

### (1) Belt and Road...

enjoying close relations, had been connected for the past 2000 years through the Silk Road, Duo added. Afghanistan could play an important role in terms of China's security, he believed.

"Afghanistan is a neighbor of China and it needs assistance, the Chinese government has developed a policy for continued aid to Afghanistan," he said.

Danish commended China's ancient civilisation, political stability and strong leadership. The second largest economic power in the world, China was distinguished country, he said. The two countries could connect three continents though the BRI, he said. Bamyan has a total of eight sites, including the Buddha statues, and seven others, already registered as world heritage by UNESCO.

Similarly, Bamyan's sister province Gansu has seven historical sites registered by UNESCO. However, the heritage in Afghanistan faces preservation challenges. (Pajhwok)

### (2) Ghani Orders...

According to ARG Palace, the Second Deputy Chief Executive Eng. Mohammad Khan also shared his recommendations and views regarding the improvement of Ghazni's situation. (KP)

### (3) U.N. Concerned Over...

Radmanish, a defense ministry spokesman confirmed civilian casualties during a joint operation by Afghan and U.S. forces that involved air support, but gave no details. He said an investigation was underway.

In a statement on Monday, the U.S. military in Kabul said U.S. helicopters supporting an Afghan army operation in Kapisa came under fire from a pro-government militia that had fired in error, and returned fire in self-defense, accidentally wounding six militia members. "We have no indication of non-combatant casualties," it said. The reports underlined one of the problems facing Gen. Scott Miller, the new U.S. commander in Afghanistan who took up his post this month and must balance the need to pressure the Taliban with the need to avoid civilian casualties.

United Nations data shows a jump of 52 percent in the number of civilians killed or wounded in air strikes in the first six months of the year. The U.N. said 149 civilians were killed and 204 wounded in air attacks in the year's first half, with women and children comprising more than half the 353 casualties.

Since the figures were reported in July, the U.N. said it had recorded increasing numbers of civilian casualties from air strikes. (Reuters)

### (4) Rabbani Stresses...

The conference would take stock of advances in the area of regional connectivity -- the most notable achievements of the national unity government -- over the past four years, he added.

Rabbani added economic ventures such as the CASA 1000, TAPI and a five-nation railway project, which were once just a concept, were turning into reality.

The minister claimed air corridors with India, Kazakhstan and Turkey had already led to a substantial increase in Afghanistan's exports. Additional air corridors with other regional countries are being developed. In early December, the 8th ministerial meeting of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process will be held in Turkey -- an opportunity to follow up on Geneva commitments related to specific economic regional projects.

"We look forward to renewed commitments of the international community to further elevate the economic cooperation agenda to new heights, under our Afghan-led RECA and Heart of Asia Processes and other initiatives," Rabbani continued. In Geneva, Rabbani said: "We will get a picture of the extent to which our international partners adjusted the nature of assistance delivery so that its impact is more visible and tangible in helping to improve the lives of our people."

The situation in Afghanistan had evolved over the past several years and has the capacity and role of the government in assuming leadership of the security, economic and governance pillars.

He believed the new phase of cooperation between Afghanistan and the international community would be of special importance in the context of our long-term partnership.

The temporary ceasefire with the Taliban was only a glimpse of hope, but a development nonetheless, he noted, Afghanistan remained far from its intended objective, he explained.

"Geneva is an opportunity to integrate regional and international support behind our peace plan, presented in Kabul in February. We welcome the support of all partners for our peace efforts through various initiatives..." (Pajhwok)

### (5) Khogyani elders...

including women and children in Shirzad district alone over the last one month.

He said the government should stop the overnight operations or it would lose public support.

Aziz Khogyani, a civil society activist and tribal elder from Khogyani district, said dozens of civilians had been killed by the 02 Unit in Khogyani, Shirzad and Hesarak districts in one month.

He said the forces also destroyed people's houses and caused financial losses to locals while many families were forced to leave their areas and displace to urban areas for their safety.

"In the past, we left our home due to Daesh and Taliban brutalities, but now we are leaving houses due to the 02 Unit oppression, if these operations continued, then we would boycott the government and then the public would decide whether to join Daesh or Taliban," he said.

Ibarhaim Zaman, another tribal elder, said the government by conducting such operations was compelling people to uprise or join insurgent groups. He said tribal elders, their children and women as well as Islamic scholars were not safe in their areas.

A civil society activist, Noor Agha Zwak, also voiced on the government and the international community to stop operations of the 02 Unit of the National Directorate of Security (NDS).

He said if the government did not listen to their demand, it would widen the distance between the regime and the people.

Ahmad Zahid Zahidi, who lost seven relatives to night raids of the 02 Unit Special Forces, said: "Two of my brother-in-laws, my father-in-law, my two uncles and two cousins one of them a student of Kabul Medical University were killed in a single night."

