KABUL - A report by the US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) indicates that according to World Bank estimates, Afghanistan's overall poverty level increased from 35% to 72% in 2020 due to economic contraction as the country braced for a second wave of COVID-19 in early 2021. Beyond the public-health impact, the COVID-19 pandemic has inflicted “significant harm” on Afghanistan’s economy, exacerbating many existing challenges, said the SIGAR report, which is titled “Economic and Social Development.”

By the end of 2020, Afghanistan’s unemployment rate was projected to rise to 57.9%, up from 20.9% in 2019, the report says.

The World Bank estimates that the overall poverty level increased from 55% to 72% of the population in 2020 due to the economic contraction, with the IMF projecting that Afghanistan’s GDP will drop by 5%, the report says.

The report quotes a UN human rights agency officer spokesperson as saying that the United Nations will require an additional $1.3 billion in 2021 for humanitarian aid in Afghanistan, as the number of people who require assistance will have doubled compared to a year ago.

As of early November 2020, 11.2 million people, or approximately 56% of the estimated population, faced either a crisis or emergency state of food insecurity, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, a common global scale for classifying the severity and magnitude of food insecurity and malnutrition. The report says that on December 23, 2020, acting Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development Mahbub Rahimi announced that more than 80,000 families had received food aid as...
Pakistan Behind Taliban’s Call for Interim Govt

KANDAHAR – The Provincial council chief for eastern Nangarhar province says Taliban are seeking an interim government in line with Pakistan’s direction. Anas Abdul Hazrat made the statement after Sher Mohammad Ahmadzai, theLoadedBulletin of Taliban’s political office in Nangarhar, had resigned on Pakistan President Ashraf Ghani’s request to return to Moscow.

Hazrat said Taliban’s demand, which was against the people’s will, had drawn a harsh response from the government. He accused the militant movement of making Ghani’s resignation a precondition for peace in the country. The president was still a beta version of the trust of a majority of Afghans.

He explained Ghani did not come to power by force, but the Afghan people had attached confidence in him. In his meeting with Hazrat, the Taliban chief also explained their demand with the trust of a majority of Afghans.

He expressed confidence that the Afghan people, who had elected the current president, would not hand over the country to the Taliban. He expressed public support for the administration. “The Afghan people have voted for the interim government and would defend their votes at any cost. “The Taliban should not dream of an interim government in Afghanistan because it is against the will of the people,” the provincial council chief insisted.

“We know the Taliban are talking about the interim government. But all the people of Afghanistan have not yet come to the Taliban and the Taliban have not yet committed on the clauses. Recently, the Taliban have increased their attacks and targeted security outfits, said Hazrat.

Kandahar – At least four policemen were killed and three more were wounded in a Taliban attack on Monday night, said Fawzia YahyAli, a provincial council member.

“The Taliban were also killed and two others were wounded in the clashes,” she said.

However, local officials and the Taliban have not yet committed on the clauses. Recently, the Taliban have increased their attacks and targeted security outfits, said Hazrat.

Border Police Officer Killed, 2 Wounded in Nangarhar Blast

NANGARHAR – At least one border police officer who was on duty and two men were wounded in an explosion in an eastern province of Nangarhar on Tuesday morning, local officials said.

The explosion occurred in Sur-kund district when a police vehicle was hit by an IED, according to the officials.

The officials did not provide further information about the incident. The Taliban group including the Taliban that has yet claimed responsibility for the blast. [TOLO NEWS]

4 Policemen Killed in Kunduz Clashes

KUNDuz – At least four policemen were killed and three more were wounded in a Taliban attack on Monday night, said Fawzia YahyAli, a provincial council member.

The clashes took place in Fizi of Kunduz city when the Taliban attacked a security outpost near the airport.

“The Taliban were also killed and two others were wounded in the clashes,” she said.

However, local officials and the Taliban have not yet committed on the clauses. Recently, the Taliban have increased their attacks and targeted security outfits, said Hazrat.

On Monday, the Afghan Chief of Army Staff Gen. Yasin Zia visited Kunduz to review the security situation of the province and meet on a new plan to launch operations, the Ministry of Defense said in a statement. [TOLO NEWS]

MPs Question $893M Allocated for Govt Expenses

KARL - A lawmaker said that the current fiscal year’s budget was inappropriate considering the economic state of the country.

As the Afghan parliament continues to review the current year’s budget, lawmakers have highlighted the Ministry of Finance’s allocation of $893 million (AFN 9 billion) for Internal Security Forces, which has triggered questions from parliamentarians. The senior lawmaker asked the government to explain the amount allocated for Internal Security Forces.

“From one side, we see a military budget of $893 million. We wonder if you should sit back and let it all be consumed,” said the lawmaker.

She said that internal security forces are already in trouble, due to lack of funds and equipment, and that the government needs to spend the allocated funds more efficiently.

“The Af $893 million in Budget is huge. We wonder if you should sit back and let it all be consumed,” said the lawmaker.

The official explained that the Ministry of Finance has allocated $893 million for Internal Security Forces, which includes various security services and are not included in the Afghan government’s budget. However, the official did not provide any information on how the funds would be spent.

