

(1) King Salman...

who revealed that the meeting discussed trade and investment cooperation with the intentions of boosting the trade exchange between the two countries.

Qassabi also said Ghani reviewed measures taken by the Afghan government to develop several commercial systems and provide security and stability for future investment projects.

The trade minister also pointed out that, according to the orders from King Salman bin Abdulaziz, and under the follow-up of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, a Saudi delegation will visit Afghanistan in the coming two weeks.

Representatives from a number of government agencies will be introduced to investment opportunities and business facilitating measures carried out by the Afghan government. This visit will seek to enhance trade exchange between Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan.

Ghani, for his part, cheered the leading role played by Saudi Arabia at the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and reaffirmed that his government is keen on further developing ties with the international organization.

Better cooperation with the OIC, according to Ghani, will see to the implementation of a number of programs and projects, especially those designed to counter radicalism, extremism and terrorism. (Agencies)

(2) Attacks on ...

Out of all new babies in South Asia, 2.7 percent die in the first 28 days of life. This is the same figure as sub-Saharan Africa. There are many reasons for this, but the lack of clean water - which often leads to child malnutrition and serious disease - is one of them.

The lack of investment in the nutritional care of women during pregnancy also has dire consequences for survival rates and the well-being of newborns: one in four infants in South Asia are born small and weak, often as a direct result of maternal undernutrition. (Pajhwok)

(3) Germany Provides ...

The program for improving good governance in Afghanistan's extractive sector is closely matches the MoMP agenda for reform and fighting corruption in the ministry.

"This phase of the program started in December of 2018 and would continue until November of 2020 and the period would possibly be extended for another two years", the statement said.

It said the program would be implemented by GIZ on behalf of the Germany's Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development. (Pajhwok)

(4) Taliban Threatens ...

warnings. This is not right," a Kabul

"Civilians are affected in all targets by the Taliban," a Kabul resident Sayed Kazim said.

Another Kabul resident, Khiyal Mohammad, said telecommunication companies are working for all Afghans and that their services should not stop.

This comes as telecommunication services out of the capital city, Kabul, are not provided 24/7. In most areas, they are stopped during nights. (Tolo news)

(5) Top US Peace ...

of the sides and a party to the conflict, not as the government," Shaheen said.

Earlier this month, an array of local and international media reports suggested Washington proposes

cutting the U.S. troop strength in Afghanistan by nearly half to 6,000 as a means of finalizing the proposed deal with the Taliban. However, Col. Sonny Leggett, spokesman for the U.S. Forces-Afghanistan rejected the reports.

Of the 14,000 U.S. military personnel in Afghanistan, 8,475 are assigned to the NATO-led Resolute Support mission "to train, advise, and assist Afghan security forces," according to the U.S. Defense Department in March.

Last week, speculations surrounding the establishment of an interim government in Kabul overshadowed the first two days of talks in Doha that commenced on Friday.

Both the U.S. and Taliban rejected the idea of forming an interim government weeks ahead of the key presidential elections slated for Sept. 28. (AA)

(6) Over 2,000 Polling ...

Almost 300 polling centers out of 462 will remain open in Herat which is a major province in the west of the country. Other provinces in the west such as Badghis, Ghor, and Farah will have the highest number of closed polling centers with 136, 111, 174 closed centers respectively. Ghazni province will have the highest number of closed centers - 159 out of 406 - in the center of Afghanistan, the figures show.

Panjshir, a secure province in the center of the country, will have only one closed center out of 97 centers while all 220 polling centers will be open on the election day in Bamiyan province, the statistics show.

Helmand with 162 closed centers out of 462 will have the highest number of closed centers on the election day in the south of the country.

"There will be appropriate security measures for these centers and the people can go for casting their ballots with confidence," a spokesman for Ministry of Defense Rohullah Ahmadzai said.

Some MPs said there is a need for close coordination among security institutions to ensure a safe environment for the presidential election scheduled for September 28.

"Lack of coordination between security institutions and the election commission led to many problems in parliamentary elections," MP Sayed Hassan Paktiyawal said.

