

**(1) First Lady ...**

from around the country, she urged the youth to build their self-confidence and use their abilities to make a better future for Afghanistan.

"We have good memories and the country's citizens [Afghans] have more talent. You should believe in your talents and stand on your own feet," Rula Ghani said.

The exhibition was held at the Ministry of Higher Education where students from different universities displayed their projects in information technology - including software programs and hardware gadgets.

Zahra and Fatima, students from the Computer Science Faculty of Kabul University, said they have developed a software program for the election system, which could help the voting process and prevent fraud.

They also called on government to support them in their efforts. This comes after the Ministry of Higher Education announced Thursday that it will enroll final semester students in government offices as interns. (Tolonews)

**(2) President Supports...**

Habibzai, acting mayor of Kabul, said parallel development of cities was necessary for the effective implementation of the 10-year uplift plan and preventing displacement.

Speaking on the occasion, the president noted substantial progress in the urban sector over the past two years. To sustain the momentum, ongoing urban projects be completed on priority, he said.

He linked intensifying insecurity in the capital from surrounding districts. The president stressed even development of districts to control insecurity and population growth in Kabul.

"In the area of infrastructure development, we should have plans that don't need to be changed in future; instead they should be sustained and development," the president added. (Pajhwok)

**(3) Zakhilwal Wants...**

from his seminary. Zakhilwal also met Mehmood Khan Achakzai and Senator Usman Kakar of the Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party, Aftab Khan Sherpao of the Qaumi Watan Party, Ghulam Ahmad Bilour and Afrasiab Khattak of the ANP, Sirajul Haq, Shahraz Khan and Bakhtyar Maani of Jamaat-i-Islami.

The newspaper said JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, who remained absent from the recent round of discussions, would be invited to attend the next meeting to be hosted by Aftab Sherpao in Islamabad.

One unnamed official told the daily Pakistani leaders suggested former President Hamid Karzai should visit Pakistan as a confidence-building measure. The diplomat reportedly agreed with the proposal. (Pajhwok)

**(4) U.S Forces ...**

and Afghanistan. Meanwhile, military commentator Mirza Mohammad Yarmand commented on NATO spokesman's remarks and said: "To defeat terrorists, Afghanistan needs regional and international cooperation. I don't think Pakistan will be honest in its commitments towards the anti-terror mission. Pakistan should close the illegal madrassas on its soil, if it actually wants to combat against terrorism."

According to Afghan security officials, a large number of Afghan and Pakistani Taliban entered Afghanistan - from Pakistan - this year and tried to transfer the Taliban's main council to Helmand, but they were failed.

"Taliban has been divided into many factions; therefore, it is a good opportunity for the Afghan government to invite the moderate Taliban groups to the peace table," university lecturer Qasim Wahidi said. NATO has said that the Taliban

made lots of efforts this year to take control of central cities of some provinces including Helmand, Kunduz, Uruzgan, Farah and few other provinces; however, the insurgent group failed in this bid. (Tolonews)

**(5) USAID Connects...**

interviews of my career. I was able to directly interact with three companies' employees," said Maryam Taraki, a training graduate and a senior student of English literature, who participated in the job fair.

Soft Skills is USAID-USWDP's thirty-hour training designed for senior and recent graduate students from target public universities on "Pre-employability" and "Personal Development" through University Career Centers.

These programs prepare students to more effectively compete in the job market. The USAID-USWDP project also provides computer training to better equip students with the essential technical and leadership skills.

In 2016, USAID-USWDP has trained 416) 1098 females, 682 males) students and placed 147) 304 females, 157 males) of them in internships and long-term jobs.

In 2017, USAID-USWDP intends to train 1000 more students and secure an additional 300 internships and long-term employment opportunities.

The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for more than 50 years." (PR)

**(6) US Reiterates ...**

forces are undermining the country's sovereignty and freedom of its politics as well as the government," he said.

"That is why there is a need for America and its allies to come to the table for direct talks with the Islamic Emirate (the Taliban) for negotiating an end to the occupation," he added said.

