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First-ever Afghanistan–Russia Business Forum inaugurated in Tatarstan

KABUL: The First Afghanistan–Russia Business Forum has been inaugurated on the sidelines of the 16th Kazan International Economic Forum in Tatarstan, the office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Eco-

nomics Affairs said in a statement Friday. The event was co-chaired by Mullah Abdul Ghani Beradar, the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs of the Islamic Emirate, and Alexey Logvinovich Overchuk, Russia's Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, the statement said.

Addressing the inaugura-

tion ceremony, Mullah Beradar highlighted the political stability achieved in Afghanistan since the establishment of the Islamic Emirate, saying that economic activities and domestic and foreign investments have increased across various sectors.

He emphasized the initiation of numerous large and

small-scale projects aimed at the country's reconstruction, being implemented by both domestic and international companies.

Beradar also underscored the Islamic Emirate's commitment to developing infrastructure and expanding trade, aiming to facilitate Afghanistan's exports to regional and distant countries.

Announcing the Islamic Emirate's readiness to construct a second Salang Tunnel to enhance trade and transit connectivity between Afghanistan, Russia, and Central Asia, Beradar emphasized the importance of leveraging Russia's expertise in tunnel construction and sought cooperation from the Russian Federation in this endeavor.

"Afghanistan is committed to participating in the North–South Transport Corridor and highlighted the significance of the Afghan-Trans railway project and expressed interest in Russia's collaboration to initiate and implement this project, aiming to position Afghanistan as a pivotal player in regional economic integration," he said.

See P4



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small-scale projects aimed at the country's reconstruction, being implemented by both

domestic and international companies.

Kabul, Delhi discuss diplomatic engagement

KABUL: Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, the acting Foreign Minister of the Islamic Emirate, in a telephone conversation with Dr. S. Jaishankar, the Minister of External Affairs of India, discussed the enhancement of diplomatic engagement between the two countries.

Hafiz Zia Ahmad, the ministry's deputy spokesman, said in a statement on his X page the other day that the conversation focused on enhancing bilateral relations, promoting trade, and upgrading diplomatic engagement between the two countries.

Calling India a key regional country with historical relation

with Afghanistan, Mawlawi Muttaqi expressed hope for further strengthening relations, reiterating Afghanistan's commitment to a balanced foreign policy and constructive engagement with all sides.

He also urged for facilitation of the issuance of visas for Afghan businessmen and patients, as well as the release and repatriation of Afghan prisoners in India.

Meanwhile, Dr. Jaishankar reaffirmed India's ongoing support for Afghanistan, highlighting joint efforts in the political and economic fields.

He also pledged to accelerate the resolution of Afghan prison-



ers' cases and enhance the visa issuance process.

Both sides also underscored

the importance of further developing the Chabahar Port.

The Kabul Times

Tatarstan delegation to visit Kabul for bolstering engagements in various sectors

KABUL: Rustam Minnikhanov, Tatarstan President, met with

Mullah Abdul Ghani Beradar Akhund, the Deputy Prime Min-

ister for Economic Affairs of the Islamic Emirate, on the sidelines of the 16th Kazan Forum, saying that his country's delegation will visit Kabul to bolster engagements across various sectors.

According to a statement from the deputy PM's office on Friday, the meeting focused on strengthening bilateral economic, trade relations, and potential investments by Tatarstan investors in Afghanistan.

Speaking at the meeting, Beradar said that the foreign policy of the Islamic Emirate is characterized by independence, positivity, neutrality, balance, and an

emphasis on economic development, aiming to foster positive relations with all nations worldwide.

Tatarstan president underscored the significance of a high-level delegation from the Islamic Emirate participating in the forum, and added that while existing trade interactions with Afghanistan span several domains, they are prepared to escalate trade volumes moving forward.

Mullah Beradar also hailed this visit as a promising commencement towards enhanced collaboration between the two nations. The Kabul Times

Haqqani announces establishment of 26 new telecommunications sites in Samangan

KABUL: The acting Minister of Communications and Information Technology, Mawlawi Najibullah Hayat Haqqani, during his visit to Samangan, said the other day that 26 new telecommunications sites will be constructed in the province, according to a statement from the ministry.

