

(1) 15,000 ANA...

Mirza Mohammad Yarmand told TOLONews.

Some suggested the spike in attrition could be the result of some Taliban strategy. "It could propaganda of the enemy, in some areas enemies put pressure on families to ask their sons quite the ANA," military analyst Atiqullah Amarkhail said. Nevertheless, senior defense officials are considered most responsible. "Secondly, it is the triangle of the management," Amarkhail added.

The ANA is an all-volunteer force, and new soldiers join the ANA by signing a contract. Millions of dollars are spent annually for their training and support. In total, the United States has spent 8.34 billion USD on training and equipment for the ANA. But with report of high attrition rates, concerns about the wasting of valuable, limited resources on account of poor management have peaked.

Government officials, particularly from the MoD, have sought to quell those concerns. "Our Defense and Interior Ministries now have the best management system possible, and sometimes the trauma of war cause such issues, but God willing, everything will continue going well," said Ahmad Zia Massoud, the Presidential Advisor for Good Governance and Reform.

According to the new SIGAR report, from September 2013 to September 2014, up to 40,000 enlistees were deleted from the Ministry of Defense database. But the report did not specify under what conditions those enlistees ended their active duty. (Tolonews)

(2) Ministry of...

decline in ANA ranks, the statement said.

"When some of our personnel go and cannot make it back on time then the reports mention them as deserters," said the statement adding that casualties during wars were normal.

The statement went on to say that after NATO's combat mission came to an end, Afghan forces took lead in securing the country successfully, despite a drastic rise in insurgents' attacks. (Pajhwok)

(3) ANSF Still...

upcoming fighting seasons have only recently assumed their new positions, he said.

"We will need to work closely with them to enable their success and aid them in building additional needed military capacity. We cannot afford for Afghanistan to once again become a safe haven for extremist groups. Increased instability and diminished security would not only affect Afghanistan, but also the Central Asia region as a whole," the general said. He also told lawmakers that the United States will maintain a unilateral capacity to conduct counter-terrorism operations against high-value targets and groups in the region. "We will maintain a unilateral capacity to conduct CT operations against high-value targets and groups in the region that pose a threat to the US or our core national interests," Austin said.

Violent extremist organizations, to include the remnants of core al-Qaeda (AQ), continue to operate in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and, to a lesser extent, parts These groups threaten regional stability, plan attacks against the US and partner interests, and pursue weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Of note, the Taliban insurgency continues to present a credible threat to the Afghan government, he added. (Pajhwok)

(4) Herat Remains ...

council will go for long-term protests." Continuing the sit-in protests in the city, they accused the government of mistreating the people of Herat who they claim are the high taxpayers in the country. "The protesters will continue their sit-in protests in order put an end to the government's discriminatory treatment of the citizens," another protester Abdul Qadeer Salehi said.

According to the residents of Herat, previously they paid nearly 3.5 AFN per kilowatt hour (kWh), but now they were asked to pay 5.5 AFN for each kWh. Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS)—the national power utility—has acknowledged increase in the electricity rates, but blamed Iran for inflating the tariff on electricity imported from the country. Recently, DABS officials declared

that it was the lowest price they could set for Herat consumers. (Tolonews)

(5) Fate of Sno...

which comprised the police chief and the provincial spy department head, had tried to reach the district with relief goods, but they returned because the road leading to the town had been blocked by heavy snowfall.

Sarajuddin, a resident of the district, told Pajhwok Afghan News the snow had left residents stranded residents of eight villages over the past nine days.

A Public Works Department official Abdul Momin said crews were working to clear the road between Warsaj and Taloqan from snow.

More than 300 people have been confirmed dead in avalanches and flash floods triggered by heavy snowfall and rains across the country. (Pajhwok)

(6) Taliban Lay Siege...

police chief Sultan Hussain said the Taliban had no courage to enter a face-to-face fight with security forces. "We need more security forces and ammunitions to ensure security in the district," he added. Deputy Governor Gul Muhammad Baidar said "I personally visited Yangan and found the security situation really bad there and we will send reinforcements to improve the situation."

The unrest has also disturbed the aid distribution process to avalanches-hit families in Badakhshan. (Pajhwok)

(7) 48 Killed...

now under medical treatment."

The operation has entered its second day after the security commanders decided to launch an operation against the abductors following the failure of negotiators to free the passengers. About 30 passengers belonging to Hazara ethnic minority were kidnapped 10 days ago by armed masked men from Shah Joy district of Zabul.

According to the drivers and eyewitnesses, the abductors drove the passengers away to Khak Afghan district after identifying them to be Hazara men. The operation, which was already warned by the officials, was launched after the mediation between the Zabul elders and abductors apparently failed. The Kandahar Police Chief Gen. Abdul Raziq and 205th Atal Corps commanders are currently leading the operation in an attempt to free the passengers without any harm. However, the families of the abductees still wait on news about the fate of their beloved ones, keeping eyes at their doors for the past 10 days.

