

**(1) Afghan Participates...**

was among the first countries which signed agreement with China in support of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Meanwhile, the second deputy CEO said that "international terrorism and insecurity are a great setback for progress and development and Afghanistan sustained the largest sacrifice in this regard". He added that if terrorism and instability in Afghanistan could impact the world, peace and stability in Afghanistan would also affect the peace and stability in the region. He urged that all countries need to play their positive role in consolidating regional peace and stability.

Mohaqq also praised China's role in investing in Afghanistan saying that "China is the largest foreign investor in Afghanistan" and played a remarkable role within the past sixteen years. Chinese officials stressed the need for common prosperity and trade, win-win cooperation, mutual trust and people-to-people exchanges. Mme. Gao Yan, China's deputy minister of commerce said that China and South Asia share a long history and need to pursue common development. Yan said that South Asian countries are active participants in BRI, as more than 80 countries signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with China, and active trade partners of China.

Similarly, Hu Chunhua Chinese vice Premier said in the opening ceremony of expo that China and South Asia countries are close neighbors and they are most dynamic in economic market. He also urged for further enhancement of economic and trade cooperation, deepening people-to-people exchanges and creating more platform for exchanges. He said that this year marks the 40th anniversary of China's reform and opening-up and China will open its door wider to the outsider world and this door will never shut down, quoting President Xi.

More than 3,800 companies from 86 countries and regions attended the expo, with over 40 percent attending enterprises from overseas.

Besides many exhibition halls, exhibition zones were also established specifically for Afghanistan, the theme country. In addition to showcasing the cultural monuments and tradition, Afghan exhibition zone featured the products such as saffron, carpet, dried fruit, etc.

Afghan traders and businessmen also featured the products of Afghanistan in the exhibition halls. Haji Sayed Bilal, the head of New Heri Farooqi LTD, who exhibited Afghan carpet in the expo said to Outlook Afghanistan Newspaper that he will display the products in all "international exhibitions" being held in China. Answering to the question that what challenges Afghan traders face in exporting products to China, Bilal said that since there is no land route from Afghanistan to China, the cost of export is too high.

Although the railway line between China and Afghanistan was inaugurated on 7 September 2016 and the first cargo train from China arrived at Hairatan port of northern Balkh province after about two weeks of journey, Bilal said that goods were only allowed to be imported not exported through the port on the railroad. He said, "If it [China-Afghan railroad] opens, it will be very beneficial for us. We pay 2 to 3 US dollars per kg for carrying the goods. This is a very high cost".

According to Bilal, Afghan traders export their goods from Kabul to Urumqi through the air and if Afghan traders were allowed to export their goods through Afghan-China railroad, it would be cheaper. He did not seem satisfied enough saying that on the one hand, there are not foreign traders in Afghanistan to buy the goods, on the other hand the market for those products are not good. "We have to put the products of our country on display to support Afghan craftsmen and keep the name of our country high," said Bilal.

Moreover, one of the Afghan exhibitors and businessmen Ahmad Shadab Mahshar, who exhibited leather and wool coats, lapis lazuli, and sil-

verware in the expo, said to Outlook Afghanistan that the market has declined compared to previous years. Shadab, who is doing business in China for three years, hoped that the CSA expo would be effective for trade market and provide opportunity for the investment and trade of Asia mainly South Asian countries, including Afghanistan which is the theme country. He also shipped his cargo by air through Urumqi to Shanghai and Beijing saying that since there is no direct China-Afghan railroad, it will take long time to ship the goods by railroad connecting China and Afghanistan through Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. (Outlook Afghanistan)

**(2) Afghan Sikh Leader...**

decree in 2016. After the October election, he will be a solitary voice among 259 legislators, but hopes his 10 years of service in the Afghan army can help him secure a seat on the defense and security committee.

"I don't only want to serve my Sikh and Hindu brothers. I have to be able to serve all the Afghan people, no matter which ethnicity or group they belong to. Our services must reach everyone," he told The Associated Press during an interview inside a colorfully decorated temple in Kabul.

The 52-year-old father of four, originally from the eastern Paktia province, has lived most of his life in Kabul. He also served as a senator representing the minority, which has long had a seat in the upper house of parliament. Sikhs and Hindus have been driven out of many areas by heavy fighting. They have suffered widespread discrimination in the conservative Muslim country and have also been targeted by Islamic extremists. Under Taliban rule in the late 1990s, they were asked to identify themselves by wearing yellow armbands, but the rule was not enforced. In recent years, large numbers of Sikhs and Hindus have sought asylum in India, which has a Hindu majority and a large Sikh population.

"We must try to save our people from this chaos," Khalsa said. "By any means and at any cost we must ask for our rights from the government. Your rights will not be given to you, you must earn them," Khalsa said.

Khalsa will join parliament at a time when the Afghan government is struggling against a resurgent Taliban and an Islamic State affiliate. The Taliban have seized a number of districts across the country, and IS has carried out a wave of attacks in recent months targeting the country's Shiite Muslims, another embattled minority. Sikhs and Hindus would face renewed persecution under the Taliban and wholesale slaughter at the hands of the more radical IS. But Khalsa said he has no plans to leave the country and will continue to fight for his community's survival.

