

(1) 200,000 IDPs ..

of last year's war. Aminullah and his family spent four months in a tent in Kabul. "I was living in a tent, but with the arrival of winter we relocated to this room; I get 5,000 Afs salary and pay 3,000 Afs in rent, only 2,000 Afs remain and the government has done nothing to help us so far," said Aminullah.

MoRR has said that the majority of those who returned from Iran and Pakistan are in need of humanitarian assistance. "Assessments indicate that currently up to 200,000 return refugees and internally displaced persons are in need of humanitarian assistance," said Fazl Ahmad Azimi, deputy minister of refugees and repatriations for policy and planning.

The Afghan government has however announced the allocation of one billion Afs to facilitate these return refugees and internally displaced persons. Government has also pledged to give them 270 million Afs in cash. "About \$500 million USD is needed to address their needs; government is set to ask the international community for the money within the next two weeks," said State Minister for Disaster Management Wais Ahmad Barmak.

According to Barmak, during the 1395 solar year, 1,500 refugees and internally displaced people lost their lives and 2,600 others were wounded in clashes and natural disasters. (Tolonews)

(2) MPs Accuse...

Foreign Affairs (MoFA) meanwhile said it is waiting for the Supreme Court's decision on the fate of its minister Salahuddin Rabbani, who was among those dismissed.

"We have sent a letter to parliament's international relations commission and that means we have opened a case that says the fate of the finance minister should be reviewed. Now we are waiting for the Supreme Court's decision," said Khairullah Azad, deputy spokesman of MoFA.

The Ministry of Finance (MoF) recently said that MoFA had spent 73 percent of its development budget and that judicial departments should decide about the fate of the minister. A number of MPs also said parliament must revise its decision on the finance minister.

"The international relations commission and other commissions of parliament should gather MPs comments and review the fate of the finance minister," MP Farhad Azimi said. (Tolonews)

(3) Contract...

process of the Afghan embassy's building in London. President Ghani directed the foreign minister to provide programs for repairing of Afghanistan's embassies in foreign countries and share progress with the Presidential Palace. (Pajhwok)

(4) Mariam Ghani ...

work of the Palace. Mariam's earlier documentary compared the previous condition of the Palace and the post-war condition which was vastly damaged.

The restoration of the Palace was officially inaugurated by President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah late in the month of May last year.

President Ghani said the reconstruction of the Palace will be done with the available national resources, insisting that the renovation of the Palace is wanted by the whole nation. (KP)

(5) Ariana Airline ...

Shah Ahmadzai, deputy financial chief of Ariana. Meanwhile, the company has also advocated that the Afghan government invests \$50 million USD in Ariana so that it can carry out its five year plan, saying this will help Ariana increase its profits to \$100 million USD in the next five years. Ariana is also expected to purchase two new jets from the money it saved.

"We are trying to purchase new planes for our routes and increase our capacity of flights

and successfully complete Hajj operations in the coming years," said Amin Ayazi, Ariana's deputy head of administrative affairs.

Responding to accusations of some Ariana employees accepting bribes, the airline officials dismissed the claims.

Recently Ariana officials were accused of taking bribes from a contractor that was supposed to build a new compound for Ariana in Kabul.

They said construction of the compound would be put out for tender. (Tolonews)

(6) Proliferation ...

highlights the government's weakness and lack of public trust in it. This has resulted in scaring away investors."

Only small-time drug dealers had been arrested over the past two years, he noted. "I am worried why no big smuggler has been detained so far. Police nab small traffickers to hoodwink the people."

The governor continued he had launched a determined crackdown on the irresponsible armed men. But he did not go into details.

Meanwhile, provincial council member Mohammad Hussain Hanif alleged certain elements in the province aided the gunmen. However, he did not name anyone.

The irresponsible groups had big hand in insecurity, killings and smuggling of narcotics, he charged. "If the local government is really strong, it would have eliminated all armed men. "A number of mafia circles are abetting the armed individuals, whose number is rising. Residents are worried about the deteriorating security situation and the increased number of gunmen."

A civil society leader, Munir Ahmad Hadaf, urged the government to take serious steps to prevent the illegal men's activities at the earliest possible.

"There are hundreds of illegal armed groups in the Taloqan, harassing people and committing murder. But the government couldn't do anything, showing its weakness."

