

(1) Afghan President

efforts to initiate talks with the insurgents.

The president's office said on Tuesday the militants had crossed a "red line" and peace would have to be won on the battle field.

But Ghani raised the possibility of reconciliation with some militants in a speech to Islamic clerics in Kabul.

"Those who are responsible for this tragedy and do not want peace, the door of peace is closed to them," Ghani said.

"Those who accept peace, they will witness that the nation will embrace them. But there is a clear difference, our commitment to bringing peace does not mean we will sit quietly and won't retaliate."

"We will dig them out from any hiding holes."

Afghanistan's government has made such vows for years but the insurgency appears ever more resilient. Peace efforts have been made in fits and starts but without progress.

U.S. President Donald Trump appeared to dash any hope for peace efforts on Monday when he condemned the Taliban for the Kabul violence and rejected the idea of talks.

Trump last year ordered an increase in U.S. troops, air strikes and other assistance to Afghan forces, to force the Taliban to negotiate.

But his comments on Monday suggested he saw a military victory over the Taliban, an outcome that U.S. military and diplomatic officials said could not be achieved with the resources and manpower he had authorized.

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan said in Kabul on Tuesday the U.S. strategy had not changed and the aim was still to press the Taliban militarily to convince them that they had to negotiate.

The Taliban are fighting to drive out foreign troops and re-establish their form of strict Islamic law.

Afghanistan has long accused neighboring Pakistan of failing to act against Taliban plotting violence from safe havens on the Pakistani side of the border. On Friday, Ghani accused Pakistan of being the "Taliban center" and said he was waiting for Pakistani action.

Pakistan denies helping the Taliban and a Pakistani delegation led by Foreign Secretary Tehmina Janjua visited Kabul on Saturday with the aim of fostering cooperation. Janjua called for both sides to stop the "blame game", Pakistani media reported.

The United States said last month it would cut security aid to Pakistan, complaining it was not doing enough to fight militants sheltering there. (Reuters)

(2) Pence, Ghani

and strong determination.

The statement added Ghani thanked the US VP for his sentiments and continued American assistance to Afghanistan in various fields.

Ghani likened the second consecutive terror attack in Kabul to the September 11 assault in the US. But such assaults further strengthened Kabul's resolve to defeat terrorist groups, he said.

The president added: "Now is the time the Afghan and Muslim Taliban denounce the attacks and those who don't do this are terrorists. The Afghan government would never negotiate with them." (Pajhwok)

(3) High-Level Pak

and counter-terrorism cooperation.

After the Pakistan army chief's meeting with President Ghani in October, five working groups are being established to address bilateral concerns.

On Friday, the Foreign Office hoped the groups would boost cooperation in different areas, including security intelligence-sharing, military, economy, trade and transit, repatriation of refugees and connectivity.

"We believe the true enemy of the Afghan people is the endless cycle of violence. This conclusion is informed by our four-decade experience of facing blowback from instability in Afghanistan," the FO spokesman said.

A key agenda item is said to be the repatriation of about 2.7 million Afghan refugees to their home. "Our refugees' policy is focused on voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees to their homeland.

"Based on this policy, the Ministry of Saffron being the lead ministry is engaged with all stakeholders and government of Afghanistan for voluntary repatriation," said the spokesman. (Pajhwok)

(4) 47 Militants

militants in Andar and Deyak districts of the eastern Ghazni province since Friday morning, according to provincial government spokesman Aref Nuri.

During the ongoing operations backed by aircraft, Nuri added that nine more militants and nine security personnel

had sustained injuries.

Similarly, the security forces in operations against Islamic State (IS) group in the eastern Nangarhar province, have killed 13 armed fighters and injured several others in Achin and HaskaMinda districts on Friday, spokesman for provincial government Attaullah Khogiani said

Taliban and IS groups are the two brutal fighting forces that have challenged the government in Afghanistan.

Security officials including Defense Ministry spokesman General Dawlat-Waziri have said that the government forces would continue to mount pressure on anti-government militants in winter to weaken the insurgents ahead of spring and summer commonly known as fighting season in Afghanistan. (Xinhua)

(5) Refugees Deported

danger," said Nasir, using a pseudonym to protect his safety.

"It was a big decision to make. Leaving everything behind in Afghanistan, even my mother, was too difficult."

Shortly after his father's death, his brother was also attacked by a group of unknown men. It was then that Nasir decided to flee Afghanistan.

