

Afghanistan Comes Closer to Achieving Peace: Khalilzad

KABUL - US special representative Zalmay Khalilzad has said achieving peace in Afghanistan is the joint demand of the US and people of Afghanistan, hoping the Afghans would soon get durable peace.

During a meeting with Atta Mohammad Noor, the chief executive of the Jamiat-i-Islami Afghanistan (JIA) party, Khalilzad said parties to the conflict in Afghanistan had come closer to reconciliation.

Noor on his Facebook page said US Ambassador to Afghanistan John Bass and NATO Forces Commander Gen. Scott Miller were also present at the meeting.

Khalilzad stressed over the creation of a credible and national team acceptable to all sides for future proceedings on the peace process. The JIA head hailed efforts of the US and Khalilzad for peace and stability in Afghanistan and vowed to support all efforts in this regard. He termed peace as main desire of the people of Afghanistan.

The overall security situation and instability in the north of the country was discussed during the meeting.

Khalilzad is scheduled to travel to Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar to facilitate the Afghan reconciliation process.

Khalilzad resumes regional tour after the Taliban attended a multinational meeting on the Afghan peace process in Moscow. (Pajhwok)

China's Annual Shopping Frenzy Shatters Records Again

SHANGHAI - Online shoppers spent more than \$14 billion within the first two hours of China's annual buying frenzy on Sunday, once again breaking records as the consumer tradition enters its 10th year.

The spending binge breaks from gloomy forecasts about the world's second-largest economy, which is struggling with a tariff war with the U.S., a stock market slump and slowing overall growth.

Known as Singles Day, the clamor for deals and discounts was heralded with characteristic fanfare by Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba, which has turned an unofficial holiday for people without romantic partners into a yearly windfall for digital retailers.

A massive screen at Alibaba's gala in Shanghai showed the surging sales numbers in real time: At 2 minutes and 5 seconds after midnight, 10 billion yuan (\$1.43 billion) in purchases had been made on Alibaba's platforms. By the 1 hour and 47 minute mark, that number had increased tenfold. Singles Day began as a spoof event celebrated by unattached Chinese university students in the 1990s. In Chinese, it's called "Double 11," after the numbers in the month and date. The improvised holiday has since been co-opted by e-retailers and transformed into China's version of Cyber Monday — the busiest time for online shopping in the U.S. (Fox News)

Iran Sells 700,000 Barrels in Second Oil Auction



TEHRAN - Iran on Sunday went ahead with a second public sale of its light crude oil to international clients through its Energy Bourse in a policy meant to dodge US sanctions and sell the strategic fuel to direct buyers.

The National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) had put 700,000 barrels of light oil up for the grabs at a proposed price of \$65.22 per barrel - \$5 below the first sale that was held last week.

The auction started at 14:30 Tehran's local time (11:00 GMT), but finished in less than

an hour according to a report by the Energy Bourse published at 15:17 local time. The oil that had been put on sale was sold out in three cargos: two at 245,000 barrels and one at 210,000 barrels.

No names and details of buyers were provided as officials had earlier said the identities of bidders were kept confidential. The price at which the oil was sold was specified at \$64.97 per barrel.

During the first round which was held last Sunday, a total of three buyers purchased a collective of eight cargoes total-

ing 700,000 barrels of Iranian oil.

According to NIOC's arrangements, buyers would have to pay 20 percent of the total value of their purchases in Iran's national currency - the Rial. The remaining payments would need to be made in foreign currencies after loading.

Buyers would have to pay 10 percent of the value of their purchases in Rials two hours before the start of trading. They can either buy 35,000 barrels of oil or a multiplication of this up to a ceiling of one million barrels. (Press TV)

'Moscow Summit Served Taliban's, Russia's Interest'

KABUL - The Hezb-i-Musharekat Milli (HMM) party and some Meshrano Jirga members on Sunday criticized the High Peace Council (HPC) delegation's weak handling of the Moscow summit.