An inhabitant of the Nahr-i-Chaman neighbourhood of Taloqan, Samiullah, said that even though there was no insurgent group in their area, they feared the armed men and could not venture out in broad daylight.

He called the presence of illegal gunmen more dangerous than the Taliban and Daesh. "The number of gunmen has risen meteorically, rendering the government helpless."

They torture people in front of police personnel and carry guns freely, leaving residents in a state of fear and disturbing their day-to-day activities, he added

Takhar police chief Brig. Gen. Noor Mohammad Hakimi acknowledged the illegal armed men existed in the entire province.

"Weapons have remained in people's possession from the jihad era. Some of them help the government but many others cause serious issues."

He said checkpoints had been established to prevent illegal gunmen, asking the authorities to help them in disarming the illegal individuals.

About two months back, Deputy Governor Mohammad Farid Zaki had dubbed the illegal gunmen as a parallel government by insurgents. "The government's stance on the is clear, but it has no intention of disarming illegal gunmen," he said.

In addition to Takhar, illegal armed men have surfaced in many provinces, inconveniencing civilians. (Pajhwok)

(7) People to...

cooperating with security forces.

Lala Mohamad, a resident of Ghazni city, said the government alone could not ensure security. He said people should fully support the government in ensuring security.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid had previously said Afghan forces recent operations in Ghazni were a failure.

He had said Nawa district and many other areas were under Taliban control and the Afghan forces were attacked every day. (Pajhwok)

(8) Afghan Ski

confronted a lot of hardships, we are happy now to go for training in Korea and hope that this would help us to learn new things and return to our country with some achievement. This will also help us to participate in international competitions," said another skier Mohammad Sajjad Kargar. The Afghan ski federation established a year ago within the structure of National Olympic Committee. This is the second time that Afghan skiers travel abroad for professional ski training. (Tolonews)

(9) Meshrano ...

pressure."

According to him, earlier 25,000 foreign troops existed in Helmand but there was still insecurity wasn't and now the expected 300 more US soldiers could never cope with security issues. He said until foreign forces were not expelled from Afghanistan, peace would continue to elude Afghanistan, he believed. Senator Shir Mohammad Akhundzada from Helmand asked the unity government to resolve their differences because their differences were hurdle to resolving the country's security problems. Some other lawmakers said deployment of 300 US soldiers couldn't resolve Helmand's problems and the US should put pressure on countries which supported insurgents.

Muslimyar said the 300 US soldiers were being deployed to Helmand based on the security agreement, but the move should be aimed at defending the Afghan people, not enhancing the conflict. Deforestation in Kunar

Senator Taib Atta from Kunar said forests the eastern province belonged to all Afghans, but more than 3,000 trees were daily cut illegally and most of the wood was smuggled to Pakistan.

He said local Kunar officials were powerless to control deforestation and the central government should take steps in this regard.

Lawmaker Mohammad Hassan Hotak also expressed concern over deforestation in Kunar and asked the Meshrano Jirga's administrative board to dispatch a delegation to investigate the matter.

Finally, the house decided to send a delegation to Kunar on Monday to probe forest cutting. Muslimyar called Kunar forests as national asset and stressed their protection and preservation as moral duty of Afghan people.

Muslimyar said a delegation would be sent to Kunar on Monday to investigate the matter. According to him, the cutting of trees had sparked a dispute between the governor and the police chief of the province. He stressed the Meshrano Jirga delegation should probe the topic with neutrality. (Pajhwok)

(10) CEO Urged...

till summer.

The activists, who represented eastern provinces, said complained about poor quality education in the east and said universities and schools had problems with regard to quality education.

They urged drastic changes in Nangarhar's security sector and stressed doing away with Daesh or Islamic State and other militant groups there.

They said there was only one civil hospital in the east and that was insufficient. They also talked about the second lane of the Takul-Jalalabad and Jalalabad-Torkham highway

On Saturday, Nangarhar-based residents of Kunar province and some civil society activists protested against deforestation. Kunar is home to forests amid reports about their arbitrary cutting.

The constitution holds the government responsible for preserving forests and public property under Article 15. (Pajhwok)

(11) Top Leaders ...

as Omran Khan also famous as Dr. Zakria and Shaheen who are originally hailing from Pakistan.

According to MoI, the two senior commanders were having a

key role in organizing terrorist attacks, specifically coordinated suicide attacks.

