

(1) Meshrano Jirga...

university and college in Dari. University and college is usually written and spoken in Pashto language, but the new law ordered Dari meaning of the two words be added to parenthesis in official letters.

Alokozay said the law was finally approved with a majority of votes. Differences over words used for university and college have led to suspension of approval of the draft law of the Ministry of Higher Education for 10 years. (Pajhwok)

(2) Azizi Bank ...

145 branches along with its 100% subsidiary bank- Bakhtar Bank. (PR)

(3) Officials Count ...

addition, an unprecedented 551,000 people have fled their homes because of the intensified and expanded war.

Afghan and U.S. officials say more than 1 million Afghan refugees, including undocumented families in neighboring Pakistan and Iran have returned home in 2016, setting a record. When internally displaced people are counted in, more than 1.5 million Afghans have been on the move since January, according to UNAMA officials.

Analysts hold out little hope that 2017 will be much better without a peace and reconciliation process between the Afghan government and the Taliban. (VoA)

(4) Govt. Finance...

and development budgets once approved by parliament. "It has never happened in the national budget of Afghanistan that salaries of government employees are not paid due to a lack of cash or payment," Finance Ministry spokesman Ajmal Hameed said.

The Wolesi Jirga members also argued that such unlawful measures by finance units would create financial problems and would violate the rights of pensioners, martyrs families and disabled persons. In response to this, the spokesman for the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled, Abdulatah Eshrat, said: "A budget deficit means that we paid the debt of previous years and this led to a budget deficit. Also pensioners have not been consulted." (Tolonews)

(5) Corruption,...

Presidential Palace are amending the budget separately and on their own."

In reference to the allegations, meanwhile, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) said no government office is allowed to amend the ordinary and development budgets once approved by parliament.

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(6) Reports about ...

from Taliban militants during an ongoing operation code-named "Shafaq-2".

He said reports about Marja district's collapse were a propaganda of militants, asking the MoD to investigate media outlets that published baseless reports.

The commander said Taliban militants had been trying to mount pressure on security forces and capture a number of districts and Lashkargah, the

provincial capital, but they failed to do so.

Helmand military operations chief, Abdul Jabbar Qahraman, also said such reports were propaganda. He said Afghan forces had never planned exit from Marja district.

Marja district chief, Haji Baz Gul, said he had also heard such reports but no one had directly shared the issue with them. He said there was no reason for security forces to withdraw from Marja.

He warned the fall of Marja would have a negative impact on overall security situation of the province. However, Gul added currently enough Afghan forces equipped with weapons were present in the district.

Marja is 35 kilometers west of Lashkargah city. Only the district center and a small area named Kamp is controlled by Afghan government while majority of areas are under militants' control. (Pajhwok)

(7) Moscow Meeting...

fight Daesh or Islamic State (IS) militants in the region.

Current Russian ambassador also confirmed his country had contacted the Taliban, but said the contact was aimed to protect their political offices in Afghanistan and encourage the rebel group to join the peace process.

Afghan officials have repeatedly accused Pakistan of supporting and providing shelter to militants fighting against Afghanistan.

Pajhwok tried to contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the trilateral meeting, but failed. (Pajhwok)

(8) 5,000 Historical ...

is a big problem for us," said Mohammad Fahim Rahimi, chairman of the National Museum.

Meanwhile, acting minister of information and culture, Sayed Kamal Sadat, urged the people to return antiquities and relics smuggled out of the country during the civil war.

"We urge other countries to obey international laws and return Afghan relics, which were smuggled out of Afghanistan," Sadat added.

A number of visitors at the National Museum in Kabul meanwhile urged government to ensure the safety of historical sites and relics around the country.

"I am here in Kabul to visit the National Museum. I will tell the story of what I have seen here when I am back in Kandahar. The historical relics are kept properly at the museum," said Abdullah, a visitor from Kandahar.

