

(1) Ayatollah ...

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Ayatollah Khamenei said in a statement issued by his office on Monday that scholars and literary figures in Afghanistan make a very significant contribution to the promotion of Islamic teachings and the Persian language.

He said: "In addition to its rich human and cultural resources, Afghanistan also enjoys abundant natural resources. These potentialities and commonalities should all serve to upgrade cooperation between the two countries."

Ayatollah Khamenei stressed the need for determination to boost cooperation and rapport between Iran and Afghanistan. He said: "Of course, the Americans and some countries in the region are unaware of the potentialities of Afghanistan and do not favor rapport and cooperation between the two countries either, but Iran regards the security and progress of its neighbor, Afghanistan, as its own security and progress."

He said: "Issues between the two countries, including immigrants, water, transportation and security are all resolvable and everyone should deal with and settle these issues seriously and within the framework of a timeframe."

Regarding the necessity of the resolution of the key issue of immigrants, Ayatollah Khamenei said hundreds of thousands of Afghan immigrants are studying in Iran at different levels. "The Afghan people are very talented and smart and this talent should be used correctly in acquiring knowledge because the educated Afghans are needed for the reconstruction of your country."

The Supreme Leader said Tehran is also expressed his hope that the Afghan nation and government would witness more success day-by-day. In the meeting also attended by President Hassan Rouhani, Ghani expressed content with his visit to Tehran.

He said: "Our objective is [to see] Afghanistan become a communications hub in the region and regain its former status as the linking intersection in the region."

Noting that Iran and Afghanistan face similar threats and common opportunities, the Afghan president said: "Our political will is based on expanding bilateral ties and we have to make efforts to boost common and positive points between the two countries."

He said that the Afghan government hopes to turn domestic conflicts and unrest into opportunities for cooperation and referred to some challenges like the issue of insurgents, narcotics, immigrants and common border waters.

"The issues between the two countries should be resolved based on the political will of both governments and based on a timeframe set during this visit," he said.

Ashraf Ghani said Iran is suffers the most through drug trafficking, adding: "None of our neighbors has been as serious as Iran with regard to the threat of narcotics and no country has fought it like Iran, and we are ready to combat this scourge with the help of Iran."

The Afghan president pointed to the expansion of bilateral ties between the two countries in transportation and investment as well as cultural and economic cooperation, and addressing the Supreme Leader, said: "Under your wise leadership, Iran has stabilized its historic identity and we hope that under the aegis of this wise leadership, we will witness closer cooperation between the two countries." (Tolonews)

(2) MPs Ask ...

vice chief of army staff and the spy-master, appeared before the upper house, Meshrano Jirga, and on Wednesday last before a joint commission of both houses of parliament, explaining reasons behind the growing insecurity.

At today's lower house session, some lawmakers suggested that the president, the chief executive officer and security bosses should be summoned to a general session.

But a lawmaker from northern Baghlan province, Obaidullah Ramini, opposed the idea, saying security officials spent much of their time offering explanations to parliament and its commissions instead of working in their offices.

He suggested security officials should be given at least three months to devise their plans on how to improve the country's security situation because these officials had newly been appointed.

Lawmaker from Samangan province, Makhdom Abdullah Mohammadi, said Afghanistan's security challenges could not be overcome by summoning security officials.

Mohammad Akbari from Bamyan province said summoning officials had no benefit. "We should not waste their time by summoning them again."

Mohammad Sarwar Osmani from Farah province also held similar views, saying summoning security officials had no impact on the country's security scenario.

He proposed that Afghanistan should buy weapons from China, Russia and India and bring into use all available resources.

Some lawmakers insisted the security deal with Washington should be reviewed for the sake of improvement in Afghanistan's security situation.

Zakria Soda from northeastern Badakhshan province, the scene of a bloody insurgent attack recently, said Afghanistan had signed the security deal with the US in the hope that it would bring security, but the security situation had since been worsening.

"That's why the deal should be reviewed. And if the United States does not assist Afghanistan in maintaining its security after the review, the deal should be scrapped," he said.

Soon after his inauguration in September, President Ghani signed the BSA and a separate status of forces agreement (SOFA) with NATO.

The parliament approved both the agreements in November, allowing the US and NATO to keep some forces past 2014, amid a renewed offensive by the Taliban.

Qurban Kohistani, a lower house member from central Ghor province, also insisted the security agreement with the US should be reviewed, believing Americans had not arrived in Afghanistan to maintain its security. "The US has come here to train terrorists against its enemies," he said.

