

(1) Afghanistan

shares a 85-kilometer border with China in Wakhan district of northeastern Badakhshan province. Zebak and Wa Khan areas of Badakhshan connect Afghanistan with Pakistan, Tajikistan and China.

Afghanistan remained a connectivity point for years, but the emergence of powers in the 19th century and in the new imperialism-era, Afghanistan lost everything to serve as a centre of contacts and relations for the outside world, the president said.

Afghanistan turned into a hub of conflicts in the 21st century and it was hoped the conflict would end in 50 years and Afghanistan would become the economic hub in the heart of Asia and as Asian continental economy, he said.

"We should realise the balance in problems and opportunities, identify our big partners with an eye on the future in order to have an upper hand on geographical and political hurdles and advance towards future. Everything that creates problems for governance, knowledge, policies and progress should be identified and resolved."

Referring to Afghanistan's geographical situation, the president said if insecurity was overcome, tourists from across the globe would pour into the landlocked country.

"We have water resources which we can give to our neighbours except China. There are dams and canals as huge resources of Afghanistan and fortunately we have more than 200 projects in area of irrigation."

He said Afghanistan had rich mineral deposits including iron ore and gold and 17 of 14 of the world's rare minerals were found in Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(2) Afghanistan Ready

cooperation and readiness to conclude agreements offered by the regional organisation, a statement from the Presidential Palace said.

Thapa thanked the Afghan president for his support to the SAARC and hosting the RECCA-6 summit in Kabul. (Pajhwok)

(3) Electoral Reform

alternative regimes that could harm public participation in polls.

The IEC termed the creation of constituencies a difficult task at a time when exact facts and figures about the population were not available. Such a move could fuel ethnic and linguistic differences, it warned.

In addition, the panel said, creation of an authority to monitor the work of election bodies would undermine the independence of the electoral bodies, a step that would be in conflict with Article 156 of the constitution.

The creation of more bodies would add to confusion and there was a need for legislation in this regard, the statement continued, saying a power overlap would pit one panel against the other.

Earlier, electoral watchdogs welcomed ERC suggestions, acknowledging their implementation would be difficult in the prevailing circumstances.

Some of the major suggestions include registration of voters, making the election bodies accountable, the presence of two foreigners in the Independent Election Complaints Commission (IECC), reservation of one Wolesi Jirga seat for the Hindu minority, identification and shrinking of constituencies. (Pajhwok)

(4) Russia Pledges

houses in Afghanistan. This comes as a Memorandum of Understanding was concluded recently between the Afghan housing construction sector and Russian Industry to form a construction company.

The Ministry of Urban Development Affairs (MUDA) said the construction company will start operations under the name of Cardinal and will be based on 51 and 49 percent share.

Equipment worth \$25 million will be imported in the housing

construction sector of Afghanistan once the agreement has been finalized and signed.

According to MuDA the investment and import of equipment will enable the Cardinal Company to build up to 1,000 apartments annually.

A delegation of the Afghan officials led by urban development minister Syed Sadat Mansoor Naderi will be expecting to visit Russia to review the technologies and equipment besides signing the agreement between the two nations.

Russia's investment in housing sector is seen as a critical step forward considering Russia's previous engagements in Afghanistan which included construction of 11,000 housing units in the form of blocks in Macrorryan.

Other major projects constructed by Russia include Salang tunnel, construction of housing factory, Naghlo dam, Kabul polytechnic university, Kabul Jangalak Takhnikom, Mazar-e-Sharif electricity factory, Silo factories in Kabul and Mazar and Ghaziabad-Hada farm in Jalalabad city. (KP)

(5) EU Asks

the meeting, EU Special Representative and Head of the EU Delegation to Afghanistan, Franz Michael Mellbin, commented: "On behalf of the European Union, the Kingdom of Norway and the Swiss Confederation I would like to express our gratitude towards the Afghan Government for hosting this meeting."

He said the meeting underlined the Afghan government's continued effort and commitment to move towards self-reliance.

"This is key to our support going forward. The meeting highlighted the continued partnership and commitment from the EU and the international community towards Afghanistan and the Afghan people."

