

(1) IS Activity....

"winter lull" in military hostilities, which were incessantly under way in the north and south of Afghanistan," the Russian president's special envoy said. "The armed opposition is expected to step up combat activities across the country with the coming of spring. In fact, this phase has already started," Kabulov told TASS.

According to him, the situation in Afghanistan's Northern provinces has been rapidly degrading.

"The militants are getting entrenched in territories and populated localities bordering on Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, naturally, inciting tensions on both sides of the border," Kabulov stressed. (Monitoring Desk)

(2) Wolesi Jirga ...

running high in parliament when MPs saw that the minister was not going to attend. But then house speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahim told the lawmakers that the minister had postponed his foreign tour and would attend.

"Honorable minister has postponed his foreign trip and will arrive in the house in few minutes," said Ibrahim.

MPs waited for an hour but Rabbani did not arrive, later on they decided to impeach him. "This is disrespect to parliament," Ibrahim said minutes after rumors surfaced that Rabbani would arrive.

"You (MPs) recommend his impeachment and the minister will be impeached in one of the sessions and the minister of refugees and repatriations will be summoned again," he added Rabbani will be plunged into a political crisis if the lawmakers finalize the impeachment. (Tolonews)

(3) Decree on ...

electoral reforms commission. The Presidential Palace however reiterated government's commitment to bring about electoral reforms this solar year. The president had previously announced that the parliamentary and district councils' elections will be held sometime between summer and autumn this year. (Tolonews)

(4) Curriculum of ...

University chancellor Babrak Miakhel said they had launched efforts at reclaiming usurped land of the university.

"Nearly 10 acres of land north of the university has been usurped and we have launched our efforts to recover it."

He said the higher education minister inspected various sections of the university and listened to problems of teachers and students during exclusive meetings. (Pajhwok)

(5) US to Strike...

times that Hafiz Saeed had been killed.

Meanwhile, the Afghan Ministry of Interior (MoI) has said that the security forces will continue their military campaigns against Daesh affiliates in the area.

"Militants apparently associated to Daesh convened a high level meeting in Chapa Darah district of Kunar a week before; at the gathering the group formally announced the nomination of Hafiz Saeed as top commander for Kunar. It seems that Daesh is considering to officially start their military struggle," said Afghan senator Mohammad Tayyeb Atta.

This development comes at a time that the embattled Afghan security forces have been fighting ongoing battles across Kunar and Nangarhar to curtail the advance of the infamous militant group which is known all over the world because of its harsh acts of violence and brutality.

Amid speculations over the existence of Hafiz Saeed, Afghanistan's Ministry of Interior (MoI) has said that the government is closely monitoring the movements of Daesh in the region, urging a severe military response if Daesh is seen inside Afghanistan.

"We are closely monitoring the

ongoing situations. All necessary measures will be taken into consideration to repress Daesh in Kunar," said Sediq Sediqqi, a spokesman for the Ministry of Interior. (Tolonews)

(6) More

suffered casualties, he said, without giving specific figures.

"The insurgents, sneaking from Helmand province, launch attacks on security forces here. The situation is very bad," Hotaki said, asking the government to pay attention to improving security of the district, which might fall to Taliban.

Meanwhile, Taliban spokesman Qari Yousaf Ahmadi claimed responsibility for the attack and said all seven policemen manning the security post were killed. He said the militants suffered no casualties. (Pajhwok)

(7) 20 Military ...

year, eight AAF pilots graduated from a programme hosted by the 81st Fighter Squadron at Moody Air Force Base and will return to Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(8) Security Forces...

attacks in such a situation. Zabit Khan Mohammad, another uprising member, said: "We picked weapons to prevent militant attacks on our villages, they kill innocent people and children and prevent students from going to schools. We have no option but to stand up against them."

He said there were currently no security problems on the Shiberghan-Mazar-i-Sharif highway and in Faizabad district and this had a positive impact on the security situation in some areas of Balkh province.

Khan asked security organs to support uprising groups fighting against militants, so they could play a positive role in ensuring security.

However, deputy police chief, Col. Abdul Hafiz Khashi denied the claims and said police supported these groups when needed.

"We have deployed at least six armoured tanks for uprising groups in Faizabad district, besides reinforcements are also sent when needed during fight against militants," he said.

