

### (1) Pakistan Denies ...

An Afghan official had told the media in Kabul on Wednesday that firing started in the meeting at the residence of a Taliban leader Abdullah Sarhadi after exchange of hot words that also killed at least four Taliban commanders.

Sarhadi also denied the incident, according to section of the Afghan media.

The Taliban issued a statement on Thursday, dismissing the reports of Mansoor's injuries as baseless.

"Our credible sources state that Amir ul Mumineen (commander of faithful) has no presence in the stated area and neither has a security incident occurred there," the statement said.

The alleged incident came as the Taliban has been divided into two factions after Mansoor succeeded former Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar as the hardliner group's new leader after Omar was confirmed dead in late July. (Xinhua)

### (2) Afghan Gov't...

the report, Sultan Faizy, the spokesman for Afghan first Vice President Abdul Rashid Dostum, confirmed Mansoor's death on his Twitter account late Thursday.

Mansoor replaced Taliban former leader Mullah Mohammad Omar in August after confirmation of the death of Omar by the Afghan government and Taliban outfit in late July.

However, assuming Taliban leadership by Mansoor has divided the hardliner group into four factions and the prominent one is led by Mullah Mohammad Rasoul, a close aide to Omar's family.

Meantime, Zabihullah Mujahid, who claims to speak for the Taliban outfit, in an a statement sent to media has dismissed the report as "absolutely baseless," saying intelligence agencies by launching such baseless propaganda were attempting to deceive the public opinions.

Local media, citing a former Taliban leader Mullah Amir Khan Mutaqi, has reported the death of Mansoor on Thursday. But the purported Taliban spokesman Mujahid said Mansoor has never been injured nor died.

Another Taliban spokesman Qari Mohammad Yusuf Ahmadi has utterly rejected the reports about Mansoor as groundless.

In an online statement, Yusuf Ahmadi stated that no clash had taken place between Taliban in Kuchlak town of Quetta, adding Mansoor was sound and leading the Jihad (holy war) against enemies in Afghanistan.

Meantime, Afghan political analyst Mawlana Farids has confirmed the internal fighting among Taliban militants.

He told the media that "Mansoor might have been injured and even killed" but it was difficult to confirm the news because they were outside of the country.

The supporters and opponents of Mansoor have allegedly fought each other in Farah, Kunduz, Zabul, Nangarhar and other parts of Afghanistan over the past couple of months. (Xinhua)

### (3) Ghani Vows ...

change conference in Paris - the Afghan leader vowed not to compromise on national interests during peace talks with Taliban.

"The first and the second chapters of the Constitution of Afghanistan are not for negotiation. Our women can not go back to apartheid. Equal rights of the citizens of Afghanistan can not be compromised. I will never deal and enter into any sort of peace that is going to be the shame of history - it needs to be a peace that is within our constitutional terms and guarantees the future of our citizens," Ghani said.

Ghani went on to say that the presence of terror hideouts and training camps beyond the borders are the main obstacle in the way of peace negotiations. However, he stressed that Kabul is talking to Islamabad from the position of a sovereign

and independent country and that Afghans want peace between the sovereign states of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

"The mental peace for us is peace between the state, the sovereign state of Afghanistan with the sovereign state of Pakistan," he said.

According to Ghani, terrorists enter Afghanistan for destructive activities from countries such as China, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and especially form Pakistan.

"Where do the majority of the terrorists come from? Ghani asked, adding that, "they come from China, they come from Russia, they come from Tajikistan, they come from Uzbekistan, they come from Saudi Arabia, they come from Egypt and particularly from Pakistan. Where are Afghans as terrorists in other countries? Please point out to me."

Referring to activities of terrorists associated to notorious Daesh, Ghani said that some of the terror groups are coordinating with Daesh while some others are fighting the group.

This comes after peace talks stalled in July following the news of Mullah Omar's death two years earlier and Pakistan's failure to abide by its commitment regarding the Afghan peace dialogue.

Bilateral ties between Kabul and Islamabad has been strained ever since - especially after insurgents allegedly operating out of Pakistan hit a number of targets inside Afghanistan's major cities these past few months. (Tolonews)

### (4) US-Afghan ...

were captured Afghan police, army and border police.

