

(1) Ceasefire Over...

the government peace plan. The president linked the Afghan peace process to three internal players -- one Taliban, second, the people of Afghanistan and third the government.

"Now the Taliban are confronting the people of Afghanistan, the ulema, the religious scholars of Pakistan, Mecca and Madina, the ulema of Islamic ummah. The government is also facing pressure from these elements but it discharged its responsibility and now it is the Taliban's turn to respond," said Ghani. President Ghani said his main responsibility was to stop the bloodshed and pave the ground for security and then prosperity. He said it was a phase of review and preparation for intra-Afghan peace negotiations.

"There was no plan for peace since the Saur Revolution in 1978, but the new initiative for peace will listen to views of people from all classes of the society," Ghani added.

Ghani called the Afghans "a great nation" and said the Afghans showed their greatness during the ceasefire as they behaved good with Taliban instead of showing violence.

"Our political class should also learn from patience and respect of people, people's emotions are important and we should not stand against them," the president added. "Taliban! Come and show your willingness for peace, it is an Afghan pressure not a foreign, it is the demand of ulema and the nation, make a decision. The Ulema invite you to the Quran and the people send you their children (for asking peace), now it is your decision whether to kill the nation or respond positively," he said.

He added the national unity government had talked to people of different segments about peace since its establishment.

"The current international, regional and national consensus on peace has passed from different phases and has now turned into an overall national consensus and demand," he said.

Ghani said no one could monopolize the peace process and supporting peace was now a demand of all Afghans.

He added around 7,000 people in the holy month of Ramadan and around 4,000 people in Eid holidays visited the Presidential Palace and 95 percent of them supported peace. About rumors of Safe Zones in the country, Ghani said that it was not a government's plan and the government would not hand over any area to anyone.

The president said his first promise during his presidential campaign was to bring peace and signing a peace agreement with Hezb-I-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG) was his first step towards peace.

"Our every steps for peace is based on plan and strategy, they are taken not in hurry or based on emotions," he said. "Another step for peace is consensus over peace plans."

"Regional consensus for peace has developed to the most extent, there is no regional consensus for war, in contrary to the past, regional countries have promised to cooperate with us in achieving peace," he said. He said four years ago, member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) were concerned about the situation in Afghanistan, but now they were no longer worried.

"The situation has changed now, you saw all members of SCO last month in a conference supporting the Afghan peace process and promising to cooperate, it was an unprecedented step from SCO last month," he said.

He said his dialogue about peace was based on Prophet Mohammad (SAW) teachings and the prophet's life was a method of life for him.

Ghani said the US's new strategy for Afghanistan and South Asia was bringing peace and stability to Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(2) Islamabad...

He said Pakistani speakers made it clear that peace in Afghanistan was in the interest of Pakistan and conflict had negative impact on the two countries.

"For the first time the spirit of cooperation was at its high which was never noticed in the previous conferences of this nature," said Khadem.

The participants of the conference asked the US to enter direct talks with the Taliban if it really wanted peace and stability in Afghanistan, but Khadem said this point was not included in the resolution of the conference.

The resolution demanded increasing cooperation between the spy networks of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

It asked the Taliban and Afghan government to show flexibility in their demands and make negotiation a success. (Pajhwok)

(3) Afghans Slam...

be punished based on parliament's internal duties principles," another MP Abdul Qader Zazai Watandost said.

Meanwhile, Badakhshan MP Abdul Latif Pedram and some of his colleagues who gathered outside parliament on Saturday said he did not mean to insult any ethnic group during his speech on the Ghazni elections controversy on Wednesday.

He accused the MPs that tried to tackle him physically on Wednesday of being "illiterate" individuals. "We will continue our efforts to maintain justice and freedom," said Pedram.

Despite Wednesday's incident, Afghanistan also recognized the 2018 International Day of Parliamentarism on Saturday, which was observed across the world.

This year marks the first celebration of International Day of Parliamentarism which was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in May.

The aim of the day is to recognize the role of parliaments in national plans and strategies and in ensuring greater transparency and accountability at national and global levels.

The day also celebrates parliaments and the ways in which parliamentary systems of government improve the day-to-day lives of people around the world.

It is also an opportunity for parliaments to take stock, identify challenges, and ways to address these challenges effectively. (Tolo news)

(4) Halt to Children's...

ability ensured to differentiate between smuggling and trafficking.

The government was also asked to increase the capacity of the High Commission for Combating Crimes of Abduction and Human Trafficking/Smuggling (high commission) to coordinate and report on the government's anti-trafficking efforts. (Pajhwok)

(5) Media's Role...

been supporting farmers in various aspects. Currently, Balkh Cooperatives works in different fields including dairy, processing edible oil and fruits."

