

**(1) Afghan...**

of Badakhshan, at least 12 students at a girls' school were killed in a stampede as they fled shaking buildings, said Sonatullah Taimor, the spokesman for the provincial governor. Another 42 girls were taken to the hospital in the provincial capital of Taluqan.

In Pakistan, Inayatullah Khan, the provincial minister for local bodies, said the death toll in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province alone had jumped to 121.

The toll from Afghanistan's Badakhshan province was likely to rise as reports came in from remote areas. The province is often struck by earthquakes, but casualty figures are usually low.

The province also suffers from floods, snowstorms and mudslides, and despite vast mineral deposits is one of Afghanistan's poorest regions. It has recently also been troubled by Taliban-led insurgents, who have used its remote valleys as cover to seize districts as they spread their footprint across the country.

Power was cut across much of the Afghan capital, where tremors were felt for around 45 seconds. Houses shook, walls cracked and cars rolled in the streets. Officials in the capital could not be immediately reached as telephones appeared to be cut across the country.

Afghanistan's Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah tweeted that the earthquake was the strongest felt in recent decades.

He had earlier called an emergency meeting of disaster officials, which was broadcast live on television. He instructed doctors and hospitals to be prepared to receive and treat casualties.

Abdullah said telecommunications have been disrupted in vast parts of the country, preventing officials from getting a precise picture of damage and casualties. He also warned of aftershocks from the earthquake.

In Pakistan, Zahid Rafiq, an official with the meteorological department, said the quake was felt across the country. In the capital, Islamabad, buildings shook and panicked people poured into the streets, many reciting verses from the Quran.

"I was praying when the massive earthquake rattled my home. I came out in a panic," said Munir Anwar, a resident of Liaquat Pur in Pakistan's eastern Punjab province. Pakistan's army chief, Gen. Raheel Sharif, ordered troops to the quake-affected areas, the military said in a statement. It gave no further details. The quake was also felt in the Indian capital New Delhi, though no damage was immediately reported. Office buildings swayed and workers who had just returned from lunch ran out of buildings and gathered in the street or in parking lots.

In Srinagar, the main city in the India-controlled portion of disputed Kashmir, the tremors lasted at least 40 seconds, with buildings swaying and electrical wires swinging wildly, residents said.

"First I thought somebody had banged the door. But within seconds, the earth began shaking below my feet, and that's when I ran out of the building," said government official Naser Ahmed. People ran outside, shouting, crying and chanting religious hymns in an effort to keep calm. "I thought it was the end of the world," shopkeeper Iqbal Bhat said.

Srinagar Police Inspector General Syed Javid Mujtaba Gilani said that "some bridges and buildings have been damaged," including a cracked highway overpass.

Two elderly women died from heart attacks suffered during the earthquake, including a 65-year-old woman in the northern Kashmiri town of Baramulla and an 80-year-old in the southern town of Bijbehara, officials said. (AP)

**(2) Berlin, Kabul...**

also started serious talks with Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan on how to repatriate their refugees from Germany," Merkel said.

Following a weekend meeting, European Union leaders reached an agreement to assess the "We will increase refugee centers to take 100,000. Refugees will be kept temporarily in these centers," said Jean Claude Juncker head of the European Commission.

Turkey, which has been the main route for refugees to reach Europe, has seen an unprecedented flow of refugees through the country en route to Europe.

Figures show that over 50,000 Afghan refugees have entered

Germany since the beginning of the year. (Tolnews)

**(3) Russia to ...**

support from other countries. "I think Russia can rapidly help Afghan army in such a situation and it can make it a strong army in order to combat terrorism," said Jawed Kohistani, a military affairs analyst.

"But it is important that Kabul should get NATO member countries and the U.S to agree if it wants military help for equipment for its forces from any other country," he added. (Tolnews)

**(4) Iran-Afghanistan...**

meetings with Afghanistan's former and current presidents, Afghan National Security Council Secretary-General and Minister of Foreign Affairs," Zarif underlined.