Two more members of the Haqqani terrorist network arrested during the operation and at least 11 hand grenades along with some weapons were confiscated, MoI said, adding that the two militants were identified as Sarbuland and Zia-ur-Rehman.

The anti-government armed militant groups including the Haqqani terrorist network have not commented regarding the report so far. (KP)

(12) Gunmen ...

have managed to flee the area. Sources close to Zadran area saying that this is not the first time unknown gunmen have carried out failed attack on him. No group or individual has so far claimed responsibility behind the incident.

The Afghanistan cricket board has not reacted towards the report and attack on Zadran so far. (KP)

(13) Nangarhar ...

one person by another person," said Gham Sharik another activist.

"According to article 15 of the constitution the government is obliged to save forests and public property and we want the government to implement this article," said Abasin Bahir another activist.

However, Kunar governor Wahidullah Kalimzai rejected the allegations against him, while Nangarhar governor Gulab Mangal said Daesh is chopping down forests in Nangarhar as a source of income.

"From the day I started working as the governor I have prevented illegal logging and I will continue in the future. I am committed to this but there is no evidence or proof to show my involvement or show that I am not preventing illegal logging," said Kalimzai.

"In the areas where the Afghanistan enemies and Daesh exist there is no doubt that they are looting our public property and buy weapons from the money to use against Afghanistan people," Nangarhar governor Gulab Mangal said.

Meanwhile the activists criticized the recent decision of the council of ministers regarding the export of wood products from Kunar to other provinces. The activists believe that the decision is leading to illegal logging in the eastern provinces of Afghanistan. (Tolonews)

(14) US Withdrawal...

military announcement which says the Pentagon will deploy a new task force of approximately 300 Marines to Afghanistan's restive Helmand Province, marking the return to a region where hundreds of troops were killed in fierce combat.

The forces with a unit called Task Force Southwest will deploy this spring to advise the Afghan army and police, senior Marine officers said Friday. The deployment will last nine months and is expected to evolve into a series of similar rotations for the Marines, officials said.

There are approximately 8,500 US troops in Afghanistan, with most being located at major installations in the capital, Kabul, and at the US airfield in Bagram.

Professor Etlar said, "With the lame duck Obama administration quickly coming to an end the question of the US/NATO presence in Afghanistan comes to the fore."

"The Afghan war which began in 2001 has been the longest that the US has fought. After thousands of casualties and billions of dollars Afghanistan is less secure than any time since the US invasion with one third of the country under Taliban control and a plethora of Takfiri terrorist groups infiltrating the territory," he stated.

"As things now stand the interminable US/NATO occupation of Afghanistan appears to be headed for another round of escalation," the analyst noted.

Will Trump follow through on his vow to leave Afghanistan? Professor Etlar said that "there is a new administration set to be installed in Washington."

"Trump has vociferously stated time and time again that Afghanistan is a rat hole into

which the US has heedlessly sent thousands of US soldiers and spent billions of dollars to little if any effect. Trump in a tweet from 2013 succinctly said, 'Let's get out of Afghanistan. Our troops are being killed by the Afghans we train and we waste billions there. Nonsense! Rebuild the USA,'" he stated.

"The question is will Trump once he's in the White House live up to his words? And if he does what will happen to Afghanistan? Will it become a hot bed of Takfiri terrorism like Iraq and Syria? The Taliban are an indigenous force motivated by nationalist fervor to expel foreign occupiers of whatever sort. They have demonstrated that they will unrelentingly persist in their resistance no matter how long it takes," he said.

"The only way out is multinational negotiations in which the Taliban participate as fully vested members. Russia and China, hoping to stem the tide of Takfiri terrorism gaining a foothold on their borders, have already stepped into the breach," he said.

"Late in 2016, Russian, Chinese and Pakistani officials met in Moscow calling for a flexible approach towards working with the Taliban to foster a peaceful dialogue," the researcher argued.

"The Taliban have also maintained strong links to China, having sent a delegation to discuss the situation in Afghanistan in July 2016 and declaring that they will protect Chinese interests in a \$3 billion copper mining project in the northern part of the country," he stated.

"The best case scenario for peace in Afghanistan is multi-lateral negotiations between the Afghan government, the Taliban, Pakistan, Russia and China to establish a government of national unity in which the Taliban are full participants," the analyst noted.

