

(1) Uzbekistan...

President Ghani, meanwhile, appreciated Uzbekistan's role in Afghanistan, especially in the implementation of economic and infrastructural projects agreed between the two countries during his visit to Samarkand in December 2017.

The agreements were signed during Ghani's visit to Uzbekistan include a bilateral cooperation agreement and 20 other agreements in different areas including economic, transit, security, electricity, agriculture, health, and higher education.

Ghani said the main focus is on boosting joint cooperation in the region and that this will create stability in the region.

He welcomed Uzbekistan's willingness for hosting peace talks and said that Samarkand is a joint cultural heritage of the two countries.

According to Presidential Palace, Afghan and Uzbek officials will sign cooperation agreements on mining, textile, information exchange on customs and security.

The Uzbek delegation also met National Security Advisor Hamdullah Mohib and discussed bilateral relations, regional issues, security, the peace process, and counterterrorism efforts, the National Security Council said in a statement.

In his meeting with Mohib, Kamilov said Uzbekistan supports an Afghan-led peace process and that his country is ready to host any peace meeting on Afghanistan. (Tolo news)

(2) Probe on Allegations...

had changed their serial numbers. They also changed the polling center code and prepared a new result sheet," she said.

"We want this case to be handled as soon as possible and the court to issue its verdict on it. Then we will accept the final results," said Abdul Qader Zazai Watandost, former secretary of parliament.

A number of Kabul residents, meanwhile, urged judicial institutions to address the fraud allegations against the former election commissioners.

"In order to put an end to the confusion among the public and to pave the way for the new parliament to start its work, we request the AGO to wrap up the assessment of the case soon and share the outcome with the people," said Sayed Hafiz, a Kabul resident.

"I call on the Attorney General's Office to complete its work in the near future because the people are waiting," said Jamila, a Kabul resident. This comes after new commissioners were appointed for the two election commissions in a bid to hold transparent and fair presidential elections.

Vacant Posts In Independent Election Commission

An election commissioner, Mohammad Abdullah, said dozens of posts, including the positions of deputies of the IEC secretariat and some provincial chiefs, have remained vacant after a change in the leadership of the two election commission.

"The hiring process faces major challenges in the election commission. At least 180 posts among them grade 1 to 4 are being run by the acting chiefs and these vacancies should be announced to fill them. Based on the amendment in the election law, a new mechanism should be created for filling the vacant posts. We outlined a mechanism on March 24 and sent it to the reforms commission," said Abdullah. "From amongst 108 posts, over half of them are being run by caretakers."

Farid Ahmad, a spokesman for the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission, said they are prepared to start appointment process for vacant posts in the election commission.

"Our preparations are completed to start the recruitment process for vacant posts in the election commission," Ahmad said. "We are prepared to start the process whenever the election commission shows its readiness for it. We are shortlisting

18 of the posts and we will move forward the recruitment process once the election commission approves on the procedure." (Tolo news)

(3) Dostum Vows...

regarding peace talks saying nothing dangerous would happen.

Earlier, Dostum arrived in Balkh province after two months outside the country. (Pajhwok)

(4) USAID Hosts...

facilitated learning opportunities for thousands of young women and strengthened their soft skills to be young and capable leaders."

Between September 2014 and September 2018, more than 6,000 girls and young women graduated from the Royesh program and over 16,000 women graduated from the Jawana program. The programs provided the young women with the necessary work and life skills to help them build a future. By the end of the program, more than 25,000 women and girls will benefit from the WLD programs. (PR)

(5) Violence Against...

divorce, denying alimony, murder and some other violent crimes compared to similar incidents happened in the previous year.

Prosecutor Niyaz Mohammad Rasekh said 31 incidents of violence against women were registered with them last year.

Four incidents of suicide, four incidents of sexual attack, one incident of murder, three incidents of harassment, six of torture were among the incidents transferred to the appellant court after investigation.

It is worth mentioning that similar incidents of violence take place in other provinces of the country besides Samangan.

Roya Dadras, spokesperson for the Ministry of Women Affairs, said 5,910 incidents of violence against women from capital Kabul and province had been registered with them in the first nine months of last year.

She said the registered incident included, forced marriage, torture, murder, sexual attack, denying alimony.

She said most of the violent incident staged against women included torture which was accounted for 1,103 with most of these incident happened in Heart, Takhar, Baghlan, Samangan, Jawzjan and Balkh provinces.

Reasons of violence

Samangan Women Affairs director said that war, poverty, illiteracy, culture of patriarchy and bad traditions were reasons of violence against the gender in the country.

