

(1) IEC Fails...

previous issues are not repeated in the IEC.

"We expect the chairman of the secretariat to be a trusted and honest man ... it was decided that the commission would refer more names to government, but so far we have not received any names," said CEO spokesman Mujiburrahman Rahimi. Former member of the IEC's media commission Imam Mohammad Warimach, the former head of IEC public relations, Ahmadullah Archiwal, and Popal Habibi were the nominees rejected for the IEC secretariat position. (Tolnews)

(2) Greater Efforts ...

"In the last 10 months, more than 630 tons of drugs have been seized by police in the country and more than 160 smugglers arrested," Mirza Mohammad Yusufi, head of the intelligence department of counter narcotics at MoI said. The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) meanwhile said treatment of addicts is a complicated matter especially as the number increases daily. "Every week addicts are in danger because of the cold weather, and are often taken to hospital," said Abdul Manan Azad Manish, head of the drug reduction department at the MoPH.

"They spend three months in hospital and after that they learn different professions. But the issue of finding work is very important," said Ali Eftekhari, director of Omid Vocational and Training Center. Reports indicate that there are three million addicts in Afghanistan and only 110 rehabilitation centers cater to them. (Tolnews)

(3) NPC Approves...

of Parwan and Maidan Wardak provinces as well as providing fuel to the protection and care section of the Ministry of Interior (MoI) were also among other contracts approved. Most of the projects the NPC returned included designing and construction of dams in Paktia, Khost, Laghman, Bamyan, Daikundi, Parwan, Farah, Badghis, Taghar, Kandahar and Uruzgan provinces. President Ghani, discussing the projects, said construction of dams was one of the primary needs of the Afghan people. He said the NCP should work hard not to let someone play with such important projects. Ghani said major private Afghan companies with high capacity and performance should be given chance to compete in bidding process for implementation of development projects. The NCP meeting was participated by Second Vice-President Mohammad Sarwar Danish, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, ministers of finance, economy and justice, SIGAR, a number of parliament members and other officials. (Pajhwok)

(4) SAARC Member...

South Asia for holding the SAARC Summit, while Pakistan vehemently denied the charges. Before Nepal's decision to postpone the summit, Pakistan, the host nation of the summit, had announced postponement of the summit amid escalating tensions between India and Pakistan.

SAARC is a regional body founded in 1985 in South Asia, comprising Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. (Xinhua)

(5) 11 Afghan ...

of the Afghan forces counter the threats posed by the terrorist networks and groups. The Afghan Air Force received several fixed-wing aircraft as well as combat helicopters from the United States and India late in 2015 and earlier last year. (KP)

(6) S. EU Leaders...

Europe had to embrace freedom and democracy. "Europe is not protectionist, it

isn't closed, it has values and it has principles," he told journalists. "The EU is a force, a guarantee and a protection. It is a space of freedom and democracy."

Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades highlighted the need to fight against populism and to regain the confidence of EU citizens. (Xinhua)

(7) Govt. Keeping...

however said investigations into the explosion are still being conducted and that it is a complicated case.

"The task-team is trying to finish its investigation soon, but as a number of foreign diplomats have been killed in the blast; all the parties affected by the explosion are working together," Sediq Sediqqi, spokesman for the MoI said. However, some legal experts have lashed out at government saying that appointing task teams to probe incidents has become a trend and that often these bodies are a waste of time.

"Appointing task-teams is not working as we have experienced and it cannot lead Afghanistan to the facts behind incidents. One reason behind the failure of task-teams is whether the members of the team are not qualified people, or did they not release the facts because some government officials were involved in the incident they investigated," said Ainuddin Bahaduri, Afghanistan's Lawyers Union Secretary. (Tolnews)

(8) Scores of ..

local officials in Nangarhar have rejected the claims and said that security forces have tried to free these hostages from Daesh.

"Daesh militants have again tried to capture a religious scholar and an army soldier. But local police rescued them and security forces are still trying to free the remaining hostages," said Attaullah Khogyani, spokesman for the Nangarhar governor.