"As with the recently brokered ceasefire in Syria there is no need for US/NATO involvement. In fact, as Trump as previously stated, it's time for the US to get out and go home. Let the adults resolve the issues that the US and its NATO allies have only exacerbated," he advised.

"But will Trump do as he says? Will he let others succeed where the US has failed? Only time will tell," he concluded. (Press TV)

(15) 24 Nurses,...

said as part of their training, each nurse and midwife cost \$20000. He urged families to allow their daughters to get education and serve their communities.

More than 636 girls have so far graduated from the same institute in Nangarhar and nearly 144 others are under training. A member of the provincial council, Humira Rafi, said the graduating nurses and midwives would help people in faraway areas in treatment and they would serve their own people

Provincial women's affairs head Anisa Imrani also called on the females to encourage people to send their daughters to the health sector.

One of the graduated females, Robina from Khewa district, said "We learned many things from our teachers during the two years." She promised to serve people in her own district. (Pajhwok)

(16) Taliban ...

The Taliban militants group has not commented regarding the report so far.

This is not the first time infighting takes place among the main Taliban and dissident group supporters in Afghanistan.

Several deadly clashes have taken place across the country, specifically in western provinces following the death of Taliban found and supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar.

The clashes normally take place due to differences among the Taliban group leaders over the appointment of supreme leader. (KP)

(17) 4 Insurgents ...

suicide attacker fled the area but left behind his explosive vest. The intelligence agents chased and nabbed him. (Pajhwok)

(18) SOS from...

many sons, all of them too small to work.

"My son-in-law is living in that small old room. He repairs sewing machines on streets. He also has an eight-member family to support and cannot help us," the woman adds.

Gula is faced with lack of food items and other basic necessities. "My children polish shoes in the city, earning 50 to 100 afghanis daily, which cannot meet our needs,"

She is left with no option but to beg and collect flour, oil and firewood from other houses in the neighborhood. She asked the government and charities for help, but in vain.

Mohammad Zaman Nazari, a civil society activist, asked well-off people, the government and charities, particularly the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS), to help the poor.

"Wealthy people should help them in this chilly winter; the rich can offer them jobs," he suggested, saying the under-resourced individuals deserved compassion.

Khost governor's spokesman, Mubarez Mohammad Zadran, said a survey of the needy people by ARCS and the refugee's affairs department was underway.

Once identified, they would be given assistance, he promised. There are hundreds of families like Gula's in Khost, suffering from abject poverty and official neglect. (Pajhwok)

(19) Trump Picks...

Coats, 73, had served on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and was a member of the chamber's Armed Services Committee. He was also the U.S. ambassador to Germany under former President George W. Bush.

"If confirmed as director of national intelligence, he will provide unwavering leadership that the entire intelligence community can respect, and will spearhead my administration's ceaseless vigilance against those who seek to do us harm," Trump said. (Xinhua)

(20) Graham Urges ..

An unclassified version of the report directly tied Putin to election meddling and said that Moscow had a "clear preference" for Trump in his race against Hillary Clinton.

Trump has repeatedly sought to downplay the allegations, alarming some who see a pattern of skepticism directed at U.S. intelligence agencies and a willingness to embrace the Russian leader. On Friday after receiving a classified briefing on the matter, Trump tried to change the subject to allegations that hadn't been raised by U.S. intelligence. "Intelligence stated very strongly there was absolutely no evidence that hacking affected the election results. Voting machines not touched!" (AP)

(21) Deep Freeze...

asked God to "warm our hearts so we'll help" the homeless.

In Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, several hundred men, mostly from Afghanistan and Pakistan, remained in an abandoned customs warehouse by the city's bus station, where aid organizations distributed heaters, blankets, clothes and food in an attempt to keep them warm. (AP)

(22) Turkmenistan...

Caspian Sea shelf. It is planned to drill 60 exploration and development wells within the first phase of the work.

It is envisaged to produce more than 6.855 million tons of oil at the Demirgazyk Goturdepe field if the project is realized within 7 years. (Trend)

(23) Uzbekistan...

which was commissioned in May 2016 - was highlighted during the conversation.

The sides expressed strong mutual interest in expanding the number of joint high-tech projects in the areas of mutual interest.

The parties also confirmed their commitment to the principles of the Uzbekistan-South Korea declaration on strategic partnership signed in 2006. (Trend)