

(1) SCO ...

growing drug production in the conflict-ridden nation.

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev also spoke for dialogue between Afghan authorities and the rebel Taliban movement, adding that stability in Afghanistan was in the interests of the entire region.

Afghan leader Ashraf Ghani, whose country holds observer status in the organization, backed SCO strategies in the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking. Ghani said it was possible to radically reduce the presence of terror groups in Afghanistan, and that it needed to be done faster. He also urged for collective measures to counter transnational terror.

On the sidelines of the meeting, President Ashraf Ghani and SCO Secretary-General Rashid Alimov met before noon. The two leaders discussed various issues of the region and the importance of the SCO leaders meeting.

"We're paying special attention to Afghanistan," Alimov told the Afghan leader. He said Afghanistan was mentioned in the joint statement of the SCO 17th summit.

He said Afghanistan had great potential and opportunities for future development and prosperity. He expressed his willingness to visit Afghanistan.

President Ghani briefed the meeting about the 'Kabul Process' and its maiden session was attended by representatives from various countries.

He said the Kabul Process provided a platform to participants for a comprehensive dialogue on regional cooperation.

Ghani said Asia's stability and peace was linked to peace and stability in Afghanistan.

He said they held positive view about regional cooperation for peace and stability, but terrorism needed to be tackled jointly. (Pajhwok)

(2) Iran, ...

Ghani also called on all the governments to join in the fight against the terrorists.

Zarif, for his part, referred to strategic talks in Kabul, saying that working groups have been formed to implement the agreements signed earlier between Tehran and Kabul.

Both sides also exchanged views on the ongoing crisis among the Persian Gulf littoral states, urging them to solve their problems through dialogue because the region cannot

Zarif is currently in Kazakhstan to attend The two-day Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit meeting as well as the opening ceremony of Expo 2017 international exhibition.

It is predicted that Iran's SCO membership will be raised and discussed during the meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. (FNA)

(3) NATO's Senior...

Ambassador Zimmerman conveyed NATO's message of continued support to the Afghan government and the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces.

The SCR also noted local officials' close cooperation with TAAC-W and said the close cooperation would certainly enhance results of their efforts and serve as a model for all of the country. (Pajhwok)

(4) Govt. Calls

commission," said deputy presidential spokesman Dawa Khan Menapal.

The IEC argues that government is currently grappling with a series of problems including issues on the security front and it will not be possible to set a date for elections in view of the current situation in the country.

"If the commission is not assured about the security and budget, setting a date for the elections is like writing something on ice," said Warimach.

The IEC said government has not responded to a number of reforms proposed by the election commission.

Meanwhile, the U.S.'s Special Chargé d'Affaires to Kabul, ambassador Hugo Llorens, has called on the Afghan government to take steps to hold elections.

However, a lawmaker in parliament said it will be difficult to conduct free and fair elections in the country in view of the ongoing situation in the country.

"It was hoped that discussions would be held on the recommendations made by the commission and the people, but unfortunately

it was not done," added Warimach.

Following the establishment of the National Unity Government (NUG) in 2014, President Ashraf Ghani and CEO Abdullah Abdullah pledged to consider systematic reforms in Afghanistan's electoral system. But there is speculation that reforms have not been implemented in the electoral institutions. (Tolonews)

(5) Grieco Electe...

elections for the AACC Executive Committee as follows: Chairman, Sulaiman Lutfi; President & CEO, Jeffrey Grieco; Vice President, Leslie Schweitzer; Secretary, Doug Brooks; Treasurer, Yama Azami; At-Large Member: Assad Mattin; and At-Large Member: Maj. Gen. Arnold Fields, USMC Ret..

