

(1) Afghanistan...

and Kanischka Tahir hit the second goal for Afghanistan during the 50th minute of the game.

Khaibar Amani hit third goal for Afghanistan by hitting the penalty shoot for Afghanistan after the referee of the match gave a yellow card to player number 23 of Sri Lanka.

This was Amani's fourth goal during the tournament who is still the highest goal scorer in the championship. He was replaced by Zubair Amiri soon after hitting the third goal for Afghanistan.

Arash Hatefie hit the fourth goal for Afghanistan soon after replacing Abasin Ali during the 80th minute of the game while the fifth goal was hit by captain Faysal Shayeshteh during the 85th minute of the game.

The Afghan team appeared with the same formation of (4-2-3-1) as previously played which includes four players in defense line, 2 players in defensive halfback, 3 players in the middle line and 1 player in the offensive (interior) line.

The Afghan footballers have scored 16 goals during their 4 appearance against Bangladesh, Bhutan and Maldives and Sri Lanka in the semi-finals. (Agencies)

(2) World Welcomes...

Since the Paris attacks in November, which saw Islamic state jihadists slaughtering 130 people in a series of gun and suicide attacks, Europe has been on high alert with France and Belgium cancelling their traditional New Year fireworks displays in their respective capitals.

And just half an hour before the celebrations began in Germany, police evacuated two stations in the southern city of Munich after receiving "reliable information" about a plot to carry out a suicide attack at midnight by Islamic State jihadists.

Police said they were hunting "five to seven suspects" after the authorities were tipped off by a "friendly intelligence service", which media reports suggested was French.

In France, more than 100,000 police were deployed to guard celebrations, as defiant Parisians turned out on the Champs Elysees to greet 2016 in the biggest public gatherings since the November 13 attacks.

And in Belgium, police were holding five people over an alleged New Year plot in Brussels, as they also announced the arrest of a 10th suspect linked to the Paris attacks.

In Dubai, a vast blaze ripped through a luxury 63-story hotel, the Address Downtown, close to the world's tallest tower where people had gathered to ring in the New Year.

Despite the dramatic scenes from the inferno, which injured 16 people, the festivities went ahead as planned and crowds cheering the bursts of light and colour from a massive fireworks show at nearby Burj Khalifa skyscraper, even as smoke billowed from the nearby hotel.

Sydney, traditionally the first to host a major New Year's bash, kicked off the global festivities when it lit up the skies with pyrotechnics at the stroke of midnight.

After Asia, the Middle East, Europe and Africa, the chimes of midnight will finally move across the Americas.

Jakarta remained on high alert after anti-terror police foiled detailed plans for an alleged New Year suicide attack in the Indonesian capital. And Turkish police also detained two Islamic State suspects allegedly planning attacks in the center of the capital Ankara.

In Moscow, police for the first time closed off Red Square, where tens of thousands of revelers traditionally gather.

Britain deployed around 3,000 officers across central London in a reportedly unprecedented security effort, while in Italy, fireworks were banned in towns and cities due to fears that the loud explosions could spark panic.

And US officials said they had arrested and charged a 25-year-old American Muslim convert over an alleged attempt to launch a New Year's Eve attack in upstate New York in the name of the Islamic State group.

An estimated two million people watched fireworks over the sea at Copacabana beach in Rio de Janeiro which will later this year host the Olympics.

Alongside the party, swarms of worshippers dressed in white waded into the ocean to leave offerings for Yemanjá, the goddess of the sea in the Afro-Brazilian Candomble faith. Cairo meanwhile was trying desperately to attract tourists to bolster the economy, with this year's celebrations taking place in front of the pyramids and attended by a host of ambassadors, artists and intellectuals.

Sierra Leone's capital Freetown was hoping to reclaim its mantle as host

of the best beach parties in Africa after Ebola scared people away.

The city of 1.2 million was deserted 12 months ago during the worst Ebola outbreak ever recorded.

"This New Year's Eve I am going to dance and party until the cock crows," said 35-year-old Franklyn Smith. (AFP)

(3) Afghanistan, ...