This comes two weeks after Daesh captured at least 20 religious scholars in Nangarhar - so far there have been no reports about their fate. (Tolnews)

(9) Taliban, Collecting...

interviews with officials, Taliban commanders and local residents.

The diversification of the revenue collection system, in the face of a central government largely dependent on Western donations and hobbled by corruption, has raised fears that the balance of the war could tilt even further in the year ahead, and that the insurgency is becoming more entrenched and acting as a shadow government in parts of the countryside.

"What it suggests, essentially, is that the group is becoming more efficient in systematically taxing the areas they either control or have a lot of influence on," said Timor Sharan, senior analyst for Afghanistan at the International Crisis Group, a research institute.

"Efficiency of taxation is quite significant in terms of sustaining the group for a long time." In addition to collecting electricity bills from thousands of homes in provinces such as Kunduz and Helmand, the insurgents levy taxes on potato harvests, flour mills, teachers' salaries, marriage ceremonies, and fuel and vegetable trucks crossing their checkpoints.

At the same time, the Taliban continue to pursue their original sources of funding. The United Nations, in a recent report, said narcotics, illegal mining and external donations remained major income streams, with the drug economy bringing in up to \$400 million in 2016.

But the United Nations report also spoke of the group's diversification efforts.

"Analysis of Taliban revenue sources suggests that they remain highly diverse, with various income streams that

enable the Taliban to quickly substitute for declining asset streams," the report said.

Mr. Sharan said the increased revenue collection was largely due to a restructuring of the insurgency spearheaded by its former leader, Mullah Akhtar Muhammad Mansour, who was seen more as a businessman heavily involved in the drug trade than a conventional Taliban ideologue. Part of the reason for the change was an expected decline in external funding amid growing competition for resources from other militant groups like the Islamic State.

"Mansour, in his restructuring, gave more autonomy to the local Taliban groups and tasked them with finding more locally driven revenues and securing their funding at the local level," Mr. Sharan said.

The Taliban have also been hit by a dwindling number of major NATO military contracts and development projects from which they could take a cut.

Western and Afghan officials say the greater fund-raising autonomy for local commanders is also a consequence of chaos within the Taliban leadership and infighting over resources after an American drone strike killed Mullah Mansour in May.

A Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, said the group relied on a variety of resources, including Islamic taxes and offerings from farmers and local residents, donations from traders abroad and from Islamic countries, and booty captured from Afghan forces. He acknowledged that in their areas of control in places like Kunduz and Helmand, the Taliban collected the electricity bills.

"Our territory has expanded in some areas, and since our presence has increased there, our resources have also increased," Mr. Mujahid said.

At first glance, each strand of Taliban revenue might seem insignificant. But for an insurgency numbering about 30,000 men, who operate in small groups, it is a substantial sum. The head of the power department in Kunduz Province, Hamidullah, said the Taliban were collecting electricity payments from close to 14,000 homes in the province, possibly as much as \$200,000 for every two-month cycle.

Haji Ayoub, an elder from Boz Qandahari village, north of Kunduz city, said that two months ago, the Taliban had stopped government electricity workers and taken the bills they delivered by bicycle. Then, they started calling people to come to the local mosque and pay. (Monitoring Desk)

(10) Thousands ...

He asked the government to provide his family a shelter and other aid. Dad thanked the IRW for helping them in the cold winter.

Nisar Ahmad, who recently returned from Pakistan, said they were faced with serious economic problems. He commended the IRW and said the aid, particularly the firewood, helped them a lot. (Pajhwok)

(11) Nangarhar ...

Daronta dam's work would resume soon.

He said Nangarhar would be provided with 30MW of power and blackouts in Kabul would not affect power supply to Nangarhar. There would be no unscheduled load-shedding in Nangarhar.

Dilawari said with financial support from World Bank, spadework for Nangarhar's 40-megawatt solar plant had been completed and practical work would be initiated in near future.

He added the Kabul-Jalalabad power pylons' installation awaited the National Security Council's approval, after which work on the project would begin. (Pajhwok)

(12) Iraqis, Afghan...

country on Saturday in support of the detainees.