Russia hosted peace talks on Friday with delegations from the High Peace Council (HPC), the Taliban and 12 countries including Iran, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, China, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and the US.

HMM chief Najibullah Kabuli told reporters in Kabul that the HPC delegation handled the multinational event 'weakly' and failed to properly present the position of Afghan government and people strongly.

He said the HPC delegation did not respond properly when the Taliban termed the existing system in the country as occupied and rotten.

Kabuli said the Afghan delegation preferred to say silent after Taliban's attacking arguments which helped them emerge strongly.

He warned any peace dialogue without leadership of the Afghan government and involvement of political parties and civil societies would not produce the desired result and would mean the continuation of war.

He said the Moscow meeting was a suc-



cess for Taliban and was not organized to support peace efforts but to show the Taliban as powerful and give them recognition.

Kabuli said future peace meetings should be conducted inside the country under leadership of the people of Afghanistan. He asked Zalmay Khalilzad, the US special representative for Afghanistan reconciliation, to consider leadership of Afghan government in talks with the Taliban.

Kabuli claimed Iran, Russia and Paki-

stan were providing latest weapons to the Taliban, adding that simultaneously with the Moscow meeting the Taliban launched massive attacks on some districts in Farah, Ghazni, Uruzgan and other provinces.

Mesharano Jirga: In today's meeting, some Meshrano Jirga members shared their views regarding the Moscow peace summit.

Lawmaker Ghairat Baheer said the Moscow meeting was a demand of Russia. (Pajhwok)

(1) Kunduz Election...

were right in their claims and real votes should be separated from fraudulent ones.

"A number of candidates committed rigging in Imam Sahib district on the Election Day, we request judicial organs to take action against these people and corrupt election commission officials," she added.

On the other hand, Abdul Qodus Zarifi, another Wolesi Jirga candidate, also said election commissions' heads should be introduced to attorney's office.

He warned the government of staging protests if their demands were not implemented.

Ending the meeting, the protestors in their resolution letter asked the government to identify those behind closing polling stations on the Election Day, rigging and casting votes without biometric verification.

Mohammad Rassoul Omar, head of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) for Kunduz, said no one was allowed on the election day commit fraud and they had supported people's votes.

"We will not allow anyone to become a lawmaker with fraudulent votes, we have no right to recount votes, if the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC) permits we can

do it," he said.

Kunduz IECC spokesman, Mohammad Seddiq Samim, said those claiming fraud in elections should share evidence otherwise their allegations would be ignored. (Pajhwok)

(2) Afghanistan...

sector, although based on earlier plans the purchase of the ships will be carried out by the Afghan private sector.

Afghanistan's Deputy Minister of Transportation Imam Muhammad Varimach, said that the ships were bought by Afghan businessmen and were entering the international waters by using Afghanistan flag, and the main beneficiary of the project would be the private sector of the country. (IRNA)

(3) IEC Reaffirms...

elections is confirmed on April 20, next year but technical issues need time."

In addition, he said, the conduct of district, provincial councils and Ghazni Wolesi Jirga polls on the same date was being discussed and a complete election schedule would be announced in three days.

Meanwhile, Syed Hafeezullah Hashami resigned as secretary and spokesman of the IEC but pledged to continue working as commissioner.

Sayyad meanwhile hailed ser-

vices of Hashimi and said he has not formally resigned. (Pajhwok)

(4) Turkmenistan to...

Work Rail Way Construction Material P.CO for the construction of a mosque to serve 500 people in Aqina settlement.

The construction work may be launched in November 2018. The mosque may be commissioned in December 2020.

The document was signed to achieve peace, stability and security in Afghanistan, as well as to render humanitarian assistance to fraternal Afghan people. The Afghan Turkmen living near the borders of Turkmenistan is the second biggest Turkmen ethnic group outside the historical homeland after the Iranian Turkmen.

The number of Turkmen in the country is estimated at around one million people (2-3 percent). In 2016, Turkmen specialists commissioned a railway from the Turkmen city of Kerki to Afghanistan's Aqina settlement.