The Deputy Program Director of the Sustainable Economic Development Promotion (SEDEP), Robert Glass, elaborated on media's importance: "Communication is an important part of our work. It removes certain obstacles. We facilitate dialogues between stakeholders, including businesspersons, authorities and farmers. We have also conducted successful awareness campaigns, broadcasting audio spots via radio stations in Northern Afghanistan." Meanwhile, Director of Nai - Supporting Open Media in Mazar-e Sharif, Mobina Sai, said that media could contribute to people's mobilization for development.

"Even if illiterate, traditional media can support farmers by broadcasting educational programs on agriculture," added Ms. Sai.

Regarding a question about how to access loans, Glass from the Afghan-

German Cooperation said: "With the media's support, a link between cooperatives and farmers could be established. This way, farmers could be informed about opportunities, including where to get loans. For example, farmers can apply for agricultural loans at the First Micro Finance Bank Afghanistan."

Media Meetings are a series of regular events organized by the Afghan-German Cooperation in cooperation with journalist associations. These meetings bring together experts from the public sector, civil society, development organizations and media to discuss important development issues. So far, 16 meetings took place in Kabul, Mazar-e Sharif, Herat and Feyzabad. On average, about 80 media representatives participate in each session. (Wadsam)

(6) 73 Wolesi Jirga...

Qani, Farah Diba Shahrzad, Qadam Ali Khadim, Mohammad Haidari, Mufti Sayed Massod Hashemi, Mirza Alizada, Nasratullah Fazli and Sighani.

Support cards used multiple times by one candidate

Candidates who are removed for using one support card multiple times included Darab Ali Yar, Gen. Khalil Rahman Amil, Habibullah Niamaati, Daud Malyar Mohayuddin, Dr. Wahidullah Ahmadzai, Dr. Frozan Fana, Sayed Ahmad Burhani, Sahibzada Mohammad Wali Mutaqqi, Abdul Wahab Kabuli, Ghulam Rabani Noori, Freshta Mansoor, Farid Ahmad Shahab, Mohammad Mahdi Hasanyar, Mohammad EsaAhmadi, Mohammad LayeqMalakzada, MasumaTusali, MirzaAlizada and Nabila Sayedjan Zada Hamid.

Support cards out of zone Mualvi Shamsuddin Haqqani, Hamidullah Bakhshi, Shir Aqa Mohammadi, Prof. Lotfullah Safi, Haji ZadranaZizi, Haji Khan Mohammad Ahmadzoi and Khaliqdad Balaghi were among 21 possible candidates removed from the initial list over showing support cards out of zone.

Problem in physical documents Eng. Abdul SattarAzizi, Gen. Khalil Rahman Amil, Haji Hafizullah Jalili, Ahmad Parwiz Hassan, Asadullah Karimi, Sharif Kamawal, Hassan Aqa Masomi, RaziaArifi, Sayed Ibrahim Hashemi and Sayed Amanullah Amin were among 25 candidates removed from the list due to problems in their physical documents.

The IEC has laid down following conditions for possible Wolesi Jirga and district council candidates:

Provide accurate information about whether he/she is convicted or not. Provide proof with signature that he/she is not commanding and not a member of illegal armed groups.

Completion of 25 years of age on the nomination day, applying for (Wolesi Jirga, provincial council and district council)

Providing copies of 1,000 Tazkira (identity cards) which are registered.

Wolesi Jirga candidates should provide accurate and full information such as name, father's name, province, district and the volume, page and registration of his/her Tazkira as well as the voter sticker numbers and finger prints of at least 1,000 people as verifiers of candidates in the registration form and then referring it to the IEC.

If more than 35 percent of copies of verifiers Tazkira were used by two or more candidates, their nomination would be rejected following the IEC procedure.

The conditions are set out according to the Articles 39, 40, 44, 51, 73, 74 and 75 of the election law by the IEC. (Pajhwok)

(7) Badakhshan...

contact with us. This shows that they are interested in talks," said Rasikh.

"One team of them (Taliban) came to a village in Darayem district and visited government forces. No doubt, Taliban will join peace if efforts are made for it. Some of them have shown a green signal for peace," said Ahmad Mir Jawad, the district governor for Darayem.

The efforts for peace talks between

government officials and Taliban at a local level started a week ago, said Ghawsuddin Rahmani, head of the provincial peace committee.

"We will hold a big meeting of tribal elders, civil society members, religious scholars, local commanders, influential figures, and local officials in Baharak which is the center for many districts. We will discuss peace at the meeting," he said. Badakhshan residents meanwhile called on the Taliban to end the war and join the peace process.

"We are happy that Taliban came to the cities during the three-day ceasefire. But we are upset that they have gone back to their activities," said Rahimullah, a resident of Badakhshan.

Hopes for peace were raised after President Ashraf Ghani announced a unilateral ceasefire that started on the 27th of Ramadan to the 5th of Eid-al-Fitr.

After government's announcement, the Taliban also ordered its fighters to observe a three-day ceasefire over Eid.