But fewer than three years later, he was back on Afghan soil.

He claims immigration officials in Finland pressured him to sign some forms, which he did not fully understand, essentially authorising his deportation.

In recent months, European countries have tightened borders and asylum policies, resulting in large groups of refugees being pushed back to Afghanistan - a volatile country where civilian casualties are at record levels.

"About nine months have passed since I returned from Finland to Kabul, where I work as a shopkeeper," Nasir told Al Jazeera. "Only my mother and my uncle's family know that I was deported. No one else, as my life is still in danger."

Recalling his brief time in Finland, Nasir said he felt unwanted but knew he was safer than in Afghanistan.

"I remember once I wanted to buy something from a supermarket, and even though I had money to pay the shopkeeper, he refused to sell it to me. "That bothered me a bit but at least my life was safe there, so I let it go."

According to Eurostat, the European Union's statistical office, as of September 2017, Afghans accounted for the largest group of asylum seekers to the bloc, with 170,045 applications pending approval.

Ineligible applicants are sent back to their home country or a "safe third country", which is expected to provide sufficient protection.

In 2015, 33 percent of first-instance applications by Afghan asylum seekers were rejected, according to Eurostat.

By the first three quarters of 2017, more than half of first-instance applications - or 52 percent - were rejected. (Aljazeera)

(6) Investigation

December 2017 but no one had so far complained about it so far, he said, adding a delegation would be sent to the area soon for investigations.

The video has sparked off anger among government circles. The Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) asked Takhar officials to investigate the issue thoroughly.

In a statement, IDLG head Abdul MatinBek said: "The local administration is responsible for following the court ruling and bringing the perpetrators to justice."

Rubat is located 25 kilometers from the ChahAab district centre. The unstable town shares a border with the Shahar-i-Buzurg district of northeastern Badkshan province. (Pajhwok)

(7) License Extension

"According to the memorandum of understanding, the municipality is obliged to renew license of those taxpayers owing in the past subject to their tax clearance" he added.

"With the implementation of the MoU, tax evasion will be avoided" said Mr. Abdullah Habibzai, Mayor of Kabul. "After this, the tax-payers should pay their taxes in accordance with the laws and regulation at the given time in order to renew and obtain license, otherwise they will be denied access to license" he added.

It is worth mentioning that, the memorandum of understanding facilitates and speeds up the process of licensing and tax clearance, accurate statistics of tax-payers and identification of new categories of taxpayers, raise their level of compliance, enforce the same laws, increase the quality of service for citizens, simplifies the process of data sharing between the parties, saves costs and increase national revenues. (Pajhwok)

(8) Khost Poultry

was found in the chickens but the ministry maintained ban on the supply of

chickens to other provinces.

Dr. Naqibullah, former head of the agriculture department and specialist of livestock diseases said no influenza virus existed in Khost and the crow carcasses were poisoned.

He added he guaranteed that there was no virus in Khost, saying continued ban on the supply of chickens would create economic problems.

But Agriculture Department Director Saifullah Stanikzai said the type of influenza virus found in chickens was deadliest for birds and humans.

"Yesterday we sent died crow carcasses to Kabul for examination. We took serious steps to control the influenza and stop its spread to other birds and humans," he said.

The team from the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) dispatched samples taken from the birds to the animal diseases laboratory in Kabul and the tests showed the crows had died of influenza.

Jahangir Miakhel, the team leader, told Pajhwok Afghan News the influenza had been confirmed in the birds, but it was not known yet if the virus could infect other animals and humans.

He said researches were underway for further information, but serious heed should be paid to chicken meat produced in Khost. (Pajhwok)

(9) Firewood,

of Pakistani rice 2,000aafs.

Meanwhile, Noor Ahmad Khairkhwā, a tea seller in Kabul Mandavi, said a kilogram of Indonesian green tea cost 280aafs and the same amount of African black tea 300aafs -- same prices as last week's.

Ahmad WaliPanjsheri, who owns a grocery store in Dahn-i-Bagh area, sold a 49-kg bag of sugar for 1,800aafs, a 16-litre tin of ghee for 1,100aafs, a 50-kg sack of Kazakhstan flour for 1,180aafs, 24-kg Pakistani rice for 2,400aafs, a kilogram of green Indonesian tea for 300aafs and the same quantity of black African tea for 350aafs.