"Uprising groups sometimes engage in infighting and therefore security forces cannot support them in such a fight," Khashi added.

Meanwhile, some residents said the presence of uprising groups was not in the interest of people. They said these militias were misusing their power and creating problems for people.

Khair Mohammad, a resident, claimed some uprising members were torturing local residents.

"Collecting Ushur and Zakat from people and using force against people are among unwanted actions of uprising members, their misbehaviour is forcing the youth to join Taliban," he said.

But uprising groups denied these claims as far from true and said people lived a safe life in areas under their control. (Pajhwok)

(9) ANA Troops...

told Pajhwok Afghan News the troops had established their base in the middle school in winter and were still there.

"This has deprived about 300 students of education and the education department has registered its complaint in this regard with the governor's house," he said.

The governor's spokesman, Salim Saleh, said provincial officials had talked to military officials in this regard. "The governor has directed the military commander concerned to vacate the school."

He said the military would soon leave the school and students would be allowed to resume studies.

Military officials in Logar avoided to talk about the issue.

There are a total of 305 schools in Logar where 140,000 students, both girls and boys, have been enrolled. (Pajhwok)

(10) 15 Taliban ...

five incidents involving terrorist attacks have been reported in this province since the beginning of the month which involves two insider attacks and a coordinated attack that left a senior army general dead.

The deputy commander of 205th Atal Corps of the Afghan National Army General Khan Agha Achekzai was killed after a group of militants attacked him near a guesthouse late on Thursday night.

The Taliban militants group has not commented regarding the arrest of the group's insurgents by NDS so far. (KP)

(11) 10 Detained....

said. Abdul Rauf Ahmadi, spokesman for provincial police, said a man had been rescued from kidnappers in the Azizabad area of Shindand.

Aqa Gul, Palawan and Ghulam, hailing from Zabul province, had been detained in connection with the kidnapping. The detainees have allegedly confessed to the crime. (Pajhwok)

(12) To Assist...

the city welcomed the initiative and urged government officials and traders to play their part in appreciating it.

The culture of helping the poor has a history in Kandahar, but it is for the first time that a Wall of Kindness has been established here.

Similar walls have earlier been set up in Kabul, Balkh, Bamyan, Herat, Kunduz and other provinces. (Pajhwok)

(13) Afghan Gunmen...

impoverished former Soviet republic routinely reports incidents related to drug smugglers crossing the border.

One border guard died in a fire-fight with a small group of militants this month. (Reuters)

(14) Taliban's....

Taliban stormed security checkpoints of police.

Assadullah Sharefi, a lawmaker from the province confirmed that the Taliban's shadow deputy governor for Baghlan was killed by Afghan security forces.

Atiqullah, a member of the public uprising has fought the Taliban in Dasth-e-Khairabad area of Kholm district. "The Taliban could not fight us and we defeated them," he said.

Security troops in the area said that the Taliban attacked them from three directions, but were eventually defeated.

Expressing their pleasure at defeating the Taliban, the troops were taking photos on the tanks that they had seized from the Taliban. They said that they are ready to protect their country. (Tolonews)

(15) Bicycle Bomb....

not give details of the intended target.

Suicide bombings and other attacks by Taliban insurgents routinely target Afghan government forces and NATO allies, but Kabul had recently enjoyed several weeks of relative calm. (Reuters)

(16) Couple Killed ...

News: "Ihsanullah, his wife, their son, 2, and daughter, 6, were killed as a result of the rockslide caused by rainfall."

But the provincial head of the Afghanistan Natural Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), Ghulam Ali Sobat, was unaware of the incident. He said no one had suffered losses in recent rainfall. (Pajhwok)

(17) UN Chief...

provide direct support to the Iraqi government, and also to put pressure on the international financial institutions to give bigger and quicker loan support to Iraq," he said. (AFP)

(18) UN Slams ...

his knife lying beyond his reach. The clip, which was widely shared online and shown by state-owned and commercial Israeli TV channels, shows what appears to be one of the most flagrant cases of Israeli forces' use of excessive force so far in the wave of Israeli-Palestinian violence that erupted in October.

The incident was immediately condemned as an "execution" by Israeli rights group B'Tselem and as a "war crime" against Palestinians.