The National Unity Government (NUG) under Ghani and his Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah made new attempts to persuade the group to return to the peace table. But the Taliban, as in the past, responded to government's peace offer with suicide attacks and explosions in major Afghan towns and the talks never proved successful. (Tolonews)

**(7) Dostum ...**

Loya Jirga within one month. If the Loya Jirga approves the accusation by a two-thirds majority of votes, the President is then dismissed, and the case is referred to a special court.

The special court is composed of three members of the Wolesi Jirga, and three members of the Supreme Court appointed by the Loya Jirga and the Chair of the Meshrano Jirga.

The lawsuit is conducted by a person appointed by the Loya Jirga. In this situation, the provisions of Article 67 of this Constitution are applied.

AGO spokesman Jamshid Rasooli said the AGO had started work on the Dostum-Eshchi case with utmost transparency and care.

He did not deny or confirm sending a summons from AGO to the first VP office, but said the AGO had the right to call an accused or conduct inquiry against him.

He said he would not go into details given a sensitive nature of the case. (Pajhwok)

**(8) Media Outlets ...**

of parliament member Mir Wali (on Wednesday night), the media was not provided with necessary information. Government must ensure the implementation of documents it signs. Our local media always face problems when it comes to the issue of access to information," said NAI chairman Mujib Khelwatgar. President Ashraf Ghani has in the past himself pledged to ensure information is passed on accordingly.

It is important that the commission dealing with access to information is changed into

an institution so that we know that the information is not being withheld by certain individuals, said Ghani in one of his speeches. "Whenever we consult an institution regarding a particular topic, even for information which is not against national interests, it is not shared with us and also some information which is provided to us is not always completely true," said Mohammad Haleem Karimi, an Afghan journalist in Kabul.

"Whenever we work on a report, the first issue we face is that government institutions do not respond to our telephone enquiries, but when they do pick up the call, they hardly share any information with us," said another journalist, Sangar Ahmadi.

"The national unity government is firmly committed to the access of information for journalists, freedom of press and freedom of speech. But there are some important topics which need to be addressed. Some media outlets consult institutions for information which they are not responsible for. Secondly, some media outlets search for information and this takes time; thirdly the information which is of a legal, judicial and security institution nature, can't always be shared by institutions until they have completed a process," said deputy presidential spokesman Shahhussain Murtazawi.

But there are some concerns that the media itself is not interested in complaining about government's reluctance to share information.

"We have not received any kind of written complaint from media outlets; but in society we hear a lot of complaints which indicates that access to information is facing a major hurdle," said Ekram Afzali, head of the access to information oversight commission. (Tolonews)

**(9) Supreme Court...**

the Constitution and against parliamentary ethics. The Constitution has anticipated that the impeachment of ministers should be the authority of the Wolesi Jirga. Based on Articles 91 and 92 of the [Afghan] Constitution the Wolesi Jirga, considering its understanding of the situation, is allowed to decide on impeachment," said MP Abdul Qayum Sajjadi. (Tolonews)

**(10) Islamabad...**

Taliban and Haqqani network's senior leadership, retained freedom of action from safe havens inside Pakistan.

Following a counterinsurgency offensive by Pakistani security forces in the tribal region had forced a large number of terrorists to sneak into Afghanistan, the spokesman said.

Zakaria argued the number of senior commanders of Haqqani network, Taliban, Al Qaeda and other groups killed in Afghanistan this year itself told where the leaders of the terrorist outfits were currently based.

"We remain committed and extend all cooperation to the efforts towards bringing peace and stability in Afghanistan," the spokesman said, renewing Pakistan's offer to facilitate the Afghan peace process. (Pajhwok)

**(11) Kabul Summons...**

the Afghanistan government, the statement said.

Arifi insisted rocket firing into Afghanistan by Pakistani forces would further deteriorate relations between the two neighboring countries and lead to bilateral problems. (Pajhwok)

**(12) Minister Naderi...**

project includes 7 blocks consisting 266 apartments with 126 of them having 4 rooms, 140 apartments 3 rooms.