"We urge Afghans to return relics to the National Museum if they have them at home or elsewhere," said Barikzai, another visitor from Kandahar. (Tolonews)

(9) Anger in ...

social media networks, which were replete with comments criticizing Rahmani, accusing her of wasting government money spent on expensive training and avoiding her responsibilities. (Reuters)

(10) More Balkh...

governor is decisive this year in fighting narcotics, he would not let anyone grow poppy in the province," he said.

Farhad confirmed farmers' problems and said efforts were underway to provide different facilities to growers in the province.

He said poppy cultivation had been zero for eight years in Balkh and its reproduction started only two years ago. "The government is trying to revive the zero cultivation status." (Pajhwok)

(11) AFC Issues ...

workshops have also been held for referees, coaches and goal keepers by AFC and FIFA and that around 300 certificates have been issued to the top attendees. (Tolonews)

(12) 3 Militants ...

militant groups including the

Taliban insurgents have not commented regarding the report so far.

Kunduz is among the relatively volatile provinces in northern Afghanistan where the Taliban group launched several attacks this year as part of their spring offensive to capture the strategic Kunduz city.

Meanwhile, the Afghan forces are busy conducting their annual 'Shafaq' operation which was launched in response to Taliban's annual spring offensive.

The Afghan security officials are saying that the annual Shafaq operation is being conducted with an aim to eliminate the top leaders of the militant groups. (KP)

(13) 6 Suspected ...

in parts of Kandahar province. The arrested persons have admitted to their affiliation with the Taliban group, the statement added.

Kandahar, the birthplace of Taliban, has been the scene of violent incidents and insurgency over the past several years. (Xinhua)

(14) Blast Kills...

blast, the official said that the militants even don't spare the civilians to have a peaceful life. Taliban militants are yet to claim responsibility. (Xinhua)

(15) Gun Battle...

and police returned fire forcing the rebels to flee.

Five more militants sustained injuries in the firefight. Taliban militants haven't commented on the report. (Xinhua)

(16) New Garment ...

few years. "Often I decided to go to Iran for work, but did not have enough money to do so." He was joyful over the establishment of factory in the province where he will work and may not feel the need to go to other country.

The factory owner said he invested 60 million Afghans and planned to export the product. He demanded government support to increase the production.

The land and electricity issues threatened the production and expansion of the factory and Nabizada demanded help from the government in this regard. Governor spokesman termed the establishment of garment factory a positive sign for business. He said the provincial government welcomed investment and business in the province. (Pajhwok)

(17) 2 Civilians ...

claimed responsibility for the attack, but Taliban insurgents routinely use roadside bombs to target Afghan security forces and government officials - with civilians frequently caught in the crossfire. (AP)

(18) Trump to ...

million dollars of the book's proceeds over the past 15 years, and nothing since 2009. The book's co-writer, Tony Schwartz, told CBS News he has received 1.6 million dollars in royalties, per a 50-50 split agreement with the New York real estate developer.

The foundation itself has given more than 13 million dollars to charity since it was founded, but only 4.9 million dollars has come from Trump himself, according to the CBS report. (Xinhua)

(19) ASEAN Economic...

countries would further extend the peace and prosperity that have been enjoyed by around 620 million people living in the region over the past five decades.

The creation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) was originally expected to establish a single regional market and production base, turning the region into an economic-competitive area with fair economic development that is fully integrated into the global economy.

ASEAN Deputy Secretary General for AEC, Lim Hong Hin, said that 2016 saw numerous advancements towards the AEC creation, among these was the establishment of National Trade Repositories (NTRs) of all the ASEAN member states,

allowing traders to get easier access and better compliance with prescribed regulations. (Xinhua)

(20) UAE Sets ...

solar power station in the desert of Abu Dhabi. In 2009, the UAE opened the world's first driverless and fully automated metro, the Dubai metro. (Xinhua)

(21) UN Envoy ...

Agree on steps to dismantle the roadblocks, reopen the roads, and pull back the forces without further delay. Any spoiler against peace and stability should be scrutinized," Keating said.

Galkayo is currently divided into two parts, governed by Galmudug and Puntland respectively. The town has been plagued by recurrent clashes between the neighboring states over its control.

