

(1) Tehran, Kabul...

that Iran welcomes expansion of all-out ties with the brotherly nation of Afghanistan and seeks planning for cooperation in more areas.

The good and brotherly ties between Iran and Afghanistan have always been emphasized by both countries' highest-ranking officials.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, in a meeting on Monday with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, referred to abundant commonalities of belief, culture and history between the peoples of Iran and Afghanistan and shared borders between the two countries, noting: "The Islamic Republic of Iran has always paid serious attention to Afghanistan's interests and security and considers the progress of this country in all sectors as its own."

Ayatollah Khamenei described Afghan people as courageous, zealous and intelligent, adding: "Afghanistan enjoys the two great benedictions of natural and human wealth and that the country can make good progress by properly using those resources."

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution highlighted the Iranian people's hospitality vis-à-vis Afghan people during years of war and after that, saying: "Unlike certain countries, such as the US and UK, the Islamic Republic of Iran has always treated the Afghan people with respect, brotherhood and hospitality and will withhold no technical, engineering and infrastructural assistance for Afghanistan to exploit its natural resources."

Ayatollah Khamenei called for a swift settlement of the issue of Iran-Afghanistan border rivers, saying: "Such issues should not give rise to enmity and rancor in the relations between countries like Iran and Afghanistan that share borders, culture and needs."

During the meeting, which was also attended by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Ashraf Ghani, the President of Afghanistan, expressed happiness with trilateral negotiations held in Tehran, particularly the agreement for transit communications with India through Iran's southeastern Chabahar Port. "We always appreciate the hospitality of the Iranian people and Your Excellency's positive view of Afghanistan and we hope that the Tehran negotiations will prepare the ground for increasingly broader relations."

Mr. Ashraf Ghani added: "In the coming weeks, an expert meeting will be held to discuss issues related to the two countries' use of border rivers and we hope that this issue will be settled within a proper framework." (FNA)

(2) U.S Senate Bill ..

taking demonstrative actions against the Haqqani Network.

The house amendment wants the secretary of defense to certify to Congress that Pakistan is not using its military or any funds or equipment provided by the U.S to persecute minority groups seeking political or religious freedom.

Earlier, the White House expressed objection to the bill saying, "the administration objects to section 1212 of HR 4919, which would make \$450 million USD of CSF to Pakistan ineligible for the Secretary of Defense's waiver authority unless the secretary provides a certification to the Congressional defense committees."

The Senate version of the NDAA 2016, that covers \$300 million USD out of the Coalition Support Fund, already requires a certification that Pakistan was taking action against the Haqqani Network.

The renewed bill binds the Secretary of Defense to appear before the Congress and convince the lawmakers that Pakistan military has been tak-

ing demonstrated action against the Haqqani Network for them to release funds. The NDAA 2016 ends on September 30 this year.

The Pentagon spokesperson has reportedly commented that the defense secretary has not taken the decision regarding the certification yet.

Meanwhile Pakistan's Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan said on Tuesday that authorities will perform DNA tests on the body of a man who was killed in the drone strike to determine whether the slain man is actually Mansour.

At a televised news conference in Islamabad, Khan said Pakistan is still unable to officially confirm Mansour's death, although Washington, Kabul and some senior Taliban commanders have confirmed it.

The Taliban has yet to formally announce his death.

According to AP, Khan condemned the drone strike, calling it a violation of Pakistan's sovereignty and international laws. (Tolnews)

(3) Afghan Taliban ...

scholar, Mawlawi Haibatullah Akhundzada as the new leader of the insurgent group.

An online statement posted on the Taliban website on Wednesday read: "The Leadership Council of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (the name of the ousted Taliban regime) today unanimously appointed Mawlawi Haibatullah Akhundzada as the new Amirul Mominin (supreme leader of the faithful)."

According to the statement, Sirajuddin Haqqani, the leader of the Haqqani network and Mawlawi Mohammad Yaqoob, son of the Taliban's founder Mullah Mohammad Omar, have been picked as deputies for the Taliban's new leader.