Civil society activists rallied two days ago in northern Balkh, criticizing the government for not putting adequate efforts to rescue those abducted. (Tolonews)

(8) 121 Insurgents ...

the ongoing operations one is Operation Zulfikar in Helmand province in which hundreds of soldiers are taking part.

The operation begun in Sangin District but later expanded to other adjoining areas.

The operation is the largest operation being conducted independently by Afghan National Security Forces after taking the full responsibility of the security from NATO forces at the start of this year.

At the end of the year 2014 NATO wound up its military role in Afghanistan and in 2015 it started a Resolute Support mission which is aimed at training and assisting the Afghan National Security Forces to overcome the security challenges by themselves. (KP)

(9) Sar-E-Pul, ...

commander for her 14-year-old daughter.

She claimed that three of the attackers had been awarded the death sentences by the court, but some powerful people were trying to release the perpetrators from prison.

"They are threatening me from the jail that they will kill me after they are released from jail," Sakina said. "They were given the death penalty by two courts, and now I want the president to investigate the case and execute them." In another case, another woman from northeastern Takhar arrived to Kabul seeking justice, explaining that a group of powerful figures are trying to release the murderers of her son and grandson from jail.

Shahnaz said six armed men killed her two family members about six months ago after they broke into her house for robbery.

She claimed that five of the perpetrators verdict was death, but armed powerful groups were trying to free them from prison and their sentencing.

"Their brothers and wives give me death threats," Shahnaz said. "I want the president to investigate my case himself and hang the perpetrators to death."

Meanwhile, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) officials acknowledged corruption in the judicial institutions, saying the culture of impunity has caused people's distrust in the courts.

"When a person commits a crime, either he asks for support from powerful people or takes shelter to another area where there is less government control," AIHRC spokesman Rafiullah said. "And this is why justice is not implemented." (Tolonews)

(10) Afghan Pilot...

women around the globe who have demonstrated exceptional courage and leadership in advocating for peace, justice, human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment, often at great personal risk.

This year's other awardees are Journalist and women's rights activist Nadia Sharmeen from Bangladesh, Rosa Julieta Montañó Salvatierra, Founder and Director, Oficina Jurídica para la Mujer (Bolivia); May Sabe Phyu, Director, Gender Equality Network (Burma), Béatrice Epaye, President, Fondation Voix du Coeur (Central African Republic), Marie Claire Tchecola, nurse, Ebola survivor and activist (Guinea), Sayaka Osakabe, Founder and Representative, Matahara Net (Japan), Arbana Xharra, Editor-in-Chief, Zeri (Kosovo), and Majd Chourbaji, External Relations Director, Women Now for Development Centers (Syria).

Since the inception of this award in 2007, the Department of State has honored 86 women from more than 50 different countries.

Following the award ceremony and meetings with US government officials and non-governmental organization counterparts in Washington, D.C., the honorees will travel individually to cities across the United States to participate in professional meetings and events, and engage with the American people through an International Visitor Leadership Program.

Captain Rahmani was only 18 years old when she heard an announcement in the media about the recruitment of young women into the Afghan Air Force, including the opportunity for pilot training.

Soon after, she enlisted in officer training and graduated as a Second Lieutenant. In July 2012 - just two years after hearing the recruitment announcement - Captain Rahmani graduated from flight school and completed her first solo flight in September in a Cessna 182, an American four-seat, single-engine light airplane. She continued to expand her skills and challenge all odds when she graduated from advanced flight training and became qualified to fly a C-208 military cargo aircraft. Unfortunately, after her story was publicized, Captain Rahmani and her family began to receive threats from the Taliban and from members of her extended family, who disapproved of her career and ambition.

As a result, her family has had to take tremendous caution and relocate several times in Afghanistan. In spite of these threats, Captain Rahmani remains determined to continue her career in the Afghan Air Force and work as frequently as her security situation permits. (Pajhwok)

(11) 31 Water ...

in Aibak, the provincial capital, 11 in Hazrat Sultan district and three in Firoznakhchar district. Each reservoir has the capacity to store 500 cubic meter water. Khirkhawa said farmers could irrigate their five acres of land each from the reservoirs at a time.

Mohammad Akram, one of the farmers, said the lack of water had been one of their major problems affecting orchards in Samangan. He said farmers could not find water to irrigate their orchards in summer and autumn. He hoped the new facilities water would resolve the water scarcity issue to a great extent. (Pajhwok)

(12) Projects ...

contaminated water which caused various diseases among residents," he said.