Recent fighting in Galkayo that first broke out on Oct. 7 has killed more than 45 people and displaced tens of thousands.

Keating said the situation in Galkayo has raised serious humanitarian concerns. (Xinhua)

(22) UN Resolution ...

Political analyst and writer, told Xinhua that there is no doubt that the resolution "was a great diplomatic victory for the Palestinians, and was made amid a severe imbalance of power with Israel that has been going on for several years. (Xinhua)

(23) Over 6,000...

of Pambujan and Rosario in central province of Northern Samar have been evacuated and are currently staying in 14 evacuation centers in the region, it added. (Xinhua)

(24) China to...

environmental taxes, and the new levy will replace an earlier system of miscellaneous charges that are regarded as far too low to deter polluters. (Reuters)

Russian Military Tu-154 Aircraft Carrying 92 People Crashes in Black Sea

MOSCOW - A Russian military Tu-154 aircraft carrying 92 people crashed Sunday in the Black Sea after taking off from the resort city of Sochi.

Four ships and five helicopters are currently operating in the crash site, said the Russian Defense Ministry's spokesman Igor Konashenkov, adding that the ministry is maneuvering more forces and equipment for the rescue mission.

The ill-fated plane, en route to a Russian Navy base in the Syrian port city of Latakia, vanished from the radar screens shortly after taking off from an airfield in the Black Sea resort city of Sochi at 5:40 a.m. Moscow Time (0240 GMT).

Latest information from the ministry said 92 people, including 84 passengers and eight crew members, were on board.

Among them were 64 members from the Alexandrov Ensemble, the renowned choir of the Russian Armed Forces and its head Valery Halilov, as well as nine Russian journalists. They were heading to the air base for New Year celebrations.

Fragments of the aircraft have been discovered in 1.5 kilometers from the Black Sea shore of Sochi at a depth of 50-70 meters, the ministry said. (Xinhua)

German Town Evacuates on Christmas Morning for WWII Bomb

FRANKFURT, Germany - Thousands of people in the southern German city of Augsburg have left Christmas presents and decorations behind, forced to evacuate while authorities disarm a large World War II aerial bomb.

The bomb was uncovered last week during construction work in the city's historic central district. Police say Christmas Day

is the best time to defuse it because there is less traffic and it is more likely people can stay with relatives.

Police rang doorbells and used vans with loudspeakers to urge procrastinators to leave ahead of a 10 a.m. deadline. Traffic into the evacuation zone was halted from 8 a.m. local time.

Some 32,000 homes with 54,000 residents are in the evacuation zone. Christmas morning services at the medieval cathedral with its famed boys' choir were moved to another church.

Police aren't making any promises about how long it will take to disarm the bomb. Schools and sports facilities have been opened as shelters, but police said they were not full and many people had already left for relatives' homes Christmas Eve. About 200 people came to the town's exhibition center and 100 to the WWK Arena sports stadium. Public transportation was free of charge for the evacuation.

Finding World War II bombs is not unusual in Germany. Much of Augsburg's historic center was destroyed on Feb. 25-26, 1944, when hundreds of British and U.S. bombers attacked the city. (AP)

Uzbekistan Considering Becoming Part of CPEC

ISLAMABAD - Uzbekistan's Deputy Prime Minister Ulugbek Rozukulov has said that Pakistan is a very important country, and his country wanted to enhance bilateral ties in various fields including trade.

"The government, masses and business community of Uzbekistan and Pakistan must strive to boost bilateral trade, which is well below the actual potential," he said.

While speaking to the businessmen at FPCCI's Capital House here on Saturday, the visiting dignitary said that Pakistan could resolve its energy problem with the help of natural resources of Uzbekistan and that his country was considering to become part of CPEC, which, he said, was a fate changing project.

Uzbek ambassador to Pakistan, Apex Chamber President Abdur Rauf Alam and others were also present on the occasion.

"CPEC will not only benefit the whole region, but will also positively affect the people living in other parts of the field besides promoting Pakistan's economy," he said, and added, "We should push cooperation to the new heights."