The Afghan defense ministry says 60 prisoners were rescued. The discrepancy in the number of prisoners freed could not immediately be explained.

The ministry said the original aim of the operation was to arrest a Taliban commander.

It was not yet clear how the prisoners were originally captured. (AP)

### (5) Ghani Calls...

strengthening ties and focusing on the issue of the refugee influx into European over the past few months.

"It is a horrible process, it is a costly process, because every Afghan that tries to move to Europe invests something between 20,000\$ to 25,000\$ USD, and for everyone that succeeds in reaching European ... (many) lose everything along on the way, we need to get the right information (out there) and make sure that everybody understands," Ghani said.

Afghanistan and Germany will work together to find legal ways for resolving migration issues, Ghani said adding that the first step would be for Germany to divert focus towards helping with the development of 30 million Afghans inside the country, not 30,000 migrants.

"Dealing with legal migration is a joint responsibility - in dealing with the impact of illegal migration requires a proper framework."

But Merkel said Germany is committed to helping Afghanistan.

"We are aware of terror threats in Afghanistan - 980 German soldiers will stay in northern Afghanistan and this proves our long term commitment to Afghanistan. We want the peace negotiation process with the Taliban to be accelerated in order to find a political settlement to the Afghan crisis," Merkel said.

Afghans constitute the second largest number of migrants in Germany after Syrian nationals. But now it seems that Germany feels reluctant to host more refugees.

Ghani who is currently on a two-day visit to Germany held talks with German officials on a number of issues relating to the two nations including the issue of migration.

However, Merkel said early Thursday that Berlin will deport economic migrants and would

only give Afghans asylum if their lives were under direct threat.

Merkel said Germany would meet its humanitarian obligations for Afghans who are in "acute" danger because they worked for foreign forces, such as the German military.

Merkel stressed that there is not sufficient reason to grant asylum or residency status to refugees who are seeking a better life in Germany, adding that in such cases people would be deported.

"But where refugees come hoping for a better life - and I know that this hope is big for many - that is no reason to get asylum status or residency status here," she said. "And that one needs to think about the 35 million Afghans at home and the land has to develop with this. That is why we will, in such cases, have to send people back to Afghanistan."

About 800,000 migrants sought refuge to Europe this year, fleeing war and poverty in the Middle East, Africa and Asia, causing the most severe migrant crisis in the continent since World War Two. (Tolonews)

### (6) Chinese FM...

national reconciliation, as well as the measures China has taken to promote cooperation between Afghanistan's bordering areas since the fourth conference and its future plan, Hua told a regular press briefing.

She said China was ready to work with all sides to promote the Istanbul process to play a positive role in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan and regional cooperation.

Inaugurated in 2011, the Istanbul Process is the only Afghanistan-related cooperation mechanism led by regional countries in an aim to promote peace and prosperity in Afghanistan. The fourth conference was held in Beijing in October 2014. (Xinhua)

### (7) Pentagon Accused ...

privately owned 'villas' and hired contractors to provide -24hour building security, food services, and bodyguards for [the] staff and visitors traveling in country," stated a letter written by Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) chief John F. Sopko to Secretary of Defense Ash Carter and released Thursday.

"In terms of food," added the letter, "Triple Canopy was required to provide service that was 'at least three stars,' with each meal containing at least two entrée choices and three side order choices, as well as three course meals for 'special events.'"

According to Sopko, it remains "unclear what benefits the U.S. received" in such treatment, whereas U.S. taxpayers could have saved "tens of millions of dollars" if the TFBSO personnel had been accommodated on the military bases. For instance, he estimated 10 people housed at the U.S. embassy would have cost 1.8 million only.

"We have received the recent letter from SIGAR and will respond," Pentagon spokesperson Army Lieutenant Colonel Joe Sowers said.

One month before, the SIGAR chief was asking the Pentagon to justify the US43\$ million spent on "what is likely to be the world's most expensive gas station," which opened in 2012 in Sheberghan, northern Afghanistan. (Agencies)

### (8) Only Afghans...

Ashraf Ghani discussed ways in which Germany could help Afghanistan and stem the flow of Afghan migrants to Germany. Ghani said that many Afghans have misperceptions about fleeing to Germany and often they "can lose everything along the way."

