

(1) SCO Stresses...

Group of UN Government Experts for reviewing and submitting recommendations on substantive elements of a legally binding international document for preventing an arms race in outer space and also stipulating reliable guarantees for the no first placement of arms in outer space.

The SCO members called for addressing high-priority tasks, including the illegal cultivation, production, circulation, sales and dissemination of drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors.

They reaffirmed their intention to step up joint efforts to fight the narcotic drug threat, including under the three international drug control conventions and other related legal documents.

The SCO called for unflinchingly honouring the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction.

While recognising the growing threat of chemical and biological terrorism, they emphasised the need to hold multilateral talks on an international convention to combat chemical and biological terrorist attacks.

The SCO reaffirmed its determination to ensure regional security and stability, supporting the work of the government and people of Afghanistan for restoring peace and ensuring the country's sustained development.

The forum once again expressed its willingness to facilitate a political settlement under the guidance of the people of Afghanistan and with their involvement on a bilateral basis and within the framework of the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group. (Pajhwok)

(2) Kazakhstan to ...

like figs, dates, raisins, pistachios and fresh fruits to Kazakhstan.

Taking into account the above mentioned opportunities, we inform that on June 25-26, 2019, at the Kabul Star Hotel & Restaurant within the framework of the development of bilateral cooperation, an official trade and economic mission will take place in Kabul.

The event is organized by the Chamber of Foreign Trade of Kazakhstan in conjunction with the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of the Republic of Kazakhstan Atameken, the Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Afghanistan.

The purpose of the event is the development of trade relations between Kazakhstani and Afghan entrepreneurs, and the establishment of strong business ties between the countries.

From the Kazakhstan side there are large producers of processed products. It is an excellent opportunity for both Afghan and Kazakhstani businessmen to establish contacts and to present their products.

We ask interested Afghan entrepreneurs who are interested in cooperation with Kazakhstani companies to take an active part in this event. (PR)

(3) Dushanbe Urges ...

take into consideration Afghanistan's ethnic composition.

He argued: "If you talk only to people in Kabul, it will have no effect in Kunduz, Mazari Sharif or any other part of the country. And this is very clear."

He said Tajikistan supported Pakistan's initiatives for restoration of peace in Afghanistan as both countries held similar views on regional issues.

The resolution of Afghan conflict was not only important for Dushanbe and Islamabad but also for the whole region the diplomat said.

Conflicting interests of regional states in Afghanistan harmed their relations during the 1990s, he recalled. However, they are now on the same page regarding a regional approach to Afghanistan. If a political agreement was achieved in Afghanistan, the ambassador believed, all other issues would be solved automatically. (Pajhwok)

(4) Presidential ...

against the government but none of

their supporters have come on the streets for demonstration yet.

The candidates say that they have completed their plans for launching the protests in coming days. (ATN)

(5) Terrorists Should...

"We discussed bilateral relations, cooperation, peace and security developments. I thanked Rahmon for hosting the Summit and paying special attention to Afghanistan," Abdullah tweeted after meeting the Tajikistan president.

Member states of CICA include Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

CICA membership covers about 90 percent of the territory and population of Asia. It has another 8 states and 5 international organizations, including the UN, with observer status.

CICA membership would further enhance Sri Lanka's bilateral, economic and trade cooperation as well as people to people contacts with the other CICA Member States, the PMD said.

CICA is different from other security mechanisms which are commonly dominated by superpowers, says the PMD. It has the characteristics of an "Asian initiative," which values equality among members, and is led by small countries, according to the PMD. (Tolo news)

(6) Imran, Putin ...

Pakistan and Kyrgyz leaders also held talks on the early completion of the CASA-1000 project, which would start from Kyrgyzstan and reach Afghanistan through Tajikistan and onward to Pakistan. (Pajhwok)

(7) Probe into ...

A number of lawmakers said that the former members of the election commissions have lodged at the Meshrano Jirga, the Upper House of Parliament, against the Attorney General's Office and are pleading not guilty.

"Those who have not done their jobs properly, have misused their authorities, betrayed or received bribes and made deals should be punished," said Muhammad Akbari, a Senator.

Election observers criticized judicial institutions for a delay in the investigation of the former election commissioners' case.

"Delay in securing justice affects people's people trust [in judicial institutions] and it increases the culture of impunity," the head of the Afghan Civil Society Forum, Aziz Rafiee, said.

A spokesman for Attorney General's Office, Jamshid Rasuli, told TOLONews that the case has been finalized has been sent to the Supreme Court.

Officials from the Supreme Court did not comment on this matter. (Tolo news)

(8) Afghan Athletes ...

got silver medals; and Mohammad Ashraf Shukran and Abdul Sattar Shahi got bronze medals in the championship. Twenty-seven athletes from Afghanistan attended the Asian Open Taekwondo Championship in India. (Tolo news)

(9) At Least 10 Imams ...

Nangarhar residents, meanwhile, called on government to ensure the safety of imams.