A military spokesman said the soldier was being "detained on suspicion of murder," with his remand extended to Tuesday. (Agencies)

Despite that damage, Abdelkarim said film footage he had seen from Palmyra in recent days, including some taken by a drone flying over the old city, had been reassuring.

Many structures were still standing, he said, including the walls around the Temple of Bel, the amphitheatre, the long colonnaded avenue and Palmyra's striking tetrapylon - a platform with four columns at each corner. (Reuters)

(19) Syria ...

U.N. as war crimes.

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(20) N. Korea ...

the South Korean presidential palace is within striking range of the North's artillery units, and that if an order to attack is made it is "just a click away."

North Korea is believed to have artillery capable of striking Seoul with little or no warning and causing severe damage and casualties in the city of 10 million. A strike on Seoul, however, is highly unlikely, and Pyongyang has previously issued similar threats without following through.

There were few signs Saturday of the heightened tensions in Pyongyang, where residents went about their daily routines as usual. (AP)

(21) Fears and...

sought to end the Saudi-led coalition campaign against them, at the same time they accused the internationally recognized President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi and his government of being mercenaries to the Saudi government.

Since the morning till afternoon, the Saudi-led coalition warplanes kept flying overhead in Sanaa, opening sound barriers but fired no airstrikes.

"Our anti-Saudi aggression day celebration began in Al-Sabeen area and ended in Al-Rawda," said the information official at Saleh's office, Nabil al-Soufi.

"Sanaa today sends a message to the world that with our tongues and guns we will sacrifice ourselves for Yemen," al-Soufi wrote in his twitter account. (Xinhua)

(22) UN Chief to ...

Abadi and Jaafari, Ban said "our visit were successful, and we have held positive dialogues with the prime minister and the foreign minister, in which we have discussed issues of security, politics, economy and human rights in Iraq."

Ban urged the Iraqi government to step up reconciliation efforts between the Iraqi factions to close the ranks in fighting against the IS, in particular the Sunni community who say they were marginalized by the Shiite-led government.

"National reconciliation is an important part of the strategy to defeat the IS, who have ruthlessly exploited divisions and targeted the marginalized and disenfranchised," Ban said. (Xinhua)

(23) Greece Starts ...

have a choice. We have to move," he said.

Desperation was evident in the camp. One tent bore the slogan: "Help us open the border."

But some are holding out at Idomeni.

"People who have no hope or have no money, maybe they will go," said 40-year-old Fatema Ahmed from Iraq, who has a 13-year-old son in Germany and three daughters with her in the camp. (AFP)

(24) UN Envoy...

increased their attacks against Puntland forces in the past week. However, the Puntland troops have caused major casualties on Al-Shabaab fighters, killing over 60 of them and arrested several others in the past week. (Xinhua)

(25) Algeria on ...

as three Kalashnikov sub-machine guns, a quantity of ammunition, explosive manufacturing tools and three mobile phones were retrieved.

Last Thursday, a militant wearing an explosive belt was killed when he was heading to Maatkas in Tizi Ouzou to target a police station there, detectives said.

In recent days, joint security forces have been on alert, especially after homemade rockets attacked two weeks ago a gas field in the south of the country, without causing casualties.

The attack was taken seriously, as President Abdelaziz Bouteflika convened an urgent meeting with top government and army officials to discuss the security situation. (Xinhua)

(26) Somali Forces ...

and I am thanking the people of Galmudug who played a vital role of helping the state forces and refused to allow the enemy to set up a safe haven in this region," Guled said in a statement.

He said the areas in which Al-Shabaab was confronted and defeated include Dinoda, Jiray, Bali-Hawd and Galhagoog, noting that Galmudug forces have severely defeated Al-Shabaab in the recent fight in the state of Galmudug.

Al-Shabaab militants have earlier suffered a heavy defeat in Puntland region, and later on fled to Galmudug with the aim to carry out their brutal acts against the civilians.

Guled called on the people of Galmudug to continue to take part in the wider military operation against Al-Shabaab across the country, despite the victory of flushing them out from the Galmudug territory. (Xinhua)

(27) New Slovak....

