

(1) EU, Afghanistan ...

a vital new framework for partnership between Afghanistan and the European Union. The agreement built on mutual commitments to stability and development at various global conferences.

"It also formalises our partnership and provides an opportunity to strengthen friendship and cooperation between Afghanistan and the EU by conducting regular political dialogue on various fronts," he remarked.

The proposed dialogue will focus support for peace, security and development in Afghanistan and the region. "I thank Ms. Mogherini, on behalf of the EU, for opening up a new chapter in the Afghanistan-EU relationship."

CAPD is the first contractual relationship between EU and Afghanistan and establishes the legal framework for EU-Afghanistan cooperation. It confirms the EU's commitment to Afghanistan's future development during the "Decade of Transformation" (2015-2024).

The two sides will also hold talks on human rights, in particular the rights of women and children. The agreement will provide the basis for developing a mutually beneficial relationship in an increasing range of areas such as rule of law, health, rural development, education, science and technology, actions to combat corruption, money laundering, the financing of terrorism, organised crime and narcotics. (Pajhwok)

(2) 'Minimizing ...

constituencies were changed, it would be injustice to people, suggesting each province to be a single electoral constituency.

Ayubzada said the IEC had decided to minimize electoral zones in large provinces, a decision he called a mistake. He said security situation was unstable in a number of Kabul, Herat and Nangarhar districts. He hoped the IEC would consider TEFA suggestions in drafting its plans. Yousuf Rashid, executive director of Fair and Free Elections Foundation of Afghanistan (FEFA), also said the ground for elections could not be paved even if the government approved IEC's plans.

He said IEC's plan to divide major provinces into several electoral districts was impossible to be implemented as the plan had both opponents and supporters in the government. "Even if IEC suggestions are approved, it would be impossible for the commission to hold elections next year because registration of all voters would take several months," he said. (Pajhwok)

(3) Ibrahim Blasts...

countries, particularly Afghanistan, and we need cooperation from India on improving lives of our people and security in political areas," Ibrahim said. (Pajhwok)

(4) Efforts Initiated...

foothold of Daesh in the province, urging the government to launch a crackdown on the dreaded outfit.

Abdullah thanked Kunar residents for supporting their own security forces, saying the government had initiated efforts to stop the rocket attacks. The chief of army staff was in Nangarhar, closely tracking the issue.

The CEO promised reforms and other necessary steps to curb Daesh activities in the province. The ongoing year would be problematic in terms of security; but Afghan forces had complete preparedness, he concluded. (Pajhwok)

(5) Contracts for...

21 provinces will generate

job opportunities for more than 86,000 people and benefit more than 208,000 people directly or indirectly, Durrani said.

The minister said 712 development projects costing more than three billion afghanis were implemented across the country this year.

His ministry provided work opportunities for around 67,000 rural women through rural industries program and was trying to extend the program to another 15 provinces next year.

Half of development councils are women who are given a 20 percent participation in implementation of development projects. (Pajhwok)

(6) Afghanistan...

Kandahar, Helmand and other parts of the country -- as well as in the Sindh province of Pakistan -- showed there were no good or bad terrorists, he stated.

"Terrorism is a major contemporary challenge and combating it needs a long-term commitment." Understanding the various emerging manifestations of terrorism might be difficult, he added.

Ghani went on to allege that terror financing weakened states on the one hand and administrative corruption encouraged the phenomenon on the other.

"We can succeed in fighting against terrorism," he said, adding it was necessary that countries using terrorism as a tool of achieving their political aims be isolated for effectively battling the scourge.

The Munich Security Conference is an annual event on international security policy and has been taking place since 1963. It is the world's largest gathering of its kind. The MSC is known for providing an open and informal platform for allies --and adversaries -- to meet. (Pajhwok)

(7) Govt. Slammed ...

was around \$50 million. We do not know what happened to the money as the government seems to be reluctant to give us the details," said Khanzaman Omarkhail, AACN chairman.

Meanwhile, the ministry of mines and petroleum has said that they will disclose the exact amount once the Indian consortium announces its stance on the project.

"The government will act on the bank guarantee once the Indian consortium declared its position," said Zabiullah Sarwari, spokesman to ministry of mines and petroleum. (Tolonews)

(8) Kabul will ...

and said the Afghan government usually takes immediate decisions and does not study issues deeply or consider all dimensions.

"We suffer from Pakistan and rely on India. Currently that good relationship with India does not benefit us. So this policy is not good. Also, we know that Iran interferes in our internal affairs, so if we end our relationships with Iran because of America it would also not be a good politics," Entizar Khadim, a political analyst said.

In recent years Kabul-Islamabad relationships have repeatedly deteriorated over fighting terrorists. At times Western officials supported Kabul viewpoints in this regard.

Recently a number of American analysts said in a report that if Pakistan continues supporting terrorists, Washington's aid to Pakistan ought to be stopped and the international community should recognize Pakistan as a supporter of terrorists. (Tolonews)

(9) Scores of Afghan ...

including 19 Afghan nation-

als, were rounded up in different areas of Kasur, Pattoki and Chuniar. The Afghans were held in Pattoki and Kasur areas of Din Gar and Niaz Nagar. Another 42 Afghans were arrested during a midnight search operation in various parts of Sialkot. Rangpura police arrested 34 Afghan nationals residing illegally near the Jinnah Stadium bridge. The cantonment police arrested three Afghans and Hajipura police five. (Pajhwok)

(10) Above 60pc ...

over the past three to four years included businessmen and shopkeepers.