"Islam respects the rights of women and puts them high and those who value women's rights, God has a special award for them," she said.

Shams Rahman Frotan, an Islamic scholar, said public awareness programs about women's rights should increase in the country. He said most of violence against women cases resulted from people's lack of awareness about women's rights in Islam.

He said people should not treat women violently because it was against the teachings of Islam.

He said Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W) had told Muslims to be kind and gentle to their women. "In the Holy Quran, God says you should treat your women the good way," Frotan added.

Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W) never raised his hand against women and even he did not speak with them in loud voice, he said.

"Woman is mother and we should care about them, our Prophet valued the importance of mother three times more than the father, the Prophet said that if a person raised three girls and trained them, that person would be with him in the heaven," he said.

Zia Gul Naseri, a women's rights activist in Samangan, also said that the conflict, poverty, lack of awareness about women's rights and lack of law enforcement were reasons behind violence against women.

She said people should be provided with awareness about women's

rights according to Islam, the law should be enforced and the issue of women's rights added to the curriculum. (Pajhwok)

(6) Half of Afghans...

One of the most crucial factors determining the level of poverty of children is the education level of their parents.

The statement came after the country has seen its rapidly deteriorating economy in recent years, in addition to the worsening security situation. (Xinhua)

(7) Afghan Forces...

and Abdul Haq Omeri traveled with an Army vehicle to the highway where they met many Army soldiers who said the highway is under their control.

Noor Mohammad, 38, who serves in the Afghan National Army ranks in Dand Aw Patan district, said he lost one of his comrades in operation for clearing the highway of militants last year.

"He had a marvelous personality and was a talented boy. May the Almighty Allah forgive him. He lost his life just in this war front," said Noor Mohammad, remembering his friend who was killed in an operation against the Taliban.

Mohammad's friend, Noorullah, an Army soldier, said that he has not seen his family for a long time.

"My family and the children are missing me. I miss them too," said Noorullah.

"They (Taliban) are preparing from now on and they place mines in some areas. Their preparations will increase as the weather is warming," said Zakaria, 29, an Army soldier in Khost.

Every soldier in the area has their own stories.

"I still have six or seven months to return home and get married. If peace comes, I will do it soon and I will not waste the time," said Baz Mohammad, another soldier.

The Nahri area, which is the connecting point between Khost and Paktia provinces, was the last stop of the forces. A year ago, they had had to fight the Taliban to get to the area but now they reach there in a few hours of drive. (Tolo news)

(8) IEC Work Process...

for the presidential, provincial councils, district councils and Ghazni parliamentary elections which all will be held on the same day.

Election commentators said that the IEC does not have the budget yet and that lacks the experience to hire its employees.

"These two issues have caused the IEC to fail to recruit employees," said Daoud Ali Najafi, former head of IEC Secretariat.

It comes as Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC) is expected to finalize the assessment of complaints about parliamentary elections in Nangarhar, Takhar and Kunduz provinces in coming days and refer it to the IEC. (ATN)

(9) Single Source...

services to the public and hoped the future government would prioritize the public health sector's development.

He said natural disasters, people's displacement had a key role in spreading diseases which fueled poverty among people.

Low awareness among people about diseases was one of the main problems in the fight against health issues, he said. (Pajhwok)

(10) Taliban not Allowing...

the provincial capital, had been closed since long ago due heavy snowfall and the government had so far taken no measures to reopen the routes.

Meanwhile, Suhanullah Naibi, a member of the provincial council, told Pajhwok it was nine months ago when Patu district was created, but still the Taliban had a strong presence in some parts of the town.

He also blamed the government for not paying attention to the district's security situation and militants' presence would increase soon in the

area with change in the weather.

Meanwhile, provincial police chief Brig. Gen. Ghulam Sakhi Ghafari said favorable weather would allow security forces to clear of all places threatened by insurgents.

The Taliban have not yet commented in this regard. (Pajhwok)

(11) Kandahar Dry...

water and electricity shortages were resolved and the agriculture system modernized and made more professional.

However, he said some dry and fresh fruits from Kandahar export to foreign countries were exported as Indian and Pakistani products.

He hoped the opening of new routes would help the Afghan products reach many countries as local brand. In this regard, the opening of the lapis lazuli route has given birth to new hopes and expectations. Via the new trans-national route, Afghan fruits and other items would reach many countries, he hoped.

He also termed the Chabahar Port as vital for export of local items but said international sanctions on Iran were affecting trade through Chahabar port.

He termed air corridors as important for export of fresh fruits but said due to shortage of cargo planes, sometimes traders incurred losses.