Speaking on the occasion, FPCCI President Abdur Rauf Alam said that Pakistan was exporting pharmaceuticals, leather goods, agricultural products, milk and sports goods to the brotherly country of Uzbekistan.

"Pakistan is importing cotton, yarn, clothes, iron, steel plastic, telecommunications equipment and electric items from Uzbekistan," he added. (Monitoring Desk)

Putin, Erdogan Discuss Syria over Phone: Kremlin

MOSCOW - Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan talked about the Syria issue over phone on Sunday, the Kremlin said in a statement.

The two leaders exchanged views in details on the situation in Syria, the Kremlin said, adding that President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, who is currently on a working visit to Russia, also took part in the discussion.

The statement did not specify the content of their talks, but considering Putin's recent proposal to arrange a meeting between the Syrian opposition and the government at Kazakhstan's capital of Astana, their phone talk was probably about the preparation for the meeting.

In his earlier talks with Putin, Erdogan has agreed to work with Moscow on such a meeting. In Sunday's phone talks, Erdogan

also extended his condolences to Putin over the crash of a Russian military Tu-154 aircraft into the Black Sea earlier on Sunday, presumably killing all 92 people aboard. (Xinhua)

97 IS Militants Killed in Clashes, U.S.-Led Coalition Airstrike in Iraq's Mosul

MOSUL, Iraq - A total of 97 Islamic State (IS) militants were killed on Sunday in heavy clashes with the security forces and an airstrike by the U.S.-led coalition aircraft in the city of Mosul in northern Iraq.

The soldiers of the ninth armored Division repelled attacks by dozens of IS militants and suicide car bombs on the recently-freed neighborhood of al-Intisar, al-Shaima and al-Salam in southeastern Mosul, leaving 51 militants killed and destroying four suicide car bombs, along with destroying three more vehicles carrying extremist militants, a statement by the Iraqi Joint Operations Command said.

Another IS attack occurred on the positions of the federal police, just south of Mosul, but the troops repelled the attack, killing 21 militants and destroying two suicide car bombs, the statement said.

Also on Sunday, based on intelligence reports an international coalition warplane conducted an airstrike on a building in al-Wahda neighborhood, where many IS militants were believed hiding inside preparing for an attack on the security forces, leaving some 25 militants killed, according to the statement.

The Iraqi forces continued during the day their clearing operations in the freed neighborhoods in the eastern side of Mosul, locally known as the left bank of the Tigris which bisects the city.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said in a recent report that 103,872 men, women, and children have fled their homes in Mosul and its adjacent districts since the beginning of military offensive in October to reclaim the IS largest stronghold in Iraq.

The number of displaced people in and near Mosul is rising everyday.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi on Oct. 17 announced a major offensive to retake Mosul, the country's second largest city. Since then, the Iraqi security forces, backed by international coalition forces, have inched to the eastern fringes of Mosul and made progress on other routes around the city.

Mosul, some 400 km north of the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, has been under the IS control since June 2014, when Iraqi government forces abandoned their weapons and fled, enabling IS militants to take control of parts of Iraq's northern and western regions. (Xinhua)

China to Pilot Supervisory System Reform

BEIJING - China's top legislature on Sunday approved a pilot reform program to produce an integrated supervision system that will be more authoritative and efficient.

According to a decision made by the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, new supervision committees will be piloted in Beijing and the provinces and Shanxi and Zhejiang.

The new supervision committee will integrate the supervision departments, the corruption prevention department, as well as People's Procuratorate departments for handling bribery and dereliction of duty cases or prevention of duty-related crimes. All public servants that exercise public power will be supervised by the new committee, according to the decision.

It confers on the committee the power to supervise, investigate and hand out punishment. The committees will supervise duty performance, integrity and ethical conduct of public servants.

It will investigate and punish corruption and other job-related offenses, and will transfer cases involving suspected criminal offenses to procuratorates.

The decision takes effect on Dec. 26. (Xinhua)