Merkel said that Germany wants to support the creation of "safe areas" for Afghans in their own country, but there is also a need to empower the Afghan security forces "with regard to refugee movements and illegal migration."

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fleeing war and poverty in the Middle East, Africa and Asia, causing the most severe migrant crisis in the continent since World War Two. (Tolo News)

### (9) Govt. Workers ...

wants to suppress the voice of the people. Such moves could facilitate only militant groups such as Hizb ut-Tahrir," activist Zia Mubaligh said.

The activists accused the government of trying to influence freedom of press, but warned that such an action is a clear violation of international laws.

"Why has the office of the chief executive ordered an investigation into government employees who participated in the 11 November demonstration. If the government creates a better environment for the people, why would the people participate in protests and why would people migrate to Europe and America," activist Wadood Pedram said.

"Press has so far resisted against threats posed by the Taliban and also in the way of infiltration of other groups inside the government, therefore, we need to encourage the media," activist Ahmad Zaki said.

Meanwhile, the office of the Chief Executive Officer has expressed its views regarding the investigation of government employees in this manner.

"We were directed to probe the case. Government employees are set to be on duty during official hours and serve the people - investigation aims to make them realize [government employees] they may not leave their jobs in future when there is a demonstration," the spokesman for the CEO, Mujiburrahman Rahimi said. (Tolonews)

### (10) MoAL Accepts ...

is also among the grabbed lands.

According to MoAL's information regarding the grabbed lands, areas that have been grabbed illegally by the government departments is 276 hectares.

It has been said that these lands have been given in contracts but the ministry of agriculture claims that no contracts have been accepted due to presidential decree since 2012.

MoAL emphasized that a 25\$ million contract has been signed with Asian Development Bank to protect the canal project and efforts are underway to restore the canals. (ATN)

### (11) Rights Activists...

hatred, war and discrimination, asked the government to take strong measures and do more to establish sustainable peace and security in the country. (Tolonews)

### (12) MoI Starts...

correct calculation of HR staffs. This comes as The transparency and evaluation institution has announced widespread corruption in interior ministry, particularly its procurement department. (ATN)

### (13) Haqqani ...

The report further states that the only other American known to be held in that region is Caitlin Coleman, who was kidnapped along with her husband, Joshua Boyle, a Canadian citizen, while traveling in Afghanistan in 2012. Coleman had a child while in captivity, multiple U.S. officials have said.

While Hunter's letter mentions no American hostages by name, a spokesperson for the congressman told The Daily Beast that by "Americans" the lawmaker is referring to "all Americans," including Coleman, her child, and the American man being held.

U.S. and other sources knowledgeable about Coleman and her family's case told The Daily Beast that they believe she, her husband, and their child are also alive and well. The family is also believed to be held by the Haqqani.

Coleman and Boyle have appeared in a video asking their governments to work for their release.

However, no reports have been

released on what the group wants in exchange for the release.

Taliban had released a U.S. soldier Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl in exchange for five of their men from Guantanamo Bay. (KP)

### (14) Herat Police ...

governor Mohammad Asif Rahimi, said that the plane landed illegally and had not had landing clearance from airport officials. He said President Ashraf Ghani is aware of the incident and was concerned about it.

Rahimi added that a number of airport officials have been dismissed over the incident.

"Herat provincial administration was not aware of this issue at all, this issue was discussed in Kabul. I was made aware of it from Kabul and the president is very angry about this. The president dismissed Herat aviation officials," said Rahimi.

It is not however yet clear what the purpose of the flight was but officials have speculated that it could have been a private or charter flight for wealthy hunters from the United Arab Emirates - who have in the past come to Afghanistan to hunt rare birds.

The vehicles and goods offloaded from the plane have been confiscated by Herat police who say the court will take a decision in this regard. (Tolonews)

### (15) US jails ...

routinely prosecutes people deemed to have posed a threat to or harmed Americans overseas.

"This case once again demonstrates our resolve to find and bring to justice, using all available tools, those who target US citizens and interests around the world," said assistant US attorney general John Carlin. (Agencies)

### (16) Political Party...

campaign was carried out between the Company Area of Kabul and the Kot-e-Sangee bridge - a distance of about 5kms.