He instructed the telecommunication network officials to ensure the swift installation and activation of these sites within a timeframe of less than three months in the province, the statement said.

"Construction of these sites will not only cover remote regions of Samangan province but also connect the routes of Samangan Pul-e-Khumri and Samangan Hairatan to telecommunication services," the statement quoted him as saying. The ministry has been trying to establish new telecommunications sites in the country's remote areas to expand network coverage, improve connectivity, and facilitate access to communication services for underserved populations, thereby supporting so-

cial inclusion, economic development, and emergency re-

sponse capabilities in those regions. The Kabul Times



Administrative Commission: Master plan to be implemented in Surobi district

KABUL: The meeting of the Administrative Commission was held with Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, the Deputy Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate for Administrative Affairs, discussing the implementation of Surobi district's master plan, Arg said in a statement the other day.

According to the statement, the members of the assigned committees presented updates on their activities and progress concerning the tasks assigned by the commission.

After a comprehensive discussion, the issues related to the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, the General Directorate of Administrative Affairs, the National Examination Authority, as well as the properties of Emirati institutions

have been discussed in the meeting and necessary decisions have been made in this regard, the statement said. The Administration Commission of the Islamic Emirate meeting is held to evaluate and discuss important issues related to the ministries and departments, make necessary decisions, and bring reforms. The Kabul Times

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The Kabul Times



Work begins on Wakhan road's second phase

KABUL: The Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development said in a statement Friday that gravel work on Wakhan road's second phase worth 143 million Afghanis has been kicked off in Badakhshan.

The road spans 71 kilometers in length and is 8 meters

wide, the statement said, adding that hundreds of people would be provided with job opportunities during the road's construction work.

According to the statement, the road's contract had been inked in Kabul between Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development Mullah Mo-

hammad Younus Akhundzada and Chief of Afghan Sadaqat Company Ghausuddin.

The first phase of the Wakhan road, which covered 50 kilometers, was completed last year for 181 million Afghanis.

The first phase of the Wakhan road runs from Bazhai Gonbad area to the Chinese border, while the second phase extends from Bazhai Gonbad to the Broghil area of Wakhan district of Badakhshan province, the statement said.

Wakhan is a mountainous district in Badakhshan province, commonly known as the Wakhan Corridor.

This strategic region serves as a land bridge connecting Afghanistan with South and Central Asia.

The Kabul Times



hammad Younus Akhundzada

Kazakhstan to invest \$500 million in Turghundi-Herat railway

KABUL: Kazakh Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister, Murat Nurtileu, via a telephone conversation with Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, the acting Foreign Affairs Minister of the Islamic Emirate, said the other day that his country is ready to invest \$500 million in the construction of the Turghundi-Herat railway.

Hafiz Zia Ahmad Takal, the deputy spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said in a statement on his X official account that the two sides discussed enhancing diplomatic ties, expanding trade and transit cooperation, and elevating the level of diplomatic engagement between the two nations.

Muttaqi emphasized Kazakhstan's significance as a key Central Asian partner and expressed optimism about leveraging existing capacities for

regional development and prosperity.

He reiterated Afghanistan's commitment to expanding cooperation with Kazakhstan across various sectors.

Meanwhile, Nurtileu ex-

pressed interest in increasing engagement between the foreign ministries of both countries and announced plans for an official visit to Kabul in the near future. Both sides agreed to maintain regular contact and ensure that working teams from both countries continue discussions and collaborative ef-



orts in Kabul and Astana to further advance bilateral relations. The Kabul Times

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Food for thought

Today's generation guarantees our bright future

Aid should be allowed to enter Gaza to save civilians' lives

Thousands of innocent people, mostly women and children, lost their lives after brutal airstrikes began by the Zionist regime in the Gaza Strip in October 2023. The intentional raids by the regime forces on innocent civilians also left thousands of people wounded in the strictly surrounded enclave.

The Gaza Strip has now turned into a ruined area, with thousands of families, including innocent children at the brink of death due to lack of food, after the regime blocked any routes extending to the enclave. The displaced Gazans who are now living under makeshift shelters even lack clean water to drink. They do not have access to healthcare facilities.

In a fresh air ride, the regime's forces targeted a displaced Gazans' camp, leaving more than twenty-five people, all civilians, dead, and scores of others wounded.