The issue of Iran's water right and the sharing of the Helmand River, Zarif added, is one of the main demands of the Islamic Republic of Iran during talks with Afghanistan. "The comprehensive agreement linked between Iran and Afghanistan with President Rouhani during presidency of Hamid Karzai includes a main provision dealing with a long-running dispute with Afghanistan over Iran's water rights," he said.

Zarif urged Afghan government to be committed to its water treaty with Iran, covering the Helmand River since 1973.

"The treaty provisions are being enforced inadequately and inconsistently by Afghan government," Zarif said, adding that, as a result, disputes over water continue to raise tensions between the two countries and many fear that Afghanistan's Khamal Khan Dam project on the Helmand River will severely affect the amount of water that flows into the Sistan Baluchistan province of Iran.

Similar concerns have been raised about the Salma Dam, a major hydroelectric dam being constructed in Herat province, which can affect the flow of the Harirod River into Iran, he added.

Pointing to the Leader's letter to President Rouhani, Zarif stated that "from now on, we will all continue efforts to unanimously resort to the guidelines of the Leader in the best way regarding the implementation of JCPOA. (MNA)

**(5) Iran, Russia...**

the need for reviving a political process in Syria through international support and cooperation among instrumental countries in the region, it added.

The telephone conversation was the second between Zarif and Lavrov over the past week during which the two foreign ministers discussed leading issues in the Middle East, particularly the Syrian conflict.

On Saturday, the two top diplomats underlined the need to enhance their consultations in order to help find a solution to the ongoing crises in the Middle East and restore stability and security to the region. (PressTV)

**(6) Abdullah Calls ...**

Badakhshan, the earthquake occurred at 1:40 pm Kabul time and is reported to have been the most powerful in many years.

Abdullah said that efforts are underway to assess the affected areas and dispatch emergency relief packages.

He also said that casualty figures have not yet been confirmed but reports are coming in of extensive damage having been caused in some areas.

He warned of possible aftershocks and called on all aid agencies to help provide affected people with relief packages.

In addition he said: "We call on the citizens and aid organizations to take necessary precautions for the [possible] aftershocks," Abdullah urged.

Initial reports put the earthquake at 7.7 but the United States Geological Survey later downgraded it to a 7.5 magnitude. An hour after the quake, an aftershock measuring 4.4 was recorded in the area.

Kabul city, which is just over 250 kms from the epicenter shook considerably by the quake, with thousands of residents running from their homes and offices.

Scores of residents reported damage to their homes and many windows were broken during the quake. (Tolnews)

**(7) Kunduz will...**

residents that the government and security forces are with you. Allah is with you. You [Kunduz residents] should pay attention to mosques, madrassas and other places where militants want to hide

and not allow this to happen."

"No group has the ability to re-enter Kunduz city," he assured residents. According to security officials, Taliban fighters have started recruiting teenagers and children to fight against security forces.

One teenager who was arrested in the Kunduz battle, said: "First they gave me a gun but I was not familiar with it. I had no idea at the beginning how to use it."

Meanwhile, Tariq Majidi, TOLONews correspondent who is in Kunduz, says residents are however afraid that some Taliban fighters are hiding in residential homes. But security officials say residents are cooperating with them in their efforts to find suspects and prevent them from carrying out attacks in the northern city. (Tolnews)

**(8) Atmar Expects...**

area to encourage some of the neighboring countries for honest actions against terrorism.

Atmar did not name a specific country but he might have been pointing towards Pakistan that cheats Afghanistan on its promises. Chinese Ambassador told the National Security Advisor that his country is standing firm at its commitments with the government of Afghanistan.

Yao Jing said that war and insecurity in Afghanistan has external reasons and that his country will continue its efforts in resolving them. (KP)

**(9) Taliban Closes...**

Meanwhile, the head of Badakhshan education department Dawlat Mohammad said that nearly 10,000 students are not going to school in Wardoj - 40 of whom are girls - because the Taliban has closed schools.

According to governor Adeeb, the insurgents closed all schools in Wardoj after seizing control of the district and have started recruiting the students who they then send to the front lines.

