

(1) Govt Committed...

conditions for peace and stability. "We gratefully acknowledge the support of our partners in the security arena through the Resolute Support mission and the developmental partners through the EU sponsored Brussels conference of 2015 and bilateral commitments," Ghani said, adding that "Our unconditional peace offer is comprehensive and we are pleased that yesterday the Taliban accepted our ceasefire declaration for aid."

"We are utilizing the generous support to change the lives of our people through consolidation of effective and efficient institution that will be accountable to our fellow citizens," he added.

He stressed that to overcome inherited problems of corruption, governance and limited utilization of our human and natural capital, we are accelerating the implementation of a comprehensive agenda reform.

Democracy depends on choice of leadership through credible, inclusive, free and fair election and we are fully committed to holding parliamentary elections in 2018 and presidential elections in 2019, he added.

"Our progress is real but every step forward is made in a very difficult context. We are gaining our rights through the immense sacrifice and valor of our defense and security forces," Ghani said, adding that "the resilience and will of our people in the face of hardship and deprivations, and the commitment of the absolute majority of the Afghan people to peace, stability, democracy and prosperity."

Geographically located at the heart of Asia and a historical gateway to the Indian subcontinent, Afghanistan is poised to function as an Asian Roundabout, according to Ghani.

The SCO summit was the first held after the admission of two new members, India and Pakistan.

The economic and security bloc now has eight members with the inclusion of India and Pakistan last year. The others are key drivers, China and Russia, and the Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

There are four observers, including Iran and Afghanistan, and six dialogue partners.

This is the 18th summit of the SCO, which began life as the Shanghai Five in 1996 but took on the current name in 2001 when it added a new member, Uzbekistan, and also expanded its activities. (Tolo news)

(2) Chinese Firm to...

the Chinese firm, said it was a great opportunity for them to work for Afghanistan's rehabilitation.

He said the Shuang Deng Group was a well-known firm in term of providing solar energy and assured they would work with high quality and on time.

Asadullah Sadati, a lawmaker, who attended the contract signing ceremony, said that solar power would be a great answer to all power related concerns. (Pajhwok)

(3) PM Modi Praises...

announced the suspension of fighting for the first three days of Eid - the first ceasefire by the militant group in Afghanistan since 2001.

Modi's comments came after India and China's recent agreement to undertake a joint economic project in Afghanistan. They agreed to move forward in identifying a specific project initially in the area of capacity building in Afghanistan.

Modi on Sunday meanwhile appealed for a regional front against terrorism and slammed attempts to "threaten" peace in Afghanistan.

At the restricted session of the Shanghai Cooperation Summit in the Chinese city of Qingdao, Modi said the worsening situation in Afghanistan was "an unfortunate example" of terrorism.

"All parties in the region should respect the sentiment with which (Afghan) President Ghani has taken courageous steps for peace," Modi said. He said it was "our common respon-

sibility to ensure that reasons that threaten Afghanistan's sovereignty and security are not repeated".

Addressing Sunday's session of the summit, Russia's President Vladimir Putin said a new agreement approved by the bloc spells out plans for joint anti-terror efforts for the next three years. The bloc includes China, Russia, four ex-Soviet Central Asian nations, India and Pakistan, AP reported.

Putin said the bloc's new counter-terrorism agreement foresees joint drills, exchanging information and conducting coordinated anti-terror action.

He emphasized the need for the group to closely follow the situation in Afghanistan to fend off the threats posed by militants in the country.

Founded in 2001, the Beijing-based bloc was originally conceived as a vehicle for resolving border issues, fighting terrorism and - more implicitly - to counter American influence in Central Asia following its invasion of Afghanistan. (Tolo news)

(4) IEC Kicks...

day except some limited centers which are insecure," said IEC commissioner Sayed Hafiz Hashimi.

In the second phase, the IEC however was not able to open voter registration centers in Dai Chopan district of Zabul, Marjah district of southern Helmand province, Geyan district of Paktika, Kohistan district of northern Badakhshan province and Khas district of Uruzgan.

The IEC has also called on government to step up the process of resolving the election crisis in Ghazni - before Eid-al-Fitr - so that the election management body's central office in the province can open. Only a few voter registration centers are open in Ghazni city.

"We do not endorse zone-based elections, this would be very difficult, but there is the possibility of delaying elections in Ghazni," said Hashimi.

In addition, Ambassador Pierre Mayaudon, the European Union Head of Delegation to Afghanistan, said that there were encouraging signals around the election process so far.

"If you consider the electoral process, again I would say that it cannot be separated from the peace process. Timely, credible elections this year, next year, are critical for the success of peace process, if you ask me now about the recent developments, I would say that there are some encouraging signals. The fact that we have I think crossed today the bulk of six million registered voters is extremely encouraging," he said.