Obaidullah Barakzai from Uruzgan province called for the BSA to be declared null and void as soon as possible because insecurity had increased after signing the deal.

"There are cries everywhere in Afghanistan. Daily fathers and mothers weep at the graves of their sons. Widows cry as they look at their children. Where are the bosses (Americans) with whom you signed the deal while clapping. You disconnected yourselves from God and the Quran and connected with infidels. Where is our spiritual father (US president Barack) Obama? He should now come and rescue us."

Lawmaker from eastern Nangarhar province Hazrat Ali said Afghan security forces should hold serious talks with foreign troops stationed in Afghanistan on security. He asked lawmakers to stay firm on their statements because the country's security situation was fast deteriorating.

"The government should maintain security. The government says Daesh is coming. Who are Daesh (Islamic State)...they are the people who had no regard for people's honour. They are busy beheading our people."

A number of lawmakers said a national consensus should be drawn regarding security maintenance and security officials given time to chalk out their plans.

Speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahim said Wolesi Jirga's commissions would discuss security issues tomorrow and would share the outcome of their discussions with the administrative board, which would then share the details with a general session for a decision. (Pajhwok)

(3) Ghani Awaits ...

be paid for by the bank, with the road eventually stretching from Baharak to Ishkashem. The remaining 380 km of the road will pass through some of the most inhospitable terrain in Badakhshan province, which will be more expensive to build, but President Ghani has indicated China is open to providing funds for it.

"In the talks that we had with the Chinese president, their first offer to me was building the historic Silk Road, and a delegation is to come from China next week to discuss the construction of the Silk Road," President Ghani said.

Officials at the Ministry of Public Works have also said that in order to implement the project they will need assistance from the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Organization.

"We are optimistic that the technical work will begin and the Ministry of Public Works is completely ready to start work," technical deputy Ahmad Shah Waheed told TOLONews.

In addition to financing, experts say China is a good candidate for support on the road construction because it possess the technology needed to make building the road in remote areas of Badakhshan easier than it would be otherwise. (Tolonews)

(4) 25 Afghans ...

commitments and removed all customs duty on Afghan exports.

Realizing that membership of the WTO also imposes several legal and fiscal responsibilities the Government of India has been very supportive of skill and capacity development of the trade negotiators in Afghanistan. In continuation of its assistance in this area, India's Ministry of Commerce through its Centre for WTO Studies in Delhi has invited 25 Afghan officials dealing with trade in different Ministries in Kabul to attend a 10 day long specialized training on all aspects of the WTO and global trade. This training which takes place from 20-29 April, 2015 would cover a range of issues such as tariffs, trade in manufactured and agricultural products, and most importantly transit, which is enshrined as a right in the WTO.

India is conscious of the critical location of Afghanistan, which though a land locked country sits at an important north south, east west crossroad in the very 'Heart of Asia'. The potential of Afghanistan becoming a 'round about' in global trade, as Asian economies grow at an impressive pace, is for real, and well recognized by specialists and governments around the world and in the region.

Afghanistan can be the link between the energy, resources and products of Central Asia and South Asia as exemplified by projects such as TAPI and CASA 1000. Afghanistan to achieve its full economic potential requires deeper integration with the region through connectivity and infrastructure, through trade and investment. It also requires modern laws and global practices and hence a well trained cadre of trade officials is essential. Indian is happy to be partnering Afghanistan in this endeavor. (PR)

(5) Senate Grills...

because he had come to Kabul and gone abroad without cooperating with us," Ulumi said. "His file has been sent to the Attorney General's office and someone else will be appointed to the position instead of him," he continued.

General Murad Ali Murad, the Deputy Chief of Army Staff, recognized significant challenges facing the Afghan military. "Enemy activities have increased, and the upcoming year will be a difficult year for us," Gen. Murad told the Senators on Saturday.

The general also emphasized that internal and ethnic disagreements pose a more difficult challenge than anti-government armed forces in many parts of the country.

Meanwhile, Hesamuddin Hesam, the Deputy Director of the NDS, assured the Senators that progress was being made, despite how things may seem on the surface. "Despite some neglect that we have had recently, we have had achievements, too," Hesam said on Saturday. "We have arrested seven suicide bombers in a week."

And yet, the responses provided by the top security officials were by and large unacceptable to the lawmakers of the Upper House, who accused the National Unity Government of letting petty politics threaten national security.

"The president is a very unprofessional and inexperienced individual," Senator Zalmi Zabuli said.