Mullah Mansoor was killed in a U.S. drone attack in an area along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border on Saturday and the Afghan government confirmed his death a day later on Sunday.

The appointment of Mansoor's successor by the Taliban Rahbari Shura or leadership council, is taking place amid serious differences between the supporters of the late Mullah Mansoor and his opponent group, led by Mullah Mohammad Rasool Akhund.

Rasool Akhund, according to local media reports, has blamed the late Mullah Mansoor for killing numerous innocent people and after confirmation of Mansoor's death, instructed his fighters to attack Mansoor's supporters and target them across the country. Both Mullah Mansoor and his successor Akhundzada are from the Taliban birthplace of the southern Kandahar province. (Xinhua)

(4) HIA Leader ...

HIA's political wing, told Pajhwok Afghan News that the former prime minister had outlined the view in a condolences message sent to the Taliban leadership.

"I express heartfelt condolences on the behalf of HIA to Mullah Akhtar Mansour's family, his supporters and to the whole Taliban rank and file and leadership," Hekmatyar was quoted as saying in the message.

"If you [Taliban] don't have the capacity to agree on a grand strategy for peace and stability in the country, at least we can reach a deal on refusing to follow the path of enmity or use harsh language against one another by eliminating the sources that are trying to pit one group against the other," he added.

He also suggested the Taliban be careful about future challenges, just like the HIA was. He showed his eagerness to ink a similar deal with the Taliban as the group was about to sign with Afghan government.

The HIA leader asked the Taliban if they rejected his suggestion, they

should not interfere in his party's policies and let the group work smoothly. The HIA had also rendered sacrifices for the country, Hekmatyar claimed. (Pajhwok)

(5) Afghan Draft...

of women remains a major challenge in Afghanistan nearly 15 years after a U.S.-backed military campaign ousted the Taliban's hardline Islamist regime.

Afghan women and girls accused of "moral crimes" such as running away from home or having sex outside of marriage are often forced to endure invasive and scientifically questionable "virginity tests" by government doctors, HRW said.

The tests claim to verify whether a woman has been sexually active outside of marriage, but the veracity of the exams has been widely debunked by scientists.

"President Ghani should ensure that the new law upholds women's rights under both the Afghan constitution and international law, by removing all references to "moral crimes" and adding new provisions to protect women and girls from abuse," said HRW researcher Heather Barr in a statement. Afghan government officials were not immediately available for comment.

HRW said in most cases women and girls accused of "moral crimes" were escaping forced marriage or domestic violence. In some instances those who had been raped were charged with having sex outside of marriage, the rights group added. (Reuters)

(6) World Bank ...

Kyle Peters on Tuesday, a statement from his office said.

Abdullah thanked continued cooperation from the World Bank with Afghanistan, particularly on CASA-100 project. Peters promised to assist the Afghans in development projects in the future. (Pajhwok)

(7) Top General ...

by the Taliban if Congress cancels a program that allows them to resettle in the United States, according to the top American commander in Afghanistan.

The warning from Army Gen. John Nicholson comes with the future of the so-called special immigrant visa program in doubt as the Senate opens up debate Wednesday on the annual defense policy bill.

The program's backers, who include Sen. John McCain, the Republican chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said it's unconscionable to deny entry to Afghans who are considered traitors by insurgent groups for siding with the coalition. Nicholson's remarks, outlined in a May 20 letter to McCain, underscore that concern.

Opposition to the program centers on the potential \$446 million price tag of expanding the program and concerns that issuing visas to the thousands of Afghans who aided the U.S. and its allies will drain Afghanistan of much needed talent.

Nicholson told McCain that abandoning the special visa program would "significantly undermine" U.S. credibility and 15 years of enormous personal costs made since U.S. forces invaded Afghanistan.

