

**(1) Taliban Has...**

The president stated that to achieve dignified and sustainable peace in the country, there is a need for unity, solidarity, and consensus among the people of Afghanistan.

"It is not about you and us. We all have to be united. Our historic achievements and our current achievement and our common achievement is a goal which we want to determine it for our next generations," said Ghani urging unity among Afghans on national issues including peace.

He said no Afghan from any layer of the society has not been left unharmed from the 40 years of the war imposed on the Afghans.

"Everyday we witness bloodsheds, suicide, explosions, and bombardments which have harmed our people mentally and psychologically," he said.

"The key to removing the disappointment is in our hand, so let's get together and accept each other," he said amid waves of criticisms over the structure of the Qatar delegation.

He said the current opportunity for peace is a historic opportunity.

"As a sovereign nation, we will take the decisions based on the will of God and the nation," he said. "The present opportunity indicates that proper platform is created in the national, regional and international levels."

Ghani said the ultimate decision about peace is owned by the Afghan people.

"It's only the people who accept or reject the conditions for peace. The champion Afghan nation is the final decision maker of peace," Ghani said. "You may have personal contact with the Taliban because our society is a communications community, but for you, representatives of today, for the first time, there is an opportunity to engage in discussions with the opponent side. In Qatar, you will represent the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the faithful Afghan nation. You represent the rights of every child, every woman, every disabled, every family of the martyrs and every citizen of Afghanistan. The rights which are reflected in our nation document or the Constitution which is our guideline."

Ghani said the Taliban should realize the fact that the group has no way except to engage in talks with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. This comes two days after the Afghan government announced that it had prepared an initial list of the Qatar delegation which consists of 250 members. The list, however, has been criticized by some parties for not being inclusive. (Tolo news)

**(2) OSCE Mulls Transport...**

and the formation of new international transport routes on the Eurasian continent became the subject of special attention.

"In this context, the importance of the multimodal transport and transit corridor Lapis Lazuli (Afghanistan-Turkmenistan-Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey) was emphasized," the report said.

In particular, the Turkmen president expressed confidence that the functioning of the new port in Turkmenbashi city will have a positive impact on the situation in the region and beyond, and will promote cooperation among the Caspian-littoral states.

Ensuring energy security and stable energy supplies, issues of environmental protection, rational use of water resources and settlement of the situation in Afghanistan were also mentioned as priority aspects of cooperation.

The OSCE secretary general drew attention to the importance of the Turkmen initiatives on laying power transmission and fiber optic communication lines on the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP) route, as well as the commissioning of the Serhetabat-Torghundi (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan) railway.

The Lapis Lazuli transit project envisions railways and highways connecting the city of Torghundi in Afghanistan's Herat Province with Ashgabat, and further with the Caspian port of Turkmenbashi. The corridor will continue to Baku, then through Tbilisi to Ankara with branches in Poti and Batumi, and then from Ankara to Istanbul.

bul. (Trend)

**(3) AGO to Finalize...**

members of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) and the Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC) and that the outcomes of the investigations will be shared with the public.

"The meeting which we had with probe team, they told us that they will finalize their decision regarding the case in the next one or two days and will share outcomes of their investigations next week," said Rasuli.

Meanwhile, members of a number of electoral monitoring organizations said Afghans expect the judicial institutions to investigate the fraud allegations against these officials with complete transparency and justice.

"Our expectation is that meddling should be prevented in the work of judicial institutions," said Yusuf Rasheed, CEO of Free and Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan.

"If people's complaints were not addressed, public trust will not be restored in the process," former head of the secretariat of IEC Daud Ali Najafi said.

The IECC announced last month that based on new amendments in the election law, decisions of the IECC on complaints lodged against the electoral body will not be final and that a special court will probe complaints against the decisions made by the two commissions.

The IECC Secretariat Mohammad Qasim Elyasi said the special court will be formed in the near future and that any complaints made regarding the elections affairs or decisions of the two elections commissions, will be probed by the court.

The new amendments in the election law were approved by President Ghani in February based on which new commissioners were appointed for the two electoral bodies - the Independent Election Commission and the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission. (Tolo news)

**(4) U.N. Highlights...**

captured as part of the war with the Taliban and other hardline Islamist groups.

The Taliban have made major gains in recent years and now effectively control half the country.

The U.N. agencies said beating was a common form of torture to force confessions. Higher incidence of torture was noted at a detention centre run by the Afghan National Police in the southern province of Kandahar.

The detainees reported various forms of torture such as suffocation, electric shocks and suspension from ceilings.

Last year, the government committed to the prevention of torture by acceding to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, and it had made progress in implementing a National Plan on the Elimination of Torture, the agencies said.

"We welcome the steps taken by the government to prevent and investigate cases of torture and ill-treatment over the past two years," Yamamoto said. (Reuters)

**(5) Activists March...**

the government keeps a distant approach towards it, violence continues. We hope for the day when the Afghan women are provided with all the rights they deserve," Mohammadi said.

The rally also followed an exhibition reflecting the plight of the Afghan women.