NUG government said on numerous occasions that Afghanistan is not a battlefield for a proxy war and that Afghanistan wants peace between Kabul and Islamabad before starting peace talks with the Taliban.

But tensions escalated in July this year when the death of Mullah Omar, the Taliban's leader, was announced - in light of the fact he had reportedly died two years earlier.

However, tensions eased between Kabul and Islamabad in early December when Ghani attended the Heart of Asia Summit in the Pakistani capital.

Discussions on peace in Afghanistan were held and numerous countries pledged their commitment to helping Afghanistan attain peace.

"We should achieve peace by putting pressure on our opponents, there is a proverb in the army 'we want peace but keep your weapons ready'. We should move towards peace very carefully and we should know who we want peace with," said Attiqullah Amarkhail a military analyst.

After the first round of peace talks between the Taliban and government representatives in Pakistan earlier this year it was expected that the second round would be held at the end of July. But just two days before the scheduled talks, news of Mullah Omar's death was announced. This resulted in a reported split within the Taliban and complicated the situation for Afghanistan.

In the past year, Kabul has repeatedly asked Pakistan to take steps against terrorist groups operating on its soil. Meanwhile, critics have voiced their discontent at the lack of women being included in peace talks.

"We should give roles to women in the peace process so they can also defend their achievements and destiny," said Fatima Nazari MP.

While the High Peace Council believes Pakistan's approach will become clear in the coming year - on whether its commitments to Afghanistan are kept, Pakistan's Army Chief of Staff Raheel Sharif said during his recent visit to Kabul that they will fight the terrorist groups opposed to peace.

The increase in insecurity this past year has taken its toll on the Afghan nation - with thousands of people having lost their lives to the conflict. (Tolonews)

(4) Four Nations ...

senate the quadrilateral meeting will clearly demarcate responsibilities of each stakeholder at all stages.

Talking about the Army Chief General Raheel Sharif's recent visit to Kabul, he said the army chief carried a message to Kabul that the peace process would necessarily be Afghan-led and Afghan-owned.

"It was agreed that they will pursue peace and reconciliation with Taliban groups willing to join the process," the minister informed the upper house of the parliament.

Elements that would still continue to pursue violence will be dealt, under a mutually worked out framework, he declared.

All eyes are now on the four-nation meeting that is seen very significant to explore ways for the revival of the dialogue process. (Xinhua)

(5) Govt. Vows ...

mission to fight Daesh.

"The strategy of combat against Daesh has been finalized and our [security] forces have launched several military operations against them," Sediqqi said.

"As far as Daesh is an international phenomenon, we ask the regional and world countries to help us in combat against terrorists," he added. The Senate (Meshrano Jirga) meanwhile said Daesh was a product of Pakistan and said government should address the issue seriously.

"Daesh is a project of Pakistan and it is financed from the time it started its activities in Afghanistan. I repeat my call on Afghan government to take this issue seriously," said Fazl Hadi Muslimyar, head of Meshrano Jirga. Some officials also believe that Daesh is a divided faction of the Taliban in Afghanistan. But it is said that it will become a big problem for the country if serious attention is not paid to this issue.

"Daesh will change into a big problem in Nangarhar in the coming year but our security forces are capable enough to fight them," said Ataulah Khogyani a spokesman for Nangarhar's governor.

Considering the presence of Daesh in Afghanistan in 2015, US President Barack Obama decided to keep at least 9,800 troops in the country through 2016. (Tolonews)

(6) Tehran Backs...

ministry announced Friday that the meeting will focus on structuring a framework to reinstate the stalled talks with the group. (Tolonews)

(7) Iran ready...

ones, whose adverse effects are far more than traditional narcotics, Moayyedi said.

The world should deal with all drug producers across the world equally not with Afghanistan alone, he said. Over the past three decades, Iran has spent billions of dollars to seal its borders and prevent the transit of narcotics destined for European, Arab and Central Asian countries.

The war on drug trade, a profitable business originating in Afghanistan, has also claimed the lives of nearly 4,000 Iranian police officers and soldiers. (Agencies)

(8) ECSC Holds ...

of election committees are higher education, a good work background, five years of experience in government or non-government organizations, no criminal record and that they are over 35 years of age. (Tolonews)

(9) Iran has...

round of sanctions following two recent missile tests by the Islamic republic.

