

(1) IEC Prepares ...

"It is possible that some minor changes could happen in election schedule, but our main focus is to hold the election in 2018. That also depends on when we receive the necessary equipment and facilities," Badghisi added.

The delay in appointing a new chairman for IEC has also led to criticism of the government.

"Unfortunately, the main problem is in the National Unity Government because different parties have shares in the government and they have different views. Those variations in opinions could cause the process to be delayed," MP Gulalai Noor Safi said. (Tolonews)

(2) Ex-Blackwater ...

troop levels instead.

Under the plan, Prince wants his Hong Kong-listed company -- Frontier Services Group -- to provide logistics support to the extractive firms with secure transportation. (Pajhwok)

(3) Turkmenistan ...

cooperation with Turkmenistan in energy and transit areas and hoped the commissions of both countries would discharge their responsibility in this regard.

The Turkmen foreign minister said his country was ready to provide more scholarship to Afghan students and reduce the price of electricity to Afghanistan.

He said his country's leadership has decided to sell one unit of electricity against two cents to northwestern provinces of Afghanistan to facilitate people there.

Meredow extended invitation to Abdullah to officially visit Ashgabat, which the CEO accepted without specifying a date for the visit.

Bilateral cooperation, Azuru Corridor and the Kabul process came up for discussion at the meeting, the statement said. (Pajhwok)

(4) ADB Approves ...

completed," the ADB country director in Afghanistan Thomas Panella said.

According to the Asian Development Bank, with the help of the bank's new budget, 151 kilometers of the final ring road from the Qaisar area to the Dar-e-Boom area in Badghis will be constructed by using this fund.

The budget for the remaining part of the ring road was approved last week, the ADB official confirmed.

Officials from Ministry of Commerce and Industries said considering the opening of the international transport corridor to Afghanistan, the completion of the transport infrastructure is crucial for the country.

The officials said working groups of the Lapis Lazuli Corridor will soon start working to expand the business route to the world.

"It is possible and we can travel to the four connecting countries with the vehicles we have. We would also have this capacity in Torghundi and Aqina ports to provide facilities for unloading and loading of foreign vehicles transporting goods to these ports," said Sayed Yahya Akhlaqi, head of the transit and commercial department of the ministry.

Analysts said government needs to provide the ground and ensure the safety of major projects in the country, particularly in northern parts of Afghanistan.

"We need to strengthen domestic capacities, especially security in north of Afghanistan. We need to encourage Pakistanis and Tajiks to build their own business in the conjunction with our capacities," said Shabir Bashiri, an economic affairs analyst.

Afghanistan's ring road is part of the 3,360 kilometers of main highway project, connecting 16 provinces and major cities such as Kabul, Mazar, Herat, Kandahar, Ghazni and Jalalabad. (Tolonews)

(5) Religious Madrassas ...

for many years.

"Pakistani madrassas have been used for promoting insurgency for so many years. The war that is ongoing in Afghanistan is fueled by fighters that come from Pakistani madrassas. If Pakistan takes practical actions to review these madrassas, it is good and we also expect that work should be done to prevent Pakistani madrassas from being centers for strengthening insurgency and extremism," the Chief Executive Officer's deputy spokesman, Jawed Faisal said.

Currently, over 200 000 madrassas have been registered in Pakistan and hundreds of others are not registered. Over 2.5 million students are learning in these madrassas.

"Arab countries' intelligence and Pakistan intelligence have ISI mullahs such as Sami-ul-Haq and Faiz-ul-Rahman. To create instability in Afghanistan and because of Pakistan's deep strategic goals in Afghanistan, they want to create a force out of politics under the religious structure. That led to the establishment of madrassas to train mullahs,"

former deputy minister to interior ministry Mirza Mohammad Yarmand said.

"It does not need a review. Pakistan should immediately take actions to eliminate the centers of insurgency training which are a threat to the world," MP Fatima Aziz said.

Experts say that Pakistan's history is bound with the Islamic extremism and that it is difficult to believe that Pakistan would close these madrassas. (Tolonews)

(6) Ghani Stresses ...

He reiterated that Afghanistan should turn into an exporter country in the future.

Last week, investors said they are faced with lack of electricity and that the problem has affected the domestic products. In response to these complaints, Ghani vowed to overcome lack of electricity in the near future.

"The issue of power shortage will be resolved within the upcoming two years. Afghanistan will be self-reliant in terms of providing power within the coming four years," Ghani said.

He added: "We will address insecurity and we will eliminate land grabbing. We will rule the law on those who thought they will not be held accountable."