He said to further emphasize the long-term commitment of the EU towards the Afghan people, the EU would co-host the next ministerial meeting in Brussels with the Afghan government. (Pajhwok)

(6) Abdullah Satisfied

challenges and important issues facing the National Unity Government (NUG) over the past eleven months, the CEO said there were still key areas that needed to be addressed, citing the distribution of electronic identity cards, the war against corruption, parliamentary elections, a Loya Jirga and other administrative issues as examples.

"We strongly support the resolutions adopted by the conference. We are grateful to our international partners for offering a reliable and effective package," he said.

In addition Abdullah touched on the implementation of reforms in various government sectors and said bringing about necessary changes will help in reviving mutual trust between Afghanistan and the international community.

"We are entering a new era today which indicates the emergence of new opportunities for us," Abdullah added.

Abdullah also highlighted the deteriorating security in the country and said the issue had overwhelmingly affected plans considered by government.

Abdullah's comments came at the end of the one-day summit that was held in Kabul. Representatives from 60 countries and international donor organizations participated.

President Ashraf Ghani had opened the day's event early Saturday and gave a quick overview of achievements recorded by the NUG. He also presented a positive picture of what has been attained during the government's 11 months in power. (Tolonews)

(7) Iran Offers

Iran and Afghanistan in establishing internal security, Afghan refugees and fight against terrorism, drug and human trafficking. "The actions of the two countries' joint anti-drug committees should be pursued more seriously than before," Rahmani Fa-

zli said.

In relevant remarks on Friday, Rahmani Fazli in a meeting with Afghan President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani in Kabul renewed Tehran's support for the restoration of peace in the neighboring country.

"Afghanistan's security and peace are important to us," the Iranian interior minister said.

He pointed to Tehran-Kabul relations, and said, "Iran believes that a threat to Afghanistan will in fact be a threat to Iran."

The Afghan president, for his part, said his country was willing to broaden trade and economic ties with Iran.

Iran is one of the most important donors to Afghanistan, which has kept its promises to help to the reconstruction of the war-ravaged country. (FNA)

(8) Work on

Sartaj Aziz cited several projects, including some within the RECCA framework, and others on at a bilateral level. Transforming Afghanistan into an Asian roundabout would require internal initiatives and substantive cooperation of regional countries, he said.

"We have expedited work on rail connectivity projects, including Peshawar-Jalalabad and Chaman-Spin Boldak rail links," he announced, saying that a feasibility study for the Peshawar-Kabul motorway was also underway.

Similarly, he believed, ongoing work on the Torkham-Jalalabad additional carriageway would be completed by December 2016. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to extend these road networks to Central Asia.

"The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) can also play a transformative role, not only for Pakistan but for the region as a whole. Once implemented, the CPEC would provide a competitive transit route for trade between western China, Central Asia and Afghanistan."

Significant breakthroughs on CASA-1000 and TAPI gas pipeline projects have put the projects on a fast track, the advisor said, hinting at collaboration with Afghanistan in hydropower generation on Kunar River.

The neighbours had pledged to remove impediments to the full implementation of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APPTA), the diplomat told the gathering. (Pajhwok)

(9) Cut in Reliance

from the Presidential Palace said President Ghani declared that the agenda the Afghan government had presented at the London Conference was not a document only but a manifesto that reflected Afghanistan's policies about its reanimation.

He said Afghanistan's contact and reintegration with regional economies offered the landlocked country an opportunity to regain its historic role of being the Asia's roundabout, something that would create jobs, trader markets and reduce imports.

Ghani said international partners should realise Afghanistan's security, political and economic dependency and insisted that his government was eager to bring about changes to the country's infrastructures.

The president said reviving the country's agriculture remained his government's top priority and in this regard he had diverted great potentials to developing the rural sector, improving land administration, irrigation and resolving problems farmers faced in selling their agricultural products.

The president said the subject of disputes over land ownerships would be handed over to a special land administration department from the judiciary in order to make the country's lands dispute-free and set in motion people's economic growth. (Pajhwok)

(10) President Wants

neighbours in diverse fields. The Afghan-Iran border should be a focal point of economic and

security cooperation, the president remarked. "We want noticeable progress in bilateral collaboration, as both nations have common opportunities and challenges."