"The rally is aimed at promoting awareness among those women who are still deprived of their rights in society, those women are still not allowed to go out of their homes," said event organizer Negin.

"Some women who live in urban areas have received some of their rights, but we want to raise the voice of those women who live in other areas of the city and are suffering. They should be given their rights," said Muzhda, a student.

Masooma Rahimi, Chairperson of Afghan Women Network in Balkh said several kangaroo courts were reported in the northern regions of Afghanistan over the past six months. She said women are faced with different types of violence.

"We need to forge solidarity among

ourselves and be united to get our rights," Masooma said. (Tolo news)

**(6) Afghanistan to...**

Hing is a herbal product used as spice ingredient in making natural medicines called unani and is good for stomach pain and digestion. (Pajhwok)

**(7) Confusion, Mistrust...**

now-customary spring offensive last week.

The United States, which has held several rounds of talks with the Taliban, said this week it would wait to see the result of the meeting before agreeing to further talks.

Though the government will be absent, the Afghan delegation, swollen to 250 members after days of wrangling over who would be included, goes with the blessing of Ghani, who said the talks aimed at a sustainable and dignified peace.

Speaking to delegation members in Kabul, he said, "Your task will be representing the wishes of the Afghan nation and government of Afghanistan."

Some government officials are included in a personal capacity but the group will not include some of the most powerful figures in Afghan politics, who are reluctant to join forces with Ghani ahead of presidential elections due in September. Former intelligence chief Amrullah Saleh and Atta Mohammad Noor, a veteran of the anti-Soviet Mujahideen and a governor of the province of Balkh, who retains huge influence in northern Afghanistan, refused to take part. Atta Noor said the list was formed of Ghani favourites and "ignores social balance and the presence of the jihad and resistance faction".

A spokesman for former President Hamid Karzai also said he would not attend. The Taliban's own response was dismissive, pointing to the unwieldy size of the group and saying that only a limited number of political and national figures would be allowed to participate. "The creators of the Kabul list must realize that this is an orderly and prearranged conference in a far-away (Gulf) country and not an invitation to some wedding or other party at a hotel in Kabul," the movement's spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, said. "Arranging and publishing such lists signifies that the Kabul administration fears these conferences and progress towards peace and is trying to be a spoiler with such actions." The United States says any peace deal must be Afghan-owned and Afghan-led, but the general mistrust underlines the problems that need to be overcome to reach agreement. (Reuters)

**(8) ICE Unveils Final...**

charge, final results Balkh, Paktika, Ghor, Heart, Takhar, Nangarhar, Hindu minority, Laghman, Daikundi, Samangan, Khost, Jawzjan, Bamyan, Zabul, Faryab, Nuristan, Nimroz, Kunar, Kapisa, Panjshir, Badakhshan, Sari-Pul, Uruzgan, Farah, Badghis, Logar, Parwan and Helmand have been announced so far.. (Pajhwok)

**(9) Kabul, Bucharest...**

as encouraging Romanian companies to invest in Afghanistan and an Afghan-led peace process were also discussed. (Pajhwok)

**(10) Nangarhar Ulema...**

activists to hear people voices about the ongoing peace negotiations. Salahuddin Darwish, an organizer of the conference, told Pajhwok they would share their views in form of a report with the High Peace Council (PHC), the Taliban militants and all those who were working for peace in the country. (Pajhwok)

**(11) 31 Taliban Killed...**

as Naser the Taliban's Red Unit commander in Dawlatabad district, Maulvi Ihsanullah known as Toofaan, leader of Taliban group and Maulvi Taher, military commander for Qosh Teepa of Juzjan province in four different clashes in the Dawlatabad district of Faryab province.

Security forces suffered no harm during the clashes, while the Taliban have not commented about the incidents. (Pajhwok)

**(12) Taliban Releases...**

hailed from Uruzgan and two from Kandahar provinces.

He said the workers had been freed from the Taliban jail in the Zamindaro locality of Helmand province.

He said the released might have been made possible through money. (Pajhwok)

**(13) 4 Killed, 2...**

other hand, the governor house informed people the gates of Daronta Dam would be closed to save the facility from being damaged. The water level in Kabul River would rise as a consequence.

More than 120 people have been killed, dozens wounded and hundreds of families displaced as a result of recent flash floods, triggered by heavy rains. (Pajhwok)

**(14) (BRF) Feature...**

and the new container dock near the Rhein River has increased the capacity of the whole port. Through those changes, Durakovic found opportunities for his company: he will train as many as 1,000 truck drivers per year in the future instead of 400 at present.

The freight trains, named China Railway Express, is a key project under the Belt and Road Initiative proposed by China. With an average journey time of two weeks, cargo trains between Europe and China are faster than container ships and cheaper than cargo planes. The project's contribution to the local industry is visible, with the Railway Transportation Service Broker (RTSB) as a case. The company previously focused on transportation between West Europe and former Soviet Union states till 2013 when it operated the first train from central China's Zhengzhou to German city of Hamburg.

As the route succeeded and attracted more customers, RTSB operated more freight trains between Duisburg and Hamburg and Chinese cities like Chengdu, Chongqing, Hefei and Changsha.

