

(1) Ghani, Khalilzad...

dialogue, according to the statement, which said the two sides welcomed Germany's role in this regard. "The two sides hoped that the intra-Afghan talks will begin as soon as possible."

Also on Sunday, the US Embassy in Kabul said Khalilzad would hold consultations with leaders of the National Unity Government, political figures, civil society and women. (Pajhwok)

(2) Intra-Afghan...

On the other hand, High Peace Council spokesman Javed Ghafoor confirmed the German-aided intra-Afghan dialogue would take place in Qatar

He said President Ashraf Ghani and US special representative Zalmay Khalilzad met on Sunday evening and underlined the need for intra-Afghan dialogue on ending the ongoing war in the country. HPC Secretary Mohammad Omar Daudzai was also present at the meeting, he said, adding that the peace body was striving hard to pave the way for the talks.

The Taliban have not yet commented about the intra-Afghan talks in Qatar. (Pajhwok)

(3) Afghans Lose ...

expanded among the youths, less educated and even low-income individuals through a local firm, known as Vision Financial Services

"All brokers who are associated to the business are not genuine; some of them are fraudsters," said Ahmad Fawad, a local businessman who entered the forex business five years ago.

Statistics indicate that over 7,000 people have been associated with the business in Kandahar over the past 14 years and most of them suffered heavy financial losses.

"Whether accept it or not, the business is ongoing across Afghanistan. It should turn into a legal business," said Abdul Rahman Zeerak, member of Money Exchangers Union.

According to some members of Money Exchangers Union, a local businessman Bashir Gulzada has been behind the illegal forex business in the country in recent years.

The union members also alleged that Gulzada has used two separate firms known as FX zone and Unifax.

Ahmad Shah Hotak, a representative of Gulzada, said that they founded forex business in Afghanistan, but they have no link with those forex companies operating in the country.

"Vision Financial Services started its activities under the license of the Ministry of [Industry and] Commerce and the Central Bank and stopped its activities on their request," said Hotak. (Tolo news)

(4) MoI Prepares ...

the delivery has been reported 92,648 kilograms.

The Interior Ministry has requested the Attorney General's Office to slap travel ban on at least eight of the suspects, including Haris Siraj, the acting head of the Interior Ministry's logistics department; Nasir Zaid, head of the finance department; Mirwais Janbaz, acting head of logistics department and five other senior and lower officials.

The documents show that the majority of the amount was embezzled in Kabul, Parwan, Nangarhar, Kapisa, Punjsher, Baghlan, Nuristan and Laghman provinces. (Tolo news)

(5) IECC Foreign ...

641-Ai0-FY14IL#03 under DOAG No. 641-001 Strengthened Responsive, Democratic Governance for support to the Electoral Commission of Ghana for a New Activity: Enhancing Inclusive in Ghana's Electoral process (hereinafter referred to as the Grant Document).

In a bid to procure the services of a contractor for the said project, three quotations were received by the commission for consideration. Indeed, according to the chairperson, she personally recommended Dreamoval Ltd which was a group from the Ashesi University.

She testified the director of finance submitted the names of two other companies, namely Premium Tech & Business Consultancy Services and Change Investment (Ghana) Ltd.

From these three companies, the chairperson, the director of finance and the head of the donor desk selected

Dreamoval for the contract.

As a result, an initial contract worth \$32,510.00 was awarded to Dreamoval Ltd. to re-design a website for the Electoral Commission.

After the completion of the initial contract for re-designing the website of the Electoral Commission, Dreamoval had to offer extended technical services to the poll panel to protect the website which was under cyber-attack.

According to the chairperson, Dreamoval Ltd had to work round the clock to avoid a breakdown of the website. After the extended work, Dreamoval submitted an additional bill of \$76,000.00.

The chairperson discussed the new bill from Dreamoval with the USAID, which agreed to pay provided there was a contract for the additional or extra work done by Dreamoval.