"Failure to adequately demonstrate a shared understanding of their sacrifices and honor our commitment to any Afghan who supports the International Security Assistance Force and Resolute Support missions could have grave consequences for these individuals and bolster the propaganda our enemies," Nicholson wrote. Congress has added 7,000 visas to the program over the last two years alone to meet the demand and the Obama administration requested 4,000 more for the fiscal year that be-

gins Oct. 1. Since December 2014, the State Department has issued 3,200 special immigrant visas to Afghans who worked for the coalition. Thousands more visas are being processed through a pipeline that can take 270 days from start to finish.

"We're going to run out of visas by the end of the year," said Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D.N.H., who plans to offer an amendment in the Senate with McCain to extend and expand the visa program. (AP)

(8) 11 District...

due to insecurity in their districts. "I was also in Ghazni city for a long time, but later I turned to the district because the governor yesterday ordered district chiefs to turn to their districts, some other district chiefs had also returned to their main offices," he said.

Governor Mohammad Aman Hamim confirmed the issue and said all district chiefs would turn to their districts in near future.

"Only three districts had their chiefs working in their centers when I assumed office as the governor, but now most of them are operating from their own districts," he said. (Pajhwok)

(9) Pakistan Not I...

that they needed to pursue actively terrorist organizations that were using its soil to find refuge. "We've also said before that Pakistan is a country that, unfortunately, knows the effects of terrorism, the tragedy of terrorism. It's suffered multiple terrorist attacks, mass-casualty terrorist attacks. So it understands the stakes here."

However, he maintained, the US would continue to work with Pakistan in a full-faith effort, give that country the required tools and capabilities to confront the threat. (Pajhwok)

(10) Taliban Attack ...

put the attack on the enemies of Afghanistan, a reference to the Taliban and strongly condemned it.

According to the statement of the Interior Ministry, 10 people were killed and four others injured in the suicide bombing and all the victims are civilians.

The attack occurred at 08:25 a.m. local time in Bagh-e-Daud locality outside Kabul against a bus that transported the judges of appellate court to Maidan Shahr, 35 km west of Kabul, the statement added.

This is the first deadly suicide bombing carried out by Taliban militants since the death of their leader Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansoor on Saturday and choosing new leader on Wednesday to lead the hardliner group.

Taliban outfit in a statement posted on its website, hours after the attack, claimed of responsibility and confirmed that a suicide bomber blew himself up next to a bus of judges killing and injuring 22 persons. (Xinhua)

(11) 18 Bamyan ...

officer, was fined 10,000 afghanis and Mohammad Sharif, another officer, was sentenced to seven months in jail. Bamyan Governor Mohammad Tahir Zuhair told Pajhwok Afghan News his administration was decisively fighting corruption and the court ruling would be carefully implemented. Pajhwok tried to interview the convicts, but security officials intervened. (Pajhwok)

(12) Code of ...

independence, journalists should avoid any kind of partiality, should avoid the activities that undermine credibility of journalists such as special offers, gifts and bribes should be rejected by journalists. Journalists should avoid self-censorship should prefer national interest over personal interests.

Based on the code, journalists should not bow down to direct and indirect pressure from government officials, individuals and groups and should also practice caution for their own safety. The code also stresses the need for balanced reporting.

The code urges journalists not to distort information and not differentiate between spokesmen of government and armed militant groups. (Tolnews)

(13) Blast Hits ...

three girls and five boys had been wounded in the explosion. Mirza Ahmad Reja, head of the civil hospital in Mahmood Raqi, said the wounded guard was in critical condition and had been evacuated to Kabul for better treatment.

So far no one has claimed the responsibility for the incident. (Pajhwok)

(14) 25 Militants ...

Colo. Abdul Razzaq Qaderi, told Pajhwok Afghan News the offensive was underway in different parts of Chamtal district for the past 24 hours. The operation beginning from Bargah-i-Afghania locality is still ongoing. Security forces and local people have suffered no casualties in the offensive. Habibullah, a resident of Jar Kala area, said a military convoy with air support passed through the village and launched an operation in the Alborz Mountains. (Pajhwok)

(15) Clash over...