The mayor also said about 20,000 seedlings would be planted in Kunduz City and flower pots would be placed at academic areas, he added. He said the baby pants would be preserved under an organized programme and efforts were being made to establish a few recreational park next year.

Omarkhel asked Kunduz residents to keep care of the plants and pay taxes. "If people want services from us, they should be supportive. We don't have enough vehicles, people should pay taxes in order we carry out our works." (Pajhwok)

(11) Thousands...

Sinda Kani, Miyaji Baba and Shah-i-Bagh areas.

He said around 2,000 families had fled and eight people had been injured in the mentioned areas, asking the government to respond to the attacks.

Another protestor said if the government lacked the ability to protect the country's soil it should allow the nation to respond.

Guljan, another protestor, criticized lawmakers from Nangarhar province over not raising the issue on the National Assembly's floor.

The protestors urged the countrymen to carry out similar protests in order their voices were heard by the international community.

The Nangarhar governor's spokesman, Attaullah Khogyani, the Afghan military was fully prepared to respond to the cross border shelling.

Khogyani said the army chief arrived in Nangarhar on a surprise visit and discussed the issue with members of the provincial council. The public representatives preferred a peaceful and diplomatic resolution, the gubernatorial spokesman said. (Pajhwok)

(12) Heavy Rains...

are also on the verge of destruction.

Naz Bibi is one of the IDPs who fled her native area in Lashkar Gah, the capital of southern Helmand province because of war and sought refuge in the capital Kabul.

"There is war, my husband and daughter were killed, I had everything there, but I now have nothing in Kabul," said Naz Bibi.

Naz Bibi was also wounded during the war in Helmand and now tries to survive with her seven children.

The Majority of the IDPs living in Kabul come from Kandahar, Zabul and Helmand provinces. They sought refuge in Kabul in a bid to escape wars, but the majority of IDP children have no access to social services and education. (Tolonews)

(13) Snowfall,...

children, lost their lives due to chilly weather and snowfall in Jawzjan's neighboring Saripul province, Aziz Rahman Aymaq the director of Natural Disaster Management Authority in the province, has confirmed.

Similarly, four more people have confirmed dead and eight others injured in the northern Badakhshan prov-

ince over the period, according local officials.

More than 150 people had lost their lives due to snowfall and chilly weather elsewhere in the war-ravaged Afghanistan, some two weeks ago. (Xinhua)

(14) Nangarhar ...

Mena district over the past one week inflicted heavy casualties to the militant group.

Chief of Army Staff Gen. Qadam Shah Shahim during a news conference on Saturday said that nearly 2,000 IS militants have been so far eliminated across the country. (Pajhwok)

(15) Herat Bus...

companies concerned would be referred to the attorney's office, he warned.

About two days back, a traffic accident left 30 people dead on the Kandahar-Herat highway in southern Helmand province. Also on Saturday, 35 were killed and wounded in a collision in Ghazni province. (Pajhwok)

(16) 11 Militants...

militants in a crackdown against insurgents in all the four provinces and tribal areas of the country on Friday, after a suicide attack on Thursday evening left 88 people killed and over 300 injured. (Xinhua)

(17) 5 Civilians ...

one victim step on a pressure-plate IED along a road in neighboring Nangarhar province.

More than 3,490 civilians were killed and over 7,920 others injured in conflict-related incidents across Afghanistan last year, according to figures released by the UN mission in the country.

The IED explosions are the third largest cause of civilian casualties in Afghanistan, following ground engagements and suicide attacks. (Xinhua)

(18) Trump Must ...

the idea that as the leader of the free world he should be working with us to punish Russia," Graham said. (AP)

(19) China Coherently ...

permanent members of the UN Security Council, France and China should jointly safeguard multilateralism, Ayrault said. (Xinhua)

(20) US to Hold ...

last year's presidential election to help Trump win the White House.

"Know this: The United States will continue to hold Russia accountable, even as we search for new common ground which as you know President Trump believes can be found," Pence said. (AP)

(21) Iraq Announces ...

against the extremist IS militants.

However, the western side of Mosul, or the right bank, appears to be a bigger challenge to the Iraqi forces with its narrow streets and heavy population of between 750,000 and 800,000 people, according to United Nations (UN) estimates.

The Iraqi forces have surrounded the western part of Mosul, while the U.S.-led coalition forces have been carrying out air strikes on IS positions. (Xinhua)

(22) UN Warns...

destitute families are burning wood, furniture, plastic or garbage for cooking and heating," Grande said. (Xinhua)

(23) Turkey Eyes...

instead hoping that he would open a new page in relations. Trump's administration has a "good opportunity to make bold moves" in his foreign policy after the previous administration's "disregardful" attitude, Ayse Sozen Usluer, head of international relations at the Turkish presidency, told AFP.