Recently, as aid organizations announced to send assistance to the war victims in the Gaza Strip, the Zionist regime once again denied it and conditioned the release of any aid on the release of the Israeli hostages

During a UN Security Council session, Tom Fletcher, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, blamed the regime for denying the aid to reach Gazans and described Israel's plan for distributing humanitarian aid in Gaza as a performative and deceptive act.

As reported, he said the regime's denial to allow aid to reach Gazans serves as a cover for continued violence and further displacement of Palestinians and warned that since March 2, no aid has been allowed by the Israeli forces to enter Gaza.

Undoubtedly, as the UN official said, "one-quarter of Gaza's population is on the brink of famine, and over half a million people face the risk of death due to hunger."

"For those still pretending to be unsure, let me be clear: Israel's proposed aid distribution plan is not a solution. It overlooks many, including the disabled, women, children, the elderly, and the wounded. It leads to further displacement, endangers thousands, and sets an unacceptable precedent for aid distribution in Palestinian territories and globally."

On the other hand, the U.S. Deputy Ambassador to the United Nations also urged aid organizations to cooperate with this plan, as he said: "The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation's plan provides a means for doing so. The United States has sent senior members of the administration to Israel to work on modalities. While some humanitarian organizations may ultimately choose not to engage in these conversations, others have chosen a more constructive path, and they will be able to deliver aid in an appropriate way, hopefully very soon."

Many Security Council members also expressed concerns about the plan. In a joint statement, the UK, France, Slovenia, Greece, and Denmark emphasized that any aid delivery mechanism must be based on the core humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, independence, and impartiality, and should not be used to advance political or military agendas.

So, the UN Security Council members, particularly the U.S. (as it resolved), should exert pressure on the Israeli regime to lift the blockade on aid entering Gaza now, and the humanitarian aid agencies to save civilians' lives.

Also, all world countries, including the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan want the aid distributed independently, impartially, and to be in line with international humanitarian law and principles on one hand and on the other, pressure should be increased on the Israeli regime to stop targeting civilians and bend to long-term ceasefire to reach a permanent peace between the two sides.

IEA relations warming with neighbors; Tajikistan getting closer to strong interaction

The gradual warming of relations between the two countries is not something, the Islamic Emirate's officials have highlighted, a researcher from the University of Regensburg in Germany, who has extensively studied the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border, said that the announcement of bilateral meetings between Tajikistan and the Islamic Emirate is a sign of improving relations.

Relations between the Islamic Emirate and Tajikistan, one of Afghanistan's close neighbors, are gradually warming as the countries are close to further strengthening economic and political relations.

However cautious, relations between the two countries are gradually warming as the Islamic Emirate officials are speaking about cooperation with Tajikistan and a visit by a Tajik delegation to Kabul as signs of improving ties between the two neighbors.

Based on the foreign policy of the Islamic Emirate, Afghanistan never interferes in the internal affairs of other countries, nor does it allow others to interfere in its affairs.

The gradual warming of relations between the two countries is not something, the Islamic Emirate's officials have highlighted, a researcher from the University of Regensburg in Germany, who has extensively studied the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border, said that the announcement of bilateral meetings between Tajikistan and the Islamic Emirate is a sign of improving relations.

According to him, "what's really improved is that bilateral meetings are made public.

The big game changer is also the fact that [Tajik] authorities have stopped releasing offensive statements about the Taliban [Islamic Emirate]."

According to the Eurasianet report, relations between Tajikistan and the Islamic Emirate began to improve in September 2023, when Tajikistan allowed the reopening of border markets, which required cooperation between border forces of both countries.

However, the report said that Afghanistan-Tajikistan relations still remain relatively cold compared to other Cen-

tral Asian countries like Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, which have rapidly normalized their ties with the Islamic Emirate.

On the other hand, Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate, has earlier described relations with Tajikistan as positive and emphasized that there are no prob-

lems between the two countries.

lem and continues—in preventing smuggling in certain areas." Janat Faheem Chakari, a political analyst, stated: "Afghanistan's role in relations with its neighbors is highly important, and friendly ties must be maintained, especially with Tajikistan, where political opponents of the Islamic

among these countries.

Afghanistan, under the Islamic Emirate, is pursuing a flexible foreign policy in light of national, regional, and international conditions.