According to the coalition agreement, priorities in the health care system should include stricter supervision, the improvement in health care services, transparent financial management, fully operational DRG (Diagnoses Related Groups) and eHealth systems.

These points are crucial for medical associations. (Xinhua)

US Navy's 7th Fleet Flagship Arrives in Sri Lanka to Further Strengthen Ties

COLOMBO - The U.S. 7th Fleet flagship "USS Blue Ridge" arrived in the Colombo Port on Saturday in order to further strengthen the partnership between the U.S. and Sri Lanka.

The U.S. Embassy in Colombo in a statement said that the visit is the first by a U.S. Navy ship since October 2011 and builds upon last month's Partnership Dialogue in Washington D.C., where both nations pledged to strengthen maritime security cooperation efforts in the Indian Ocean Region in order to counter piracy, provide humanitarian assistance and ensure free and safe navigation in the region's vital shipping lanes.

"A strong relationship between United States and Sri Lanka will help foster greater stability, security, prosperity and a rules-based order for the Indo-Pacific region and around the world," U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka Atul Keshap said.

"This U.S. Navy ship visit demonstrates the U.S. commitment to partners such as Sri Lanka." The Blue Ridge team consists of more than 900 sailors, who will interact with their Sri Lanka Navy counterparts, experience Sri Lanka's vibrant culture, and engage with its people. The sailors will also use their shore leave to volunteer at a community center in Sri Lanka by refurbishing its walls and furniture, building playground equipment and serving food to the needy. (Xinhua)

UN Chief Shines Light on African Diaspora's Legacy

UNITED NATIONS - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on

Friday highlighted the African diaspora's contributions to society, including culture, medicine, science and spirituality, as the global community gathered to honor the millions of Africans forcibly exploited by slavery.

"The dynamic culture and traditions of Africa continue to enrich life in the countries that were once involved in the transatlantic slave trade," the secretary-general said in a message for the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Every year since 2007, the UN observes the International Day on March 25 as a tribute to the more than 15 million men, women, and children who suffered and died during the more than 400-year transatlantic slave trade, the largest forced migration in history.

The International Day also aims at raising awareness about the dangers of racism and prejudice today.

This year's theme is "Remember Slavery: Celebrating the Heritage and Culture of the African Diaspora and its Roots".

On Dec. 17, 2007, the UN General Assembly designated March 25 as the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. It was first observed in 2008. (Xinhua)

Argentine President Envisions More U.S. Investment Following Obama's Visit

BUENOS AIRES - Argentine President Mauricio Macri said Friday that "an enormous wave of investment from the United States" would come following U.S. President Barack Obama's just-concluded visit to the country.

"In the next two years, we will see a growing wave of investment from the United States toward Argentina," Macri said in an interview with local radio station Mitre, adding that the investment will be made in such areas as renewable energy, mining, tourism, petrochemicals and software.

"This is an enormous investment trend from the United States, which will be added to that from China...and to that from Europe, with whom we are restarting relations," Macri said. Obama paid a state visit to Argentina on Wednesday and Thursday, which coincided with the 40th anniversary of the U.S.-supported military coup that began a seven-year crackdown on labor unions and leftist opponents.

Meanwhile, the two countries decided to enhance their trade relations, which are currently at their lowest point in 20 years.

Macri said he had discussed with Obama how Argentine products, such as meat, pears, honey, lemons and tea, could best gain access to the U.S. market. "We are working on an agenda to achieve greater bilateral trade," Macri said. (Xinhua)

Blasts Rock Badghis, Zabul

QALA-I-NAW/QALAT/KAN-DAHAR CITY - At least two civilians and three policemen have been killed and wounded in separate landmine blasts, with three terrorist groups busted by the spyservice, officials said on Saturday.

A landmine explosion hit two motorcyclists in the Qadis district of northwestern Badghis province at around 6:30am on Saturday. One wounded motorcyclist was evacuated to hospital and his condition is said to be stable.

The roadside bomb had been planted by the insurgents to target governmental vehicles, the district police chief, Maj. Abdul Hakim Sabiri, told Pajhwok Afghan News. Separately, another landmine went off in southern Zabul province, killing one policeman on Friday, said Col. Ghulam Jilani Farahi, the deputy police chief. The incident in Mizan district wounded two others. (Pajhwok)