Badakhshan is a mountainous northeastern province having 28 districts. Residents complain the province has been ignored with regard to development projects. But the NSP's head said similar projects were being executed in 17 districts. He said some of the schemes had been 80 percent completed and the rest would be finished until summer. (Pajhwok)

(13) Taliban ...

presence in the operation had considerably assisted national security forces. The Taliban were scared of ALP personnel because they could recognize them and were familiar with the region, he said. Hamidi said 3000 ALP personnel performed duty across Helmand and they had been able to effectively keep security for communities they served despite being under-resourced.

However, residents of Marja district said they were concerned about Taliban's resistance against security forces.

Resident Akhtar Mohammad told Pajhwok Afghan News the situation had deteriorated in Tharkha Nawar and Sistan areas due to clashes between security forces and armed militants.

An ALP member in the area, wishing anonymity, told Pajhwok Afghan News leadership of the operation had been given to police for the last three days, losing the entire Sistan area to insurgents.

But a tribal elder in Sangin district, Alishah Khan, said government forces were in control of southern parts of the town and insurgents had fled. He said residents in the area lived a normal life these days. However, he said the operation was yet to be extended to troubled northern parts. A Taliban spokesman Qari Yousaf Ahmadi claimed Afghan security forces had been defeated in the Operation Zulfikar. He said security forces had abandoned much of the areas, a claim rejected by local officials. (Pajhwok)

(14) India Ready...

Avalanches and rains killed about 250 people in central Panjsher province alone. Indian PM Narendra Modi had written to President Ghani to condole the loss of lives in avalanches and

The visiting Indian official also welcomed recent political developments in Afghanistan and said India was ready to help Afghanistan exploit its sub-soil assets. President Ghani said India was a major focus of Afghanistan's foreign policy and hoped strategic relations between the two countries would further improve in the future.

Jaishankar said global terrorism was changing its form and a strong regional and global commitment was needed to tackle the menace.

President Ghani also invited India's public and private companies for investment in Afghanistan's mines, the statement said. Jaishankar arrived in Kabul as part of his 'SAARC Yatra' aimed at firming up India's ties with members of the grouping while reviewing regional and bilateral cooperation, the Indian High Commission in Kabul tweeted.

Jaishankar, who flew into Kabul from Islamabad, was received by senior Afghan officials and Indian High Commissioner Amar Sinha at the airport. (Pajhwok)

(15) US Paid \$6mln...

the ways the U.S. military compensates civilians for deaths, injuries or property damages that occur during fighting.

The new numbers come from spreadsheets that the Army Central posted recently to its Freedom of Information Act website. The Intercept had requested all of this data but had received it only for fiscal years 2011 through 2013 - years we included in our analysis and visualization of compensation for civilian casualties published last week. The military's figures cover fiscal years 2006 through 2014, and total \$5,927,200.

In conflicts since the Korean War, the U.S. has paid out these token amounts in situations where commanders decide it is culturally appropriate. The payments are not intended to admit wrongdoing or actually assess the value of lost life or property. Condolence payments began in Afghanistan in 2005, but as The Intercept has reported, the system is far from

perfect, marred by inconsistency and poor record keeping.

Like those we reported on last week, these records offer only a bare minimum of information. Most do not have a date, only the province is given by way of location, and the level of detail in the incident synopsis varies widely. Some entries are simply labeled "condolence payment." A few include names of the victims, and are as specific as "Mr A. Khan's truck, cow and a cord of wood was destroyed during combat activities on 27 Sept 04," or "local national's hand injured and lost 3 fingers."

The most money was spent in fiscal year 2011, when the military logged 557 payments for a total of \$1.3 million, followed by \$1.29 million in 2010. For the first two years the program was in existence, however, there are only a few dozen recorded payments. Between October 2013 and September 2014, the most recent data, the U.S. committed to pay more than \$174,200 in 89 payments.

The Pentagon has previously said that the general ceiling for condolence payments in Afghanistan is \$5000. These records show greater amounts were regularly paid out - but those sometimes reflect a lump sum for multiple deaths or injuries. In fiscal year 2010, for example, there was one payment of \$156,720 for the family members of 22 people who were killed and 23 who were wounded. The earlier years include a few payments for repairs for battle damage. One payment of \$160,000 was to replace "a dozen commercial vehicles due to collateral damage."

In our analysis, we have not separated out totals for deaths, injuries and property damage, because many of the records do not specify what they are for.

In Afghanistan, these payments come from a special congressionally funded pot of spending money known as the Commanders' Emergency Response Program. (It is also used for reconstruction and other "goodwill" projects.) The military distinguishes between condolence payments and "solatia," which, while functionally the same, come out of a unit's operating budget. So these condolence payment records are still only a partial accounting of how much the U.S. has paid to civilians. (Monitoring Desk)

(16) MAIL Forecasts...

will increase," said Rabani Haqqeeqat Pal, the Director of Census at the MAIL. Although he did not go into any details about how the ministry would try to mitigate the effects of a drought if one does happen, he assured that a strategy exists. "We have specific programs, but it is still too early to introduce them," he told TOLONews.