In a statement from his office, the president said the Afghan government -- mindful of the ground realities -- had always advocated for a political settlement of issues.

"We want to increase the number of customs offices along the border with Iran to enhance people's movements, curb the smuggling of drugs and other illegal substances and mount pressure on those involved in organised crime," he added.

According to the statement, the president emphasised the listing of problems being faced by Afghan refugees in Iran and called for their gradual resolution.

For his part, Fazli said: "We have cordial and brotherly relations with Afghanistan. And our country remains committed to cooperation with Afghanistan in future." Any threat to Afghanistan, in fact, represented a threat to Iran as well, Fazli added. (Pajhwok)

(11) Omar Asked

Mullah Omar voiced his regrets over Pakistan's problems resulting from Taliban policies.

If Islamabad did not like those policies, the Taliban leader suggested, Pakistan might bring in weapons and begin shelling Kandahar, the military dictator told Pickering.

Asked by Musharraf to engage with the Taliban, Pickering said the US had been in contact with the insurgent movement at multiple venues on repeated occasions -- Washington, New York and Islamabad.

The American diplomat said Pakistan being the strongest supporter of the Taliban was of particular concern to the US. "This presented us with the anomaly of a good friend being the best friend of our worst enemy."

Washington understood why Gen Musharraf did not want to go to Kandahar without being able to bring back concrete results, the official said. "But it was important that he recognise that the Bin Laden issue was eating away at our relationship." (Pajhwok)

(12) Public Praises

a safe environment for both local residents and visitors.

However, analysts and residents alike said that if security could be stepped up to such a degree for Thursday and Friday's summit, then surely security measures of this sort could and should be the norm.

"We would be happy if the security is maintained in our city as it is today so that people do not live in fear and chaos," a resident in Kabul told TOLONews on Friday.

This was in line with the common thread that emerged from the RECCA summit, that a stable Afghanistan would not only benefit the entire region but it would also bolster investment, development and tourism, which would pave the way for a strong and resilient economy.

"This [RECCA] summit conveys a positive message and nourishes hope that SOM will also be conducted in good manner so that we can convey a positive message," an Afghan businesswoman Najla Habib said.

One lawmaker in turn said that no one can deny the ability of the Afghan security forces, who have proven their ability to provide a safe environment during such occasions. However, he said that this should become the norm and that security of this nature should be carried through to other cities as well. (Tolonews)

(13) Peace Impossible

to former president Hamid Karzai on tribal affairs, told Pajhwok Afghan News during an interview that Afghanistan's military, political and economic situations were not good amid a recent spike in insecurities and clashes. He said Afghanistan's situation turned from bad to worse as a result of clear interferences by

neighbouring countries and further worsened due to a number of problems at home.

Massoud said differences over national issues had contributed well to the deteriorated situation of the country.

About the peace process, he said the foundation of this process had not been laid properly because those with enough experience and sincerity to work for peace were denied membership of the High Peace Council.

Massoud, the incumbent head of the Jihadi Council in central Logar province, said the HPC had failed to produce any results and had no achievement so far.

Also head of the Maseed and Wazir tribal council, Massoud said peace could not be achieved in the absence of a strong national will and until intellectuals were involved.

The Taliban government and the Taliban held their first formal peace talks near the Pakistani capital Islamabad on July 7 but the second round was postponed after the announced death of Taliban's supreme leader Mullah Muhammad Omar. (Pajhwok)

(14) Blaze Guts

besides causing \$3.5 million losses to shopkeepers, he said.

Apparently shell-shocked, one affected shopkeeper Sher Ali said his garments and cosmetics and boutique worth \$100,000 had been burnt.

He accused the local authorities of failing to control the blaze in time. Prompt action would have prevented the losses, he believed, asking the government for compensation.

They had sought the assistance from the fire departments of Takhar and Baghlan provinces and controlled the fire at around 11:30pm, local officials said. (Pajhwok)

(15) Regional Trade

Presidential Palace and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)'s office were present at the conference. Representatives of around 30 countries and international organisations are also taking part in the regional summit the agenda of which include ambitious regional energy projects like CASA-1000 and TAPI and enhancing regional economic cooperation.

