

(1) Iran's Mining Sector...

heavy fines, so they are approaching Iran slowly," he said. Iran's director general of foreign investment in the ministry of industry, mine and trade, Afroz Bahrami, said that foreign direct investment in the sector hit a new record of \$3.2 billion dollars. (Tolo news)

(2) Afghan Govt...

"I think the delegation that came here was just a ruse and it is just a waste of time and to keep the people of Afghanistan busy," said Gulalai Akbari, a member of Afghanistan's Meshrano Jirga in reference to a visit on Saturday by Pakistan's National Security Adviser Janjua, who led a high-level delegation to Kabul, held talks with Afghan leaders on peace and bilateral ties.

"Such visits will not have any outcomes," said senator Nisar Haris.

Meanwhile a number of experts have said there is a need for more pressure to be put on Pakistan and the Taliban to hold purposeful talks.

"We hope that these talks and meetings leave positive results," said senator Haseebullah Kalimzai.

"The Pakistanis must be asked if you (Pakistan) want to cooperate with us, then Pakistan should put pressure on Pakistan to accept a ceasefire," said senator Mohammad Hanif Hanafi.

Afghanistan has been accusing Pakistan of harboring Taliban leaders, fueling insecurity and obstructing purposeful peace negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

Afghanistan also believes that the insurgents have safe havens in Pakistan's border regions. But officials in Islamabad have always rejected these claims. (Tolo news)

(3) Energy Ministry...

important thing is that people support the project and we hope work on the project will ahead without any problems," Mohammad Asif Ghafoori, head of the energy minister's office said. A number of MPs urged government to step up security around development projects, especially dam projects.

"Government should clarify the security problem around Bakhshabad Dam. If the problem originates from the foreign countries, then people should at least decide to stand against the challenge," MP Nader Shah Bahar said.

Construction on the dam has been intermittent as work was delayed for many years due to contractor problems. However, geological studies and surveys got underway about nine months ago. (Tolo news)

(4) UK Renews...

In last five weeks alone, the KSF have undertaken over 2,800 protection journeys.

He also commended their efforts in responding to some of the recent terrorist attacks in Kabul, in which the KSF supported Afghan forces following the Intercontinental Hotel terrorist attack and provided first aid to Afghan soldiers following an attack on an Afghan Army compound in January. (Pajhwok)

(5) Communications...

office director Ahmad Wahid Wais said they are trying to address customers complaints about high prices of postal services.

"We understand the problems and know that the problems originate in heavy taxes. We have shared this problem with (Afghanistan) Customs Department and we hope the challeng-

es will be addressed soon," said Wais.

Statistics show that there are over 460 post offices around the country, but the services are not very good.

Post office officials however said they have earned more than 900 million Afs in the last two years and that their services are improving. (Tolo news)

(6) Dozens of Insurgents...

Nimroz province nine insurgents were killed and two vehicles were destroyed.

The ministry also said that a local commander for the Taliban known as Mullah Salah was killed and two of his fighters were wounded in ANA operations in Chamtal district of Balkh province.

According to the ministry, another eight insurgents were killed in a clearing operation in Wardak province.

The ministry did not provide information on casualties among security forces. (Tolo news)

(7) Mullah Rasoul's...

scholars in Jakarta.

"Afghan nation lived in hardship, poverty and peace is possible in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of foreign troops," the Taliban statement said.

Indonesian president during his visit to Kabul had offered to host a global conference in which Ulema from Afghanistan and Pakistan would take part. Pakistan government has not yet state about the conference.

Mulvi Abdul Rahman Niazi, member of the High Peace Council (HPC), said they welcomed any meeting, cooperation for settlement or facilitating the withdrawal of foreign troops.

He said Afghans suffered too much due to decade long conflict and rendered huge sacrifices. (Pajhwok)

(8) Four Taliban...

adding that "the clashes lasted for a few hours."

The security forces also seized some weapons during the operation, officials added.

However, officials did not provide further details about the clashes.

The Taliban has not yet commented about the clash. (Tolo news)

(9) 5 Police Killed...

checkpoint area.

He said eight police personnel were killed and their weapons seized in the attack. Only one militant was wounded, Mujahid concluded. (Pajhwok)

(10) Firewood, Gas...