More than 100 local companies attended in the three-day expo which kicked off last week on Tuesday.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industries held the National Industry Expo under the brand "It is Great, It is Made in Afghanistan".

The event was aimed at introducing the local products and finding markets for them. (Tolonews)

(7) Kabul Expo...

with more inclusive plans to strengthen the market for their products.

More 100 local companies and producers displayed their products in the exhibition.

"We are pleased that the people warmly welcomed the move. We again call on them to prefer domestic products as it helps to move the country towards self-reliance," said Abdul Rasoul, an investor.

"People have praised our products. Hundreds of people consulted us over the past few days," said Shamsullah an investor.

Organizers of the exhibition said security threats still remain a big challenge on way of investments in the country.

"We call on the president (Ashraf Ghani) to ensure the safety of investors and meanwhile arrest and punish kidnapers," said Sayed Noor Ali Shah Ahmadi, an organizer of the exhibition.

"I have used local products and they are very good in terms of quality compared to Iranian and Pakistani products, but it depends on the people to use as it helps the national investors," said Kanishka, a resident of Kabul. (Tolonews)

(8) China Alerts ...

increase security awareness, strengthen internal precautions, reduce trips outside as much as possible, and avoid crowded public spaces."

The latest threat alert by the Chinese embassy has been issued as the country is busy working on a large project in Pakistan involving thousands of Chinese workers.

This comes as the anti-government armed militant groups have been attempting to carry out attacks in the key parts of Pakistan.

The media wing of the Pakistani military earlier said a large cache of weapons including rockets and missiles were discovered from a location in Khyber Agency during an operation of the security forces.

Earlier, a group of armed men launched a coordinated attack on a training institute in Peshawar city of Pakistan that left at least nine people dead and several others wounded. (KP)

(9) Afghan Govt. ...

to the MPs, the inability to make decisions and the lack of solidarity and cooperation between the Muslim nations, are the reasons that Trump was encouraged to make such decision.

"If you think the powerful (countries) will be stopped by shouting, it will never happen," MP Abdul Rauf Anami said. "America is a hypocrite, America is a bully, American is the big devil," MP Mohammad Sarwar Osmani Farahi said.

Trump on Thursday night announced that he officially recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. His decision was denounced by many of countries. (Tolonews)

(10) Daesh 'Could...

material to boost their financial support," Sadaf said.

"We have eighteen kinds of mines, including emerald, ruby, gold, diamonds and oil. We have the best mineral resources of Afghanistan in this district, which are under the control of Daesh."

The member of the provincial council said Daesh can fund and equip itself more effectively than at any other time

by extraction and smuggling of these minerals.

Meanwhile, local officials in Jawzjan acknowledged the large Daesh presence in the district, but said the group is not technically able to extract materials and gems from the mines in the area.

"There is no report of how much of the materials they (Daesh) can extract," Jawzjan Governor Lotfullah Azizi told TOLONews. "It is not possible for them to illegally extract the mineral resources in the (Darzab) district because the area is limited for them and they cannot operate in a wide region." (Tolonews)

(11) Sexual Harassment ...

families are forced into begging or working as labourers are faced with sexual harassment," he said.

Tanwir alleged parents cared less about such children, who could not earn enough and were easily trapped for sexual harassment.

He said around 20,000 children (or two percent of the entire population of Kandahar) were involved in hard labour in the province.

Most of children aged between 15 and 18 are engaged in eight types of hard labour -- day labour, working at construction sites, collecting waste, begging and some other tough jobs.

He called scavenging an irritating job for children as it damaged their health. Concrete steps were needed to prevent it, he stressed.

Many children accepted hard labour due to poverty of their families, something linked to war and insecurity that also took lives of many parents, Tanwir said.

Many children were lost to the war and explosions while others were sent into armed conflict, the AIHRC official claimed.

He said they had registered two cases of children working in police ranks and one of the child policemen was recently injured in the Shah Walikot district of Kandahar. Militants also use children as fighters.

He said children's education had generally improved but 40 percent of minors were still deprived of it.

Girls either had no access to education in districts or were ordered by families to stop attending schools due to cultural restrictions.

It was the responsibility of the government to encourage society to support children and provide them education and healthy training instead of sending them into hard labour, he believed.

Fazal Albari Baryali, provincial information and culture director, also expressed concern over children's situation. He said there was need for national programmes and mechanisms to improve children's situation.

It was everyone's job to help prevent violence against children and provide them with education, he said, asking the government to invest in training of children and public awareness programmes.