With the rise of the Islamic Emirate to power in Afghanistan, neighboring countries gradually entered into interac-



tion with the country, but Tajikistan, due to the interference of some malicious groups still remained concerned about their internal security, but by the effort of the country's officials, relation with this neighbor has also gotten normal and the two countries are getting closer to strong interaction with each other.

Other countries in the region and the world should also not doubt their security from Afghanistan, as the Islamic Emirate remains committed to what it announced as its foreign policy.

The Islamic Emirate has now over 20 diplomatic missions from different countries active in Kabul and maintains more than 40 political offices abroad. **Inam Hashemi**

Emirate are based. This makes it vital that Afghanistan-Tajikistan relations remain cordial." Although the Islamic Emirate has enjoyed relatively good relations with some neighboring countries—such as Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Iran—its ties with Pakistan - have been tense at times, with occasional clashes occurring between the two countries' border guards.

Tajikistan, compared to other neighboring states, has had more limited engagement with the Islamic Emirate. It is clear that Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, and Tajikistan share historical, linguistic, and religious relations, and these can be used as strategic factors to foster stronger ties

Additionally, security and border matters between the two nations are being managed according to intergovernmental principles.

Afghanistan maintains good relations with border officials on the other side, and cooperation has taken place—



The silent killer: Measles surges in Helmand, hundreds infected

Measles is a severe, contagious, and deadly viral disease that primarily affects children, though adults are not immune either.

The disease spreads through the air via cough, sneeze, or direct contact with

that these numbers are three times higher than those recorded during the same period last year.

In its report, the organization pointed out several reasons for the rising number of measles cases in Afghanistan.

Following MSF's report,

operation with partner organizations, mobile health teams have been deployed across the province, and a 20-bed hospital has been opened in Lashkargah for measles patients.

He said, "Under the guidance of the public health director and in collaboration with

He said, "My nephew has measles.

We didn't know anything about this disease before. His condition worsened day by day.

When we brought him to the hospital, the doctors told us he had measles. Many other children in our village are also suffering from this disease."

Doctors in Helmand also confirmed the increase in measles cases, attributing it to parents not vaccinating their children.

Dr. Moheebullah Kamal, an infectious disease specialist in Lashkargah, stated, "In rural areas, most people are careless.

Globally, people pay attention to vaccination, but here, people hold the belief that vaccines are dangerous."

He continued, "The distance from health centers and poverty prevents some families from bringing their children to the hospital on time, which leads to the illness becoming severe."

Local officials say they have launched serious efforts to raise public awareness, encouraging people to take their children to receive free vaccinations provided by the Directorate of Public Health and international organizations.

It's not just in crisis-hit countries like Afghanistan—measles cases are also on the rise in European countries and the United States.

In March of this year, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced in Geneva that 127,000 measles cases were recorded in its European region in the previous year—marking the highest number in 25 years.

Ehsanullah Wolasmal



an infected person. In Afghanistan, the widespread outbreak of measles is mainly due to low vaccination coverage, lack of access to healthcare services, public unfamiliarity with or distrust in vaccines, internal displacement, war, poverty, and poor nutritional conditions.

On March 13, 2025, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), also known as Doctors Without Borders, reported a significant increase in measles cases in three hospitals in Afghanistan supported by the organization.

According to MSF data collected from the regional hospitals in Mazar-e-Sharif and Herat and the provincial hospital of Boost in Helmand, at least one child died of measles every day in 2025.

The organization stated

officials from the Helmand Public Health Directorate confirmed an increase in the number of children infected with measles in 1404 solar year.

They stated that a dedicated hospital for measles patients has been established in Lashkargah, the provincial capital.

Mirwali Rahil, Head of Public Relations at Helmand's Public Health Directorate, told The Kabul Times that the outbreak of measles in the province has reached an unprecedented level.

In recent days, hundreds of people have contracted the disease.

He noted that compared to previous years, this year has seen a marked rise in measles cases.

To address the surge, in co-

partner organizations, we have deployed mobile teams.

Wherever a measles outbreak occurs, these teams are immediately dispatched to treat patients.

In cooperation with UNICEF, we have also opened a 20-bed hospital for measles patients in Lashkargah."