Rahman, said 50kg of Kazakhstani flour cost 1,090afs, 49kg of Pakistani sugar 1,600afs, 10 liters of Khurshid ghee 1,020afs and 24kg of Pakistani rice 2,000 afs.

However, a slight difference is observed in retail and wholesale prices, but in some areas, the difference is huge.

Ahmad Wali Panjsheri, who owns a grocery store in Dahn-i-Bagh area, sold 49-kg bag of sugar for 1,800afs, a 16 liter tin of ghee for 1,100afs, a 50kg sack of Kazakhstani flour for 1,150afs, 24kg Pakistani rice for 2,200, a kilogram of green Indonesian tea for 300afs and the same quantity of black African tea for 350afs.

The prices of gold also did not register any change as one gram of Russian gold was sold for 1,900afs and the same quantity of Arabian variety for 2,400afs, the same rates as last week's.

According to Sadaqat Money Exchange Service in Sara-i-Shahzada in Kabul, one US dollar was accounted for 69.14afs and 1,000 Pakistani rupees for 616afs this week against last week's 69.12afs and 607afs respectively. (Pajh-

wok)

(11) Kabul Mayor...

the investigation conclude, he promised, it would become clear whether or not the allegations were based on facts. Once the probe was conducted, he said, the number of real accused would be ascertained.

For his part, the acting mayor rejected the allegations as a conspiracy hatched by "opportunists". He said incomplete documents related to the municipality and Kabul University's Engineering Department had been leaked.

Handed over to media and judiciary, the papers showed the municipal administration had violated rules and regulations, the official claimed.

Sheikh Ahmad, advisor to the municipality, insisted they had never misused their authority.

In fact, he claimed, the accusation was a conspiracy against the young team of the municipality. (Pajhwok)

(12) Gemstone Smuggler...

here and are stationed at their posts," Badakhshan police chief Abdul Khaliq Aqsai said.

In 2016, Global Witness released finds of a survey and stated an investigation found that Afghanistan's 6,500 year old lapis mines are driving corruption, conflict and extremism in the country.

Global Witness found that the Taliban and other armed groups are earning up to \$20 million USD per year from Afghanistan's lapis mines.

At the time, Stephen Carter, Afghanistan Campaign Leader at Global Witness, said: "These lapis mines are one of the richest assets of the Afghan people and should be driving development and prosperity."

"Instead, the beautiful lapis lazuli stone has become a conflict mineral. The mines provide a tiny fraction of the benefit they should, and have become a major source of conflict and grievance, which is driving the insurgency and undermining hope for stability in Afghanistan - which could have consequences globally.

"Unless the Afghan government acts quickly, these mines represent not just a lost opportunity but a threat to the future of the whole country," said Carter at the time.

"The Afghan government must urgently re-establish the rule of law at these mine sites, and strengthen oversight and transparency for mining across the country to make sure these natural resources serve the Afghan people to whom they belong," he said. (Tolo news)

(13) 21 Afghan...

dead or injured."

Abdul, another injured, said: "We were 21 men in the vehicle when it vehicle overturned and we all sustained injuries." (Pajhwok)

(14) No Plan to...

group, had suggested that in order to bring peace, government should handover some parts of the country to the Taliban.

"In peace talks, the plan to split the county was not on the agenda at all; our plan is that those who are willing to join the peace process should come and live in the country freely," said Jawed Faisal, deputy spokesman for the CEO Abdullah Abdullah.

While the Afghan government is hoping for peace, the Afghan security institutions will still continue their military offensive against insurgents.

"We want peace, but we will fight against those who continue to wage war," a defense ministry spokesman Dawlat Waziri said.

Interior ministry spokesman Najib Danish meanwhile said: "We will fight till the end against those who do not endorse peace and we will drive them off the battle fields."

However some experts are skeptical about government's peace policy.

"The Taliban will not endorse peace talks without increased military pressure," said MP Musa Khan Nusrat.

President Ashraf Ghani recently hosted the Kabul Process meeting where he offered a peace deal to the Taliban in a bid to get them to the negotiations table.

Ghani sent a strong message to the Taliban and said peace is now in their hands. He called on the group to accept the offer and to join the peace process and together with Afghanistan "save the country". (Tolo news)

(15) IEC Hints...

days in district centres and another 15 days in villages and far-flung areas.