"The attacks are threat against all religious scholars in Nangarhar," said Hassan, a Nangarhar resident.

In a recent incident, Mullah Safiullah Hanafi, Imam of Qaletak mosque in Khiwa district of Nangarhar was killed in an attack by unknown armed men the district when he was leaving the mosque on June 12. (Tolo news)

(10) Poor Medical ...

According to Muhiuddin, his uncle's condition is deteriorating and doctors say his treatment is impossible in Khost and officials of the prison are not allowing him to get better treatment elsewhere.

Abdullah Jan, 65, an inmate in the Khost central jail, died on the day 3rd of Eid-ul-Fitr as a result of high pressure. His relatives say his treatment was not possible inside the prison so he lost his life. On the other hand, the Independent

Human Rights Commission office in the southeast also confirmed the poor healthcare issue in Khost prison.

Saif Rahman Niaz, a member of the human right office, told Pajhwok Afghan News that medical services provided to the prisoners were not enough.

Nizai said they had shared the issue with the governor and other authorities concerned but no action happened in this regard.

Saleh Mohammad Sherzai, head of the prison, rejected these claims but said the only problem was overcrowded cells.

Sherzai explained the prison had the capacity to accommodate 240 people but they kept 700 inmates who availed inadequate health services.

Talib Mangal, the governor's spokesman, acknowledged the issue and linked it with smallness of the prison.

He said they had shared the issue with the provincial Public Health Department to provide best and enough services to inmates with available resources. (Pajhwok)

(11) US Warns India...

new military deals is one of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's top priorities when he heads to India later this month, amid high trade tensions between both countries. Earlier this week, Pompeo said that Lockheed Martin's F-21 and Boeing's F/A-18 fighter offerings will be on the table. There had even been speculations that the US could offer the South Asian nation its fifth generation F-35 jets if only New Delhi would scrap its S-400 purchase.

The Trump administration is engaged in a global offensive trying to force countries, most notably India and Turkey, out of their defense deals with Moscow. Both Ankara and New Delhi have repeatedly slammed the American coercive diplomacy, stressing that Washington has no right to dictate its terms to sovereign nations when it comes to matters of national security. (RT)

(12) Russia Opposes...

tariffs on Chinese goods, sparking a trade war. China responded in kind, but has repeatedly stressed that it stands for a mutually beneficial trade agreement and rejects economic warfare. (RT)

(13) Tanker Hit ...

showed an Iranian patrol boat removing an "unexploded limpet mine" from one of the tankers, Trump was emphatic. "Iran did do it," Trump told Fox News. "You know they did it because you saw the boat. I guess one of the mines didn't explode and it's probably got essentially Iran written all over it."

'Allegations against Iran' - Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted that the US had "immediately jumped to make allegations against Iran without a shred of factual or circumstantial evidence."

The United States has also accused Iran over May 12 attacks on four tankers anchored in the Gulf of Oman off Fujairah. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for an independent investigation. "It's very important to know the truth (and) that responsibilities are clarified," he told reporters at UN headquarters in New York.

"Obviously that can only be done if there is an independent entity that verifies those facts."

The oil tankers were 10 nautical miles apart and headed to Asia when they were struck by explosions early Thursday after passing through the Strait of Hormuz, some 25 nautical miles off Iran's southern coast.

The other vessel, the Front Altair, was carrying naphtha, a refined petroleum product.

It was hit by three explosions, according to Norwegian officials.

Iran has repeatedly warned that it could block the Hormuz Strait in a relatively low-tech, high-impact countermeasure to any attack by the United States.

Doing so would disrupt oil tankers travelling out of the Gulf region to the Indian Ocean and global export routes. Trump played down the threat.

"It's not going to be closed, it's not going to be closed for long and they know it. They've been told in very strong terms," Trump said.

Oil prices have surged following the attacks. (AFP)

(14) US Grants...

compensate, Iraq pipes in up to 28 mil-

lion cubic metres of Iranian gas a day for power generation and also directly imports up to 1,300 megawatts of Iranian electricity.

That dependence is uncomfortable for Washington, which sees Tehran as its top regional foe.

Trump reimposed crippling unilateral sanctions on Iran's energy and finance sectors in November following a decision to abandon a landmark 2015 nuclear deal between major powers and Tehran.

He gave Iraq an initial 45-day waiver to continue buying electricity and natural gas from Tehran, and in December Washington granted Baghdad an 90-day extension. (AFP)

(15) Indonesia Returns...

currently examining several other containers in Jakarta's port and the city of Batam on the island of Sumatra.

It is the latest country to return imported rubbish after neighbouring Malaysia vowed to ship back hundreds of tonnes of plastic waste last month.

The Philippines has ordered tonnes of garbage dumped in the country to be shipped back to Canada, sparking a diplomatic row between the two countries.

For years China received the bulk of scrap plastic from around the world, but closed its doors to foreign refuse last year in an effort to clean up its environment.

Huge quantities of waste have since been redirected to Southeast Asia, including Malaysia, Indonesia and to a lesser degree the Philippines.