"The idea that we could be detaining Iraqi interpreters who put their lives on the line to help troops like myself in Iraq is disgraceful," Huffington Post quoted Jon Soltz, a veteran and the chairman of Vote-Vets, said in a statement. "Not only does this not do anything to protect America, but it now sends the message that even if you put your life on the line to help America, if you are Muslim we don't want you here."

The executive order, which Trump signed Friday afternoon, banned entry from seven majority-Muslim countries - Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen - for 90 days and shut down the entire immigration program for 120 days.

U.S. District Judge Ann Donnelly of the Eastern District of New York halted parts of the executive order on Saturday after the American Civil Liberties Union, immigrants' rights groups and refugee relief organizations filed a lawsuit against Trump and the U.S. government.

A federal judge in Virginia and a district judge in Seattle came to similar decisions later that night.

Immigration lawyers and employers have warned many people not to leave the U.S. for fear they could be barred from re-entering.

Nearly 500,000 people from the seven nations have received green cards in the past decade, meaning hundreds of thousands of people are at risk of being barred from the U.S. or separated from their families. Possibly the vaguest of Trump's orders, in practice this has barred even legal U.S. residents, such as green card holders, from re-entry into the country.

The order would let the Department of Homeland Security ban more countries at any time.

Dual-nationals who are from those seven countries but have an additional passport will also be barred from entering the country for the next 90 days, according to the State Department.

This means that citizens of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen who have a passport from another country, such as Britain or France, are also subject to the ban. (Tolnews)

(13) Afghan Forces...

Some 4,800 tons of opium has been produced in Afghan provinces where government security forces had little presence in 2016, according to Afghan officials. (Xinhua)

(14) 11 Taliban...

of Kandahar, Zabul and Helmand provinces and had organized attacks on logistic convoys of security forces in the southern region.

A good quantity of arms and ammunitions were also seized from the hideouts of the arrested militants, the statement asserted.

Taliban militants are yet to make comment on the report. (Xinhua)

(15) 21 People ...

and a further 16 have had to receive medical treatment.

Provinces hit by severe weather recently include Kandahar, Ghazni, Paktia, Ghor, Zabul, Baghlan, Nangarhar, Kunar, Kapisa, Nuristan, Parwan, Herat, Laghman, Bamiyan and Panjshir, read the statement.

As a result of heavy snow and rainfall 21 houses were completely destroyed and 59 others damaged, ANDMA said. Currently main roads in the northern and central provinces are closed due to heavy snowfall. (Tolnews)

(16) Husband Pushed...

has to pay her son-in-law to let her stay at his home. She has been out of touch with her daughters and son for a year. Logar is among provinces, where poppy cultivation was recently brought down to zero. Abdul Nader Wahidi, head of

the counter-narcotics department, said 13,000 people, 10 percent of them women, were addicted to drugs in Logar.

He said most of the addicts had lived in Iran.

Crime branch chief, Col. Mohammad Jan Abid, said police were trying to eliminate the use of drugs and trafficking in the province. He called the illicit commerce a crime, saying the people involved would be dealt with sternly. (Pajhwok)

(17) Daesh Free 5...

no deal with Daesh insurgents over the freed civilians.

Izzatullah, a tribal elder in Pachiragam district, confirmed the development but said more than 40 civilians remained in Daesh captivity.

Storay, another resident of upper Pachiragam and daughter of one of the freed men, said her father was in critical condition when he reached home. Her father even could not speak well after spending three months in captivity in a dark room. (Pajhwok)

(18) 'Taliban' Behead ...

Taliban gunmen captured him, beheaded him, cut off his hands and took the body parts with them."

Saleh said no one had been arrested in connection with the murder, but police were investigating the incident.

Zargai, a resident of the Padkhab Shana village, said the victim's full name was Salman Jan Mohammad and he was 19-year-old.

"Jan Mohammad was a nice person, he was married four years ago," he said, adding the victim had a shop in Khoshi district, but shifted his business to village two months ago.