"This issue is very concerning to hear that from 7,000 centers, the figure is declined to 5,000 and now to 4,500 centers. There is the possibility that this figure will reduce if the security institutions do not launch large scale operations," MP Abrarullah Murad said. (Tolo news)

(7) Foreign Election ...

receives fund from donor sources and then spends it through non-professional institutes who do not have experience in election", he said.

Rashid also criticized candidates for lacking their own monitoring program and said, "Only a limited number of tickets plan to monitor the election process despite being faced with shortage of resources. If there is no inclusive and effective observation of election, the democratic exercise will plunge into crisis."

A day earlier, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) said it would send its observers for the September 28 Afghan presidential election. (Pajhwok)

(8) Mines Ministry...

a specific amount of time during which it should be implemented and most of them were timely implemented but there are still many proposals which are awaiting enforcement," he said.

"We are satisfied with steps the MoMP has so far taken, we want the ministry to make more efforts for implementation of all recommendations," he said.

Lorenzo Deleagues said MoMP had also created a committee to help implement the recommendations in cooperation with MEC. "This shows the ministry's commitment to transparency in its administration", he added.

Maiwand Rouhani, MEC secretary, also said recommendations which were fully implemented included approval of new mines law, environmental issues in mines contracts, considering facilities for investors in the mines law, creating a new bill for mining and some others.

He said some recommendations such as creation of digital management system of cadastre, creation of a portal for mines and some others were under implementation.

Rouhani said MoMP was strongly committed to implementing all MEC recommendations. (Pajhwok)

(9) Special Forces ...

The Special Forces killed 4 Taliban militants and destroyed a small cache of weapons during a patrol in Bermal district of Paktika, the sources added. (KP)

(10) Pakistan fired ...

to defend their soil and people. Kunar residents said that apart from being displaced, they lost their livestock. Earlier, Afghan Foreign Ministry said that the recent cross-border shelling from Pakistan showcased Pakistan's lack of commitment to peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region. (Agencies)

(11) Beijing Vows...

11-year low on Monday as the latest escalation spooked investors.

At the G7 summit on Sunday, Trump said that he could declare the escalating US-China trade war as a national emergency if he wanted to. "In many ways, this is an emergency," he said. (RT)

(12) Erdogan Says...

pushed to a road that we don't want or face stalling, our preparations are ready and we will implement our own plans," he said. "Our UAVs and helicopters have entered the region. Very soon, our ground troops will also enter the region."

The comments come two days after Turkish Defence Minister Hulusi Akar said the joint U.S.-Turkey center became fully operational. Akar also said some YPG positions in the region had been destroyed by U.S. troops as part of the deal.

Speaking on Monday, Akar said that talks were underway for Turkish and U.S. soldiers to begin joint patrols in the planned safe zone area "soon."

Ankara and Washington have been at loggerheads over a host of issues including conflicting policies in Syria. U.S. support for the YPG has enraged Turkey, which views the militia as a terrorist organization linked to Kurdish insurgents inside the country. (Reuters)

(13) Russia Nuclear...

any danger to local residents. Russia's state weather agency, Rosgidromet, said earlier this month it believed radiation levels had risen up to 16 times after the accident. (RT)

(14) Issues Between...

Kashmir and that he was told by Modi that he "has it under control". Last week, ahead of the bilateral meeting between the US president and India's premier, a senior US official had said that Trump is "ready to assist" India and Pakistan over the Kashmir issue.

The official maintained that the US is continuing to call for calm and restraint as their president is "very focused" on the situation in Kashmir because of the broader implications it has on the developments in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and the potential for increased stability in the region. (Agencies)

(15) Iran's Zarif ...

continue talks with Tehran.

"I'm looking at a very strong Iran, we're not looking for a regime change, we've seen how that works over the last 20 years," he proclaimed.

During Zarif's brief stay in Biarritz, Macron and his aides tried to defuse tensions that were stoked after the Trump administration withdrew from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and re-introduced sweeping sanctions on the Islamic Republic. In response, Tehran curbed some of its commitments under the deal and began the low-yield enrichment of uranium.

Paris spearheaded European efforts to keep the 2015 agreement afloat, even without US participation. The French peace plan reportedly involves the US lifting its oil embargo on Iran, in exchange for Iran immediately returning to compliance with the 2015 deal, and coming to the negotiating table.