The tribal elders after their press conference staged a brief protest, carrying photographs of the victims of night raids. They condemned the operations.

On the other hand, Nangarhar governor's spokesman, Attaullah Khogyani, said they had received complaints from local people about night raids and the issue had been shared with the president.

Officials of the 02 Unit declined to talk to media.

However, NDS department in Kabul said Special Forces never conducted arbitrary operations and police and prosecutors always accompanied them.

The source said Taliban insurgents used civilian houses as their bastions to attack Afghan forces from there. (Pajhwok)

### (6) II Afghan...

expressed his pleasure over the auction of eleven Afghan cricket players in the UEA T10 cricket league and added the tournament would further improve Afghan players' abilities. He said during the league the Afghan players will stay with international experienced coaches and benefit from their experience. (Pajhwok)

### (7) India-Afghanistan...

has succeeded in charting a new path towards a brighter future in Afghanistan. I hope this event has raised

your spirits and that you realize that amid all the challenges there are real opportunities."

Now in its second year, the event included approximately 200 businesses and industry leaders, including women entrepreneurs from Afghanistan, showcasing top-quality products, services, and business opportunities in agriculture, energy, health, education, mining, heavy industry, and luxury goods. This year, over 166 confirmed deals and more than 600 memorandums of understanding were signed.

Other highlights from the event include various partnership announcements between the Government of Afghanistan and private enterprises and between Indian and Afghan businesses, by Afghanistan's Acting Minister of Finance Dr. Mohammad Humayon Qayoumi, and the brand launch of "Afghan Treasures," which showcases the best of Afghanistan's Silk Road heritage. USAID also hosted a series of learning panel discussions on "Doing Business in Afghanistan".

USAID planned to host another trade show in 2019. (Pajhwok)

### (8) Abdullah Renews...

participating that he is representing a country and a society that has undergone 40 years of conflict and has suffered as a result of mainly external strife, imposed on us against our people's will and wishes.

"Almost every theme and core issue addressed by this Summit fits the conditions faced by Afghanistan and the impact they have had on three generations of Afghans," he said. "It is therefore befitting and of critical importance to me and my compatriots to focus on concepts such as reconciliation and attaining a just and comprehensive peace," he added.

He also said that "Our message is clear: we will defend our country and our people's lives and rights as part of the constitutional order, but we stand ready to talk and negotiate with the reconcilable armed opposition who renounces violence and terror, and believes in a united, democratic, peaceful and economically prosperous future."

"I believe that this is the spirit conveyed by inspiring global role models such as Nelson Mandela, and I believe that it is part of the legacy that this body and each country carries as part of their commitments and responsibilities," he pointed.

This comes after the Presidential Palace said on Monday that President Ashraf Ghani would not attend the United Nations General Assembly. The president's spokesman Haroon Chakhansuri wrote on his twitter page that Ghani was too busy with issues such as elections and peace and would not be able to attend the general assembly.

"President Ghani decided to skip the UNGA because of critical issues such as elections and the peace process being at stake," Chakhansuri wrote.

The Presidential Palace's remarks however come in the wake of media reports, including one by Pajhwok Afghan News, that Ghani canceled his trip because US President Donald Trump refused to meet him on the sidelines of the general assembly.

A number of international affairs analysts meanwhile said Trump is reluctant to meet Ghani because he feels Ghani has not contributed enough to implement the US's strategy.

"Trump is unhappy with Ghani, because he has not played a good role in implementing their (US) strategy," international affairs analyst Omar Safi said. (Tolo news)

### (9) Nowshera...

much of their trade to Chabahar and Bandar Abbas ports in Iran due to lack of required facilities at the Peshawar dry port and increase in transport fares for transporting goods from Karachi to Afghanistan.

He called for removing flaws in the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade to put an end to the Indian dominance of Afghan markets. (Pajhwok)

### (10) Asfandyar...

Asfandyar voiced his displeasure over the reaction of certain elements in Pakistan to the prime ministerial

announcement of granting citizenship to Afghan refugees.

Afghan refugees, the victim of the strategic policy of great powers and Pakistan, had been denied their right, he lamented. "The third generation of the Afghan refugees is living in Pakistan and should be given citizenship."

Citizenship by birth was granted across the globe, but either Pakistan had flaws in its system or a specific ethnic group opposed this universal right for Afghan refugees, he remarked. (Pajhwok)

### (11) Mattis All Praise...

coalition troops continued to train, advise and assist their Afghan partners. The NATO-led forces were adjusting tactics and bringing more support to certain areas, he added.