“We wonder if you should sit back and let it all be consumed,” said the lawmaker.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Finance has confirmed that the funds allocated for the Internal Security Forces are not included in the Afghan government’s budget.

The official explained that the Ministry of Finance has allocated $893 million for Internal Security Forces, which includes various security services and are not included in the Afghan government’s budget. However, the official did not provide any information on how the funds would be spent.
The international community should not play the role of a peace or stability. Therefore, warring sides had better stop their accept-or-die policy and engage in meaningful and come to debate their ideology but simply pull the trigger at do not speak the language of logic or rationality and will not to those who challenge their narrative. In short, the Taliban file clerics, which is highly paradoxical and have no justifica claim to fight for religious reasons spill the blood of high-pro ban have also targeted Islamic clerics, civil society activists, children, without an iota of mercy. They outraged the public Within the last 25 years, the Taliban have killed and ampu- ing from IS-K suicide attacks was 194 killed and wounded in 2019, but the government of Pakistan has given Afghanistan a special dispensation - that the Taliban do not want to regret the killing of thousands of civilians. The United States and its international allies as well as the in- ternational community, as well as its political interests, have been stop killing civilians, which is against both the international law and Islamic Shari’a. Killing civilians to prove the govern- ment’s political correctness and the guarantee of the Taliban’s threats. The Taliban who claim to fight for religious reasons spill the blood of high-pro- fessional people, which is highly paradoxical and have no justifica tion at all. It indicates that the Taliban will kill anyone – be it clergy or citizens – who challenge their political interests. The Talib- an do not speak the language of logic or rationality and will not to debate their ideology but simply pull the trigger at those who challenge their political interests. Seeking to impose their warped mind at the barrel of gun will be self-defeating and not possible. The Taliban have to step their accept-or-die policy and engage in meaningful and rational negotiations. Sheding the blood of civilians, even of soldiers, will not lead to military victory. The United States and its allies should step up their targeting civilians and resolve the tension through negotiated settlement. The international community should not play the role of a spectator as thousands of people are killed and wounded. It has to press the Taliban to stop their acts of violence.

Qatar Came Out With Flying Colours

By: Mansih Rand

When the Saudi crown princess, together with the UAE’s ruler, Mohammed bin Zayed, went to Kabul last month, there was no sign that the official visits by foreign leaders to the Afghan capital were not a message to the Taliban that the Afghan political process is not on hold and will continue. The Taliban have been targeting civilians, and especially women and children, without a iota of mercy. They outraged the public With the killing of 25 civilians, the Taliban have spilled the blood of professionals in the region. The United States and its allies as well as the international community have to step up their efforts to resolve the tension through negotiated settlement.

Dr. Hussain Yasa is the former Editor in Chief of the Daily Chaman News, Afghanistan. At the moment he is living in Germany in self-imposed exile.

The views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not reflect the views or opinions of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan.
(1) SIGAR: 2020 was a "turnaround" year: The US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) report for 2020 has been released. The report states that 2020 was a “turnaround” year for Afghanistan, with significant improvements in security, governance, and economic indicators. The SIGAR also highlights the progress made in the peace process and the reduction in violence levels. However, the report also notes the persistence of challenges, including the ongoing conflict, corruption, and the need for sustained international support.

(2) Taliban Terror: The Taliban claimed responsibility for the explosion that killed three civilians in the west of Kabul in late 2020. The incident took place in Dehmazang area and resulted in three civilian casualties, according to the Afghan government. The Taliban has not commented on the incident so far.

(3) UNDP: The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has released its annual report, highlighting progress in Afghanistan in the past year. The report notes improvements in education, health, and governance, while also acknowledging the challenges posed by the ongoing conflict. It calls for continued support from the international community to help Afghanistan achieve its development goals.

(4) COVID-19: The number of known global coronavirus cases has exceeded 250 million, with over 6 million deaths reported worldwide. The report also notes the impact of the pandemic on the Afghan economy, with domestic revenues decreasing by 14% compared to 2019.

(5) Voter Rights: The Afghan government has announced that it will provide voter ID cards to all citizens over the age of 18, in an effort to increase voter turnout in the upcoming elections. The move is seen as a positive step towards increasing political participation and ensuring a free and fair election.

(6) Peace Process: The Afghan government and the Taliban have agreed to release all remaining prisoners as part of the peace process. The agreement is seen as a significant step towards ending the conflict and improving security in the country.

(7) Pakistan, US…: The US and Pakistan have agreed to hold talks on a range of issues, including security, economic cooperation, and the fight against terrorism. The talks are expected to address some of the outstanding issues between the two countries, including the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan.
Biden expands quick bid to undo Trump’s immigration policies

SANDIEGO-The Biden administration on Tuesday announced a series of steps to address the U.S.-Mexico border, expanding efforts to quickly undo relentless changes to immigration policy over the last four years. President Biden plans to sign orders on family separation, border security, and significant steps to begin reversing the damage done to immigration during his first two years in office. Details were still thin, but the moves aim to reverse many of for- mer President Donald Trump’s policies to deter immigration, both legal and illegal.