On the third day of Eid, Ghani extended government's ceasefire for another 10 days - this officially ended on Friday.

Taliban however did not extend their ceasefire and immediately after Eid took up arms and carried out attacks around the country.

On Saturday, Ghani addressed the nation and said government's ceasefire would not be extended again and that security forces would resume operations against the Taliban. (Tolo news)

(8) Taliban Suffers...

FahimQayem, the police chief of Badghis.

The provincial council of Badghis and residents meanwhile called for an increase of military operations in the province.

"Jawand residents are cooperating with government forces. The routes to the center of Jawand have been closed for the past 10 years and there is a limited number of government forces in the district," said Abdullah Afzali, deputy head of Badghis provincial council.

The operation comes after the fall of Di Garm village in Jawand about a week ago. The village is located 13 kilometers to the east of Jawand's center. The village was secure in previous years. (Tolo news)

Dubai Completes Metro Tunnel Digging Towards Expo 2020

DUBAI - Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) in Dubai announced a key tunneling works of Route 2020 Project, which takes the Dubai Metro to the Expo 2020 venue, was completed on Saturday.

The tunnel stretched 3.2 km, with a depth ranging from 12 to 36 meters, said RTA. Works in the metro viaducts are set for completion in November this year, and all railway works of the project will be accomplished in July 2019.

The Dubai Metro started operations in late 2009 and currently consists of two lines, the Red Line and the Green Line. The trial run of the metro will start in February 2020.

Dubai's winning bid to organize Expo 2020 was set as a major driver to expand the Dubai Metro's network.

Dubai, the business and trade metropolis of the UAE, will host the World Expo from October, 2020 to April, 2021 as the first Arab city ever, under the slogan "Connecting Minds, Creating the Future." (Xinhua)

Trump Presses Germany on Military Spending Ahead of NATO Summit

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump reiterated his dissatisfaction on Friday with Germany and other European countries on their defense spending ahead of his Europe trip to attend a NATO summit.

"Germany has to spend more money," Trump told reporters on Air

Force One en route to New Jersey. Trump also singled out Spain and France for their failure to reach the two-percent-of-GDP benchmark for their defense budgets, claiming that "it's not fair what they've done to the United States."

NATO members will convene on July 11-12 in the Belgian capital Brussels, with military spending expected to top the agenda.

"NATO is very interesting, we'll see what happens there," said Trump, who is expected to attend the summit, followed by his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Trump has long been scolding NATO nations for not fulfilling their commitment on defense spending.

It's been estimated that eight NATO allies will reach the two-percent benchmark by the end of this year, and 15 are on track to spend two percent by 2024.

German Defense Minister predicted in May that the German military budget would only grow gradually from currently 1.24 percent of GDP to 1.3 percent in 2019 and 1.5 percent in 2025.

France is near the two-percent target, with 1.8 percent in 2017, while Spain was at 0.92 percent last year. (Xinhua)

Egypt's Sisi, Facing Online Backlash, Says Country Is on the 'Right Track'

CAIRO - President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said on Saturday Egypt was on the "right track" to rebuild its economy after years of instability that had nearly brought the country to its knees.

Speaking on the anniversary of 2013 mass protests that helped propel him into power, Sisi said Egypt had faced challenges, including political instability, armed insurgency and an economic meltdown since 2011 protests forced President Hosni Mubarak from power after more than 30 years in office.

"I tell you in all objectivity, every Egyptian man and woman is entitled to feel proud for what his country has achieved in facing the three challenges, and in record time," Sisi said in a televised speech.

Sisi, who was elected for a second term in March, has been pushing ahead with economic reforms required under a three-year, \$12 billion IMF loan that have left many of Egypt's 100 million people struggling to make ends meet.

Spurred by the painful reforms, an online campaign calling for Sisi to step down has gathered momentum in recent weeks.

"The results that have been achieved until now indicate we are on the right path," Sisi said, citing positive economic indicators, including a record \$44 billion in foreign reserves and economic growth of 5.4 percent. Human rights groups accuse Sisi of presiding over a crackdown on dissent as he pushes ahead with the reforms, that have included raising prices for fuel, electricity and public transportation.

The Egyptian military and security forces, under Sisi's orders, have been conducting a major operation in Sinai this year, trying to crush Islamist militants behind a wave of attacks that had killed hundreds.

Analysts say the reforms have eroded his once soaring popularity, but to what extent is hard to gauge since scores of websites have been banned in the past year and opponents rounded up, often on charges of spreading fake news.

In an unprecedented show of digital dissent, hundreds of thousands of Egyptians have taken to Twitter in recent weeks, to voice their discontent and call for Sisi to step down.

The hashtag campaign that translates roughly to #Sisi_leave gathered strength after the government announced the fuel and electricity subsidy cuts.

But in his speech on Saturday, Sisi said Egypt, the Arab world's most populous country, could not afford to put off implementing the reforms even if they cause pain. (Reuters)