"Recently Taliban started using children in the war. They have closed schools and most Taliban casualties are children," Adeeb said.

Rumors have reportedly been rife in the past few weeks of the Taliban's use of child soldiers although officials have confirmed last week that a number of Taliban child soldiers were

According to Wardoj district governor, up to 10,000 students are now being blocked from going to school and that several students have been killed fighting for the Taliban. He said the practice of recruiting them is resulting in many fleeing their homes and go into hiding.

"The future of more than 10,000 students remains uncertain. Taliban force them to fight and the majority of students are sent to Baharak to fight," Dawlat Mohammad, Wardoj district governor said.

"We are deeply concerned about the problem, because 40 percent of our students constitute girls. If the same situation continues, the education year is likely to be disrupted," acting head of Badakhshan education department Abdul Raziq Tariq said.

Fifteen schools operate in Wardoj district alone, a Wardoj education department official said adding that more than 90 schools have been closed by the Taliban in the entire province. (Tolnews)

**(10) Ghani Briefs...**

earthquake in his country. Mr Modi tweeted that he spoke to Mr Ghani "and expressed my sympathies and condolences at the damage caused by the earthquake" which measured 7.5 on the Richter scale and whose epicentre lay in the Hindu Kush region.

Mr Ghani "shared with me his initial assessment of the damage. I offered all possible assistance", Mr Modi said.

"(He) told me due to the quake a school building collapsed and children lost their lives. I was very pained to hear this.

"When Ghani was telling me about the school (incident), my mind went back to a similar tragedy in Anjar, Kutch (Gujarat), in 2001. Felt very sad," Mr Modi said. (Monitoring Desk)

**(11) Migrant Balkan ...**

route to more prosperous countries. But with cold weather setting in and record numbers of people arriving, questions remain about whether that assistance can come quickly enough to make a difference

"This is a step in the right direction and now it is crucial to respect the commitments," said Slovenian Prime Minister Miro Cerar, whose

tiny Alpine nation has been overwhelmed by the flow since Hungary put up a fence on the border with Serbia and Croatia, diverting the flow to Slovenia.

Croatian police said Monday morning that more than 13,000 migrants arrived from Serbia in the past 24 hours, while Slovenian police reported nearly 10,000 arrivals from Croatia in the same period. Further west, some 3,500 people had to sleep outside in Austria in cold fall weather, while Germany said it had seen 15,000 arrivals over the weekend.

In a statement seeking to paper over deep divisions about how to handle the crisis, the leaders meeting in Brussels on Sunday committed to bolster the borders of Greece as it struggles to cope with the wave of refugees from Syria and beyond who cross over through Turkey. The leaders also decided that reception capacities should be boosted in Greece and along the Balkans migration route to shelter 100,000 more people as winter looms and additional EU border watchdog agency officials will be deployed to monitor the flow. (AP)

**(12) Millions Lost ...**

Agreement (APTTA). Pakistan, by violating APTTA, is still creating issues for Afghan traders and they do not allow Afghan trade convoys to travel through Gawadar port, the ACCI said on Monday.

Referring to ACCI's concerns, the Afghan Ministry of Commerce and Industries (MoCI) said Monday that it is working with various institutions and the private sector to find a settlement to the ongoing issues facing the transit and trade sectors.

According to ACCI, based on the APTTA agreement, 360,000 Pakistani trucks enter Afghanistan annually and bring in more than 20 million tons of goods - to Afghanistan and onward to central Asian countries. However, only 8,000 Afghan vehicles enter Pakistan each year to transfer exported goods.

Over the past five years, Afghan businessmen have paid millions of dollars in fines to Pakistan for staying more than the legal time, ACCI said.

In some cases, Pakistan imposes extra taxes on Afghan goods which are higher than the actual price of the products, head of finance department of ACCI Tawfiq Dawari said, adding that

It is said that in recent months Pakistan has imposed additional restrictions on Afghan traders which include special trade permits while entering Pakistan along with bank statements. Afghan traders also have to pass through several check points to reach Karachi port. But, the Pakistani traders do not face such issues inside Afghanistan and they do business without restrictions.