He urged the government to focus more on land routes rather than air corridors because the latter were expensive.

Gardeners and fresh and dried fruits traders said if the government paid attention to their problems and helped them find markets for their products, then the exports volume would be increased and the economic growth expedited.

Qutratullah, who owns a fig garden in Shah Walikot district, said gardeners suffered from too many problems including security threats during harvest of their produce.

He said the gardening system could be developed if the government provided facilities to their orchard owners.

He also urged the government to construct some cold storages in order to enable farmers to preserve their fruits for good market.

Traders say some facilities have been made available by the government but they still were struggling with issues concerning transit trade and finding international markets. A dried fruit trader Haji Hayatullah told Pajhwok that the inauguration of air corridors with foreign countries was a comprehensive achievement, but lack of enough cargo flights delayed their exports. (Pajhwok)

(12) MSF Hands Over...

maternity services and treatment protocols, increasing the medical services available so that fewer patients had to be referred elsewhere. As well as working in the hospital, from 2014MSF also ran mobile clinics carrying out antenatal and postnatal consultations, vaccinating women and children, and screening for malnutrition.

From mid-2018, MSF began gradually handing over the responsibility of various departments to the Ministry of Public Health, with specialists supporting the ministry's staff to ensure that they had the knowledge they needed. This work continued over the course of the year and into 2019. At the end of December 2018 responsibility for the outpatient department of the hospital was handed back to the Ministry of Public Health.

"Now that we're leaving, we're counting on the Ministry of Public Health to maintain the hospital's high level of medical care", says Coakley. "Women must continue to be able come to Ahmad Shah Baba for help with complicated deliveries."

Over the years,MSF teams repaired and refurbished parts of the hospital.Improvements were made to the emergency department, and to the laboratory and X-ray services. An operating theatre, a small inpatient department, new women's and pae-

diatric outpatient departments, and a new maternity ward were all built. A new central heating system was also installed.

While one of MSF's projects is coming to an end,we remain committed to the people of Afghanistan and teams continue to work in six projects around the country. In Kabul itself MSF continues to support the Ministry of Public Health in Dasht e-Barchi maternity, and there are also projects in Helmand, Kandahar, Herat, Khost and Kunduz. (Pajhwok)

(13) Flood-Affected...

"At least 80 percent of houses in flood-affected districts in Herat has been destroyed," said Mohammad Hanif Arbabzada, a Herat resident.

"We lost our home and our lands," said Sher Ahmad, a Herat resident. Another Herat resident Nasima said she is the head of a five-member family and that the flash floods destroyed their house. She said that they need help.

Head of the Natural Disasters Management Authority in Herat, Hamidullah Mubariz, said dozens of families have been displaced due to the flash floods.

"Efforts are under way in 27 points to control the floods and reduce the vulnerability of areas," he said.

Herat governor's spokesman Jailani Farhad said that at least 10 people were killed in the flash floods.

"Unfortunately, this year, we suffered huge losses besides destruction of agricultural lands, farms and homes. The relevant offices has been directed for provide required assistance to the affected families," Farhad said.

The flash floods in Herat started last week on Thursday following heavy rains and the local government announced emergency status in vulnerable areas. (Tolo news)

(14) Qatar Reacts

militants including their commander Zalmi alias Sangari were killed and 7 others were wounded

The security guards of Gen. Dostum also arrested one of the commanders of Taliban and have taken him with themselves to Shebarghan city, the 209th Shaheen Corps said. (KP)

(15) PC Members

Local officials confirmed that Taliban militants have taken the control of the district and have killed at least 10 security force members.

Mirza Mohammad Yarmand, former Deputy Minister of Interior, said the district has a strategic location as it connects Faizabad, the capital city of Badakhshan, with other parts of the province.

"The district is evacuated. Security forces are fighting in surrounding areas. Around 15 people have been killed," Yarmand said.

Arghanj Khwa is the first district of Badakhshan fallen to the Taliban in 2019. However, in 2018, three districts of the province - Kohistan, Warduj and Yumgan - had fallen to the Taliban.

Taliban in a statement claimed that they took control of the district and killed 13 security force members, including two police chiefs. (Tolo news)

(16) Govt Criticized...

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(17) 25 Taliban Militants...

were also carried out in Musa Qal'ah district of Helmand which left 8 Taliban fighters dead.

In the meantime, the sources said an airstrike in Shah Wali Kot district of Kandahar province killed 3 Taliban fighters.

The anti-government armed militants including Taliban have not commented regarding the operations and airstrikes so far. (KP)