field headquarters, ammunition depots, explosives factories, field camps and bases, as well as vehicles and other equipment. (Xinhua)

(10) Russia Hit ...

the defence ministry said in a statement.

The ministry said the strikes destroyed a command post outside the town of Anadan, located 16 kilometres (10 miles) northwest of Aleppo, which it said was used by IS fighters to coordinate their movements in the area.

Other strikes in the IS stronghold of Al-Bab, located in the Aleppo region, saw the destruction of a field command centre and an ammunition depot.

The Russian air force said it had attacked a convoy transporting fuel and ammunition in the Aleppo region. Strikes outside the village of Latamneh in Hama province destroyed an underground ammunition bunker, the defence ministry said. (AFP)

(11) Jihadi Leaders...

issue of chairmanship of this council has not been discussed yet but it is obvious that Ustad Sayyaf arranged the meeting. The council wants to discuss the security situation," said Daud Kalakani, an MP who attended the gathering.

He said the commission has already met to discuss the security situation and Kabul's relations with neighbors ahead of a planned meeting with the NUG leaders.

Members of the council said the president has agreed to talk about reforms in government and empowering the security forces.

"We have not discussed details of the plan to include Jihadi forces in the security forces if the situation deteriorates. We have not discussed how to call on people to support security forces if needed," he said.

"The responsibility of logistics and equipment of (Jihadi) forces must be shouldered by the government,"

Kalakani said. The CEO's spokesman Mujiburrahman Rahimi said meanwhile that using public forces to help security in the country is worth considering but these forces should not pose any security threat in the long-term.

"Public forces have announced their support to security forces countywide and the government is supporting this move, but this does not mean that we are going towards forming a militia."

A number of analysts in political affairs have said the role of public forces besides the Afghan security forces could be a good move.

"Establishment of such councils is a good move. Gathering of such figures reveals national unity, but these leaders should bring up a single definition in forming such a council. Such a council should prove effective afterwards," said Ahmad Wali Massoud, analyst and former ambassador of Afghanistan to England.

Former Jihadi leader Abdul Rab Rassoul Sayyaf, former defense minister Bismillah Mohammadi, former Jihadi leader and former vice president Mohammad Yunus Qanuni, former Jihadi leader and ex-minister of water and energy Mohammad Esmail Khan and other prominent Jihadi leaders and heads of political parties are members of the council. (Tolonews)

(12) All Parties...

outlets.

Under international humanitarian law Afghan journalists are not participants in the conflicts they cover and do not lose their status as civilians. International humanitarian law explicitly prohibits attacks against civilians and acts or threats of violence aimed at terrorizing the civilian population. Additionally, journalists are protected under international human rights law, which protects the right to freedom of expression.

The work of journalists is critical in providing independent and accurate information about the ongoing conflict. Journalists must be guaranteed the highest degree of protection by State and non-state actors. (PR)

(13) UN Urges...

city on Monday. Ban Ki-moon has extended his deepest condolences to the family of Ulfat, "a much valued colleague, staunch human rights defender and friend to many in the United Nations and across Afghanistan."

In a statement released by his spokesman, local authorities are urged "to undertake a rigorous and prompt investigation into the circumstances and motives behind this killing and ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice."

Meanwhile, UN Special Representative in Afghanistan Nicholas Haysom has said that they will work with Afghan government to bring the perpetrators to justice.

"The motive behind this murder is to be determined, but the Mission will do all it can together with local authorities to bring the perpetrators to justice," assured Mr. Haysom. "UNAMA is angered by this senseless killing and our thoughts are with the family of Ms. Ulfat." Ulfat was working with UNAMA from the past five years. (KP)

(14) Ghani Appoints...

the Presidential Palace said in a statement.

The statement said that Ghani has "met the new police chiefs at the Presidential Palace and discussed their responsibilities."

This comes a day after Ghani discussed the security situation of southeastern provinces with Tandar 203 Corps Commander Lt. General Mohammad Sharif Yafitali via a video teleconference from Tawhid Center in the Presidential Palace.

In the video conference, the governors of Paktia, Paktika, Khost, Logar, Ghazni, Wardak and Bamiyan provinces briefed the president on governance and security situation in their respective provinces, the Presidential Palace reported.

"After listening to their briefings, the president directed the Director General of Independent Directorate of Local Governance to apply the standards for transparency in appointments of civilian officials," the Presidential Palace said in a separate statement.

Ghani said that "nobody is allowed to meddle in the security sector's affairs and appointments. He added that the National Security and Defense Forces have thwarted the enemy's plans and attacks while defending the country and people with full courage and bravery."

He said the presence and role of the local police was crucial in ensuring security in the southeastern zone,

and directed the governors to focus fundamental attention on the recruitment process for further strengthening of the National Army and National Police. (Tolonews)

(15) Govt. Condemns ...

the recent threats against journalists and media especially the one against TOLO and ITV". In addition government said the move by the Taliban was against Islamic values and the country's laws.

"The media and its employees play a very important role in promoting a democratic system, providing information to people and strengthening national values," the statement read adding that the government is responsible for ensuring these values are upheld.

"The government of Afghanistan assures that in respect of the freedom of our media, government will not neglect the need to protect the lives of journalists as citizens and of media organizations."

This comes after the Taliban on Tuesday issued a strong threat against TOLO TV and ITV whereby death threats were issued against all staff.

In a statement issued by the group, it said the two channels were now considered a direct military target in their war.

On Monday, soon after the threats were issued, UK Ambassador Karen Pierce took to twitter and condemned the statement, saying "freedom of expression should be respected".

Scores of Afghans and members of the international community have also taken to twitter in support of freedom of speech and of TOLOTV, TOLONews and ITV.