A civil society activist, Ahmad Shah Spar, agreed children had been affected by decades of conflict in Afghanistan.

Insecurity, poverty, lack of parental guidance and other problems were being experienced by children, who were forced into hard labour and even crimes, he explained.

Nazir Ahmad is a 14 years old boy forced into child labour due to the poor economic condition of his family.

After the death of his father in a bomb blast, he has been the only breadwinner for his family -- two sisters and a brother. Ahmad has been working in an auto repair shop to support his family.

He told Pajhwok that despite doing a hard job, the shop owner humiliated him with abusive words and even thrashed him at times.

The boy complained he felt even more lacerated when some people asked him for sexual favours.

Ahmad said he was very interested in going to school but he could not because he was the only one in the family to work and earn. (Pajhwok)

(12) Corruption ...

being back in 2011 in compliance with the orders of the then president and consensus of international community.

Shaker said the MEC research was completed in six month from March to August, during which 380 consumers and 138 employees of DABS were interviewed.

"The result of these interviews show massive corruption happen in distribution of electricity, distribution of meters, power consumption, and revenue of the DABS," he said.

Shaker said selling hydro-power at the price of thermal electricity, installing more than one metre for one family, electricity consumption without meters, the consumption of industrial electricity and the rate of local electricity, existence of low quality electric meters and non-availability of quality laboratories to check the quality of meters were some of the factors that paved the way for massive corruption in the power utility. He presented examples by saying: "If

an individual wants to install an electric meter at his home,

"With bribe one can get a meter at local rate for industry. In addition, there are people who consume electricity without electric meter from the main cable and the number of these people is in thousands."

Shaker said electricity wastage in the country was 37 percent while in Pakistan it was 17 and in Iran 14 percent.

He said average demand of electricity from DABS accounted for 7.7 billion afghanis, in which 40 percent electricity was supplied to residences, 29 percent to government institutions, 26 percent to the industry, 4,5 percent to mosques and religious institutions and nearly 40 percent was consumed by powerful and government leaders.

He added since 2002 up to date 220 billion afghanis had been provided to the electricity sector of the country, of which 12.5 billion afghanis had been acknowledged by DABS.

However billion of afghanis had been missing and the company was unaware about it, he said.

Wahid Tawheedi, DABS spokesman, said every allegation leveled against the power utility should be supported by documents. (Pajhwok)

(13) Pakistan Threatens ...

posing threat to the Pakistani government.

The director of the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has warned that the United States will take necessary steps if Pakistan fails to destroy terror safe havens in its soil.

Ahead of Secretary of Defense James Mattis visit to Pakistan, Mike Pameo had said the defense secretary James Mattis was travelling to Pakistan to "make clear the president's intent" and "will deliver the message that we would love you to do that."

"And that the safe haven inside of Pakistan has worked to the detriment of our capacity to do what we needed to do in Afghanistan," he added. (KP)

(14) Equipments Seized ...

parts of the country, located close to capital Kabul.

The anti-government armed militants are actively operating in its various districts and often carry out insurgency activities, mainly in the districts lying along the highway connecting Kabul with the southeastern and southern provinces.

A top leader of the notorious Haqqani terrorist network was killed along with dozens of other militants in an operation in this province late last month. (KP)

(15) SAARC ...

Dr. Sunil Motiwal, CEO of SDF, said that "SDF, as an umbrella financial institution for SAARC project and programs is fully committed to promote regional integration and economic cooperation among the SAARC Member States through project funding and collaboration." (PR)

(16) Buzkashi ...

resident of Kabul, said.

"It is just for fun. One wins and another loses. In the next turn, another one wins and another loses," Khalid, a resident of Kabul, said.

The Buzkashi competitions are held once a week in this part of Kabul. (Tolonews)

(17) 31 Rebels ...

foreign militants wounded.

He said 10 bunkers and some vehicles belonging to militants were also destroyed while weapons and ammunition captured by security forces during the still underway offensive.

On the other hand, Zabihullah Mujahid, a Taliban's spokesman, claimed 10 security forces had been killed and five others wounded during the operation.

He claimed the foreign forces targeted civilian homes and only two rebels had been killed and three others wounded. (Pajhwok)

(18) Fuel, Sugar ...

Sezar Ahmad, a gas dealer in Taimani area, said the rate of gas remained steady at 60afas a kilogram.

In food items, the price of sugar slightly decreased.

Food Traders Union head Fazal Rahman said the price of 49-kg of Pakistani sugar decreased from 1,870afas to 1,850afas.