Meanwhile, several people whose family members have contracted measles also spoke with The Kabul Times, confirming the increasing number of infections in the province.

Mohammad Sharif, a relative of a measles patient at the government hospital in Lashkargah, said he didn't know how his family member contracted the disease.

He added that others in their area had also been infected, mostly children.

Strengthening bilateral ties between Afghanistan & India

In a most recent telephonic conversation between Afghanistan Foreign Minister, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, and Indian Foreign Minister, S. Jaishankar, the enhancement of bilateral ties, focusing on trade and diplomatic cooperation have been discussed.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has reported that in the telephonic conversation, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi has highlighted the importance of maintaining positive ties with all countries through a balanced approach.

Muttaqi specifically requested the facilitation of Indian visas for Afghan businessmen and patients, as well as the repatriation of Afghan prisoners currently in India.

In response, Jaishankar has reaffirmed India's commitment to cooperating with Afghanistan and emphasized the importance of collaboration in both political and economic sectors.

In the telephonic conversation, Jaishankar has assured Minister Muttaqi that India will prioritize addressing the concerns regarding prisoners and improving the visa issuance process for Afghan nationals.

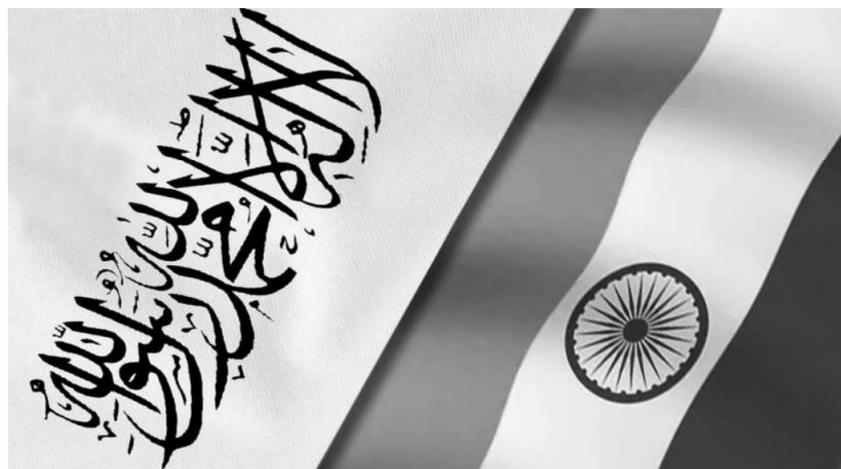
Previously, in meeting between the acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic

Emirate, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, and M Anand Prakash, the joint secretary of the Pakistan-Afghanistan-Iran division of India's external af-

eral relations, trade and transit the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan since the IEA took over the power in mid-August 2021.

The recent and first tele-

should go ahead with easing visas to Afghans, particularly businessmen, to help expand trade relations between the two countries.



fairs ministry, bilateral political relations, trade and transit as well as recent regional political developments had been discussed.

In the meeting, Amir Khan Muttaqi had stressed the development of diplomatic, economic relations and invited Indian investors to take advantage of good investment opportunities in Afghanistan.

The two sides had discussed the expansion of bilat-

phonic conversation between the foreign ministers of the two countries is a clear sign that the two countries are keen to strengthen their bilateral political and economic relations in various fields. There are hopes that the recent telephonic conversation between the officials of the two countries will pave the way for strengthening bilateral political and economic relations between the two countries. It is time that India

Although India does not have a shared border with Afghanistan, but the country is connected with Afghanistan and has had good relations with Afghanistan for decades.

With the recent telephonic conversation between officials of the two countries, hopes have increased that bilateral political and economic relations between the two countries will further increase in the near future. **Mukhtar Safi**

The Chinese modernization in my eyes

Part III

Five days in Inner Mongolia: A journey of wild beauty and unforgettable memories. In the vast northern reaches of China lies a region where digital innovation meets breathtaking natural beauty—Inner Mongolia.

My recent journey there, alongside journalists from various countries, offered a unique window into China's modernization, not as a one-dimensional economic miracle, but as a holistic blend of cultural preservation, technological advancement, environmental restoration, and inclusive growth.