"I sacrifice myself for those of my brothers who have been through all kinds of pain and suffering," he said. "I don't care if I lose my whole family and I get killed for this cause. I will struggle until I get their rights." (ABC NEWS)

**(3) EU Asylum Agency...**

Afghanistan represented seven percent of the total, but the year-on-year decrease (- 74 percent) of Afghan applicants was the most significant among the main countries of origin. Afghanistan was the main country of origin between 2009 and 2012, and later remained constantly among the top three.

In 2017, Afghans lodged more applications in the first half of the year than in the second half; in January and March the monthly totals exceeded 5,000, whereas in the second half of the year the highest monthly total was 4,220 in August.

In a press release issued by EASO, the office said with respect to the number of pending cases, at the end of 2017 there were a total of 954,100 applications awaiting a final decision, which represents a decrease of 16 percent against the end of 2016.

This reflects the lower number of applications and suggesting greater efficiency in the asylum systems of Member States and the Common European Asylum System (CEAS).

Latest figures for the first four months of 2018 highlight a further drop in the number of applications lodged. The EASO stated that between January and April 2018 approximately 197,000 individuals sought international protection in the EU, a level lower than the same period in each of the last three years.

Still, it was higher than the pre-crisis levels in 2014. Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan continued to be the main countries of origin of applicants. (Tolo news)

**(4) Afghan Taliban...**

On Sunday, an Afghan Security Council meeting chaired by President Ashraf Ghani extended the ceasefire for another 10 days.

The Taliban said in the statement that the truce announced by the insurgents was not a response to the government offer, but it was announced for the wellbeing of the nation and for providing secure environment for Afghans to celebrate the Eid festival. (Xinhua)

**(5) Afghan Peace...**

Khayber said the marchers, varying in number from day to day, would take main roads and some times turn into villages, choosing dangerous areas on purpose to try to confront people's fear.

"We saw people suffering huge pain from the war ... Honestly, my conscience doesn't let me calm down. It hurts me and I ask myself: why we did not start working for peace earlier?"

Before Ramadan, the marchers were walking 30 to 35 km (18 to 20 miles) a day, but during the fasting month, when they could not take food or water during daylight hours, they slowed to 20 to 25 km per day.

In one area of Ghazni province, they were told by the Taliban not to enter an area because it was too dangerous. "We met Taliban fighters and after an introduction, they told us we shouldn't have come here because the area is planted with bombs and they had planned an attack.

"After minutes of discussion with them, they seemed tired of it all, and the war. They directed us back to the safest area."

**BLISTERED FEET, TEARS**

In Ghazni on Sunday, the Taliban took six soldiers hostage, the governor's office said on Monday. The Taliban denied the accusation and said the six had defected.

Mohammad Yasin Omid, 24, a teacher from Zabul province, said he joined the march on its 21st day.

"The group had already walked for 15 days. When I saw their bleeding and blistered feet, I could not control my tears so I decided to join them."

The Taliban are fighting to expel foreign forces, defeat the U.S.-backed government and restore sharia, or Islamic law, after their ouster by U.S.-led forces in 2001.

But Afghanistan has been at war for four decades, ever since the Soviet invasion in 1979.

Both the government and the militants declared temporary ceasefires for the end-of-Ramadan Eid al-Fitr holiday, leading to hugs and selfies between the two sides as militants emerged from their hideouts to enter towns and cities.

The Taliban ceasefire ended on Sunday. The government extended its ceasefire with the Taliban, which had been due to end on Wednesday, June 20, by 10 days.

The anti-war marchers said they won't stop in Kabul.

"We received support from the people in Kabul as we had expected," said marcher Badshah Khan.

"Now we will have sit-ins in tents and continue walking to other provinces to get more support." (Reuters)

**(6) Suicide Attack Leaves...**

incident and said a number of people have been killed or wounded in the explosion.

Provincial public health director Dr. Najibullah Kamawal had earlier said that the dead bodies of at least 15 people have been shifted to the hospitals so far along with at least 45 others who have sustained injuries.

However, another security source had said at least seventeen people have

been killed and at least fifty others have sustained injuries in the attack. No individual or group has so far claimed responsibility behind the incident. (KP)

**(7) Trump's Afghanistan...**

Mogadishu in Somalia when a U.S. Black Hawk helicopter was shot down with a rocket propelled grenade, standing troops in hostile territory.

Now, the general could become the ninth Afghanistan commander since the 9/11 terror attacks in 2001, and be tasked with overseeing the new Afghanistan strategy announced by Trump in August, which will cost about \$45 billion this year. The strategy included sending about 4,000 more U.S. troops to train and assist Afghan forces as part of the NATO Resolute Support mission.

The Taliban tentatively agreed to a three-day ceasefire this week as the U.S.-aligned government in Kabul offered peace talks. But the group has committed a string of deadly bombings, assaulted provincial centers, and maintained control of vast portions of Afghanistan since the new strategy was declared.