The mooted financial penalties on companies and individuals in Iran, Hong Kong and the United Arab Emirates, for apparent links to Tehran's missile programme, highlighted worsening US-Iran relations.

They also put in jeopardy a landmark deal struck in July between Iran and six world powers including the US, which is due to be formally implemented within weeks. (AFP)

(10) NDS Rescue...

after a group of civilians were beheaded by the militants apparently belonging to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group. (KP)

(11) Taliban Leader ...

raise the issue on an international level particularly by seeking support from the US and the United Nations to resolve the issue and bring more pressure on Pakistan," Mirdad Khan Nejrabi, head of parliament's internal security commission said.

"Most Taliban are being used as an investment project by certain individuals, there are non-government organizations in Pakistan who receive money under the Taliban label from foreigners. I am sure this is also part of the same initiative," political analyst Nazar Mohammad Mutmaeen said.

Afghan officials have been critical of Pakistan's anti-terror policy, with some accusing Islamabad of supporting, funding and training militants loyal to Taliban in a bid to follow their strategic objectives and imperiling Afghanistan's stability.

Pakistan which wields strong influence on Taliban hosted the first formal peace negotiation talks between Afghan government and Taliban last July, however the talks were deadlocked following the reported death of group's longtime leader Mullah Omar and a range of coordinated terrorist attacks against major Afghan cities.

Following the attacks, the Afghan government said Pakistan allowed attacks to be planned on Pakistani soil. (Tolonews)

(12) Air Power...

international community to help their ground forces in the fight against an insurgency that is spread across the country, making close air support capabilities an absolute necessity for survival.

Since the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001, successive Afghan governments and their international allies have not been in agreement on how to equip Afghan security forces with air fighting mechanisms. Analysts believe the U.S. and other NATO partners had to consider several variables before providing warplanes because of concerns about accidental use of Afghan airpower against NATO allies spread throughout the country.

Rising casualties This past year was reported to be the bloodiest for the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) since the U.S.-led coalition toppled the Taliban regime and established a new security structure in the country.

"The main reason for increased Afghan security forces casualties is the lack of an effective and sovereign air force," said Mirdad Nejrabi, chair of the national security committee of the

Afghan parliament.

Nejrabi added that Afghan casualties in the war could be drastically reduced with the provision of an effective close air support system owned and managed by Afghans.

Better prospects That realization was reflected in recent remarks by U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter during his trip to eastern Afghanistan's Nangarhar province, where the Islamic State group has made inroads.

"The U.S. is helping Afghan forces from the air not as much as in the past, but that's part of the plan, which is to get to the point where Afghans are able to provide for their own air support," said Carter. "The buildup of the Afghan air forces that's going on right now, we wish we had started earlier."

Carter added that over the next year or so, Afghanistan will have its own sovereign air force.

General Wardak told VOA that 2016 is going to be a different year for the ANSF in terms of its casualties.

"Starting in January of 2016, Afghan forces will receive a total of 28 MB 530 F helicopters and around 19 to 25 A-29 airplanes," he said. "We have several C-130 and C-208 planes at our disposal right now."

The general added that the MB 530 helicopters would be outfitted with military equipment.

Afghan officials have long complained that the lack of air support for ground forces and medical evacuation helicopters to transport wounded soldiers has contributed to the increase of Afghan casualties on the battlefield.

General Wardak said the new planes coming in 2016 would address most of those problems. (VoA)

(13) 25 Daesh...

Nangarhar has become the hot spot of the militant group in eastern part of the country where it has also established prisons.

Only in Achin District, the group runs eight captivities where they possibly keep the around 300 villagers detained in the course of two months. (KP)

(14) 2015: Natural

parts of the country in 2015 and we delivered our aid on time to the affected people."

After the avalanches the NUG government announced three days of national mourning. The incident left about 250 people dead and hundreds wounded. Soon after, the weather warmed up, snow melted and floods hit Panjshir province - leave a swathe of destruction in its wake.