"We realized it is our duty to do the job. But all citizens must take part in the cleanliness of the city," Abdul Hadi Arghandiwal , head of the faction said.

Members of the public have however been up-in-arms recently, saying that garbage has not been removed from some areas in the city for a few months. They are concerned that this could start affecting people's health.

When contacted, Kabul municipality officials said that garbage in some areas had not been removed due to a lapsed contract they had with a private company.

Kabul is Afghanistan's largest and most populated city, with an estimated population of five million. But most feel it is the responsibility of the municipality to keep the city clean.

"May God bless these volunteers who came to our help today to clean the city. All residents must take part in such campaigns in order for us to have a clean city," an employee of Kabul municipality Gul Mohammad said on Thursday. Meanwhile, an organization known as Rangeen Kaman also organized a photo exhibition under the theme "Kabul from the Bridge" in a bid to increase public awareness about a cleaner environment.

The exhibition was held at the Allawuddin Bridge where scores of photographers displayed their work to protest environmental awareness.

Volunteers put flowers inside empty beverage cans and placed them on the bridge to draw attention to the exhibition. They also urged people to say "No" to plastic bags and to stop using plastic goods.

"If you see the environment in Kabul city, it is covered with dust and smoke and this threatens the population in our country," Chairman of Rangeen Kaman organization Ali Parsa told TOLONews. (Tolonews)

### (17) S. Arabia ...

States and its allies say must eventually lead to Assad's removal - but with no timetable for it.

At the three-day gathering that starts Tuesday in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, the factions will try to form a unified opposition delegation and a platform regarding what is meant to be a transitional period in Syria, officials who were invited said. (AP)

### (18) 205,880 ...

(3,327) the highest contributor. The INE did not say how many Chinese had taken Spanish nationality.

The INE highlighted that 10 percent of the new Spanish citizens were actually born in Spain and of those, 95 percent were younger than 10 years old, while 79 percent of new citizens were granted Spanish nationality due to having lived legally in Spain for 10 years or more.

The majority of new citizens live either in Barcelona and Madrid, while just over 1,000 live in the rural region of Extremadura. (Xinhua)

### (19) Turkish PM...

by Russian and Syrian forces. A marine was also killed on a rescue mission to retrieve the second pilot.

On Saturday, Putin slapped a set of sanctions on Turkey in response to Ankara's refusal to make any apology for the incident.

The package of sanctions include bans on some Turkish exports, a prohibition on hiring of Turkish nationals from next year and a suspension of visa-free travel for Turkish citizens. (Xinhua)

### (20) Syria Govt...

would give certainty to the opposition. "But it would be exceedingly difficult to cooperate without some indication or confidence on the part of those who have been fighting him that in fact there is a resolution or a solution in sight," Kerry added.

Otherwise the rebels would feel they were helping and entrenching Assad, which would be completely unacceptable, he said.

Russia and Iran, Assad's main allies, have said it will be up to the Syrian people to decide on Assad's role at a future presidential election. (Reuters)

### (21) S. Sudan ...

in August this year. Many of the refugees in DRC have voiced their refusal to return to the newly-formed country in the absence of peace, saying their most urgent needs are shelter, food and medical care.

Some 2.3 million people have been forced to flee their homes since conflict erupted two years ago this month in the African state. (Xinhua)

### (22) US to Help ...

political leadership were Greece's program to overcome the specter of default and Grexit, the Leftist government's request for debt relief in coming months, as well as regional developments, the Cyprus dispute and energy issues.

"We will do everything we can to see Greece return to growth," Kerry said during a meeting with Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras.

The U.S. Secretary of State welcomed on his part Greece's cooperation on security issues which were also high on the agenda in the light of the recent Paris terrorist attacks and the tension in Turkish-Russian relations after the shooting of a Russian warplane by Turkish forces on the border with Syria. "Greece remains a hub of stability in the region," Tsipras stressed during the talks.

In joint statements to the press following talks with Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikos Kotzias Kerry acknowledged that Greece faces significant challenges regarding the refugee and migration challenge and pledged Washington's support. (Xinhua)