The ACCI has called on government to take steps and find a solution to the ongoing crisis facing the Afghan traders.

Some Afghan traders have said that Pakistani drivers are paid up to 4,000\$ by Afghan businessmen to transfer their merchandise to Karachi port.

"Currently, Pakistani vehicles transfer our goods to Afghanistan and charge 4,000\$ dollar from Karachi to Torkham, this is because there is no competition and only Pakistani trucks operate on the route," Afghan businessman Haris Shafiq said.

Talking on the trade and transit issues, the Ministry of Commerce and Industries has said that relevant Afghan institutions are working on an appropriate strategy to overcome the issues and to reach an agreement with Pakistan. (Tolnews)

**(13) Atmar Warns...**

and calling for U.S. and NATO military backing to help drive them out.

The warning by Mohammad Hanif Atmar follows the announcement earlier this month by President Barack Obama that the U.S. would keep 9,800 troops in Afghanistan through most of next year, casting aside a pledge to withdraw most U.S. forces before leaving office. Obama cited the fragile security situation in the face of a resurgent Taliban.

Speaking to The Associated Press in an interview late Saturday, Atmar said al-Qaida, the Taliban, the Islamic State group and other insurgents, including the brutal Haqqani network, which has ties to the Taliban, "are morphing." "They have not been degraded, they have regenerated themselves,"

he said.

Atmar warned the insurgent groups are reinventing themselves, joining forces, and drawing funds and support from outside as they take advantage of a perceived weakness of Afghan forces following the end of the U.S.-led international combat mission last year.

Highlighting Afghanistan's need for continued support from the U.S. and NATO, the Taliban overran the key northern city of Kunduz on Sept. 28 - their first seizure of a major urban area since being toppled in 2001 by the U.S. invasion - before being driven out over a period of two weeks. The Taliban then threatened cities in different corners of the country, including Lashkar Gah, capital of southern Helmand province, and Maymana, capital of northwestern Faryab. The Taliban have been stretching Afghan forces to the limit this year, and the shift in tactics - from scattered shootings and bombings to coordinated assaults on cities - has posed a challenge to a force accustomed to coming in behind U.S. troops to hold territory, rather than going on the offensive.

This has provided fertile ground for insurgent groups to move into Afghanistan from other countries, particularly Pakistan, where a military campaign to eliminate their safe havens from the tribal areas of North Waziristan has pushed militants into Afghanistan.

Atmar said several groups are now using Afghanistan as a staging ground to reach their "home countries," including China, Uzbekistan and other Central Asian states, and Russia.

"What needs to be well understood is that the symbiotic network of terrorists that we are confronted with is going to be a threat to every country in this region and by extension the whole world," Atmar said.

"We are hoping that assessment is shared not just by Central Asia, Russia and China, but by our neighbors to the south and east," he said, referring principally to Pakistan.

Al-Qaida has made a return to Afghanistan since the drawdown of U.S. and NATO troops began picking up steam from 2011 to 2013, Atmar said, blaming the simultaneous withdrawal of intelligence and eye-in-the-sky technology that the international forces had provided.

He said the Islamic State group now poses an "existential threat" because it no longer includes only disaffected Taliban, unhappy with the lack of progress after years of fighting to topple the Kabul government, but has an "institutional connection" to the group's leadership in Iraq and Syria.

Leaders are now being appointed directly by the IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, Atmar said, entrenching the rivalry with the Taliban - which believes itself the rightful ruler of an Afghan Islamic state.

"They have well-established connections to the Islamic State (in Syria and Iraq). Islamic State is commanding and controlling them, Islamic State is financing them, Islamic State is giving them the strategy to pursue. We have no doubt about that," he said.

IS loyalists have a foothold in eastern Nangarhar province, near the Pakistan border, where they have battled government forces and Taliban fighters. Atmar said military operations were underway to dislodge IS from the four districts they have seized.