There is evidence on record that apart from the contract to repackage the strategic plan for the commission, funded by UNDP, Quazar Ltd was awarded another contract to develop a logo for the panel at a cost of GHC23,470.01.

This contract was funded by the government of Ghana. On completion of the work, the director of finance and the chief accountant wrote on the 8th of March, 2016 to the Bank of Ghana to transfer \$6,080.31 being the equivalent of GHC23, 470.01 into the account of Quazar Ltd at the First National Bank, Guateng.

Two contracts were awarded to Quazar Ltd. The first was about repackaging a strategic plan of the commission funded by the UNDP.

The second contract for developing a logo for the commission was funded by the government of Ghana. It is clear from evidence that the allegation that the chairperson unilaterally awarded contracts to Quazar Ltd is not true.

The contract to repackage the strategic plan was awarded after a meeting of stakeholders was held at the instance of the UNDP.

The contract was awarded after three quotations submitted by three companies had been evaluated by a three-man evaluation panel, chaired by the director of finance of the electoral commission.

On the 31st of May 2016, the director of finance of the commission wrote to the UNDP country director to effect direct payments to Quazar Ltd for the work done.

The problem with the contract awarded to Quazar for the repackaging of the strategic plan was the method used to engage Quazar Ltd.

Evidence disclosed the commission had used a restricted bidding procurement process, which identified three companies to submit quotations.

In view of the fact that a restricted tender was used, prior approval of the Public Procurement Authority was required under Section 38 of Act 663, as amended, for the process to be lawful. (Pajhwok)

(6) New Zealand ...

Troop numbers would be cut to a maximum of 75 from July and 45 from next January, before the mission wraps up by June 2020, she added.

The troops provide training on basic weapons skills as well as medical support and logistics to the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) in camp Taji to the north of Baghdad, the capital.

More than 44,000 ISF personnel have been trained at Taji since 2015, the New Zealand government said in a statement. U.S.-backed forces drove Islamic State out of its last stronghold in eastern Syria this year, bringing an end to a so-called caliphate declared by the militant group. New Zealand's deployment in Iraq had been scheduled to end in May 2017, but successive New governments extended the date. Last year Ardern extended the armed force deployment in Iraq and Afghanistan until June.

Ardern added that New Zealand will cut to 11 personnel, from 13, its deployment to a NATO-led mission in Afghanistan, but troops would remain until December 2020, to support the training of Afghan army officers. (Reuters)

(7) In 10 Ghazni...

He said boys in the Rashidan district were facing problems and lacked books and stationary.

Abdullah, a resident of Andar district, said few years back, girls were enrolled in the Meri High School and people showed huge interest, but later the situ-

ation turned bad and the school was closed.

He said the state of girls education in Ghazni was not acceptable and if it remained the same, the number of girls getting education in Ghazni would reduce which would have bad consequences.

Of total 14 district in Ghazni, girls schools have been active in Muqar and Deh Yak districts only and there is no girls school in the remaining districts due to the lack of public interest and Taliban's presence. Haji Jan Mohammad, resident of Waghaz district in Ghazni, stressed that most people in their areas did not want to send their girls to schools.

"The public mindset is not ready to accept girls education, in most of the areas the Taliban have been causing hurdles to girls education," he added.

He said the issue was more intense in Pushtun-dominated areas and there was need for steps to resolve it.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said they had no problem with girls education but due to fighting in most areas, people did not send their daughters to schools.

He alleged no work had been done for promotion of girls education in Ghazni and they had often demanded that education related programs should be extended to remote areas in Ghazni.

He claimed the quota of Ghazni education was being robbed in Kabul and other areas.

Six-hundred schools are active in Ghazni with over half of them have no buildings and are facing other problems as well. (Pajhwok)

(8) Saffron Baba ...

cultivate saffron in the province.