"The individual who come to the registration centre gets a security code attached to his National Identity Card (NIC) and the same NIC with security code will be required on Election Day," she said.

She said the past voters card were invalid and the future polls would be conducted on the bases of new voters card and NICs. (Pajhwok)

(16) Afghanistan...

process of monitoring had improved with limited support from the government.

But a number of buyers said Iranian and Pakistani medicines had flooded the local market. Haseebullah, a pharmacy-owner, says most medicines sold in the market were imported from Turkey, Iran, India and Saudi Arabia. But Iranian and Pakistani medicines have captured the market.

Meanwhile, the residents of Kabul complained of the low quality of medicines and urged the authorities concerned to pay proper attention to the public health issue.

Abdul Khaliq, an inhabitant of Taimani area, grumbled medicine prices very high but their quality was low. The pharmacists often told lie and sold low-quality drugs at high prices, he alleged.

But Kamawal claimed around 150 tonnes of expired and low-quality drugs were seized and destroyed last year. Around 190 pharmacies, including those without certificates, were closed. A hundred pharmacies with good performance had been awarded appreciation certificates, the official explained.=

Proper management and control had helped increase the revenue of his department from 27 million afghanis to 40 million afghanis, Kamawal concluded. (Pajhwok)

Macron, Merkel Promise EU Reform Roadmap by June

PARIS - French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Friday they would come up with a roadmap for a major shake-up of the European Union by June, despite resistance to Macron's ambitious reform agenda from smaller members of the bloc.

Macron has called for a major drive to reinvigorate the EU and deepen cooperation at a time of rising populism, with proposals that include a common eurozone finance minister and budget.

Merkel has given a cautious welcome to his ideas, but had been hamstrung by nearly six months of tortuous talks to form a coal-

ition government, the longest in Germany's post-war history.

Heading into talks Friday at the Elysee Palace with the newly-reinstated chancellor, Macron sought to accelerate the pace.

Citing Brexit and the gains made by populists in Italian elections as cause for urgent action, he said France and Germany would "propose a clear, ambitious roadmap" on the eurozone, migration policy, defence, trade, research and education by June. Merkel, who has been weakened by her conservative CDU/CSU party's election losses, backed the deadline, telling a joint press conference: "We have to achieve results by June."

While France and Germany did "not always have the same opinions at first", she said they would attempt to find "common paths". But even if he manages to win Merkel over, Macron's plans could founder on resistance from smaller northern European countries wary of being railroaded into sweeping reforms.

Merkel's visit to Paris drew a sharp response from Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, who told Berlin and Paris not to ignore the concerns of other EU states.

"Of course the German government can meet the French government without us being there," Rutte told Germany's Spiegel magazine.

"But that doesn't mean that we and other EU countries agree with everything the Germans and French agree on. We won't just nod along to everything."

Finance ministers from countries including Denmark, Ireland, Sweden and the Netherlands had already called last week for more modest goals, such as completing the eurozone banking union, instead of "far-reaching proposals" for change.

For Macron, however, who made overhauling European institutions a key campaign promise last year, Merkel's return to the helm of EU heavyweight Germany comes not a moment too soon. (AFP)

Facing Far-Right Challenge, Minister Says Islam 'Doesn't Belong' To Germany

BERLIN - New Interior Minister Horst Seehofer said Islam does not belong to Germany, and set out hardline immigration policies in his first major interview since being sworn in this week, as he sought to see off rising far-right challengers. His comments put him on a collision course with Chancellor Angela Merkel, who on Friday reiterated her long-held view that Islam was a part of Germany, even if the country was traditionally characterized by Christianity and Judaism.

"Islam does not belong to Germany," Seehofer, a member of Merkel's CSU Bavarian allies who are further to the right than her own Christian Democrats (CDU), told Bild newspaper in an interview published on Friday.

Seehofer said he would push through a "master plan for quicker deportations" and classify more states as 'safe' countries of origin, which would make it easier to deport failed asylum seekers.

Seehofer is particularly keen to show his party is tackling immigration ahead of Bavaria's October regional election, when the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) is expected to enter that state assembly.

Both Merkel's conservatives and their centre-left coalition partners - the Social Democrats - lost ground to the anti-immigrant AfD in September's national election following the arrival in Germany of more than a million migrants and refugees. (Reuters)