"At the same time of course, we know of some weaknesses of the overall institutional apparatus that is in charge of the election not least in the IEC ... So all the action of the international community is driven by a sense of being partners," added Mayaudon.

According to the IEC, over 5,100 people, including 240 women, have received handbooks for district council elections while another 3,090 people, including 430 women, have received handbooks for parliamentary elections.

The IEC has extended the nomination deadline until June 14. (Tolo news)

(5) Senate, Cleric Body...

religion of unity and solidarity and peace and stability is an important responsibility of Muslims," he said.

"The Ulema Council asks both the sides to discharge their faith and personal responsibilities and put an end to the bloodshed of people and a barbaric environment, we want permanent peace through Afghan-owned and Afghan-led negotiations, Afghans are thirsty for peace," he said.

Kamal Sadat, deputy information and culture minister for youth affairs, said that the people hoped the temporary ceasefire would extend.

He hoped the conflict in Afghanistan would permanently end by extension in the ceasefire and the Afghans would soon witness peace in

their country. (Pajhwok)

(6) Afghanistan Upbeat...

land-based Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) and the ocean-going Maritime Silk Road (MSR).

The initiative was known in English as the One Belt and One Road Initiative (OBOR) until 2016.

The Chinese government calls the initiative "a bid to enhance regional connectivity and embrace a brighter future," while critics call it a push by China to take a larger role in global affairs with a China-centered trading network. (Tolo news)

(7) 10th OCB...

anti-corruption and narcotics measures, implementation of security bilateral commitments between Afghan Government and Donors and other relevant subjects were discussed.

"Donors recognize the progress and achievements of the Afghan government. The international community stands ready to support the ANDSF for years to come. At the same time, it is important to work together to achieve full financial sustainability in the future. This can only be achieved by close cooperation between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the donors" said Ambassador van Leeuwen.

Wais Barmak, Minister of Interior Affairs and Tamim Assi, Deputy Minister of Policy at Minister of Defence provided enough information to the participants regarding progress, achievements of security and defence forces and their future plans.

It is worth stating that, according to Afghan Government's commitment in Chicago Conference, it will take responsibility of financing security and defence forces by the end of 2024. The government is committed to improving the capacity of security forces, fighting against corruption and increasing contribution to fund Afghan Security forces.

"We are working with our international partners on the implementation of the reform package as set out by the National Unity Government. Furthermore, we call for continued international support and regional support for a political process oriented towards peace and cross-border economic cooperation" said Mr. Khalid Payanda, Deputy Minister of Finance.

"Working together as partners and allies, we can fight the threat of violent extremism, not only in Afghanistan but also the rest of the world. We remain grateful for the international support for a stable, peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan" he added. (Pajhwok)

(8) China's Leader...

destructive forces make their way to the neighboring countries of Afghanistan, they will pose serious threats to us. Therefore all countries need to expand their cooperation with Afghanistan to resolve this issue. The SCO-contact group should start the cooperation between the member countries as soon as possible," said Tajik President Emomali Rahmon.

Meanwhile, senators in Afghanistan's Meshrano Jirga (Upper House of Parliament) have said that the implications of the SCO summit at this juncture will be helpful for Afghanistan in promoting peace and stability.

President Ashraf Ghani has been representing Afghanistan at the summit.

"President should talk with the Russian and Iranian officials about the reports we have about these countries in Afghanistan. He should ask China to cooperate with Afghanistan for peace," said Senator Shafiqullah Hashimi.

"We hope that the president returns from this meeting with achievements and makes Afghanistan a permanent member of this organization," said Senator Lailuma Ahmadi.

SCO leaders also pledged to work toward fighting terrorism, boosting the infrastructure of their economies and fighting extremism and separat-

ism.

"We need to strengthen the foundation for shared peace and security. We need to actively implement the 2019-2021 program of cooperation for combating "three evil forces" of terrorism, separatism and extremism, continue to conduct the "Peace Mission" and other joint counter-terrorism exercises, and enhance cooperation on defense security, law enforcement security and information security," added Xi.

On the role of observer nations at SCO, Xi said: "... we need to expand partnership networks of international cooperation. By intensifying exchanges and cooperation with SCO observer states, dialogue partners, and other countries in our region, by enhancing partnerships with the United Nations and other international and regional organizations, and by engaging in dialogue with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other international financial institutions, we can contribute our share to resolving hotspot issues and improving global governance." (Tolo news)

(9) Helmand Peace...

Helmand peace activists first started a sit-in protest in the province against the ongoing war after a deadly car bombing outside a sports stadium in Lashkargah city killed at least 16 people. (Tolo news)

(10) Fed up with...