The Afghan-American Chamber of Commerce is the largest business and trade association serving both U.S. and Afghan business communities. The AACC facilitates U.S.-Afghanistan business, investment and trade ties through its Annual Business Matchmaking Conferences (BMCs) and related program activities that support the long-term, sustainable private-sector led development of Afghanistan. AACC member services include:

1-Exchanging business procurement, contracting and project financing information;

2-Forging business, trade and investment partnerships and access to resources;

3-Identifying capacity development requirements and programming needs for members through business consultation, business-trade-investment seminars and capacity development workshops;

4-Building commercial linkages between U.S. and Afghanistan companies through networking events;

5-Providing relevant policy analysis, testimony and public policy inputs to help improve Afghanistan's market-led approach to private sector development and reducing tax and corruption burdens for our members; and

6-Publishing expert commercial and "doing business" content for use by AACC members that stimulates U.S.-Afghanistan trade, investment and market-led economic growth.

The AACC remains the most strategic and influential voice for Afghanistan and U.S. businesses in helping to shape Afghanistan's market-led private sector economy. (PR)

(6) Hekmatyar...

war," he remarked. He suggested war could be ended if HIA's wide influence was used. Those who talk about the system change should ask themselves what alternatives were available, he said.

"Evidence shows recent Kabul attacks, in which hundreds of Afghans suffered casualties, are aimed to disrupt the peace process. The enemies of peace are behind these attacks and they want the war to continue," he said.

Pointing to protests after a string of attacks in Kabul, Hekmatyar said peaceful demonstration was the right of every Afghan and he defended the protestors.

However, he condemned those who take to the streets with weapons to display their power, disrespect people, provoke residents, exchange fire with police and oblige security forces to take punitive action.

In response to a question about elections, Hekmatyar said his party was interested in taking part in the presidential and parliamentary ballots.

But he said the creation of an independent and acceptable election commission was urgently needed. (Pajhwok)

(7) Khalilzad ...

in the past, you cannot solve the present," he said during the discussion on "Regional Perspectives on the US Strategy in Afghanistan."

Speaking at the Atlantic Council's South Asia Center, the ambassador rejected Kabul's criticism of Islamabad for its internal problem. "The Haqqani network and the Taliban are not our friends. They are not our proxies. What Quetta Shura you are talking about? What Peshawar Shura?"

To this, Khalilzad said: "We know the leadership of the Taliban (are in Pakistan), the Quetta Shura and now the Peshawar Shura, the Haqqani network that has been a difficulty... The leaders are based in Pakistan."

"That (fact) cannot be disputed easily. Are they getting supplies,

getting training, where does the logistic lines of this fight, how deep does this go into Pakistan," Khalilzad added.

Spurning the ambassador's denial, Khalilzad insisted the reality was different. "We have very firm evidence of his presence in Pakistan, where he went, lived, hospital," he said, adding a long time there was the idea that Osama bin Laden never left Afghanistan.

"There is ample evidence that while the operation was going on, the Haqqani network was being evacuated to safer location," the former US ambassador charged.

Tellis believed the Trump administration had a real possibility that if the US was not successful in Afghanistan, it could choose to reduce its commitment and eventually withdraw.

This would only make circumstances in Afghanistan worse and would have an adverse impact on the situation in Pakistan. "It is worthwhile for Pakistan to redouble its efforts in working with the US to compel the Taliban to come to the peace table," he insisted.

Chaudhry, who appeared to be isolated, said Pakistan wanted a peaceful, stable, sovereign and prosperous Afghanistan. "Afghan soil should not be used against Pakistan. Other than that we want to facilitate reconciliation. We need political level contact..." (Pajhwok)

(8) Ghani,....

Afghan President said that Afghanistan had broad economic horizon seeking to extend this relation through Hairatan border.

This meeting was attended by Afghanistan's National Security Advisor Mohammad Hanif Atmar, Senior Advisor to the President for Infrastructure Dr. Mohammad Hemayon Qayyumi, Senior Advisor to the President for Public Affairs and Strategic Communications Shahzaman Maiwandi, President's Special Representative for the Commonwealth Mohammad Shakir Karger, and Head of Law and Treaties of Ministry of Foreign Affairs Najib Aqa Fahim.

and peace. Representatives of several neighboring and other important countries, including China, participated.