One follower said: "Free media is Afghanistan's proudest achievement and must be defended strongly. (Tolonews)

(16) US, Afghan...

Shoffner said the joint offensive seized a large amount of data and weapons, including anti-aircraft guns, rocket-propelled grenade systems with associated hardware, and warheads.

The digital media equipment collected from the site showed it was also a large media cell of the terrorist network.

"The enormous success of this operation validates our ongoing campaign. Working with, by and through our Afghan partners, we're building their capabilities while we fight our common enemies," the statement said, quoting General John Campbell, commander of for U.S. forces in Afghanistan. (VoA)

(17) Luxury ...

Barney's. We did a few collections for Monsoon, which since it's on the high street is great for volume, great for them to get consistent orders so we're working on our third collection for Monsoon."

"After a few years, I thought it'd be great to create fusion line with Turquoise Mountain. I love the fact that it's employing and a training presence for young women. It's brilliant," she added.

In response to a question regarding the design concept for The Turquoise Mountain collection, Pippa said "Whenever I work with a community, I try to draw on their aesthetic. I don't see the point of working somewhere where there's quite a traditional design feel and just saying "Why don't you just make this?". Then you may as well have it made in China. It's about trying to include them, having their hand in it and including the cultural and historical references that are there. Whether it's in Kenya or South Africa or Bolivia or Chile. So the Afghan collection has central Asian and Islamic influence, but this new collection has a little more contemporary feeling - a little more modern."

Turquoise Mountain is a non-profit, non-governmental organization regenerating the old city of Kabul, and spurring the sustainable development of the Afghan crafts industry.

The organization was established in March 2006 by HRH The Prince of Wales in partnership with former President of Afghanistan HE Hamid Karzai.

Young Afghan men and women are trained in skilled trades by the group where Pippa has been working with this group for about seven years now. According to Pippa, The Turquoise Mountain is doing is so important because they're creating the business development side so the students have somewhere to work after they graduate from school. Currently, there are about 20 artisans employed by the group which includes 6 girls and 14 boys. (KP)

(18) Saudi Arabia...

are attracted to the Saudi market due to the secure environment and long ties between the two countries. Around 4,000 French companies that export products to the oil-rich state,

while 80 French companies have branches in Saudi Arabia. (Xinhua)

(19) New Frontier...

is going on along more than 60 percent of the Tajik border with Afghanistan," he added. (Asia-Plus)

(20) Afghan Woman...

to the idea of her moving to the United States, but are now excited for her and her budding rap career.

The new-found musician also revealed her plans to move back to Afghanistan as a rapper for women's rights.

"They're even waiting for my new song... My family, they changed their minds. If I can change their minds with my music, then maybe I can change the world," Alizadeh said, according to CNN. (CNN)

(21) Battle for...

ease. The overstretched Afghan security forces now face the grim prospect of urban warfare, with the militants threatening several other provincial capitals.

"The Taliban have the capability to fight like they did before 2001," Afghan army Brig. Gen. Ahmad Habibi said Saturday as he nodded toward his troops firing rocket-propelled grenades and heavy machine guns on the outskirts of Kunduz. "The terrorists fought the NATO coalition, and they are still fighting now."

Before the U.S.-led invasion of 2001, the Taliban had seized Kabul and nearly all major cities.

The Afghan security forces, however, have had little experience with full-scale urban warfare - a weakness that was clear during the Kunduz fighting.

Raining down fire on outnumbered Taliban fighters barricaded in houses below, Habibi's troops struggled with old weaponry, sometimes banging rocket-propelled grenade launchers on the ground to get them to work; and in one instance, they threw an apparently faulty RPG warhead down the hill into residential houses below.

At one point, debris from the back blast of an RPG fired carelessly by an Afghan soldier tore a chunk of flesh from the leg of a comrade. (Agencies)

(22) MH17 Shot...

pointed to the conclusion that the flight was downed by a guided air defense missile, probably a 9M38M1 missile of the BUK-M1 which "has not been produced in Russia since 1999." Malyshevsky added there is evidence that the BUK-M1 system and accompanying missiles were still in service with the Ukrainian Armed Forces in 2005. (Xinhua)

(23) Israel Shells...

sponsored by shelling Syrian military positions.

Israeli officials have reiterated in the past several years that Israel does not intervene in the four-and-a-half year civil war in Syria, but rather protects its interests against security threats emanating from the area. (Xinhua)

(24) EU Launches...

The EU is Tunisia's largest trading partner by a wide margin, accounting for 57 percent of total Tunisian trade. In 2014, total EU-Tunisia trade amounted to about 20 billion euros (about 22.8 billion U.S. dollars). (Xinhua)

(25) UNHCR ...

short of food, shelter and medical attention.

In recent weeks, UNHCR has stepped up assistance to alleviate the difficult situation of the 60,000 internally displaced people in the lake area, distributing vital non-food items to more than 32,800.

Other agencies including Medecins Sans Frontieres, the UN's World Food Programme, UNICEF and the Red Cross are also responding to the humanitarian needs of internally displaced people. (Xinhua)

(26) China-Russia...

ago, it was less than 7 billion U.S. dollars.

The China Harbin International Economic and Trade Fair started in 1990, and the China-Russia Exposition was upgraded last year to focus on bilateral cooperation between China and Russia. (Xinhua)

(27) Iran Parliament...

begin shutting down parts of its nuclear program in coming weeks. When completed, that process will result in most international sanctions, imposed on Iran since 2006 over concerns it was covertly seeking atomic bombs, being lifted.

The bill also calls on Iran's government to impose strict curbs on U.N. nuclear inspectors' access to military sites, leaving the possibility that disagreements could still arise. (Reuters)