

Uzbekistan Reveals Priority Sectors for Foreign Investments in 2019

TASHKENT - Uzbekistan is planning to get \$4.1 billion in foreign direct investment in 2019, which is almost 71 percent more compared to 2018 (\$2.4 billion), Deputy Chairman of the State Investment Committee of Uzbekistan Shukhrat Vafayev told Trend. He said that many changes have been made in Uzbekistan in 2018 to further improve the investment climate, in particular, a number of tax and financial reforms were implemented. "As a result, foreign companies are showing more and more interest in investing in various sectors of the economy in Uzbekistan. By Oct. 1, 2018, the number of enterprises with foreign capital operating in the country reached 6960, which is

29.6 percent (1,590) more than a year before. Of these, 3,764 are joint ventures, 3,196 are foreign enterprises," Vafayev said. He added that the main investor countries are Russia, Turkey, China, Kazakhstan and South Korea. The residents of Afghanistan, India, Germany, Ukraine and Azerbaijan also show interest in investing in Uzbekistan. "In only nine months of 2019, some 1,652 enterprises with foreign capital were established. The volume of foreign direct investments in 2018 is projected at \$2.4 billion. In 2019, it is planned to get \$4.1 billion of foreign direct investments," the deputy chairman said. (Trend)

France Drops Charges Against Rwandan Officials

PARIS - Investigative magistrates in France have dropped charges against nine Rwandan officials investigated over the death of the country's president in 1998, an event that led to a genocide that killed more than 800,000 people, a judicial source said. France launched the investigation, that also targeted Rwanda's former defense minister James Kabarebe, in 1998 following demands by relatives of the French crew who died when president Juvenal Habyarimana's plane was downed. The investigation, and accusations by Rwandan officials that France was complicit in the 1994 genocide, dam-



aged relations between the two countries for several years. The judicial source said on Wednesday that the charges were dropped on Dec. 21. A French prosecutor had recommended in October that the

charges should be dismissed due to insufficient evidence. Rwanda said on Dec. 24 that it welcomed the definitive end of what it called a politically-motivated investigation. (Reuters)

(1) Peaceful Afghanistan...

Ghani said he still believed in complete international support. Afghanistan's relationships with different nations would be built on the basis of mutual benefits.

The president made it clear that no one would be allowed to use Afghanistan's soil for negative activities.

He thanked the international community for its support and said: "The picture we want to show the world is that we should be at the centre of cooperation and coordination,

"Terrorism is a huge regional threat. Therefore, a peaceful Afghanistan is vital to regional stability."

The peace effort, he said, was a complex process, according to Ghani, who said the complexity was witnessed at the Abdu Dabi meeting.

Referring to the recent deadly attack in Kabul, the president said foreign terrorist networks would not stop carrying such attacks in Afghanistan.

"I want to tell the Taliban that by denying involvement in the attack or condemning it, they could not escape the blame. If the Taliban are not directly involved, they provide a platform for others to carry out such attacks," Ghani concluded. (Pajhwok)

(2) Turkey Extends...

Around 12,000 foreign troops from 28 NATO member states and 14 other allies have reached an agreement on supporting the NATO mission in Afghanistan. (AA)

(3) HPC Suspends its...

of Islamic Movement of Afghanistan.

It comes amid the U.S. and the Afghan government's diplomatic efforts towards establishing the basis for talks to end the 17-year-old war in Afghanistan. (ATN)

(4) Saleh Outlines...

ARG Palace on Tuesday evening.

Asadullah Khalid was also introduced as the acting minister of defense by President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani during the same ceremony.

In his speech during the ceremony in ARG Palace, President Ghani said both Khalid and Saleh are the young and experienced cadres and have high national morale.

He said the duo has been cooperative with the government in national issue despite expressing their difference on political level and both have specific and distinct leadership and point of view.