The conference asked militants groups to agree on a ceasefire and start peace talks with the Afghan government immediately.

A statement from the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued on Wednesday quoted the meeting's participants as agreeing to a united approach against those refusing to join the political process and continue to provide the ground for foreign terrorists to operate in Afghanistan.

In addition, the statement said, the participants supported all Afghan security forces' efforts to defend the people of Afghanistan and combat all terrorist threats that affected the international community. (Pajhwok)

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(10) Afghanistan ...

in the memory of the martyred citizens announces Saturday as a day of national mourning."

It said the day would be marked by reciting verses from the holy Quran and flying the national flag half-mast. (Pajhwok)

(11) Ghani, ...

and Pakistan is an obstacle on the way of China's economic activities. China has long strategic relations with Pakistan and also cannot easily ignore Afghanistan; therefore, it is willing to mediate between Kabul and Islamabad," university lecturer Nasrullah Stanikzai said.

"Afghanistan hopes that China will use its close relations with Pakistan to force the country to cooperate with Kabul, but China's foreign policy will be conservative and cautious in this respect," political analyst Zabi Farhang said.

Afghan government has often called on regional countries to encourage Pakistan to become sincere in fighting against terrorism in the region.

Last week at the Kabul Process meeting, President Ghani said made serious remarks about Pakistan. He said the Afghan government was committed to fighting terrorism but that it wants to build strong political and economic ties with all neighboring countries.

He said Afghanistan is suffering an "undeclared war of aggression from Pakistan".

Ghani said Taliban sponsored terrorism is creating a platform that is bringing terrorists from all over the region to Afghanistan. (Tolonews)

(12) Daesh Militants ...

said Daesh is trying to make its stronghold in north of Feroz Koh city and it has trained dozens of people including teenagers and children.

He said that nine commanders of Daesh have entered the country from abroad and are responsible for training new recruits for the group in Dara-e-Murghab area.

"Daesh is trying to establish a stronghold in north of Feroz Koh in Dara-e-Murghab area. This is concerning. If this happens, the group will threaten nine provinces of the country from this area," he said.

Other Ghor officials said the group is led by two local Daesh commanders, Qari Rahmatullah and Mawlawi Taj Mohammad, who were fighting government under another militant group previously.

Members of Ghor Provincial Council said they are concerned about the possible threat posed by the fighters loyal to Daesh in the province.

"It will be a big threat to Ghor province if the group makes a stronghold in Dara-e-Murghab area. This is really concerning," said Basir Ahmad Qaderi, deputy head of Ghor Provincial Council.

Ghor civil society activists said Daesh is recruiting in the province for the past year but security forces have not taken any step to stop the group from growing its fighters.

"The group (Daesh) is recruiting in parts of Ghor for the past year and they are making safe havens there, they go to other parts from Dara-e-Murghab and recruit there. This is really concerning for the province," said Mohammad Gul Poya, a civil society activist in Ghor.

Ghor officials said the group will threaten Faryab, Sar-e-Pul, Bamian, Badghis and Herat provinces if they built their training camp in Dara-e-Murghab area.

Recently, two preachers of Daesh were arrested in Herat and Nimroz provinces who were on the way to Ghor. (Tolonews)

(13) Private Sector ...

have also stood idle. Government closed routes leading to the Presidential Palace this past week.

"Closing the roads is not the solution. The past week has been tough for the private sector. It has been concerning for the (private) sector. The situation has concerned businessmen," the ACCI deputy head Khanjan Alokozai said.

Meanwhile, a number of businessmen and shopkeepers said the closure of markets and shops has pushed up the price of goods in Kabul.