Inner Mongolia is not just a frontier region—it is a living, evolving example of how China is balancing tradition with

land ecology and productivity. Their work is vital not just for Inner Mongolia, where grasslands are central to the ecosystem and local culture, but for the country's broader environmental strategy. Inner Mongolia's modernization doesn't mean sidelining its cultural identity. Rather, it elevates it through thoughtful integration.

This was most evident during our visit to the Hohhot International Sculpture Park. Spanning 37,000 square meters, this green oasis—designed in the shape of an eagle's wings—symbolizes freedom and strength while offering a visual narrative of "Northern Border Culture."

The sculptures and land-

Chayouhouqi, a region actively shaping a sustainable and prosperous future.

As Zhao Dan of the Chayouhouqi Tourism Investment Company explained to us, tourism here is more than sightseeing—it's a pathway to green, inclusive economic growth.

Guided by President Xi Jinping's vision for ecological civilization, Chayouhouqi integrates cultural tourism with environmental stewardship.

Its branding as the "Summer Resort Capital of the Chinese Grasslands" is not mere promotion—it is backed by strategic investments in all-season tourism, supported by rich volcanic landscapes, national-level scenic spots, and rural revitalization efforts.



transformation.

Our exploration began with a visit to the Inner Mongolia Data Exchange Center, a regional digital hub designed to power the province's economic transformation.

As we entered the facility, we were introduced to a futuristic ecosystem where data flows securely and efficiently—pivotal for developing a robust digital economy.

The center serves as a backbone for regional and national data transactions.

From automated data registration to intelligent product adaptation and ecosystem optimization, the center is a testament to how Inner Mongolia is embracing technology to leap into the future.

This platform is not isolated; it aspires to influence data standards and transactions across China, enabling a safer, smarter, and more interconnected digital market.

But what was truly striking was how this technological leap was being harnessed not just for profit, but for public benefit—enhancing governance, supporting businesses, and creating a model for sustainable urban development.

From bytes to blades of grass, our next destination was M-Grass, a leading company in ecological restoration and grass seed production.

This organization isn't merely producing agricultural goods—it's spearheading a movement. M-Grass leads over 30 research centers, including national hubs focused on desertification control, wind erosion prevention, and sustainable agriculture.

Its efforts go far beyond conventional conservation. M-Grass collaborates with more than 70 research institutions, universities, and companies to form a national innovation center dedicated to grass-

scape meld together to reflect the spirit of Inner Mongolia.

From ancient myths to modern expressions of identity, the park encapsulates the creative energy of the region, where art and nature coexist in harmony.

No journey to Inner Mongolia is complete without stepping onto its iconic grasslands.

The Chichuan Green Grasslands, often referred to as the "Backyard Garden of the Green City," were a highlight of the trip.

These expansive meadows hosted the 70th anniversary celebrations of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region—symbolizing unity, history, and pride.

More than a scenic destination, Chichuan serves as a cultural and ecological hub. We toured the Hohhot Tara Conference Center, construct-



ed within China's largest traditional Mongolian yurt.

This architectural marvel reflects the blending of tradition and innovation—a recurring theme throughout Inner Mongolia's modernization story. Here, culture isn't frozen in time—it evolves, supported by new infrastructure, educational efforts, and tourism initiatives that keep ancient customs relevant and alive.

Perhaps nowhere is the synergy between ecological protection and tourism development more evident than in

In 2024 alone, the banner welcomed 4.468 million tourists, generating 3.73 billion Yuan in revenue.

These efforts benefited over 3,000 farmers and herds-men, created 5,000 jobs, and lifted household incomes significantly. Tourism here is not extractive—it's regenerative, feeding back into the local economy and society.

Our journey concluded in Hohhot, the capital of Inner Mongolia.

Meaning "Green City" in Mongolian, Hohhot sits at a critical junction of regional and international development.

It's part of strategic economic zones such as the "Two-Hour Economic Circle" connecting Beijing, Tianjin, and Hebei, and the broader opening-up initiatives toward Russia, Mongolia, and Europe.

Hohhot is evolving into a

powerhouse of high-quality development, with efforts focused on green, intelligent upgrades of traditional industries and the cultivation of strategic emerging sectors. Its "Six Pillar Industry Clusters" support everything from dairy and grass seed production to clean energy, biotech, and information technology. The city is home to global dairy giants like Yili and Mengniu, anchors of a thriving green agriculture and livestock processing industry.