Saffron Baba told Pajhwok Afghan News in an inclusive interview that he shared the seed of saffron with some farmers and taught them how to cultivate it in their lands. He said saffron was giving satisfactory yield to these farmers.

When asked why people call him Saffron Baba, he said because he did a lot for promoting saffron in the province, something the agriculture department and relevant NGOs despite having enough facilities did not do.

He said precisely he would cultivate poppy in his farm fields but later started cultivating saffron.

He said before switching to saffron from poppy, had only heard the name of saffron and he did not know how it was cultivated.

Gul Mohammad added: "I once asked my relatives in Pakistan to send me some amount of saffron and then I started learning how to cultivate it. First I received 25 kilograms of saffron seed and cultivated on my land."

He said some of his villagers were laughing at him as he cultivated saffron because they were not much familiar with the new crop.

He divided his land among family members and cultivated saffron on 2.5 acres of his land.

In the past when people were not much familiar with saffron he sold one kilogram of saffron for 8,000 afghanis but now as people were quite familiar with saffron's worth, he sold one kilogram for 70,000-80,000 afghanis.

Saffron Baba said he collected three to four kilograms of saffron from each acre of his land which produced a satisfactory yield.

He said so far he had sold saffron seed among dozens of farmers of other districts and given them advice regarding saffron cultivation.

He said saffron required less water and labor and gave satisfactory yield compared to poppy and as a result people started cultivating saffron on more land. As part of his efforts to promote saffron cultivation, he visited western Herat and some others provinces to share his experience with other farmers.

Most farmers have Saffron Baba's number and they contact him when need information while cultivating saffron.

Around 90 farmers have been distributed 45 kilograms of saffron seed each by the MC NGO in Khakriz district.

The Saffron Baba says Kandahar weather is suitable for saffron cultivation and even he is told Kandahar saffron is better than Herat one.

Satisfied with the production level, he urged the government to find a suitable market for their saffron.

Meanwhile, the provincial agriculture

department head said they had distributed 20 tons saffron seed among farmers for promoting the lucrative crop across the province. (Pajhwok)

(9) Interior Ministry

the police is not allowed to keep a case more than 72 hours except the attorney general," said Arash Shahrivar, a legal expert.

Last week, the Ministry of Interior reported progress in the case involving Haji Delawar.

But on Sunday, close friends and relatives of Delawar gathered in Kabul dismissed accusations as baseless.

"Your government is committing character assassination," said Bakhto Jan, an investor and a close relative to Haji Delawar.

"Based on the law, security forces are obliged to refer the case to the Attorney General's Office as soon as possible," said Khan Jan Alokzai, deputy head of Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

According to Ministry of Interior, Afghan security agencies were following Delawar almost for a year.

At least 10 people, among them three Pakistani nationals, were arrested last week in connection to Delawar's case, the Ministry of Interior said. (Tolo news)

(10) Turkmenistan...

has repeatedly offered to hold talks in Ashgabat under the auspices of the UN to restore peace in the neighboring state. Ashgabat is in favor of providing more ambitious and targeted international economic assistance to Afghanistan, primarily through the involvement of Afghanistan in the implementation of large infrastructure projects in the energy and transport sectors.

Examples of this are the projects of laying power transmission lines and fiber-optic communications along the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP) route, and the construction of railway lines from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan. A large-scale project to lay gas pipeline to India and Pakistan for the supply of Turkmen gas is also connected to the territory of Afghanistan, where unstable situation has remained for a long time. Observers believe that the implementation of this project may contribute to the restoration of Afghanistan, as it will allow creating jobs and provide the country with guaranteed income from transit. (Trend)

(11) 65 Voter ...

This comes after a member of IEC on Sunday confirmed shortcoming in public awareness campaign ahead of September presidential elections in Afghanistan, saying that the "inattention" could be a major defect.

Sources have said that at least \$23 million has been allocated for public awareness campaign on elections.

Reports indicate that public interest in registering their names has been delicate three days after the election management body officially launched the process.