In his speech during the event, Minister Naderi said around AFN 250,000 to AFN 350,000 were received in extra from each of the apartment owners as he slammed the former officials for mismanagement and embezzlement of the funds.

He said the new administration of the ministry tasked the technical and legal teams to review all documents of the project after receiving repeated requests and

complaints from the tenants.

Naderi said the team found discrepancies in installment payments, lack of official list for apartment's areas and other necessary documents, illegal hand over of the apartments, and injustice, recklessness, and lack of responsibility against the people. (KP)

**(13) Recipient ...**

promotion to the rank of major from first lieutenant. The government was committed to investment in youths of the country.

The Overseas Sword is donated by Kuwait's Ministry of Defence in memory of Sheikh Ali Al Sabah, former defence minister. (Pajhwok)

**(14) Jamiat Criticize...**

to delegats at the conference and said his negotiations with Ghani over a more substantial role for the party in government were not finished and that they would continue discussions in this regard.

The gathering came a day after a number of influential Jamiat party figures gathered at the house of Ahmad Zia Massoud, a member of the party, and discussed ways to solve the party's internal disagreements. (Tolonews)

**(15) 18 Insurgents...**

the security forces organised the ambush early Friday in Baghlan-i-Markazi district."

Sibghatullah was allegedly involved in organising terrorist activities over the past few years in Baghlan-i-Markazi district and adjoining areas. (Pajhwok)

**(16) Azra Road...**

Nangarhar were trafficked through Azra to Ghani province, from where the narcotics were smuggled to Iran.

Given a shortage of security personnel in the district, smuggling through Azra could not be curbed, he argued. "I'm often told about the inadequate number of security forces, an issue that has been shared with the governor's office."

He stressed the need for a stop to the drug smuggling menace to improve the district's security. Abdul Wali Jakil, a provincial council member, also tied insecurity in Azra to drug smuggling. The Taliban earned more than 100 million afghanis annually through drug smuggling, he said.

The money was spent funding the war and construction of luxurious houses for Taliban leaders in Pakistan, he alleged, stressing a halt to drug smuggling to stabilise the district. Meanwhile, the governor's spokesman acknowledged thousands of kilograms of drugs were smuggling through Azra every year. Salim Saleh the security forces had frustrated four drug smuggling attempts in the town this year. (Pajhwok)

**(17) Fabrics Company ...**

company produced all types of clothes and people could obtain their favorite.

He urged people, particularly students, medical staff and security personnel to order uniforms at his company in order to promote domestic products. A civil society activist, Baz Mohammad Abid, also asked Afghans, particularly private school officials to make their uniforms in the Afghan Tailoring Company.

Private Schools Society (PSS) head in Nangarhar, Yawar Abbas Momand, assured the company's officials he would consult all private schools owners to make their uniforms by the Afghan Tailoring Company.

He said the Afghans should purchase domestic products even if they sell at higher prices compared to imported products. A worker at the company, Abdul Munib, who has been working as tailor from the past 18 years, said he had worked in many other areas, but it was his first time working in an Afghan company.

This is the first time a fabrics company has been opened in Nangarhar province. (Pajhwok)

**(18) Taliban Key...**

Khalil has also confirmed the report and contended that the "notorious Taliban commander Sibghatullah" was killed following ambush conducted by security forces in the wee hours of Friday and his body is with government troops serving in Baghlan. (Xinhua)

**(19) Car Accident ...**

non-government institutions have helped him," said Ahmad Wali Sarhadi, provincial representative of the Afghanistan Journalists Union. Journalists meanwhile said they face many challenges in the province.

According to statistics, in the last nine months one journalist has been shot dead and 25 other cases of violence against journalists have been reported. (Tolonews)

**(20) Taliban Set ...**

were captured after they left Maidan Shahr, the provincial capital, for Jalriz district.

The official said the sportsmen had been abducted in Noor Mohammadkhel area and shifted to an unknown location. He confirmed the detainees were freed on Wednesday.