"All the imported goods been stopped by government from coming in through (Kabul entrance) gates. The goods have been stopped from entering Kabul markets; therefore, it has affected prices and has damaged the private sector," said Zamanuddin, a businessman.

According to TOLONews reporter, Zarmina Mohammadi, a number of shops and markets did however reopen on Thursday but many remained closed.

Those who have reopened their shops said they have very few customers - compared to previous weeks.

"People are not buying anything. The market is in a bad situation," said Shirzai, a shopkeeper in Kabul.

Meanwhile, a number of Kabul residents said the price of goods has increased sharply in recent days.

"People are faced with many problems. The price of everything has surged. For instance, something that was sold for 1,150 Afs (in the past) is now sold for 1,250 Afs," said Abdul Wahid, a resident of Kabul.

According to the ACCI, the situation will further deteriorate for the private sector and businessmen if government fails to resolve the situation. (Tolonews)

(14) 'Protest Tents ...

conference here that the protests following recent incidents in Kabul had created serious problems for Kabul residents.

About Friday's protest that turned violent, he said: "We want the government to find what led to violence in the protest demonstration, in which many people were killed and injured. Those involved in the violence should be taken to task."

He called protests as the right of people and requested the protesters to share their demands with the government through talks and do not let opportunists to misuse their emotions. However, Marastial said the pro-

testors' demand for resignation of the president, the National Security Advisor and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) was illegal.

He said the president and the CEO had been elected on people's votes and the NSA had been appointed by the Presidential Palace. "The NSA has no executive role and his resignation is not in the interest of people and the country."

Solidarity Party of Afghanistan (Paiwand-i-Milli) party head, Sayed Mansour Naderi, said he was against any type of movements and gatherings that disrupted public order and security and created problems for people.

He said such movements were against the principles of democracy. Divisions in the national unity government would serve no one's interest, he added.

About the Jamiat-i-Islami (JIA) demand for removal of Atmar, Naderi said: "Such demands are not justifiable in current critical situation. According to our understanding, Atmar is a professional cadre and servant of people, particularly in security affairs of the country."

"We should all join hands and not let our country and people suffer more and all our internal and external enemies are waiting for our divisions because divisions in government serve their interest," he said.

On the other hand, Afghanistan Ulema Association (AUA) in a separate press conference condemned recent attacks in the country and said such attacks were never justifiable in the holy month of Ramadan.

Any action that resulted in killing of innocent people was against Sharia, said Maulvi Attaullah Faizani, AUA spokesman.

"Considering the current sensitive situation, we want political parties, leaders and people to avoid tribal, regional and language discrimination."

The AUA also released a resolution letter, saying peaceful protest was the right of all people but erection of tents and blocking roads, particularly in Ramadan, was creating huge problems for people. The ulema said the tents should be removed.

A number of civil society activists during a gathering in Shar-i-Naw Park also opposed the protest tents. Fardin Fedayee, head of Afghan Youths Civil Society Association, said the protest tents on roads had created problems for people. (Pajhwok)

(15) Pakistan ...

remained committed to a peaceful and stable Afghanistan but also worked with all regional and global initiatives to that end.

Pakistan's top civilian and military leadership attended the meeting. Nearly 1,000 people have been killed and wounded in recent terrorist attacks mainly in Kabul. (Pajhwok)

(16) NDS Being...

leadership of the security agency. The MP and the former military official claimed that none of the members of the NDS leadership are professional, except a few including Massoud Andarabi, a senior NDS official.

They added that senior officials of the NDS have been appointed based on political shares mentioned in the NUG agreement signed by President Ghani and CEO Abdullah in September 2014.

"The head of the NDS (Mohammad Masoum Stanikzai) is an individual who does not have any experience or specialty in the field. Because he is a trusted person to President (Ashraf Ghani). He is mostly busy with foreign policy affairs and mediation in the peace process," said Jafar Mahdawi, an MP.