Meanwhile due to floods and heavy rain in north, north east and central provinces many more people died. Despite NUG's 800 million Afghani injection to help victims, the United Nations and other organizations also spent millions of dollars on aid.

But some officials have called for better management regarding aid distribution to victims of natural disasters. "We asked for aid for Badakhshan province residents because they were living in bad conditions but when aid reached after days we saw that the aid was not delivered to those in need. People and government must learn a lesson from each natural disaster and be prepared," said Safiullah Muslim a parliament member.

"In Takhar many residents lost their lives in the [October] earthquake. Floods also affected them a lot but not much aid was delivered to them," said Mariam Kofi Takhar an MP.

Afghanistan has also been hard hit by earthquakes this year with a 7.5 magnitude quake recorded in Badakhshan in October. Again in December a 6.2 magnitude earthquake struck the northern parts of the country.

However, a large percentage of the population live at high altitudes in the mountainous country and are constantly at risk in terms of floods, avalanches and earthquakes in the mountainous country. (Tolonews)

(15) Dr. Arian...

which enables UK doctors to teach and advise their Afghanistan colleagues using web-based video-conferencing and mobile phones. The telemedicine scheme has already saved the lives of dozens of emergency patients at the five Kabul hospitals taking part.

As a result of his work, Dr Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, the President of Afghanistan, is hosting a special conference in the New Year to celebrate the project.

Dr Arian, who lives in Chester, said: "Healthcare in Afghanistan is the most basic you could imagine for a developing country, despite Afghan doctors' hard work and dedication. (Monitoring Desk)

(16) US Yet to ...

until now," Shlyamin pointed out. According to him, to bring peace to

Afghanistan, it is necessary to search for more flexible and well-thought-out decisions, including those related to easing a stance on the Taliban.

Earlier, the Russian President's special representative for Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov said that the US and NATO have completely failed to fulfill their task of normalizing the situation in Afghanistan.

"The ultimate goal of the Afghan anti-terrorism campaign - the establishment in Afghanistan of a democratic centralized state - was not achieved," he said.

The US-led mission in Afghanistan was completed on December 28, 2014, in an official ceremony that took place in Kabul in utmost security due to safety concerns.

The US military campaign in Afghanistan proved to be the longest war in US history, lasting for more than 13 years. The maximum size of the US military contingent during the war was 140,000 service personnel in 2010. During combat operations, over 2,300 US service personnel and more than 1,000 coalition soldiers were killed. A total of 17,674 US service personnel were injured. (sputniknews)

(17) 2015: Kidnap...

freed after being held hostage for months.

"Because I talked a lot to the media I am being threatened. My family will not let me go out. I have had to change universities and our financial situation is not good. I don't know what will happen," said Yousof.

Afghan experts have meanwhile accused government of neglecting to provide security to the people.

"War expenses and war pressures caused the Taliban to start kidnapping people this year. This is a new tactic that they have undertaken this year in their battlefield. In doing this they attract media attention. And unfortunately those who were killed was because of government neglect," said Asif Ashna a political analyst. Meanwhile, the Afghan Interior Ministry (MoI) has also linked kidnappings to Daesh. They say about 110 people were kidnapped by groups in 2015.

"Unfortunately in 2015, 110 people in Daikondi, Uruzgan, Zabul and Ghazni were kidnapped by armed opponents. Unfortunately 21 of those were killed. But a number of them have returned home," said Sediqqi Sediqqi, spokesman for the MoI. (Tolonews)

(18) NDS Prevents...

started in Salangar, Haidar Ghar and Qasaba areas early on Wednesday morning and continued till late evening in which five militants have been killed and another wounded.

Zwak added that one of the militants killed was a senior commander of the group.

Governor's spokesperson identified the militant commander killed as Mohammad Nasir alias Abdul Rahman. (KP)

(19) Traffic Accident...

said that five people have been killed and 25 others wounded in the accident. Latifa Akbari added those wounded include children, men and women.

Kabul-Kandahar highway is one of the dangerous routes in the country that is usually the site of traffic accidents. (KP)

(20) Taliban...

"Le Jardin", one of a small number of restaurants in Kabul still frequented by foreigners.

No information on damage or casualties was immediately available.

