Besides $1b Aid Pledge, new Delhi Signs 3 Accords with Kabul

KABUL - Besides pledging another $1 billion in development aid, India has signed with Afghanistan three memoranda of understanding (MoUs) on cooperation in the fields of trade, hydro-electricity and education.

The two leaders agreed that militancy presented the single greatest threat to stability, peace and progress of the region and beyond.

Later, speaking at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses in New Delhi, Ghani asserted that making a distinction between good and bad terrorism is a "short-sighted" approach. He also said the Chabahar port in Iran would help India bypass Pakistan in transferring goods. He said states should help their neighbours and not widen the gap by maligning them.

"This (states) do not behave like malign states actors who use-e-o-in their neighbours. They see a collective security to be an objective that brings stability. Stability does not come from the barrel of the gun," said Ghani.

A spokesman for President Ghani in Kabul, Harsam Chalilzam, yesterday said the meeting between Ghani and Modi discussed economic cooperation, security and stability and India’s development assistance to Afghanistan. (More on P-4)

UN Calls for $150m to Help Internally Displaced Afghans

KABUL - The UN Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief, Stephen O’Brien, has raised concerns over the large number of internally displaced Afghans in the country, calling on the international community to step up efforts to help.

The UN official has asked for $150m in aid within four months to facilitate one million internally displaced Afghans.

O’Brien has also asked the Afghan government to step up efforts for ensuring transparency, fighting corruption and improving economic development for the ordinary Afghans.

Speaking at the UN envoy’s press conference, the UN wire reported Afghan children have been affected massively by the violence in the militancy-riddled nation, saying Afghanistan is the world’s third most affected country in elimination of terrorism.

The envoy said Afghanistan and Iran continued their cooperation in various fields following the tripartite agreement on the Iranian port of Chabahar.

"We held coordination meetings at the government’s level of 250, and 260 July to discuss security and new trade opportunities involving the port. Afghan Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammad Tahsin on 3rd August during his meeting with the Governor of Khorasan to discuss the development of the region and in friendship with Afghan nationals in Iran," he said.

He said Iran and Afghans have agreed to increase trade.

Energetics Issue a Key Topic Brussels Brokers Afghans

KABUL - The development of infrastructure around the production of power is a key topic on the Brussels summit agenda – and one which Afghan stakeholders hope the international community will take seriously.

Wahidullah Tawfeeq, spokesman for Da Afghanistan broadcaster Shariq (DABS), said on Thursday that currently 89 percent of power is imported and that in the next two years this will increase to 99 percent.

According to DABS, Afghanistan has the capacity to produce 125,000 megawatts of thermal and hydro power, but currently produces only 20 percent of this in hydro energy.

DABS also said that government will discuss the issue of infrastructure within this sector, particularly that of hydro-electric dams, at the Brussels conference.

"We import 80 percent of power which we pay money for. In the next two years this demand will increase to 99 percent," said Tawfeeq.

"Meanwhile, a number of Afghan stakeholders have interpreted the Brussels Conference as an opportunity to solve the energy issue for their new government, especially DABS, for not focusing on the development of renewable energy, and as far as energy and DABS have not done enough to generate more hydro power," he said.

"New Afghanistan, in terms of its geopolitical position is at the center of world attention and the international community has plans to help Afghanistan," said Mohammed Masoud, economic lecturer at Kabul University.

"The international community helps Afghanistan, but there some reason why the national unity government is unable to act constructively together and a trade agreement is not a part of that," he added.

We would support stronger trade relations within the region," state Department of Commerce spokesman Mark Toner told a regular Washington news conference.

He said that for Afghanistan, which was a priority for the United States at least and beyond.

"And progress of the region and beyond. Later, speaking at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses in New Delhi, Ghani asserted that making a distinction between good and bad terrorism is a "short-sighted" approach. He also said the Chabahar port in Iran would help India bypass Pakistan in transferring goods. He said states should help their neighbours and not widen the gap by maligning them.

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