Emphasizing on the need to utilize the intelligence expertise of Khalid and Saleh in a criti-

cal juncture of time, President Ghani said the government decided to benefit from the intelligence and military experiences of the two cadres in implementing reforms in the defense and interior ministries. (KP)

(5) Rs1.5m Being...

taking high dowry and prevent illegal wedding traditions.

Tribal elder Malik Sultan said the high amounts of dowry were paid by wealthy families but poor households also did not give away their daughter for low dowry.

Many brides spent their youth at father's home because of high dowry, he noted.

A young man, who did not want to be named, said he had engaged a girl six years ago. His father had promised the bride 120,000 Pakistani rupees. Now his father is dead and he is unable to pay the amount.

He said: "I have sent my relatives to my father-in-law in order to decrease the dowry to 60,000 rupees but they refused and I'm forced to divorce my fiancé." (Pajhwok)

(6) Qureshi, Lavrov...

importance of peace in Afghanistan for regional stability and renewed Pakistan's commitment to assist in the process.

With his Iranian counterpart Javad Zarif on his trip to Tehran on the same day, the foreign minister discussed bilateral relations and regional situation. Both officials agreed on the importance of improved bilateral relations between the two countries.

He visited Beijing on Tuesday, where he met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. The two discussed "bilateral and regional issues, especially peace in Afghanistan", according to Foreign Office Spokesperson Dr Mohammad Faisal.

The US decision to pull nearly half of its troops from restive Afghanistan was high on the agenda at the meeting between the Pakistani and Chinese foreign ministers. China has not announced an official stance on the US troop pullout, but Pakistan on Saturday welcomed the decision to slash US troop numbers calling it "a step towards peace" in war-torn Afghanistan.

In recent months, China has played a more active role in brokering peace in the region as stability in Afghanistan is critical to its Belt and Road policy of expanding trade links across Asia. During the course of its bad patch in ties with the US, Pakistan increased its interactions with China, Iran, and Russia for Afghan peace. Now that Pakistan has agreed to assist the US in achieving peace in Afghanistan, Qureshi's visit is meant to reassure regional partners that Islamabad is not ditching them

on the Afghan reconciliation issue. (Pajhwok)

(7) Afghan Forces...

three months and this is a significant achievement for the Ministry of Interior," Danish said.

Taliban in a statement rejected the claims that heavy casualties had been inflicted to members of group's so-called red unit.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Defense spokesman Ghafoor Ahmad Jawed told TOLONews that security forces have achieved significant progress in those provinces where the level of threats have been large, including in Farah province.

In last few weeks, Farah province has been the center of high profile visits including a visit by the commander of US and NATO forces in Afghanistan Gen. Scott Miller.

"At least six Taliban commanders who were operating in various fields and known as Mullah Mohammad also known as Musafir, Nabi Jan known as Fedayee, Mullah Bakhtyar known as Niazi, Mullah Mohammad Omar known as Zarqani, Hafiz Fazel Ahmad and Hafiz Naseer were killed," said Jawed.

This comes as violence continues to grip various regions of Afghanistan with the arrival of cold weather in the country.

Both the Afghan security forces and the Taliban militants have claimed to have had inflicted massive casualties to their opponents in the battles.

This new development takes place at a time that efforts both domestically and internationally have been increased to bring the Taliban to the peace negotiation table in order to end the 17-year conflict in the country. (Tolo news)

(8) IEC to Delay...

preparation for holding the presidential elections. We are prepared around 60 to 70 percent," Abdul Aziz Ibrahim, a spokesman for the IEC, said. (Tolo news)

(9) Fiber Optic...

great achievement for our ministry," he said.

He said that the company will reduce internet services prices by 50 percent within the next few weeks.

He said that Afghan Telecom asset is about AFs 21 billion and the company reduced its losses by 20% compared to past years. Afghan Telecom has paid \$17.9 million in tax under the 10% rate of the Afghanistan law, said Ayan. Ayan said that Afghan Telecom also plans to introduce 4G internet services in the country in the next six months.

Meanwhile, officials from the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology said one of the key reasons behind internet outage in the country is issues

around fiber optic network.