In mid-March, it was reported that the Turkmen Ministry of Railways reconstructed a railway with a total length of 13 kilometers to the Afghan station Turghundi. After the implementation of this project, the capacity of the station has increased. There is an opportunity to supply Afghan products to the inter-

national markets.

By connecting Afghanistan with the Turkmenbashi International Seaport, this transport corridor will provide an opportunity to reach Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey and European countries across the sea. (Trend)

(5) Pilot's Mistake...

bay by airport security. "Ariana Afghan Airlines (DEL-KDH) whilst taxiing for take-off returned to isolation bay after the crew pressed the hijack button. After the basic checking the flight finally departed at 15:30 today," said a source at Delhi airport.

The source added that the aircraft was cordoned off by the Airport Security Group (ASG). "The aircraft was cleared for departure on confirmation that it was an error by the captain," said the source, who added that the pilot wrote an application saying that the button was pressed by mistake.

Following the incident, the Ariana Afghan Airlines plane took off nearly two hours after its scheduled departure.

While there was no immediate official reaction, sources said the pressing of the hijack button had pushed all agencies concerned, including the anti-terror force National Security Guard (NSG), into action.

Dostum meets Hekmatyar to discuss presidential elections

KABUL - Head of the Hizb-e-Islami Afghanistan (HIA) and first-vice president, Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum have discussed matters related to presidential elections, a statement from the HIA said on Sunday.

Hekmatyar and Dostum discussed in details current political situation, peace process and future presidential elections, the statement said.

The HIA has not yet decided the creation of joint electoral alliance for the elections but discussion in this regard was underway with political parties, the source said.

Political parties' joint team would agree on a candidate for next presidential elections, who is eligible to run for the position, the statement added.

The candidate should be committed to Islamic and national values and assure its people he/she would not turn to a dictator, the source concluded. (Pajhwok)

U.S. Scientists Discover Link Between Brain Activity, Mood Disorders

SAN FRANCISCO - U.S. scientists at University of California San Francisco (UCSF) have found a new pattern of brain activity that may help develop new therapies in the future to treat mood disorders like depression.

Most human brain research on mood disorders has relied on studies in which participants lie in a functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) scanner and look at upsetting images or listen to sad stories.

However, the scientists from UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences recruited 21 patient volunteers with epilepsy who had had 40 to 70 electrodes implanted on the brain's surface and in deeper structures of the brain to record brain activities for seven to 10 days.

By using computational algorithms, they matched patterns of brain activity to changes in the patients' reported mood and analyzed the recordings of brain activity in each patient to identify so-called intrinsic coherence networks (ICNs), which are groups of brain regions where their activity patterns fluctuate at a common frequency.

The researchers found that changes in the activity of the brain network were highly linked to day-to-day bouts of low or depressed mood.

The mood-related network was characterized by beta waves in the hippocampus and amygdala, two deep brain regions that have long been correlated with memory and negative emotion, respectively. The researchers were able to identify a single signal that explained almost completely bouts of depressed mood in the patients involved in the experiment. (Xinhua)

Other Indian media reports, stated the NSG commandos and officials of other agencies responded swiftly to the situation and immediately surrounded the aircraft and carried out a security check. After the two-hour operation, that created panic among passengers on board the aircraft, the plane was cleared for take-off. (Tolo news)

(6) Afghan Turk...

of Education (MoE) formally handed over the management of Afghan-Turk schools to the Turkish government, defying calls by parents and students to keep the schools under Afghan control.

Following a failed military coup in 2016, the Turkish government formally asked Afghanistan to hand over control of these schools to the Turkish government.

Turkey claims that these schools are run by Turkish cleric Mohammed Fethullah Gülen who is currently in exile in the United States.

Turkey blamed Gülen for orchestrating the failed military takeover in 2016. However, former officials from the Afghan-Turk schools have said the schools had nothing to do with politics and they only provide education to Afghan children.

According to some reports, the Turkish government reportedly offered a number of incentives in exchange for taking control of these schools. (Tolo news)