"We do not have any professional individual in the NDS. We should have a clear definition of the national security. Is national security a municipality? Municipality is even better than the NDS, because it has some technical employees, while the NDS does not have this," said Daud Hassas, former advisor of CEO Abdullah Abdullah.

Meanwhile, a number of political analysts said that appointing security officials based on political shares will deteriorate the country's security situation.

"This issue has caused deep security gaps and crisis," said Jawed Kohistani, a military affairs analyst.

Kabul and other provinces have witnessed deadly attacks in the past month, leaving scores of people dead and wounded.

Keeping security agencies away from politics was a major promise by the NUG leaders, President

Ashraf Ghani and CEO Abdullah Abdullah, during their election campaigns. (Tolonews)

(17) Political...

said Naderi.

He said at least 25 Islamis were killed and dozens others were wounded in Wednesday's blast.

Meanwhile, a member of the Rights and Justice Party said the demands by Jamiat are concerning, and that their call for the removal of the national security advisor is actually a demand by regional intelligence agencies.

"The resignation of Mohammad Haneef Atmar is not in favor of the people. We call on the presidential palace to stay firm on its stance and prevent unwarranted demands," said Moen Marastial, a member of the party. (Tolonews)

(18) Zimbabwe...

will require Zimbabwe Cricket (ZC) and the International Cricket Council (ICC) to provide their firm word. But where we feel there is a serious concern for the safety of our sportsmen, we take the matter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which then makes the final decision on the basis of security reasons.

"If the ministry rules that the safety of our nationals in a foreign country will not be guaranteed, then those people cannot travel there." (Agencies)

(19) 22 Daesh,....

in some other mountainous areas, with Daesh suffering most of the casualties. He said three Taliban fighters had also been killed. The official said hundreds of families had fled to other areas due to the clashes.

Nangarhar governor Mohammad Gulab Mangal on Wednesday told a press conference at the Provincial Council office that he had directed security forces to support and strengthen the uprising members to destroy Daesh militants.

He had said security forces were on standby and would conduct raids in case Daesh advanced. Mangal said he had also ordered the Disaster Preparedness Committee to provide aid to the displaced families.

Reports say clashes have been ongoing between Taliban and Daesh gunmen for control of the Tora Bora cave complex in Pachirawgam district since Tuesday.

Another report said about 10 Daesh militants had been eliminated during the past 24 hours during air raids in Nargosai and Chinar areas of Kot district.

Attaullah Khogyani, while confirming the air strikes, said the slain militants included some foreign nationals. (Pajhwok)

(20) UN Calls ...

allegations relating to "Operation Burnham," a raid of two villages in the Baghlan province in Afghanistan by the New Zealand Defence Forces on 22 August 2010, will be fully investigated and addressed."

Foreign Minister Gerry Brownlee said in a statement that "the New Zealand Government has not been ordered to investigate the allegations made in the book Hit & Run".

Mr Brownlee said that the request was part of a list of issues that are a routine reporting process, and said that the request about Afghanistan was based on "factual inaccuracies".

He said the allegations made by Nicky Hager and Jon Stephenson in Hit & Run have been disproven. "The allegations made by Nicky Hager and Jon Stephenson were disproven and the Chief of Defence Force held a press conference detailing the New Zealand Defence Force raid in Afghanistan in 2010.

I would also like to point out that the findings of the International Security Assistance Force investigation undertaken in 2010 after Operation Burnham were available to the United Nations Assistance Mission - Afghanistan at the time."

In April, Prime Minister Bill English said a classified video, which he will not release, confirmed that the New Zealand Defence Force personnel took all necessary precautions to ensure minimal opportunity for civilian casualties and destruction of property. (Monitoring Desk)

(21) \$5m Transformer

Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat has paved the way for the supply of electricity for up to 16 thousand residents of Jalalabad.

He said the work on installation of electricity pillars for the supply of an additional 220 mega watt electricity will also start in the near future. (KP)