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70.10	93.19	820	239	78.51	0.84	19.09



Volleyball training and talent identification camp wraps up in Kabul

The National Volleyball Federation, in collaboration with the General Directorate of Olympics, Physical Education, and Sports, successfully concluded a 20-day volleyball training and talent identification camp, selecting 20 standout athletes from 150 participants representing all provinces of Afghanistan.

The camp, designed to identify promising talent for the upcoming fourth season of the Afghanistan Premier Volleyball League, targeted athletes aged 18 to 23. Over the course of the program, participants underwent rigorous training and evaluation under the guidance of expert coaches. The selection process focused on skill, performance, and potential, with the top 20 athletes earning the opportunity to compete in the highly anticipated Premier League.

The fourth season of the Afghanistan Premier Volleyball League is set to commence on May 18, 2025, and will feature 10 teams from various clubs across the country. Organized by the National Volleyball Federation and supported by the General Directorate of Olympics, Physical Education, and Sports, the league is expected to run for 17 days, showcasing the nation's finest volleyball talent.

This initiative underscores Afghanistan's commitment to nurturing young athletes and promoting volleyball at a national level. The selected players are poised to make their mark in the competitive league, contributing to the sport's growing popularity in the country.

The federation and its partners aim to continue fostering talent development, ensuring a bright future for Afghan volleyball.



Muay Thai championship kicks off in Kabul

The first phase of the "Golden Belt of Afghanistan's Finest" Muay Thai Championship commenced in Kabul, organized by the National Muay Thai Federation under the General Directorate of Olympics, Physical Education, and Sports, in collaboration with the Technical and Vocational Education Authority. Held at the Institute of Fine Arts and Industries in Kabul, the event brings together 200 athletes from 10 provinces across Afghanistan to compete for the prestigious title.

The championship features participants from Kabul and nine other provinces, competing in four age categories: children, adolescents, youth, and adults. Athletes will face off in various weight classes, vying for the coveted golden belt. The competition, designed to identify Afghanistan's top Muay Thai talents, spans three days and serves as a platform to select elite fighters for national and international tournaments.

This nationwide initiative underscores Afghanistan's growing commitment to promoting Muay Thai as a competitive sport. The event not only highlights the skill and dedication of the athletes but also fosters unity among provinces through sportsmanship. Organizers aim to elevate the sport's profile in Afghanistan, providing opportunities for talented fighters to shine on global stages.

The championship has generated excitement among sports enthusiasts, with spectators eagerly anticipating thrilling matches. As the event progresses, it is expected to showcase the resilience and potential of Afghanistan's Muay Thai community, paving the way for future sporting achievements.

ICC sets \$5.76M prize for World Test Championship, winners to claim \$3.6M

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has revealed a substantial prize pool of \$5.76 million for the World Test Championship (WTC), underscoring its commitment to promoting Test cricket. The winning team of the WTC final will receive a staggering \$3.6 million, while the runner-up will be awarded \$2.16 million. This significant financial incentive highlights the ICC's efforts to elevate the prestige of the longest format of the game and reward teams for their consistency and excellence over the two-year championship cycle.

The highly anticipated WTC final is scheduled for June 21, 2025, and will feature a thrilling clash between Australia and South Africa. The match will take place at the iconic Lord's Cricket Ground in England, often referred to as the "Home of Cricket." Both teams have demonstrated remarkable skill and resilience throughout the championship, earning their spots in the final through consistent performances in the grueling Test format.

Australia, known for its strong batting lineup and formidable pace attack, will face a tough challenge from South Africa, whose balanced squad has shown tenacity in recent Test series. The final promises to be a captivating contest, with both teams vying for the coveted WTC mace and the lion's share of the prize money.

The ICC's substantial investment in the WTC reflects its dedication to preserving Test cricket's legacy while making it financially rewarding for players. Fans worldwide eagerly await the showdown at Lord's, expecting a battle that will showcase the essence of Test cricket.



will be awarded \$2.16 million. This significant financial incentive highlights the ICC's efforts to elevate the prestige of the longest format of the game and reward teams for their consistency and excellence over the two-year championship cycle.