In the past three years, the turnover of the company tripled to 300 million U.S. dollars, and the freight volume doubled in 2018 from a year ago.

"It's all because of the China Railway Express. It has become the focus of our company," said Kateryna Negrieieva, business development director of RTSB, adding that more jobs are created in other parts of Europe as a result of increased cargo flows on the routes. In the Polish city Malaszewicze bordering Belarus, RTSB's office expanded from five staff members in 2016 to 30 at present. (Xinhua)

**(15) Movement at North...**

President Trump made strides toward the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula last June when he and Kim met in Singapore. A second summit in February proved less effective however when negotiations broke down over what the U.S. said was Pyongyang's excessive demands for sanctions relief in return for limited disarmament measures.

Kim said last week he would be open to a third summit but only if Washington were to come to mutually acceptable terms with North Korea.

Trump acknowledged on Twitter that he too would be willing to meet again, continuing to stress the importance of sanctions and a nuclear-free North Korea. (Fox News)

**(16) India Has Vast...**

others were assembled locally out of Russian-made assembly kits.

Apart from the T-90s, India has purchased a number of T-90Ms - an upgraded iteration of the tank. In fact, India has significantly more T-90s in service than Russia itself, as well as a number of the older T-72 tanks.

Russian-made aircraft The Indian Air Force operates a wide selection of Russian-made airplanes as well, including a hundred or so MiG-21s. Though the supersonic fighter first flew in the late 1950s, don't let their age fool you: the latest upgraded model - known as MiG-21UPG Bison - can actually go toe to toe with 4th-generation fighters. The aircraft is suitable for gaining air superiority, as well as for ground attack missions.

Aircraft of this type were involved in the recent flare-up between India and Pakistan - and at least one of them was shot down. India claimed that a Bison managed to shoot down a US-made Pakistani F-16 jet, yet failed to provide

any solid proof. Islamabad, on its part, vehemently denies the loss and involvement of F-16s in the conflict. (RT)

**(17) Japan Asks US...**

men, after the bodies were discovered. Akiba solicited the envoy's cooperation in a probe of the deaths and his best efforts in preventing such a tragedy from recurring.

US soldiers were in turn admonished to "demonstrate solidarity with their Okinawan neighbors" in a letter sent on Sunday by Lieutenant General Eric Smith, chief of US forces in Okinawa and commander of US Marines in Japan, to unit leaders. They were warned the incident "has and will continue to cause strong feelings" and told not to go out on the day of the funeral.

Tensions remain high between Okinawans and the approximately 27,000 US military personnel stationed on the island - about half of all the American soldiers stationed in Japan. Okinawans overwhelmingly rejected the opening of a new US military base in a remote area of the island in a February referendum, citing environmental damage in addition to the safety risk the base would pose to locals, but Tokyo plans to go ahead with construction anyway. US personnel in recent years have been implicated in crimes from drunk driving up to and including rape and murder, while the bases themselves contribute to pollution and other quality-of-life issues, according to locals. (RT)

**(18) 'Unlawful &...**

The updated map still refers to the West Bank as being "Israeli occupied with current status subject to the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement; permanent status to be determined through future negotiations," despite Netanyahu's recent promise to impose Israeli sovereignty across West Bank settlements. About 40,000 people live in the Golan, half are Druze and Alawites, and half are Jewish settlers. (RT)

**(19) 'Turkey's Erdogan...**

Ankara broke ties with Damascus in 2011 after the start of the Syrian war, and Erdogan has in the past described Assad as an "assassin".

But Erdogan acknowledged in February that low-level contacts have been taking place and his rhetoric has also softened in tone in recent months.

"In Syria, from the start, on the ground, we do not agree with Iran on many issues," Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Wednesday. "But we have decided to cooperate with Iran for a political solution."

Repeated rounds of UN-backed Syria peace talks have failed to end the bloodshed, and Iran, Russia and Turkey have sponsored the parallel so-called Astana negotiations since early 2017.

Talks among the three countries have focused on the jihadist-held bastion of Idlib in northwestern Syria, local Syrian media have reported. (AFP)

**(20) Russian Envoy to...**

"Russia's role in Syria is very important and it creates balance facing U.S. policy in the region," he said. (Xinhua)

**(21) US 'Concerned' over...**

"The U.S. highly values transparency and due diligence and in this context, supports the timely completion of all investigations," said the U.S. spokesperson, who added that the government remains "committed" to a strong U.N. AIDS agency. The U.S. stopped short of saying whether any funding would be withheld.

After Brostrom's public charges that she was sexually assaulted last year, an independent review of UNAIDS found there was a "toxic" atmosphere at the agency and that it was plagued by "defective leadership." UNAIDS chief Michel Sidibe announced he would leave in June - six months before his term was set to end.

Sweden's no. 2 donor, announced last year it would suspend its funding to the agency until the leadership had changed.

"There is a massive backlash in the U.S. and the U.K. against multilateralism, and all of this helps fuel the argument, of why should we fund these far-away agencies when we have these other problems at home?" said Devi Sridhar, a global public health expert at the University of Edinburgh. (AP)