"Who answers for all the killings that happen every day?" Senator Gul Ahmad Azami asked. "Has the son of an MP or Minister been killed so far?"

Senator Farhad Sakhi suggested President Ashraf Ghani would have been wise to stall his trip to Iran and come to Parliament to answer for all of the violence and turmoil of the past couple weeks. "I wish the Commander-in-Chief was in the Senate today with his cabinet to answer and wouldn't have gone to Iran to be deceived again," Sakhi said. (Tolonews)

(6) 5th Afghan...

The exhibition is held every year to showcase Afghan and Turkish products. The objectives of the exhibition is to boost trade ties between the two nations, find markets for both Afghan and Turkish products and raise awareness among the traders about the investment situations and opportunities in both countries.

Afghanistan and Turkey have always had a warm relationship, owed to the ethnic, historical, cultural and economic links between the two nations.

The affinity between the nations has resulted in a high trade balance that reached to USD 297mn during 2012. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Turkey's principal export products to Afghanistan are prefabricated buildings, electrical conductors, diesel engine vehicles, iron-steel building material, medicine, non-woven textiles.

Turkey's main imports are sesame seeds, unshelled walnut, raisin, vegetable dyes. (Agencies)

(7) China Wants ...

Minister Khurram Dastagir had raised the issue of opening of more trade routes.

Pakistan also wants to increase the economic and trade ties with the landlocked country which is why both countries may ink a free trade agreement.

A top official, privy to the development, says that five new trade routes would be opened in Balochistan province and seven in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Pakistan and Afghanistan currently have four trade routes which include Chaman, Torkham, Ghulam Khan and Miranshah.

Out of the existing four trade routes, the Miranshah route is non-operational because of the ongoing military operation against the militants. Both Afghanistan and Pakistan have come closer to each other and it seems both are determined to flush out terrorists from their respective territories.

The CPEC is not only beneficial to Pakistan, but it will also help strengthen the regional connectivity and China, which has managed to procure the mines of billions of tonnes of iron, copper and other rare metals in Afghanistan, wants to use the road infrastructure under the CPEC for transportation of the said metal to make products.

China wants to make inroads and increase its influence in Afghanistan by using the CPEC and for this purpose it stresses sustainable peace between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

China has already taken the Taliban in Afghanistan into confidence on the agreements with Afghan authorities on costly mines and the latter have assured an olive branch no matter whoever rules Kabul. This will not only ensure the access of Pakistani products to the Central Asian markets.

China also attaches importance to peaceful relations between Pakistan and Iran in order to make CPEC a success story. It also desires to make a China city or China Town in Pakistan.

China has asked Pakistan to make the port city Gwadar a safe city through software and hardware arrangements with fool-proof mechanism ensuring no incident of terror at the port so that it could be developed speedily.

"China is going from pillar to post to make Gwadar a viable port and to this effect it has asked the Government of Pakistan to introduce separate laws for Gwadar which are not applicable in the remaining parts of whole Pakistan."

Chinese are geared up to first build display centres at the port wherein Chinese products will be displayed along with Pakistani products. Chinese are going to establish fisheries industry at Gwadar at the very outset.

One Chinese company is also geared up to set up a cement industry at Gwadar that will help develop special economic zones, a free zone, industrial city, and oil city. On top of that Gwadar will be made data connection corridor through a cross-border fibre optic cable that will link the port city with China.

The fibre cable will be laid down at a distance of 11,000 km linking Kashgar reaching up to the western part of China. (Monitoring Desk)

(8) Ghani Urges...

and historic ties and commonalities the two countries share.

Ghani and his high-level delegation arrived in Tehran on an official two-day state visit early Sunday. The president met with Ayatollah Khamenei later in the day.

Ayatollah Khamenei said in a statement issued by his office on Monday that scholars and literary figures in Afghanistan make a very significant contribution to the promotion of Islamic teachings and the Persian language.

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frame."

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(9) Nimroz Districts...

309,764,599 AFN for implementation of 691 development projects in various sectors such as transport, electricity, education, irrigation, and livelihood.

Thousands of residents of Nimroz province have benefited from these projects so far. (Wadsam)

(10) Kabul Orphanage

The nursery was rehabilitated with the support of Afghan lawmaker Farkhunda Zahra Naderi and was presented to children under six years of age on the occasion of her birthday. A number of the lawmakers including Dr. Nilofar Ibrahim and Raihana Azad along with advisor for the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs Humaira Qaderi and Atiullah Wahaj head of the orphanages solidarity and coordination center.