He said the remains of Jan Mohammad were buried on Sunday and his brutal murder had terrified local residents.

But Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said Salman had not been killed by the fighters and they condemned the incident.

He said they had launched their own investigation into the murder in order to find the killers and punish them for their crime.

The Padkhab Shana area is two kilometers away from the governor's house. (Pajhwok)

(19) Putin, Trump ...

who agreed to maintain regular personal contacts. Both sides are working to set possible date and venue for a Putin-Trump meeting.

The presidents discussed and agreed to cooperate in the fight against terrorism, the situation in the Middle East, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Iranian nuclear program, the Korean Peninsula issue and the Ukrainian crisis. (Xinhua)

(20) Schulz Nominated...

Wednesday that he would not participate in the Sept. 24 general elections and would also step down as SPD chairman.

The 57-year-old political veteran, who has also given up his post as economic minister, took over the foreign ministry portfolio on Friday from Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who is expected to become the country's next president in February.

Sources here told Xinhua that Gabriel's decision not to run against Merkel as SPD candidate largely because of poor poll results while Schulz candidacy would instead raise SPD's prospects in the upcoming elections.

According to DPA reports, a recent survey published on Friday showed support for the SPD has jumped by 3 percentage points since the beginning of the year to 24 percent, but still 12 percentage points behind Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and its ally, Bavarian-based Christian Social Union (CSU). (Xinhua)

(21) Russia's Draft...

two terms with seven years each, said RT, adding that the People's Assembly serves as a parliament, passing laws

which later should be forwarded for approval to the Assembly of Territories and then to the president.

It says the country's leader can be stripped of his powers by the Assembly of Territories in case the People's Assembly formally accuses the leader of committing "treason" or any other "severe crime." (Xinhua)

(22) Trump Aims ...

Trump in Washington on Friday, British Prime Minister Theresa May said the U.S. president confirmed that he is "100 percent" behind NATO. (Xinhua)

(23) Trump's Refugee...

was issued detained at airports upon arrival.

New York City's Kennedy airport "became a scene of anguish and desperation" on Saturday for the families of people detained after arriving in the United States from nations subject to Trump's travel ban, according to AP reports. (Xinhua)

(24) US, German...

taking care of terror," and he complained that various members of the bloc were not paying their dues, which was "very unfair to the United States."

At a joint press conference with Trump in Washington on Friday, British Prime Minister Theresa May said the U.S. president had confirmed that he is "100 percent" behind NATO.

During Saturday's phone conversation, Trump and Merkel also affirmed the importance of close German-American cooperation to the security and prosperity of the two countries and expressed their desire to strengthen bilateral relations in the coming years.

In addition, the two leaders agreed on the need to strengthen cooperation in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism and to work to stabilize conflict areas in the Middle East and North Africa. (Xinhua)

(25) Syrian Army ...

of Idlib, last major bastion of the armed opposition.

Around 5.5 million people in Damascus and its suburbs have been without water since fighting intensified in the Wadi Barada area in late December. (AFP)

(26) British PM...

government of the United States, just the same as immigration policy for this country should be set by our government," a spokesman from her office said on Sunday.

"But we do not agree with this kind of approach and it is not one we will be taking. If there is any impact on UK nationals then clearly we will make representations to the US government about that." Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson went further, saying it was "divisive and wrong to stigmatise because of nationality." (AFP)

(27) France's Hamon...

of the vote making a lead to former prime minister's 31.48 percent. Voting opens at 7,500 polling stations across France and the first partial results may emerge within an hour and a half of polls closing. (Xinhua)

(28) Tajikistan...

Affordable Housing project," Zarifzoda said. Ubaidulloev's replacement as mayor is none other than the president's son, Rustam Emomali, although Zarifzoda never mentioned his name during his press conference. The Affordable Housing project was launched in Dushanbe in 2013 and was intended to begin settling needy people into new homes by September 2015. Construction work was serially delayed, however, creating much discontent among the homebuyers that had already put down deposits. Some, concerned they would end up without homes or their money, demanded to be reimbursed. (Monitoring Desk)