But he said 50-kg Kazakhstani flour cost 1, 200afas, 24-kg Pakistan rice 1,850 and 16-kg tin of Khurshid ghee 1,070afas, the same rates of last week's.

Meanwhile, Noor Ahmad Khairkha, a tea seller in Kabul Mandavi, said a kilogram of Indonesian green tea cost 280afas and the same amount of African black tea 300afas -- same prices as last week's. Ahmad Wali Panjsheri, who owns a grocery store in Dahn-i-Bagh area, sold a 49-kg bag of sugar for 1,900afas, a 16-litre tin of ghee for 1,200afas, a 50-kg sack of Kazakhstani flour for 1,300, 24-kg rice for 2,100afas, a kilo of green tea for 300afas and the same quantity of black tea for 350afas.

The price of gold also remains unchanged. Haji Fawad Ahmad Salehzada, a jeweler in Timor Shahi area, said one gram of Arabian gold cost 2,350afas and the same quantity of Russian variety 1,900afas.

According to moneychangers' union in Sara-i-Shazada, one US dollar accounted for 69.05afas and 1,000 Pakistani rupees for 634afas against last week's rates of 68.85afas and 635afas respectively. (Pajhwok)

(19) Tajikistan Nationals ...

said last week that "This operation is a testament to the real growth the Afghan forces have achieved over the past year," he said.

Gen. Nicholson further added "It is also another example of the lethality of the undefeated Afghan Special Forces and the success of working side by side with our Afghan partners."

The Afghan security authorities said last Tuesday that a top leader of the Al-Qaeda terrorist network has been killed along with at least 80 other militants during the operations of the Afghan and US forces.

The Afghan Intelligence, National Directorate of Security (NDS), the militants were killed during the operations conducted in Ghazni, Zabul, and Paktia provinces. (KP)

Iraqi PM Declares 'End Of War Against Daesh' In Iraq

KABUL - Iraqi Prime Minister says the enemy wanted to kill Iraq's civilization, but the Iraqis have won through their unity and determination.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi on Saturday announced the end of a three-year war by Iraqi forces to drive Daesh militants, the so-called Islamic State militant group, out of the country, AFP reported.

"Our forces are in complete control of the Iraqi-Syrian border and I therefore announce the end of the war against Daesh (IS)," Abadi told a conference in Baghdad.

"Our enemy wanted to kill our civilization, but we have won through our unity and our determination. We have triumphed in little time," he said.

Daesh seized vast areas north and west of Baghdad in a lightning offensive in 2014, endangering the very existence of the Iraqi state.

"I announce the good news: the liberation by Iraqi forces of the whole of the Iraqi-Syrian border," the prime minister told the conference organized by the Iraqi journalists' union, as mentioned in the AFP report.

This comes after in November Iran's President Hassan Rouhani announced the end of Daesh's self-proclaimed caliphate in Iraq and Syria.

In a speech on national TV, Rouhani said: "Today with God's guidance and the resistance of people in the region we can say that this evil has either been lifted from the head of the people or has been reduced."

"Of course, the remnants will continue but the foundation and roots have been destroyed," he said. (Tolonews)

Trump decision hurts Muslims around world

KABUL - Afghanistan has communicated its profound concern through diplomatic channels to the American leadership over their decision of moving the US embassy to Jerusalem and officially recognizing the contested city as Israel's capital, the Presidential Palace said on Saturday.

A statement from the Presidential Palace said the Kabul administration conveyed its concern about the US decision by understanding the deep concerns of the Afghan Muslim nation and the Muslim world.

The statement said the US announcement had hurt the feelings of Muslims around the world and would jeopardize the peace process in the Middle East.

"Therefore, any kind of actions taken unilaterally and without engagement of Palestine will not produce positive results," it added.

It said the National Unity Government and the Afghan Muslim nation together with Muslims of the world wanted the right of Palestinians for an independent state to be ensured. "The status of Jerusalem, which has been the first Qiblah for the Muslims, and is of high respect and importance for other religions as well, shall be recognized, in accordance with International Laws, resolutions of the United Nations and demands of the Muslim world." It further added: "Fortunately, there is an international consensus that a unilateral decision can't be made on Jerusalem and that a permanent solution to the issue should be sought in a comprehensive peace framework." In order to ensure enduring and fair peace in Palestine, the unity government promised to continuously support this process in partnership with Islamic world and the international community under the framework of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the United Nations, it concluded. (Pajhwok)