While in France, Zarif talked for over three hours with Macron as well as officials from Britain and Germany. A French official told Reuters that the talks were "positive and will continue," but the foreign minister was more reserved, saying that the "road ahead is difficult ... but worth trying." (RT)

(16) Indonesia to...

was made not to move the capital elsewhere on Java because the country's wealth and people are highly concentrated there and should be spread out.

Currently 54% of the country's nearly 270 million people live on Java, the country's most densely populated area.

"We couldn't continue to allow the burden on Jakarta and Java island to increase in terms of population density," Widodo said at a news conference in Jakarta's presidential palace. "Economic disparities between Java and elsewhere would also increase."

In an interview with The Associated Press last month, Widodo said he wants to separate the center of government from the country's business and economic center in Jakarta. Jakarta is an archetypical Asian mega-city with 10 million people, or 30 million including those in its greater metropolitan area. It is prone to earthquakes and flooding and is rapidly sinking due to uncontrolled extraction of ground water. The ground water is highly contaminated as are its rivers. Congestion is estimated to cost the economy \$6.5 billion a year.

Mineral-rich East Kalimantan was once almost completely covered by rainforests, but illegal logging has removed many of its original growth. It is home to only 3.5 million people and is surrounded by Kutai National Park, known for orangutans and other primates and mammals.

Widodo said the relocation of the capital to a 180,000-hectare (444,780-acre) site will take up a decade and cost as much as 466 trillion rupiah (\$32.5 billion), of which 19% will come from the state budget and the rest will be funded by cooperation between the government and business entities and by direct investment by state-run companies and the private sector.

He said the studies determined that the best site is between two districts, North Penajam Paser and Kutai Kertanegara, an area that has minimal risk of disasters such as floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, forest fires, volcanic eruptions or landslides in the seismically active nation.

Indonesia's founding father and first president, Sukarno, once planned to relocate the country's capital to Palangkaraya in Central Kalimantan province.

Infrastructure improvement has been Widodo's signature policy and helped him win a second term in April elections.

Decades of discussions about building a new capital on Borneo island moved forward in April when Widodo approved a general relocation plan. He appealed for support for the move in an annual national address on the eve of Indonesia's independence day on Aug. 16.

He said Monday that his government is still drafting a law on the new capital which will need to be approved by Parliament. (AP)

(17) Hong Kong ...

escalating illegal and violent acts of radical protesters are not only outrageous, they also push Hong Kong to the verge of a very dangerous situation," the government said in a statement.

The protests began in mid-June over a now-suspended extradition bill that would have allowed Hong Kong people to be sent to mainland China for trial.

But the demonstrations have evolved over 12 straight weeks into a broad demand for greater democracy in the financial hub that was promised a high degree of autonomy under a "one country, two systems" formula when it was handed to China by colonial ruler Britain in 1997. More demonstrations are planned in the days and weeks ahead, including a rally at Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific Airways (0293.HK) headquarters on Wednesday to protest against perceived "white terror", a term used to describe anonymous acts that create a climate of fear.

Cathay has emerged as the biggest corporate casualty of the protests after China demanded it suspend staff involved in, or who supported, the anti-government demonstrations that have plunged the city into its biggest crisis since 1997.

On Saturday, activists threw petrol bombs and bricks in the gritty industrial district of Kwun Tong, on the east of the Kowloon peninsula. Some protesters cut down "smart" lamp posts equipped with surveillance cameras. (Reuters)

(18) No Cheap Way...

new relationship on the right foot, based on mutual trust."

Her remarks come a day after British Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced that the UK would not have to pay the £39 billion (\$47.7 billion) fee promised by the former government under Theresa May in the case of a 'hard' Brexit.

The UK is planning to only pay somewhere between £7-9 billion (\$8.6-\$11.05 billion) if they leave the EU on October 31 without a deal, according to reports. Johnson said that money saved would go towards "supporting our farmers... and indeed for investment in all sorts of areas."

Johnson has side-stepped questions about whether he formally told European Council President Donald Tusk about his decision during a meeting on the sidelines of the G7 summit in France. Brussels says it yet to be notified about London's new position. (RT)