Alex Mayorkas, whose nomination as Homeland Security secretary awaits Senate confirmation, will lead a task force on family separation, focused largely on reunifying parents and children who have been separated—someth- ing that has been reported to be occurring at levels not yet to be found by a court-appointed committee.

The task force will report regularly to the President and recommended steps to prevent the situation from occurring again,” the Biden administration said in statement.

The review of border security includes a policy to make asylum-seekers wait in Mexico for hearings in U.S. immigration court. It is a step toward fulfilling a campaign pledge to end the “Remain in Mexico” policy, unless otherwise mandated by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Biden administration officials said in a statement on Tuesday. “The legislation to undo the U.S.-Mexico border. (RT)

tokyoto-Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga on Tuesday extended the state of emergency over the COVID-19 pandemic in struggling regions for another month.

Among the 11 of Japan’s 47 prefectures currently covered by the state of emerg- ency, Tokyo and nearby Kanagawa, Chiba, Saitama prefectures will remain under the state of emergency, as well as Aichi, Gifu, Shizuoka, Hyogo, and Fukuoka prefectures, Suga said at a meeting of the government’s COVID-19 task force.

Meanwhile, Techno Pro- fessionals, located in the capital’s north, will be removed from the emergency list as COVID-19 cases have waned in the area. The southern island of Okinawa, which has been under conserva- tion due to narcissus, is left of the list. The Okinawa task force was announced by the Japanese government in January for the state of emergency in Okinawa.

Pakistan's Supreme Court has ordered the release from prison of another former president, Pervez Musharraf, who has been in custody since 2013 for treason charges.

The court's order came during a hearing in the case of Musharraf, who was arrested in 2013 for treason charges and has been in custody since then.

The United States also expressed concern over Musharraf's arrest and top U.S. diplomat Anthony Blinken called for a re- turn to accountability in his first phone call with Pakistan's foreign minister on Friday.

The Supreme Court panel led by Justice Atta- ur Rehman, which took up the case, said Musharraf should be released immediately.

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Gov’t to Increase Monthly ‘Salaries’ of Teachers, Security Forces

KARUL - Presidential Palace said Tuesday, that the government will review the (NTA) payroll system and an allocated reformed budget to increase the salaries of security force members and teachers. President Ghani in an order instructed his First Vice President Ghani in an order to increase the salaries of security force members and teachers.

KABUL – The Afghan government-backed peace negotiating team discussed intra-Afghan talks, ceasefire and reduction in violence with NATO ambassadors, a statement said on Tuesday. The Afghan peace negotiating team in a statement said that Afghan peace negotiating team will review the (NTA) faulty allocation of government employees’ salaries. House of the representatives employees’ salaries. According to Arg, President Ghani also tasked officials at the Finance Ministry to review the (NTA) reformation system which currently is in violation of the NTA bill. Earlier, the Afghan parliament rejected the draft budget for the 1401 fiscal year for the second time, one of the reasons was the faulty allocation of government employees’ salaries. The parliament emphasizes that government employees should have equal privileges according to their job payment scale and that the unfair pay system which currently is practiced, should be abolished. (Khaama Press)

Two People Killed, Seven Wounded in Four Blasts in Kabul

KABUL - Four blasts happened in different parts of Kabul on Tuesday morning, leaving two people dead and five more wounded. The first blast happened at around 07.30 am in Jsl Sheet area in the center of Kabul in which a police vehicle was targeted and two security force members were wounded, police said. A security source said that the vehicle belonged to the counter-narcotics department of the ministry of interior affairs, The second blast happened at around 08.30 am in the Salim Karwan area in downtown Kabul. The explosion targeted a civilian vehicle, killing two people and wounding two more, police said. Mohammad Ali, head of a council at Jamiat ESLah, a Kabul-based organization, was killed in the explosion in the Salin Karwan area, sources from the organization confirmed.

Afghan Negotiating Team Virtually Meets NATO Envoy

Mohammad Masoom Stanikzai, head of the Afghan negotiating team in Qatar, and some members of the delegation held a video conference with NATO ambassadors and representatives on Monday night. They discussed the Afghan peace process. Stanikzai thanked the international community, especially NATO and its allies for supporting the Afghan peace process and emphasizing on ending violence in the country. Stanikzai said intra-Afghan talks were yet to yield the expected progress but added that a ceasefire is

Afghans Win 7 Medals, Including Gold, in Intl Taekwondo Event

KABUL - The national taekwondo team won seven medals in the Nepal Open International Virtual Poomsae Taekwondo Championships, in which athletes from 30 countries participated. The medals were won by Mohammad Idris Qarizada (gold), Sardar Agha (silver), and Sayed Zarif Hashimi, a statement said on Monday night. "As you know, different sports events have been delayed, but competitions in some styles can be held virtually. The Nepal taekwondo federation succeeded in holding the poomsae taekwondo championship in which 30 countries attended," said Mohammad Idris Qarizada (gold), Sayed Abdul Muoz Ahmad Salik and Mohammad Atif, head of a council at Jamiat ESLah, a Kabul-based organization, was killed in the explosion in the Salin Karwan area, sources from the organization confirmed.

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