American and coalition officials constantly review operations in Afghanistan, Mattis said. The reviews look at casualties, numbers of Afghan troops trained, numbers employed and more. (Pajhwok)

### (12) Lack of Female...

observers from overseeing the elections.

Impendent Election Commission (IEC) would monitor its personnel and observers to ensure transparent election

Free and Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan (FEFA) head, Yousuf Rashid, said he planned to have 9,500 observers including 35 percent of them women. But finding female election observers in districts and remote areas was a difficult job, he said. He said they faced problems like insecurity, traditions and family restrictions in hiring female observers. Lack of financial resources was another problem election watchdogs faced as they could not pay salaries to women to observe the election process, Rashid added.

He said FEFA was paying \$50 to each election observer working in the organization for seven days including the Election Day.

A problem in the past election was that IEC had to task men in some specific polling stations that were supposed to be managed by women, he said.

FEFA employs people from area where election process is ongoing, so they are able to simply visit polling stations on the Election Day, he added.

"The international community's dying down enthusiasm towards funding the election process and the IEC's lack of emphasis on election observation make the upcoming polls less transparent compared to the past elections. There will be a very limited number of election observers," Rashid said.

Transparent Election Foundation of Afghanistan (TEFA) head, Mohammad Naim Ayubzada, also said women hesitated from performing duty as election observers in remote areas.

"Insecurity, cultural restrictions and social problems as well as death threats to female observers are issues that make it impossible to employ women as observers in many areas, he said.

"The IEC has not yet announced how many and in which areas only women polling stations will be set up, if the commission employs female workers in polling stations, then we would be able to have female observers," he said.

"This problem is not confined only to the election observers, the IEC is also unable to open special polling stations for women voters in many areas of the country," he said.

IEC would monitor its personnel and observers to ensure transparent election

Badghisi added efforts were underway to recruit female teachers on the Election Day but most of districts were without women teachers -- an immense challenge for the panel.

Abdul Qadeem Karokhel, head of the IEC branch in Kabul's Khak-i-jabar district, told Pajhwok they had no female teacher. Only two female teachers, driven by a sense of patriotism, were going to the district from Kabul daily but they might not do so on the election day, he said.

Karokhel added there were 14 voter centers for women, where 54 female staffers would be needed on the election day.

A resident of Maidan Wardak province, who wished to go unnamed, said that she wanted to work as an election observer due to her economic problems, but she would never go out of the provincial capital for that job due to security problems.

"Except Behsud, all other districts of this province are unstable, I don't believe there will be elections, I will never go to districts or leave Maidan Shahr city for monitoring elections," she said.

She said her family also did not allow her to work outside the provincial capital.

Huma Ahmadi, a female candidate in the Wolesi Jirga elections, said a limited number of female election observers would negatively impact the polls and women would not be able to vote for candidates of their choice. She said female voters did not go to polling stations managed by men only.

He said insecurity was another reason women showed no interest in working as observers while families too did not allow their women and girls to do such jobs.

However, IEC deputy spokesman, Zabihullah Sadat, said security organs had assured them of security of 5,100 polling stations and 21,000 areas and there was no problem for female election observers.

He said election oversight institutes could hire female observers in areas where election affairs were managed by female IEC staff.

But Sadat did not say how many polling centers would be managed by women across the country.

The impact of limited female election observers

FEFA head, Yousuf Rashid, said limited number of female election observers would negatively impact the polls and it would lead to use of 'women's proxy votes'.

In last elections, some reports said that women did not go to polling stations but their votes were polled by men.

TEFA head Ayubzada also said women would not go to polling stations managed by men and that would leave a negative impact on elections. Shahzada Khanum, 60, a resident of the capital of Maidan Wardak province, said: "Women cast their votes only in polling stations which are managed by women, it is because women know better the language of women and they get proper direction there as to how to use their votes, but we cannot vote in areas which are controlled by men, our men also do not let us go there."

Ayubzada said lack of women observers would affect transparency in elections.

Sadat also agreed lack of female observers would affect the elections. (Pajhwok)

### (13) 6 Ghazni...

be under security threats and is likely to fall," he said.

Some other residents expressed similar views.

However, local officials said Taliban only controlled three districts of the province.

Governor's spokesman, Mohammad Arif Noori, said the Taliban controlled only Ajiristan, Khwaja Omari and Nawa districts.

"We have the ability to recapture these districts, but we have lack security personnel to keep them from falling again, the recruitment process for more forces is underway and operations to recapture these districts would be launched once the recruitment process completed," Noori said. Local security officials refused to comment about the issue.

The Taliban confirmed capturing some districts of Ghazni during their attack on the city.

However, the group's spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, did not provide the number and names of districts they control.

Nawa district of Ghazni has been with the Taliban over the past 16 years. (Pajhwok)