According to Sadaqat Money Exchange Service in Sara-I-Shahzada in Kabul, one US dollar accounted for 68.75aafs and 1,000 Pakistani rupees for 606aafs this week, against last week's rates of 69.10aafs and 610aafs respectively. (Pajhwok)

(10) Dand-I-Shahabuddin

promised them of any help.

He warned to continue protests if their voice was not listened.

A number of other people in the gathering had similar complaints.

Shamsul HaqBarakzai, a provincial council member, accused the local administration on negligence and said that he told relevant officials such operation were counterproductive.

"Only civilians suffered damage in these operations, the government is responsible to help displaced people with the support of charity organizations," he said.

Barakzai also said that the houses of a number of people were destroyed during the operation and he had shared the issue with local officials.

Governor's spokesman, Mahmud Haqmal, said that they would launch a survey of the destroyed houses soon.

He said that a committee was already appointed for the survey in consultation of the provincial council member, ShamsulHaqBarakzai.

"We would start our help with the people after this survey completed," Haqmal concluded.

Two weeks back, Afghan forces launched an operation against the Taliban in Dand Shahabuddin area Pul-I-Khumri where a number of civilian houses were also destroyed in bombardments. (Pajhwok)

(11) 5 Guards of a

political party and a senior advisor to the Chief Executive Officer, said that five of his office guards were killed and four others wounded in the attack.

He said that the attack on his office launched on 9pm Friday night and continued until today morning.

Malik termed as questionable negligence of the government, particularly Faryab administration for failing to protect people, saying security situation in Faryab, especially in Shering-Tagab district was worth concerning. Except the district center, all other areas are under the Taliban control and this district is under serious threat of collapse, he said.

A day earlier, Taliban also shot dead Amir Faizullah, a tribal elder in Shash Tapa area of SherinTagab district. (Pajhwok)

(12) Uruzgan Health

department was weak to the extent that it could not monitor or prevent fake doctors from operating.

Officials at the provincial public health department contended that they could not put hand on the quacks because they had the backing of powerful individuals and warlords.

Acting public health director Saifuddin Barak said there were persons who could not even write their names but they had opened clinics and were advising treatment to mostly illiterate people.

The director admitted stopping the quacks was beyond their ability because powerful individuals and warlords were behind them.

However, the provincial council rejected the public health director's remarks as an excuse to keep his job. Amir Mohammad Barakzai, the council head, said the public health department had so far not complained to the council about the issue.

He claimed the provincial council could cut short the hands of powerful individuals supporting the quacks. He alleged the public health department officials were complicit in the illegal practice and that was why the quacks openly operated. (Pajhwok)

(13) Peace Door no

Ghani said war is the only option against those who carried out such heinous crimes. But peace was in the interests of the nation, he said.

Ghani added that the issues discussed at Saturday's conference will be shared with the international community at the Kabul Process conference - which will be held later this month.

At Saturday's event, Mohammad Karim Khalili, the head of the High Peace Council, said a negotiations process is the only way to ensure enduring peace in Afghanistan.

He said people have consensus on two issues: the need for peace and reaching peace through an Afghan-led process.

He added that one of the reasons that people align themselves with the Taliban is because of shortcomings in government. He recommends government bring reforms so as to prevent people from joining militant groups.

Khalili stated that the HPC will start negotiations with anti-government armed militants who want to negotiate.

He commended the Afghan security forces for defending the country against threats but said a peace process was the only way to achieve lasting peace. (Tolnews)

(14) Key Issues to

Pakistan's stance that there was no military solution to the Afghan problem, Faisal said only an Afghan-led and owned peace process would ensure peace in the country.

He also said that Pakistan would continue to support efforts for peace in Afghanistan, but the Afghan government needed to reach a settlement with different Afghan groups.

Daily Times also quoted him as saying the endless cycle of violence in Afghanistan had and would add to the woes of the people of Afghanistan and also the Afghan refugees in Pakistan, who would not be able to return to their homes.

This comes just days after a high-ranking Afghan delegation visited Pakistan to discuss the spate of Taliban attacks on Kabul this month which left close to 150 people dead.

The delegation reportedly handed over evidence that the attacks had been planned in Pakistan.

Daily Times meanwhile reported that the foreign office said Pakistan had taken action against all terrorist groups.

Faisal rejected accusations of Pakistan supporting the Afghan Taliban and Haqqani Network, and said that Pakistan would not allow its land to be used against any of its neighbors.