She added the new administration would assess anew its relationship with Turkey regarding trade, military, the fight against terror among other issues and "take new steps to improve relations". (AFP)

(24) China, Britain ...

Britain should further implement the important consensus reached by the Chinese and British leaders on deepening cooperation in security and law enforcement.

China and Britain should expand their cooperative areas and enrich their cooperative style, so as to build a "golden age" for law enforcement and security cooperation, the delegates said. (Xinhua)

(25) WB to Continue...

sponsored and supported projects and said he was fully focused, as always on furthering Pak-WB economic cooperation. (APP)

Britain's Exit from EU Irrevocable Once Triggered: Minister

LONDON - The process of Britain leaving the European Union is irrevocable once it has been triggered, a government minister said on Sunday. Prime Minister Theresa May says she will invoke Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty by the end of March, beginning two years of formal divorce talks.

Lawyers for the government have said that, once started, the process is irrevocable, but some EU leaders say Britain can change its mind and a legal challenge to determine whether it can be reversed has been filed with an Irish court. "People can take cases to court. My understanding is it is irrevocable and when we press the button that will go forward," Justice Secretary Elizabeth Truss told the BBC's Andrew Marr show when asked about whether Britain could reverse the process. (Reuters)

Turkmenistan Eyes to Develop Market Economy

ASHGABAT - Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov during his inauguration ceremony held in Rukhyyet Palace in Ashgabat Feb. 17 named the support and development of entrepreneurship and market relations in different sectors of the country's economy as one of the main objectives, Turkmenistan State News Agency reported.

A presidential election was held on Feb. 12 in Turkmenistan. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, who has been the president since 2007, was re-elected for a third term with 97.69 percent of votes. Nine candidates took part in the presidential election.

At the inauguration ceremony, Berdimuhamedov defined the steps to transform Turkmenistan into an advanced industrialized country.

"Deep processing of hydrocarbon resources based on modern technologies will be carried out, and such high-quality products as gasoline, polypropylene, polyethylene and liquefied natural gas will be produced," the Turkmen president said. (Trend)

Canadian PM's Trade Agenda Positions Canada as Global Dealmaker

OTTAWA - The best-selling book The Art of the Deal has helped make American businessman Donald Trump a household name and outlined his approach to

business success, which included such guidance as "think big," "use your leverage" and "get the word out."

Thirty years later, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau - just a teenager at the time the future U.S. president's book was published in 1987 - is now employing those tips in positioning Canada as a major global trading partner.

He left his first face-to-face meeting with Trump in Washington on Monday with the Canada-U.S. dynamic maintained within the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The protectionist U.S. president told the pro-trade Canadian prime minister - and the reporters gathered at their joint news conference, that they would be doing certain things "that are going to benefit both of our countries."

For Canada, that appears to be more of a "renovation of NAFTA" rather than a "brand-new" agreement, which Trump mentioned as possibilities in a meeting with U.S. lawmakers earlier this month.

That reassurance signaled the importance of cross-border trade between both countries, and gave Trudeau a political bounce as he traveled abroad later in the week to welcome a no-less significant free trade deal with the European Union.

In the first speech by a Canadian prime minister to the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France on Thursday, Trudeau said that if the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) is successful, "CETA will become the blueprint for all ambitious future trade deals." If not, he said, "this could well be one of the last."

European parliamentarians voted to approve CETA on Wednesday - the day after members of the Canadian House of Commons passed legislation to implement the trade agreement, which is now before the Senate where it is expected to pass and become law. Once the 38 national and regional parliaments in the EU ratify CETA, the agreement will eliminate virtually all of tariffs on Canadian exports to the EU and provide the country with access to more than 500 million consumers in the European market with a gross domestic product, based on purchasing power parity, of about 19 trillion U.S. dollars. It will also, in Trudeau's view, help grow the middle class on both sides of the Atlantic - a message he also delivered during his visit to Washington D.C. earlier in the week.

CETA sends another message to Trump through a statement from European Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström following the historic European parliamentary vote on Wednesday. "By building bridges rather than walls, we can face the challenges that confront our societies together," she said.

"In these uncertain times, with rising protectionism around the world, CETA underlines our strong commitment to sustainable trade."

Europe is counting on Canada to serve as a key bridge-builder, as the president of the European Parliament Antonio Tajani said at a joint news conference with Trudeau on Thursday. "It's easier for the Canadians speak to the Americans," said Tajani, who believes Trudeau's Monday meeting with Trump "paved the way for better relations" between the EU and the U.S.

That's crucial for the EU if it ever hopes to revive a free trade deal with the U.S. after Trump canceled negotiations, particularly if Trudeau can make inroads with the U.S. president whom he said in Strasbourg on Thursday that is "demonstrating that good relations with one's neighbors is a great way of getting things done." But the prime minister's Liberal government is looking beyond NAFTA and CETA to establish trade agreements with China, India and Japan. "This is the year of trade," Canadian International Trade Minister François-Philippe Champagne told reporters here last Friday.

"People want to do trade with Canada because Canada stands out for progressive trade, having provisions that deal with worker rights and the environment." (Xinhua)