"What these groups need to survive and to grow is sanctuaries, whether in Pakistan or Afghanistan. They've had them in Pakistan for decades now," Atmar said, referring to the widespread belief that Pakistani authorities provide safe haven to Taliban leaders.

"Unless we get rid of the Taliban, either through counter-terrorism or through peace and reconciliation, these elements will grow because they need a host, and they need a recruitment facility. And we should not allow the Afghan Taliban to grow into that kind of facility for them," he said.

As the Taliban's traditional fighting season draws to a close, before winter snows cut mountain routes to and from Pakistan, Atmar said he expected another tough fight in 2016.

"Our principle assumption is that the Taliban are not interested in peace," he said. "Those who believe the Taliban can win militarily need to be convinced they are wrong." Atmar called on Pakistani authorities to use their influence on the Taliban. Pakistan hosted a

first round of peace talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government earlier this year, but the process was postponed indefinitely after the announcement of the death of Taliban founder Mullah Mohammad Omar.

Atmar said that before the process could be revived, the Afghan government hoped for talks with the Pakistani leadership.

"We hope that the response is reciprocal, that they are seeing the opportunity that has risen for a genuine peace and reconciliation between the two states and then between the government of Afghanistan and the Taliban," he said. "Our position is that we cannot go to the negotiating table while they (the Taliban) are killing our children." (AP)

**(14) Presidential ...**

the adoption of former president's office budget.

Earlier, the former President Hamid Karzai has demanded his rights and privileges from the office of administrative affairs.

The finance minister, Akil Hakimi claims that he is aware of Karzai's rights according to the law but is not aware of the 95 code.

"The former president will receive his privileges under the constitutions but I do not know anything about the 95 code," Finance ministry said.

However, Afghan analysts say that President Ashraf Ghani gives hush money to President Karzai.

This comes as that the decree sparked Parliament members anger, saying, "The half \$ million will be paying to President Hamid Karzai's office monthly is the tax money that takes from the pockets of Afghan people and their mobiles' credit cards.

"The usage of these public funds must be investigated and prevented," Sarwar Osmani Farahi, representative of Farah said. (ATN)

**(15) Afghan Women ...**

pens but you are holding flags that give me hope that 'we will never move back'," said Khalili, who is a well-known Afghan author and poet.

He promised to stand beside Afghan women regardless of "how cruel Taliban become."

Freshta Zarabi, one of the authors of the journal, said she contributed to the project by conducting research on the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation's (SAARC) role on empowering civil society in Afghanistan.

Despite many commonalities between Afghanistan and regional countries, she said Afghan civil society does not trust regional organizations and that she hopes to build that confidence. According to her, Afghan civil society is mainly dependent on western countries.

In addition, she said SAARC has also not paid much attention to the civil society organizations in Afghanistan.

The guests meanwhile praised the Afghan women who compiled the journal and urged them to continue their fight for women's rights.

"This is a big achievement for young Afghan women and I hope this evolution continues to grow," said Zarghona Rasa, media advisor for the CEO's Office.

The journal, which has initially been published in English, consists of 148 pages. The authors said however that Dari and Pashto versions of the journal will be published soon. (Tolnews)

**(16) RCS Ready...**

The 7.5 magnitude earthquake rocked Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and India Monday afternoon.

The quake, also felt in China, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan has so far left hundreds of people dead and injured. (IRNA)

**(17) Syrian...**

now, they should stop attacking our bases and then we can talk about future cooperation," Rayyes said in his earlier BBC interview.

His comments echo the views of other Syrian rebels towards the Russian statement, with Assad's opponents suspicious that Moscow is working purely to shore up its ally. (Reuters)

**(18) Netanyahu...**

said had stabbed and wounded a soldier at an intersection near the town of Hebron.

Since Oct. 1, at least 54 Palestinians, half of whom Israel says were assailants, have been shot and killed by Israelis at the scene of attacks or during protests in the West Bank and Gaza. Israeli police say 10 Israelis have been killed in Palestinian stabbings or shootings. (Reuters)