"It is a supportive registration process. Those whose identity cards have no stickers, we past stickers on it and those who have completed the age of 18 can register their names," said Samim, an IEC voter registration officer in Kabul. Elections observers said the problem is rooted in the "poor leadership" of the election management body which is already under public scrutiny in the wake of last year's parliamentary elections marred by serious allegations of fraud and poll irregularities.

Observers accused the IEC of engaging in political bargaining and mismanagement in the process.

According to IEC, more than nine million people have registered last year for the parliamentary elections and the commission expects that two million more people will register their names ahead of September presidential elections. (Tolo News)

(12) Russia-China...

100 billion U.S. dollars in 2018 and will probably continue to grow by 27 percent to 30 percent this year, he added.

He said that the quality of Russia-China investment, trade and economic cooperation will be significantly improved in the next decade, while new forms of cooperation will emerge in such areas as technology, investment, goods and services. (Xinhua)

(13) Obesity, Climate...

prevalence of obesity, to the need to unlock the potential and mitigate the risks of new technologies such as artificial intelligence and automation."

"These opportunities and challenges arise from people and behaviors, and how well we grasp and meet them depends on individuals, families, communities, firms and public institutions responding effectively. Social science is vital to understanding how we can equip people with the capabilities and resilience to adapt to the pace and frequency of change and manage new technologies."

ESRC has published a list of its priority research and innovation themes. These include advancing the frontiers of social science, productivity, prosperity and growth, next-generation public services and living with technology.

Research programs will also look at changing populations and Britain in a changing world. (Xinhua)

(14) Google Earned...

Furthermore, the \$4.7 billion figure is a conservative estimate as the analysis didn't factor in the personal user data collected by Alphabet, Google's parent company, which can be further monetized.

Details from the report generated a very mixed reception among journalists and media workers who particularly drew attention to the revenues built up by Google while news outlets increasingly lay off staff.

What also seemed unjust is that the snippet Google shows "is all anyone cares about," and readers don't bother actually clicking into the full story. "Google should license/pay for this," one commenter suggested.

People do realize though that the relationship between the tech company and news media is more complicated, saying that when Google "makes money on news it's by serving ads ON publishers' sites." (RT)

(15) Stunned Finnish ...

before," a field director with the Coast Guard, Jarmo Hakkinen, said.

"It is standard procedure for us to send patrol boats to identify vessels sailing close to the border. But this time it led to a funnier case."

The yacht was apparently stylized as a Medieval Russian vessel which had a design similar to Viking ships. Three-headed dragons or serpents often appear in Russian folk tales. The Coast Guard did not reveal many details about the 'sea monster' yacht, apart from the fact it was made three years ago, and was likely traveling to a fair in Norway because its crew of seven was dressed in "traditional costumes." (RT)

(16) A Brexit Deal...

system, not just obviously for ourselves, but for the Irish," he said, adding that Britain should pay the set up costs and the annual running costs. (Reuters)

(17) Shops Open...

Alliance for Freedom and Change (umbrella protest movement) is fully responsible for recent unfortunate incidents... including blocking roads which is violating international humanitarian laws," Lieutenant General Jamaledine Omar said on state television late Sunday.

"The Military Council has decided to reinforce the presence of armed forces, RSF and other regular forces to help normal life return," he said, including the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces behind the repression.

He said security forces would provide "security to isolated civilians, reopen roads and facilitate the mobility of people, public and private transport and protect markets and strategic state installations".

The civil disobedience campaign was launched after men in military fatigues on June 3 raided a weeks-long sit-in leaving dozens of people dead, according to protest leaders who said several bodies were removed from the Nile.

The overall death toll since June 3 has reached 118, according to a doctors committee linked to the protesters who are pressing the military to hand over power to a civilian administration.

The health ministry says 61 people died nationwide in last week's crackdown, 49 of them from "live ammunition" in Khartoum. (AFP)