Around 300 million tonnes of plastic are produced every year. Much of that ends up in landfill or in the seas, according to the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF). (AFP)

(16) Brexit: Irish...

because what the backstop is is ... a legally operable guarantee that we will never see a hard border emerge again," Varadkar told RTE radio. "If we don't have that, that is no deal."

How to manage the land border between EU-member Ireland and British-run Northern Ireland - including an emergency "backstop" solution to prevent the return of extensive frontier controls - has proven the most contentious element of Britain's planned exit from the European Union.

Varadkar again rejected a proposal for a time limit on the Northern Ireland clause, saying a backstop with a time limit is "not a backstop."

He said that Ireland remained open to the possibility of alternative arrangements that would allow an open border with Northern Ireland while protecting the European Union's single market - something Johnson has suggested may offer a solution.

But Varadkar said that would only be a possibility once the technologies required had been demonstrated to work effectively.

"What people are saying is give up the backstop, which we know will work legally and operationally in return for something that doesn't yet exist but might exist in the future ... I can't do that to the border communities," Varadkar said.

Varadkar said he was looking forward to sitting down with May's replacement, but said the next prime minister should not expect a better Brexit deal.

"The fact that the failure of the House Of Commons to ratify the withdrawal agreement somehow means they are going to get a better deal, that is just not how the European Union works," he said. (Reuters)

(17) Anti-Graft...

said state officials that had proven incapable of stamping out corruption should lose their jobs and vowed to make the justice system work fairly for everyone.

"Under the constitution, people are free and equal in dignity and in rights, meaning nobody is that irrelevant to have their rights compromised, nor is anyone that powerful to stand above the law."

"Too many people feel that this is not quite the reality in our country. The feeling of injustice has grown and has demonstrated itself in calls for change and decency but also in anger over 'the system'," she said in a nod to the rise to

anti-system and far-right parties.

Caputova's election stood in contrast to a European shift toward populist and nationalist parties.

Caputova, whose fight against an illegal landfill in her home town earned her the nickname "Slovakia's Erin Brockovich" after the American environmentalist portrayed by Julia Roberts in a 2000 film, also called on the European Union to become a leader in the battle against climate change.

Slovakia's president wields little day-to-day power but appoints prime ministers and can veto appointments of senior prosecutors and judges.

Five people have been charged with the murders of Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kusnirova, including businessman Marian Kocner, who was investigated by Kuciak and has become a symbol of perceived impunity after more than a decade of rule by Smer. Kocner has denied any wrongdoing. (Reuters)

(18) NATO Faces...

earmarked for design, spare parts and testing.

But he said it was critical to decide quickly how to replace the 1979/1980-era airplanes, with their distinctive radar domes on the fuselage, or NATO would need to take costly steps to keep them flying even longer.

"We have to get moving on this. We have to ensure that the studies move along quickly. We need a reality check," he said. The AWACS planes are among the few military assets owned and operated by NATO, rather than individual states. They are used to conduct missions such as air policing, support for counter-terrorism operations, evacuations, and crisis response.

Gschossman told Reuters NATO could follow the lead of member states Britain and Turkey in purchasing the E-7, a newer radar plane also built by Boeing. Those aircraft, he said, were large enough to add potential new capabilities, such as operating drones for expanded surveillance, in coming years.

"We have to ensure that we acquire a system that has growth potential, but that also - for financial and time reasons - is based on existing capabilities," he said. NATO is considering the AWACS replacement issue as part of a broader study of surveillance, but the process has dragged out given rapidly changing threats and newly emerging capabilities. France and the United States also operate E-3A aircraft and could potentially buy E-7 planes in coming years, which could lower costs by generating larger order quantities. "Why don't we bet on the proven technology that we already have in the E-7 and provide NATO with a certain number of those aircraft? That would give us a basic capability that could be expanded in the future," he said. George Riebling, deputy general manager of the agency and a former senior U.S. official, said NATO was running out of time. (Reuters)

(19) Turkey Slams...

highly vulnerable to a further prolonged period of acute economic and financial volatility. The foreign exchange reserve buffers are weak," the agency said.

The agency remained the negative outlook because of possible instability caused by the re-run of the Istanbul mayoral election on June 23 and the fear of U.S. sanctions against Turkey over Ankara's purchase of a Russian missile defence system. The Turkish economy entered recession for the first time in a decade last year following a currency crisis. In August 2018, the agency downgraded the rating to Ba3 from Ba2. (Xinhua)

(20) China, Qatar...

hailed the strategic significance of the Qatar-China relationship, calling his China visit in January a great success.

The Qatari side is ready to work with China to boost cooperation in key areas including investment and energy, as well as increase cultural and people-to-people exchanges, Tamim said.

Qatar firmly supports China's push to safeguard sovereignty and fight against terrorism, said the emir. He spoke highly of China's fair stance on international affairs, where the Chinese side upholds that disputes should be resolved through dialogue between nations, and pledged to increase coordination with the Chinese side in multilateral affairs. (Xinhua)