Industries and drivers might go on strike if the situation continued.

"When drivers of Tajikistan offer illegal money here, they increase the price of goods and it is common people who have to suffer," he said. However, customs officials at Sher Khan port rejected the allegations. Sher Khan Port Customs Department Head Hafeezullah Hamdam said no institution including border police took illegal money from drivers.

He added Tajik drivers had to pay 150 afghanis as a legal procedure. Sher Khan Port Enterprises Head Najibullah Nazari also rejected the claim of drivers and said 150 afghanis was legally taken from drivers for services being rendered by the enterprises at the port.

Sher Khan Port Mayor Muhibullah Wafa too spurned the drivers' allegations and said drivers were only asked for a small amount as urban tax.

Traffic Department Head Col. Qaderjaihon said demanding illegal money from drivers did not happen in Kunduz.

"If I found a traffic official involved in this practice, I will fire him the same day," he added. (Pajhwok)

(11) DMCC Welcomes...

ownership registry, DMCC Tradeflow has handled Dh25.5 billion (\$6.94 billion) worth of shariah compliant commodities traded in the first four months of 2018, involving more than 30 financial institutions across three continents.

Amer Khalil urRehman, chief executive officer of the Islamic Bank of Afghanistan, said: "We are pleased to mark our collaboration with DMCC by signing this agreement and becoming a member of the DMCC Tradeflow community. This will enable us to offer a broader range of Shariah-compliant financial products and services, and reach to the unbanked customers within our country."

The Islamic Bank of Afghanistan sees Shariah-compliant finance as a unique feature that could help attract more people into the country's financial system. The Islamic Bank of Afghanistan had paid-up capital of \$25 million and held \$187 million of deposits as of December 2017, offering its services across a network of 59 branches.

DMCC Tradeflow enables banks, financiers and suppliers to manage and mitigate potential risks across the commodity value chain by providing a transparent, regulated platform for registering possession of commodities, which are stored in DMCC's UAE-based facilities. (Agencies)

(12) Govt, Parliament...

the ceasefire," he said.

The presidential spokesman said the Kabul government wanted the Taliban to welcome the government's unconditional peace offer and extend the ceasefire by joining the peace negotiations in order to pave the ground for a permanent end to the conflict in Afghanistan. The Taliban on Saturday announced a three-day ceasefire with the Afghan security forces during EidulFitr. However, the insurgents vowed to continue targeting foreign troops.

The Afghan government and the Wolesi Jirga or lower house members welcomed the Taliban's ceasefire announcement.

Sakhi Mashwani, a lawmaker talking at today's session of the Wolesi Jirga, said that the declaration of ceasefire by the government, to which the Taliban agreed, was raising hope for peace.

"We hope both the government and the Taliban would start intra-Afghan peace negotiations and not allow more lives to be lost in the proxy wars by agreeing on peace," he said.

Speaker AbdurRauf Ibrahim, said: "Any action that leads to prevention of civilian casualties and to peace and stability, the Afghan people welcome it."

"The lull in war is for a few days, but it can be a start," he said and hoped the bilateral ceasefire would end up in permanent peace and stability.

"The Taliban should also welcome peace talks the way they accepted ceasefire," Ibrahim said.

Sayed Ehsan Tahiri, HPC spokesman, told Pajhwok Afghan News that their council also welcomed the Taliban's announcement of ceasefire.

"Our nation is thirsty for peace and we hope the trust will be further developed so the ceasefire continues for the sake of prosperity of the society and people in the country," he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(13) Afghan Forces...

Taliban, Islamic State and the Taliban-linked Haqqani network. Pakistan and Afghanistan frequently accuse each other of harbouring terrorists planning cross-border raids.

A massive truck bomb struck the Afghan capital, Kabul, in May last year, killing more than 150 people. The Taliban on Saturday announced a surprise three-day ceasefire over the Muslim Eid holiday this month, their first offer of its kind, days after the government declared an unconditional ceasefire of its own.

The governor of Nangarhar was dismissed last month as part of an administrative shakeup in a region where security has sharply deteriorated.

Officials in Nangarhar said he had failed to tackle endemic corruption in the province, which includes the Torkham post, the main crossing point into Pakistan for both goods and people as well as major smuggling routes.

Foreign air strikes targeted two Islamic State hideouts in the province, killing six insurgents, an Afghan military official told Reuters on Sunday. He did not say when the attack took place. In southern Kandahar province, the Taliban stormed a security checkpoint on Saturday night, killing five police, a spokesman for the provincial governor told Reuters. In August, U.S. President Donald Trump unveiled a more hawkish military approach to Afghanistan, including a surge in air strikes, aimed at forcing the Taliban to the negotiating table. (Reuters)