Hajjo also said the revival of Silk Road, Lapis Lazuli Transit Corridor, Chabahar Port in Iran, Afghanistan-China-Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Iran and Afghanistan-Tajikistan-Turkmenistan railroads, and better jobs for Afghan. (Pajhwok)

(16) SOM Should

According to economists, the next meeting of SOM is scheduled next year in the Belgian capital Brussels in which delegates will review the continued international aid to Afghanistan.

In today's meeting, the Afghan officials briefed representatives of the international community attending the meeting on a number of areas it has worked on such as good governance, fighting corruption, protection of human rights, women empowerment and economic development.

It is hoped that international delegates might pledge further aid to Afghanistan after reviewing measures taken by the National Unity Government to rebuild the country.

"The important issue is that the government should benefit from the meeting and attend the next meeting in 2016 with more achievements," deputy head of Rights and Justice Party, Moeen Marastyal, said.

The SOM conference is the first such meeting with donors to take place in Afghanistan following the inauguration of the National Unity Government at the end of last year. (Tolonews)

(17) Woman, 3

during the clash, he acknowledged, saying the fight was still underway and reinforcements had arrived at the scene. Eight injured civilians and eight security personnel were brought to the hospital where a woman died of her serious

wounds, the Civil Hospital chief, Dr. Asadullah Fazli, said, adding the rest of the injured were in stable condition.

A rocket fired by insurgents hit his brother's house, killing his brother's wife and their three sons, Attaullah, who brought the victims to the civil hospital, said.

His newly constructed house was destroyed in the attack, a lecturer at Laghman University Abdul Manan Safi said, adding his family was not living in the house. (Pajhwok)

(18) Sprayed

lah, death to the interior minister, long live national unity". They saw no reason for the omissions.

Anwarulhaq Ahadi said mentioning Afghan and Islam words in the electronic ID cards was important.

Calling the national unity government a deal-based arrangement, Ahadi told the protestors: "The incumbent rulers would not give you your right until you mount pressure on it."

He criticised the Presidential Palace for widening its distance from the people and said, "I am ready for every sacrifice to defend our nationality. The government would not do anything until we bring pressure on it, so get united and bring pressure on the illegal government." He said the people did not value officials who did not respect their nationality. (Pajhwok)

(19) Afghan

around the globe for 2015 due to his activities and struggles regarding peace in Afghanistan, India, Uganda, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo DRC, South Africa, Tibet and Nepal.

Yasar Ahmadzai, also an employee of the Democracy International (DI), a freelance journalist, civil activists and peace builder has more than 10 years of experiences in the sphere of conflict resolution, reconciliation, peace building and community change activities in Afghanistan, India, Rwanda, and Nepal. (Pajhwok)

(20) Germany

Africa and Turkey, respectively, and which have long coastlines that make it easier for refugees to touch land. Those two countries also happen to be the two most indebted countries in the European Union relative to the respective size of their economies. (Xinhua)

(21) Clinton

Clinton contained top-secret information.

On Friday, Clinton again insisted that she treated classified material seriously and had never exchanged emails that were marked classified through her private email system.

"We dealt with classified material on a totally different system," Clinton said. "I dealt with it in person or on secure phone lines. (Xinhua)

(22) US, S. Arabia

U.S. media said King Salman's visit took place as Saudi Arabia seeks assurances from the U.S. that the Iran nuclear deal comes with an effort to check Iran's regional ambitions.

According to the joint statement, the two countries also agreed on continue military cooperation in confronting ISIL and "heightened cooperation on counter-terrorism, maritime security, cybersecurity, and ballistic missile defense." (Xinhua)

(23) Pakistan

rity adviser Sartaj Aziz in his day-long visit to Kabul on Friday reiterated the country's commitment to facilitating an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process. Aziz met Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and other leaders to explore ways to review the peace talks that were deadlocked after Mullah Omar's death was confirmed by the Taliban last month. (Xinhua)