However, researchers from the Afghan Sciences Academy have pointed out that Afghanistan, over the past 50 years, has faced two or three droughts every ten years. Based on the lack of rainfall and snow this year, they have posited, a drought is not out of a fate question.

"Our research shows that every ten years, there is a chance that Afghanistan will face two or three droughts," Geography Department member at the Afghan Sciences Academy Rafiullah Nasrati said. "The government and the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock have no programs on hand in case of a drought," he asserted.

Meanwhile, MAIL officials have responded by highlighting increased measures in Nangarhar, Nuristan, Laghman, Kunar, Fara, Badghis, Panjshir, Ghazni and Kapisa provinces. According to them, last year, the amount of rainfall was sufficient, and as a result, farmers produced some 5.3 million tons of wheat and 6.7 million tons of crops. (Tolonews)

(17) Former ...

The head of the Attorney General's Anti-Corruption Department, Sayed Alam Ishaqzai, confirmed on Tuesday that Safi had been sentenced last fall to jail for a year for his involvement in the collapse of the Kabul Bank. But Safi, who has become a symbol of the country's systemic corruption, was able to flee abroad after his sentencing and avoid arrest.

Khalid has said the biggest problem is the insufficient documentation that went into the loan process of the Kabul Bank. "Controversial loans are very complicated issue as sufficient documents don't ex-

ist about these loans and 70 percent of the loans were provided without taking a guarantor, and collection of these is impossible," he said.

When the Supreme Court ruled on the Kabul Bank case, arrests were ordered for 21 individuals. However, 16 of them escaped the country and only thirteen have been successfully detained. (Tolonews)

(18) Smith Supports...

Afghanistan forever is unnecessary and counterproductive, but some flexibility in the pace of the drawdown of the last ten thousand troops seems to make a lot of sense," Smith said.

Smith's comments add to a growing number of voices who support slowing the withdrawal of the roughly 10,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, who are training and advising Afghan forces. (Agencies)

(19) Kandahar Police...

equipments," he said, adding the incidents were taking place in areas where police had strong presence. Iqbal accused police officers of involvement in theft cases and said that robbery case could not take place with connivance of police. He said that majority of policemen who did not receive their salaries on time resorted to robbery cases through professional thieves. Taj Mohammad, another dweller of Kandahar city, said his car was stolen few days back. He said: "My Corolla model car was stolen in an area where police check post is located at 100 metres distance." He linked the robbery cases to joblessness, demanding the government to create job opportunities for people, which would decrease criminal cases to great extent. However, Kandahar police officials confirmed increase in theft cases but denied involvement of their officers. Police spokesman Zia Durani said police were patrolling day and night to prevent criminal activities. Police officers detained three to five robbers each week and take them to justice. (Pajhwok)

who recently returned from Iran where he had gone to find a job. After his return, he was convinced by Taliban militants to carry out a suicide attack, Qaderi said. There has been no word from the Taliban about the arrest of the suicide attacker. (Pajhwok)

(20) Militant with ...

the US and Afghanistan the "effort should be made that not to create any space for any militant activity to increase." (Pajhwok)

(21) Jilani Suggests...

coaching of Kargar, the national football won the South Asian Football Championship in 2013 and pulled co-champion in the 2011 South Asian matches. He was announced as Afghanistan's "Great Man" in 2014. (Tolonews)

(22) Former Afghan ...

as district executive officer for the past three years. However, influential and tribal elders have geared up their efforts to release the official unharmed, he added. Taliban, however, have not yet commented on the incident. (Pajhwok)

He was announced as Afghanistan's "Great Man" in 2014. (Tolonews)

(23) Taliban Kidnap...

added. Her colleague from Sar-i-Pul province, Mohammad Hassan Sharifi Balkhahi, also alleged the government of discrimination. Welfare projects were not implemented properly because some of roads constructed were damaged soon after completion, he remarked. (Pajhwok)

(24) 6 Provinces

added. Her colleague from Sar-i-Pul province, Mohammad Hassan Sharifi Balkhahi, also alleged the government of discrimination. Welfare projects were not implemented properly because some of roads constructed were damaged soon after completion, he remarked. (Pajhwok)

(25) Customs Biggest ...

48,000 of them are female students studying in 160 local schools. (Pajhwok)

(26) 9 Soldiers Among ...

the operations. (Pajhwok)

(27) Iraqi Forces...

Khurmato, east of Tikrit, and the last from the Speicher airbase, just north of Tikrit, according to security sources. (Xinhua)

(28) Saudi Arabia,...

generating capacities, including through nuclear and solar means. The kingdom reportedly plans to build up to 18 nuclear reactors by 2040. (Press TV)

(29) China's Defense ...

and research. Sometimes we have to do these from the very beginning," she said. (Xinhua)