Gen. Sher Aziz Kamawal, commander of the 808th Spinzar Military Corps, told Pajhwok Afghan News the incident took place when the Taliban, who were collecting Ushr, faced opposition from two illegal armed groups. The Taliban managed to flee the area but the two illegal armed groups engaged in a clash, he said. "Two people from Qudus Chapa and Hekmat groups were killed and another wounded during the ongoing clash," Kamawal added. (Pajhwok)

(16) 5 Detained ...

poet, was kidnapped by unidentified men two weeks ago and her corpse was found on Tuesday.

The poet, Mina Entizar, told Pajhwok Afghan News her sister was on going to school when disappeared and her body was found in the Rigo area of Dand district 12 days after her abduction. "My sister Laila was 23 years of age. An 11th grader, she was kidnapped by unidentified men on her way to school," she said. The young woman was killed and her body cut into pieces by animals. "We don't have personal enmity with anyone and don't know who did this and why. We want security organs to investigate the incident and find the perpetrators," she said. (Pajhwok)

(17) 3 Kidnappers...

of Khogyani and Sherzad districts -- were detained during an operation in Surkhrod on Tuesday.

The kidnappers have reportedly confessed to being involved in many cases in the province. Intelligence agents also held a militant in the operation, he said.

A civil society activist, Navid Shinwari, said kidnapping cases had considerably increased in recent months despite occasional raids and arrests. (Pajhwok)

(18) U.N. Environment ...

that it would be keen to achieve a broad range of agreements on issues affecting the environment globally with key attention on some specific policy approaches on transport reforms. (Xinhua)

(19) Obama to ...

of lethal weapons to the country - a vestige of the Vietnam War - would be

completely lifted.

Obama repeatedly insisted that lifting the embargo was not a response to Beijing's assertiveness in the South China Sea. Critics accused Washington of throwing away a powerful lever it had to press communist-ruled Vietnam for improvements in human rights. (Reuters)

(20) Majority ...

However, support varies depending on the reason for fleeing.

Meanwhile, 55 percent of Germans surveyed were also in favor of refugees returning home once the situation in their country of origin had improved and the reason for fleeing no longer pertained.

The survey showed respondents' view of the impact of immigration on the German economy is somewhat more positive than it was in March, and they saw immigration as bringing either more opportunities or more risks. (Xinhua)

(21) Prisoner...

pardoning Savchenko following a request by relatives of two Russian reporters killed in an attack that Savchenko was believed to be involved in.

In March, the 34-year-old female pilot was sentenced by a Russian court to 22 years in prison after being found guilty of complicity in killing two Russian journalists in 2014.

Savchenko, who is considered a national hero by many Ukrainians, has denied the charges, saying that she had been kidnapped in Ukraine and then handed over to Russian authorities. (Xinhua)

(22) Iraqi Forces...

destroyed five of their vehicles, while four security members were killed, the source said.

Meanwhile, the security forces took control of Sajar area, some 10 km north of Fallujah, after fierce clashes with IS militants and raised the Iraqi flag over its police station and a government building, the source without giving further details about casualties. (Xinhua)

(23) European ..

its new approach towards online platforms, like online marketplaces, search engines, payment systems, social media, video and content-sharing sites. (Xinhua)

(24) Gen. Raheel..

the government has long condemned drone strikes, terming them a violation of Pakistan's sovereignty, it had already conveyed a set of 'red lines' to the US in 2010, specifically mentioning attacks in Balochistan as a no-go area. (Agencies)

(25) US Senate...

the House of Representatives last week, linked \$450m from a total of \$900m proposed for Pakistan to take action against the Haqqani network. But the Senate bill is different from the House version. (Agencies)

(26) China, EU ...

positive results in formulating innovative growth strategies, the top Chinese diplomat said.

For her part, Mogherini said the EU is willing to work closely with China to push for a positive outcome at this year's EU-China summit and ensure a successful G20 summit in Hangzhou. (Xinhua)

(27) Tajikistan...

German OSCE Chairmanship. The meeting participants reportedly also discussed a number of international and regional issues being of mutual interest. (Agencies)