He also said focus should be on eliminating safe havens of the TTP, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar in

Daily Times reported Pakistan had constructed 975 posts along its border with Afghanistan, while Afghanistan had built nearly 200 posts only, said Faisal. "Around 470 attacks were carried out in Pakistan from Afghanistan," he said. The spokesperson noted that the 27 suspects handed over to Afghan authorities recently were connected to the Afghan Taliban and Haqqani Network.

Last week however the Afghan government rejected these claims and said no prisoners had been handed over. (Tolnews)

(15) Two Women

for three years but he did not provide further information.

Meanwhile, NasimaArozo, the head of Sar-e-Pul's woman affairs department, said since the beginning of this solar year (March 2017), 40 women attempted to commit suicide while another four committed suicide. (Tolnews)

(16) Second Phase

doing so and they are threatened, and they cannot build factories here," said Mohammad Amiri, a factory owner, who has a facility in the second phase of the park.

Bagrami industry owners' association has meanwhile also called for basic services to be provided.

"First, a road should be built for us and then the water system should be built, electricity which is an important need, should be provided for us," said Mohammad Qasim, head of Bagrami industry owners' association.

"You can see, many factories here are ready to start operating," he said.

Previously, factory owners from Nangarhar and Herat complained about the slow pace of construction at industrial parks in the provinces.

Analyst say the merging of Afghanistan Investment Support Agency with the Ministry of Commerce and Industries has affected the pace of development at these industrial parks. (Tolnews)

(17) Water Scarcity

enough this time around. In the past, it would snow every winter four or five times. But this year, the snowfall has been scant," he said, referring to the wet spell at the weekend in Balkh.

Mohammad Anwar, hailing from Char-Bulak district, said the time for wheat cultivation on rain-fed land was over. Future snow and rainfall, therefore, would not be beneficial for rge crop, he argued.

"Wheat on rain-fed farms should have been cultivated earlier. When the weather gets hotter, plants should have grown up," he said, adding farmers were worried about a decline in yield. Agriculture Director Sirajuddin Mehraban confirmed to Pajhwok the wheat cultivated on rain-fed land in Balkh had not germinated yet.

He said they were still expecting rain and snowfall.

More rains and snowfall would prepare the ground for spring crops, the official thought, saying Balkh needed 400 cubic metres of water per second. Currently 34 cubic metres of water were provided in a second.

He termed the water shortage a big issue, stressing the need for government help in dealing with the situation. (Pajhwok)

North Korea Flouts Sanctions, Earning \$200 Mln from Banned Exports: UN

UNITED NATIONS - North Korea is flouting UN sanctions by exporting coal, iron, steel and other commodities banned under UN sanctions, earning nearly \$200 million in revenue last year, a UN report said Friday.

A UN panel of experts also found evidence of North Korea's ongoing military cooperation with Syria to develop its ballistic missile and chemical weapons programs, and with Myanmar.

North Korea "continued to export almost all the commodities prohibited in the resolutions, generating nearly \$200 million in revenue between January and September 2017," said the report by the experts seen by AFP.

Coal shipments were delivered to China, Malaysia, South Korea, Russia and Vietnam by ship using "a combination of multiple evasion techniques, routes and deceptive tactics," said the report.

The Security Council last year adopted a series of resolutions to tighten and expand exports bans aimed at cutting off revenue to North Korea's military programs. (AFP)

Trump Says Russia-Probe Memo Proves Bias; Dems Say No

WASHINGTON - President Donald Trump declassified a top-secret congressional memo Friday and suggested it proved the investigation of his presidential campaign and Russia was fatally flawed from the start.

Democrats said the document did nothing to clear him or his campaign, and the FBI called the memo inaccurate and incomplete.

Butting heads just as they had before the memo's release, Trump and his critics stuck to the positions they had staked out in the weeks leading up to the hotly disputed release of the memo prepared by Republicans on the House intelligence committee.

The memo makes their case - and Trump's - that politically motivated abuses in the early stages of the FBI's investigation made it worse than worthless.

The Democrats, having none of it, said the four-page memo merely cherry-picks Republican talking points in an effort to smear law enforcement and undercut the current federal investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller. Rep. Adam Schiff, the committee's top Democrat, said the GOP document "mischaracterizes highly sensitive classified information" and its release "will do long-term damage to the intelligence community and our law enforcement agencies." (AP)