"This is a group that knows they cannot win at the ballot box, so they go to bombs. They can't take on the Afghan army anymore, and so they kill innocent people," Defense Secretary Jim Mattis told reporters last week.

The Army officer in charge of the Security Forces Assistance Brigade deployed under the president's new strategy to assist and train Afghan forces cited "great progress" during a briefing to reporters this week.

"And I'll tell you in the less than a hundred days we've been here, across our SFAB formation, across the country, we see the examples where the Afghans are taking the fight to the enemy," said Army Col. Scott Jackson, the brigade commander. "They're using their own organic resources to fight against the enemy, their own attack aviation, their own air force, their own artillery and utilizing their own ground maneuver to put the enemy in a bad spot." (Monitoring Desk)

**(8) VAR penalty...**

best chance of the game by far.

The victory leaves Sweden joint top of the group after Mexico's surprise victory against world champions Germany on Sunday.

Next up for the Swedes is an intriguing encounter against Germany in Sochi on June 23.

South Korea started the game brightly, forcing the first corner in the fourth minute, but were gradually forced back by an attritional Swedish side.

It was the Europeans who came closest to breaking the deadlock when forward Marcus Berg was denied by a fine point-blank save Jo Hyeon-woo in the 20th minute.

Berg was denied again nine minutes later by a desperate last-ditch block from Kim Young-gwon

Despite their increasing dominance, Sweden also demonstrated why they have struggled to score goals.

Berg, again, and Claesson went close before the end of the half, but it was clear for everyone to see why they had only scored once in their four matches prior to Russia.

Korea threatened only on the break where Son Heung-min's pace troubled 33-year-old Granqvist, who was without defending partner Victor Lindelof, who was ill.

The somewhat rancorous build-up to the game -- where Sweden were accused of spying on their opponents -- was increasingly reflected in the niggly nature of the match.

Resilient Sweden held firm after the goal and the Hwang late scare aside, and a half-hearted South Korea appeal for a penalty, their defence rarely looked troubled.

The huge celebrations, the first match played in the \$290 million stadium, at the end showed the importance the Swedes attached to this match.

Before the game, South Korea's coach Tae Yong-shin called it a "must win" game but the defeat leaves his side contemplating only an early exit. (Xinhua)

**(9) Russia...**

injuries that wiped out almost the entire defensive line.

But the men in red are now on the cusp of making their first knockout stage of a World Cup in post-Soviet history.

The achievement would be a huge relief for both players and Russians who worried about being humiliated on the world's biggest sporting stage.

Standing in their way could be Salah, but his availability has been a headache for Egypt ever since he injured his shoulder during a tussle with Real Madrid's Sergio Ramos during the Champions League final last month.

Ramos was accused of deliberately hurting Salah and it has been suggested opponents could target him again, particularly if his shoulder is not fully healed.

"I saw only that Ramos was holding the cup," Cherchesov said. "He did not do this on purpose, this is a contact sport, and as I understand it nobody injures people from other teams on purpose.

"Salah will get better and bring happiness to fans of Egypt. Players like him only make tournaments better."

Meanwhile, Russia's early success has seen the number of Russians who say they will follow football rise from 52 percent to 64 percent, according to one poll.

Russia's veteran goalkeeper Igor Akinfeev said he would rather focus on winning than any particular opposing player.

"Would I prefer to see Salah play or not? I do not even know how to respond," said Akinfeev. "I would prefer to see my team win." (Agencies)

**(10) During three...**

the Interior Ministry Spokesman Najib Danish said that they were watchful of the activities of armed oppositions in the cities.

Amid ceasefire celebrations, the pictures of the Taliban members were circulating on social media that showed their joint selfies with the Afghan security forces and women in the cities.

Some media reports suggested that the Taliban were set to punish those who have taken selfies with the pro-government forces and women.

However, in a phone call with Ariana News, the Taliban Spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid rejected the reports.

This comes as the Taliban on Sunday evening in a statement said that the group will not extend the ceasefire with the Afghan government and that its fighters have been ordered to resume action cross the country.

However, the government unilaterally extended the ceasefire by 10 days. (ATN)

**(11) 2 ISIS-K Militants...**

and terrorist related activities.

The latest airstrikes in Wataput have been carried out amid ongoing counter-terrorism operations against the loyalists of the terror group in some restive provinces of the country.

At least two militants affiliated with the terror group were killed during a similar operation in Wata Pur district last week. (KP)

**(12) Film Tracks...**

was pregnant with her father's second child.

Mani first came across Khatera earlier that year when she appeared on national television to tell her story - a turning point that resulted in support pouring in from activists and fellow victims.

The filmmaker, who grew up in Iran as an Afghan refugee before leaving to study cinema in Britain, then tracked the young woman's battle for justice through the courts.

She now hopes to screen the film in Afghanistan next month.

"I'm not optimistic but I have to do it," she said.

"I want to tell rape victims, you are not dirty, do not be ashamed of yourself. Go speak up and take back your honour." (Reuters)