The explosion came days after the Taliban claimed responsibility for a suicide attack near the Kabul airport that killed one person and wounded 33 others, the latest in a series of suicide attacks in the city. (VoA)

(21) Afghan...

the joint and came back to Kabul the patient was suffering from kidney problems. But after surgery in Kabul the patient has recovered and is in good health," said Hashmatullah Wali a doctor at the Police Hospital in Kabul.

"Thanks to Allah the doctors treated me well and now my health has improved," Dawolat Murad the patient said. Meanwhile Mohammad Anwar, another soldier, said he was suffering from back pain and consulted doctors in Pakistan. They advised that he needed to have one kidney removed. However, he returned instead to Kabul and consulted doctors at the Police Hospital. After undergoing surgery, the soldier said the kidney that had not worked, started functioning normally again.

"I had surgery in Afghanistan and after the surgery my kidney resumed working," Mohammad

Noor, the patient, said. Lack of standard equipment for diagnosis and treatment of patients forces thousands of Afghans to seek medical help in India and Pakistan every year. Based on statistics, annually millions of USD is spent in foreign countries on medical treatment. (Tolonews)

(22) ISIS Photo ...

following the announcement of Taliban group founder and supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar's death in July this year and the appointment of new Taliban supreme leader Mullah Akhtar Mansoor.

This comes as the US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter warned regarding the emergent threat of the terror group during a surprise visit to Afghanistan on Friday, however he said the threat posed by the terror group is being tracked very closely as they have started creating 'little nests' in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, the commander of the US and NATO forces in Afghanistan Gen. John Campbell earlier said the loyalists of the terror group are attempting to establish a regional base in Jalalabad, the capital city of eastern Nangarhar province.

The loyalists of the terror group in Afghanistan also released a new propaganda video last week which purportedly shows the extreme violent acts of the terror group in Afghanistan. (KP)

(23) British PM...

whether we are stronger and better off with our European neighbours as part of the European Union, or on our own."

Cameron said he thought Britain was in the middle of a "great reforming decade", a "turnaround" period where a revived economy could spur "real social renewal". "We remain on the long walk to a Greater Britain. We won't get there overnight. But during 2016, we will make some of our most significant strides yet," he said. (AFP)

(24) Ukraine, EU...

the 28-member bloc was initiated in 2012 within the framework of the comprehensive Association Agreement and was signed in June 2014. Russia, which had a separate preferential trade regime with Ukraine, had long opposed the EU-Ukraine trade pact, warning that it would allow European products to flood Russia via Ukraine without import duties.

As the EU-Ukraine trade deal came into force, Moscow has suspended its free-trade agreement with Ukraine. (Xinhua)

(25) Saudi...

Arabia's interpretation of the Islamic law, or Shariah, drug-related offenses are considered "ta'zir", meaning neither the crime nor the punishment is defined in Islam. Discretionary judgments for "ta'zir" crimes have led to arbitrary rulings with contentious outcomes. (AP)

(26) Ukraine...

offer Russia a better deal than other creditors. Russia says it is official, country-to-country, lending and outside the scope of Kiev's agreement with private creditors. After Yanukovich fled, Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimea in March 2014 and has been accused by Ukraine and the West of backing a rebellion by separatists in eastern Ukraine. (Reuters)

(27) 980 Killed...

with 68, the statement said. Citing its local health authorities, the U.N. says 124 civilians were killed in Anbar province, which has large areas under IS control. The U.N says it could not fully verify the Anbar figures due to the increased volatility of the situation on the ground and the disruption of services. (AP)

(28) U.S.-Backed...

opened several major offensives against Islamic State with the ultimate goal of capturing Raqqa. The alliance has separately been fighting in recent weeks against Nusra Front, Ahrar al Sham and other insurgents in northern Aleppo province. The Democratic Forces of Syria includes the Kurdish YPG militia, which has been the most effective partner on the ground for U.S.-led air strikes. (Reuters)

(29) Boko Haram...

extra vigilance during and after the new year celebrations as the ban on knockout and fireworks is still in force. Meanwhile, the state government had announced total restriction on vehicular movement during the new year celebration on Friday. (Xinhua)