Nearly 480km of fiber optic cable will connect Afghanistan to China's fiber optic network, he said. With the expansion of fiber optic network, internet services will be better, said Saer Zaland, spokesman for the ministry.

"Our achievements in the financial sector during 1397 is remarkable. We have been able to increase our revenue from AFs 8.4 billion to AFs 10 billion and reduce our operational budget from AFs 7 billion down to AFs 6 billion. Now, our net income is around 16%," Zaland said.

Although, 4G internet services are already introduced in Afghanistan, but citizens have been constantly criticizing the prices and low speed.

Afghan Telecom chief confirmed that Afghanistan Telecom Regulatory Authority of Afghanistan (ATRA) has slapped over AFs 900 million fine on telecom companies over weak internet services.

Reports say that currently Afghanistan has been connected to five neighboring countries through fiber optic networks, but technical problems in Afghanistan are blamed for slow internet services and high consumer prices. (Tolo news)

(10) 16,000kg...

smugglers were handed over to the Afghanistan Central Bank.

The CJTF's primary court sentenced 264 people, including a foreigner, a woman and 15 government officers, from 1.5 years to 20 years in jail over their involvement in drug deals, he said.

He said most of the cases happened in Kabul (93 cases) and Nangarhar (25 cases) during the last three months.

The official said 217 people including 14 women and an Iranian national were detained in connection with 159 drug cases in the period.

Afghanistan remains the world's leading drugs producing. Despite billions of US dollars spending by the international community to fight drugs in Afghanistan, poppy cultivation in the country has increased by several times since 2001. (Pajhwok)

(11) OIC, UN & Others...

He extended his condolences to the families of the victims over this tragedy, and wished the injured a fast recovery.

Meanwhile, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) denounced the horrific attack in an area of Kabul City.

"These attacks cause untold human suffering to Afghan families," said Tadamachi Yamamoto, the secretary-general's special representative for Afghanistan and head of UNAMA. "The United Nations unequiv-

ocally condemns them, as there is no justification whatsoever for such attacks," he added. On behalf of the UN in Afghanistan, Yamamoto expressed deep condolences to the families of the victims and wishes a speedy recovery of the injured.

"I strongly condemn the attack on the government building in Kabul. My thoughts are with the victims and their loved ones. NATO stands with Afghanistan in its efforts to ensure security and create peace," NATO's senior civilian representative, Ambassador Cornelius Zimmermann, said.

In a statement, Iran embassy in Afghanistan, also denounced the Monday terrorist attack against civilians and government building in Kabul.

"We express our condolences with the government and nation of Afghanistan, especially the bereaved families of the victims," it added. (Pajhwok)

(12) 755m Afs Needed...

people are in need of urgent help; but the government which depends on international organizations, cannot assist 69,000 of the families, Balkhi said.

He told the upper house that 84,000 families had been identified as vulnerable to harsh winter. He said 28,000 of the families had received assistance but the rest remained in need of help.

The government has set aside 20 million afghanis for refugees and IDPs for 1398 fiscal year while the ministry has requested \$10 million (755 million afghanis), he said. He asked the parliament to consider more budget for assistance of refugees and IDPs. (Pajhwok)

(13) Lufthansa Names...

business strategy for the LHG sales organisation. In his most recent position as senior manager sales steering and business development for Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe headquartered in Vienna, Lange was responsible for the commercial steering of seven sales teams in 16 markets and further developing the growth of the Lufthansa Group Airlines in Eastern and South-eastern Europe. In addition, he also headed a Global Cooperation Working Group for the new Lufthansa Group Joint Venture with Air China.

Lange will be based in Dubai, succeeding Karsten Zang, who held this position since the beginning of 2014. Lange will report to Dr Stefan Kreuzpaintner, vice president sales Europe, Middle East & Africa, Lufthansa Group. (TradeArabia News Service)

(14) Drone Strikes...

The Taliban militants often attempt to target the government institutions and security personnel as part of their ongoing insurgency against the government. (KP)