The nursery has been equipped with standard equipment and was handed over to the relevant authority for use to educate the children living in the orphanage house.

Kabul-NurseryNew multimedia systems including sound system and TV set was also gifted to the nursery to facilitate entertainment for the children besides displaying educational films and cartoons.

Ms Naderi has been visiting Alaudin orphanage house during the recent years in a bid to take part and assist with the construction and reconstruction works parts of the orphanage house requires.

Around 250 children are kept in Alaudin orphanage house in Kabul. The orphanage houses are operating under the umbrella of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Afghanistan. (KP)

(11) Builders Protest

as they say they are owed over \$90 million USD - an issue dating back five years. Many of them say that they have gone bankrupt as a result of this.

According to them, Turkish and American companies hired them for Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior projects in the provinces but have never paid them.

In turn, these business owners criticize government for not having intervened on their behalf to get the money.

"Turkish and American companies took our money and government has not done anything to address our problems," says Muhammad Afzal, a

construction company engineer.

The business owners say that if government does not help to get the money out of these companies they will embark on an extensive strike. (Tolonews)

(12) Al-Qaeda No ...

Doha told Al-Sharq newspaper they were not ready to hold talks with the Afghan government unless the foreign forces left the country.

According to Naeem, talking to Afghan government in presence of foreign troops in the country meant submission. He also ruled out any internal differences in the group.

He said the group's leader Mullah Mohammad Omar was alive, in good health and were making regular meetings with his deputies.

Naeem was unaware of al-Qaeda leader Ayman Al-Zawahiri, but said majority of the group's fighters had left Afghanistan to Syria, Iraq, and Yemen.

"The unity government is installed by US secretary of state John Kerry and the government has internal issues as well. Their differences on a nominee for defence ministry and electoral reforms commission are examples," he continued.

The Taliban's Qatar office spokesman said there was no independent administration in the country right now and there was no difference between former and incumbent president.

Regarding Daesh group presence in Afghanistan, he said: "Our strategy is clear. We won't interfere in other countries' internal matters and we don't want others to interfere in our affairs."

He insisted since the group's inception, the US has not viewed them as a terrorist group. (Pajhwok)

(13) Afghan Farmers ...

is considerably declining in the province due to influx of Pakistani and Iranian imports.

Bamyan's potatoes are known in the region for their unique taste, but they fail to compete with the cheaper potatoes that flood Afghan market from Iran and Pakistan. As a result, farmers in Bamyan are discouraged to grow potatoes on their lands.

Costing USD 1000, the new machine will replace the manual works of the farmers and encourage farmers to grow more potatoes. (Pajhwok)

Khpalwak said the detained person confessed he was planning to attack General Raziq.

Widely regarded as an efficient police officer, Gen. Raziq earlier survived several suicide attacks. (Pajhwok)

(14) Foreign Fighters...

we will see what they can do to persuade more fighters to renounce violence," he told Pajhwok Afghan News.

Tayebi said foreign fighters did not believe in peace and had their own agenda and were getting directions from regional countries. (Pajhwok)

(15) Jawzjan Police ...

lize the province. "These Uzbek insurgents were previously active in other provinces such as Faryab, now they have moved to the Qosh Tepa districts of this province and are busy with their terrorist activities," says Jawzjani.

He said although insurgents are trying to destabilize the area they do not have the capacity to fight Afghan security forces face-to-face. (Tolonews)

(16) Residents, Officials...

The official said 195 school buildings were constructed during the past 14 years with a cost of \$300 million. The buildings now housed more than 100,000 students, he said.

He informed that construction work on another 15 school buildings to accommodate 8,000 students was underway and would be completed this solar year. Aren said around 187 schools were without buildings and the students of these schools studied in tents and under the open sky.

But residents, acknowledging some progress, complained the quality of education remained low and many schools lacked textbooks, chairs, desks and other resources.

Tajor, a resident of Sufi Qila village on outskirts of the provincial capital, Shiberghan, said her children learned nothing from their teachers. (Pajhwok)

(17) Bomber Plotting...

sent from Quetta to target Kandahar police chief. The attacker was tasked by Haji Lala, a notorious Taliban commander, based in Quetta, the provincial capital of Baluchistan province in Pakistan.

Khpalwak said the detained person confessed he was planning to attack General Raziq.

Widely regarded as an efficient police officer, Gen. Raziq earlier survived several suicide attacks. (Pajhwok)