The Taliban have not commented as yet on the development. The militants in the past too had kidnapped many people on the Maidan Shahr-Jalriz road. (Pajhwok)

**(21) Russia's Defense...**

On Thursday, Trump said in a tweet that the U.S. should "greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability until such time as the world comes to its senses regarding nukes," sparking speculations on a possible change of Washington's nuclear strategy under the upcoming Trump administration. (Xinhua)

**(22) US Democrats...**

tax returns and the committee's Republican Chairman Bob Corker immediately blasted Democrats for playing politics. (Xinhua)

**(23) British PM...**

while working to secure the best possible business links with the European Union and the world." May says she will trigger article 50, the two-year long mechanism to start the EU exit process, by the end of March 2017. (Xinhua)

**(24) Trump Urges ...**

territory. However, according to local media which cited sources, the vote had already been postponed. (Xinhua)

**(25) Putin Says ...**

of Assad. The next step for Syria would be a nationwide ceasefire, he said.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Gennady Gatilov said earlier on Friday he expected the talks in Astana to take place in the middle of January. (Reuters)

**(26) Kyrgyzstan, Iran...**

crime, arms smuggling, drug trafficking, and human trafficking, according to the statement. (Xinhua)

**(27) Business Council...**

trade potential exists between the two countries and that the bilateral trade is not reflective of the true trade potential.

The trade volume between the two countries was 3.92\$ million in 16-2015 after increasing from 2.98\$ million in the preceding year. (Monitoring Desk)

**German Consumer Climate Predicted to Rise Slightly in January 2017**

BERLIN - The German consumer climate is expected to have a strong start into the new year, with predicted overall reading at 9.9 points for January 2017 from 9.8 points in December 2016, market research group GfK reported on Friday.

According to GfK, economic expectations have increased slightly, while income expectations have seen significant growth. However, propensity

to buy has suffered moderate losses.

"Consumers are remaining optimistic as 2016 draws to a close," commented Rolf Buerkl, an analyst for GfK.

Buerkl said that consumers seem to be totally immune to a series of risk factors, such as the outcome of the U.S. presidential election, Brexit, the flare-up in the financial crisis in Italy following the failed referendum and the resignation of the prime minister, and the persistently high terror threat.

The GfK consumer climate survey has been conducted since 1980. Its findings are based on around 2,000 consumer interviews conducted each month on behalf of the European Commission, the executive body of the European Union. (Xinhua)

**Better Access to G20 Markets Boosts LDCs' Exports By 15 Pct: UN Report**

GENEVA - The world's poorest countries are barely engaging in global economy, but fully liberalizing trade for these countries into G20 markets could boost their exports by about 15 percent, according to a report released on Thursday by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

The Key Indicators and Trends in Trade Policy 2016 said that while the least developed countries (LDCs) account for about 12 percent of the world's population, their share in global exports stands at about 1 percent.

"We've seen some progress in the last decade, but the participation of LDCs in the global economy remains marginal," said Guillermo Valles, director of UNCTAD's Division on International Trade in Goods and Services and Commodities.

The report found that LDCs generally trade much less than the size of their economies would suggest. The export-to-GDP ratios of the 48 LDCs are on average about 25 percent, substantially less than the average for other developing countries of about 35 percent.

"Fully liberalising market access for LDCs and eliminating the negative trade effect of non-tariff measures on LDCs would increase their exports by about 15 percent," the report said. (Xinhua)

**US Companies in Brunei Expect More Cooperation with Chinese Financial Institutions: Ambassador**

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN - U.S. companies in Brunei are looking forward to having more cooperation with Chinese financial institutions like Bank of China Brunei Branch, the U.S. ambassador here told Xinhua on Friday. According to the ambassador Craig Allen, the opening of the Bank of China Brunei Branch is a very important milestone in a number of different ways.

"Firstly for the Brunei economy, it's good to have new foreign direct investment here. To have more banks, more competition and more capital coming into the market is of course a good thing", Craig Allen said after visiting Bank of China Brunei Branch.

"So this is a very positive development and I want to congratulate the Bank of China for making this investment." Bank of China (Hong Kong) opened its first branch in Brunei on Tuesday, marking it the first Chinese financial institution here in the sultanate. (Xinhua)