IEA aims to turn Afghanistan into regional trade and transit hub, says Beradar

KABUL: The Deputy Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate for Economic Affairs, Mullah Abdul Ghani Beradar Akhund, said that the Islamic Emirate aims to turn Afghanistan into a hub for regional economic, trade, and transit cooperation, according to a statement from his office the other day.

He made the remarks during a meeting with Marat Shkirzyanovich Khusnullin, the Deputy Prime Minister of Russia for Construction and Regional Development, at the sidelines of the 16th Kazan International Economic Forum in Tatarstan, the statement said.

According to the statement, the two sides discussed political, economic, and trade-related matters.



Expressing gratitude to the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation for removing the name of the Islamic Emirate from the list of banned organizations, Beradar added that the Islamic Emirate has adopted an economy-centered foreign policy, aiming to turn Afghanistan into a hub for regional economic cooperation, trade, and transit, which benefits not only Afghanistan but the entire region. "To achieve this goal, the Islamic Emirate has been working to facilitate Afghanistan's exports to regional and distant countries and attract foreign investment in various sectors. Based on this strategy, the Islamic Emirate invites

the Russian Federation to invest in urban development, construction of affordable housing, public schools and hospitals, roads, bridges, dams, water supply systems, and electricity distribution networks," the deputy PM said as quoted by the statement.

He emphasized that the involvement of a major and influential country like Russia is vital to ensure that trade and transit routes are not used as tools for obstruction by other countries. Mentioning the Afghan-Trans project as a key regional initiative, he said that the projects play an important role in linking Central and South Asia, urging the Russian Federation to cooperate in completing the project according to the set plans.

Meanwhile, Marat Shkirzyanovich Khusnullin stated that the Islamic Emirate was removed from the list of banned organizations to promote bilateral political and economic ties with Afghanistan.

Expressing hope that the meeting would pave the way for significant progress in various areas, he affirmed Russia's readiness to cooperate with the Islamic Emirate on urban development and housing projects. Khusnullin praised the achievements of the Islamic Emirate in the transportation sector and acknowledged that there are currently no obstacles in this area within Afghanistan, assuring that the Russian Federation is ready to give Afghanistan an active role in the North-South Corridor.

The Russian Deputy PM emphasized increasing the volume of bilateral trade and enhancing banking cooperation, stating that a detailed report on these topics would be presented to the PM and President Vladimir Putin, to send technical teams to Kabul for follow-up and implementation.

Both sides agreed to appoint official representatives to follow up on the discussed issues and expressed hope that with joint coordination, significant progress would be made in these areas.

US senators seek to block Trump's UAE, Qatar defence deals

A group of United States senators is trying to halt \$3.5bn in weapons sales to the United Arab Emirates and Qatar over concerns that the deals

will personally benefit the family of US President Donald Trump. Two "resolutions of disapproval" were submitted on Thursday in the US by Democratic Senators Chris Murphy, Chris Van Hollen, Brian Schatz and Tim Kaine, along with Senator Bernie Sanders, an independent who often votes with Democrats.

The legislators also issued statements accusing President Trump, who is concluding a trip to the Middle East, of actively engaging in the "corruption of US foreign policy" over the timing of the sales and recent investment deals.

The Department of State this week approved the \$1.6bn sale to the UAE of Chinook helicopters and equipment, F-16

aircraft components, and spare and repair parts to support Apache, Black Hawk and Chinook helicopters. Initial reporting cited the figure as close to \$1.3bn, but the \$1.6bn figure was used in a statement from the legislators.

The lawmakers are also seeking to block \$1.9bn in sales to Qatar of MQ-9B Predator drones and associated equipment, which was approved by the State Department in March.

The Chinese modernization in...

Alongside this economic dynamism is a push for scientific innovation, cultural integration, and the development of smart cities and livable environments. This journey through Inner Mongolia revealed more than just development statistics or scenic views. It showcased a living model of Chinese modernization—one that values both the silicon of servers and the soul of the steppes. It's a place where ancient throat songs echo across fiber optic networks, where sustainable grazing coexists with global data flows.

Through this harmonious blend of past and future, Inner Mongolia invites the world not just to visit, but to reflect. What does modernization truly mean? Is it measured solely

by skyscrapers and GDP, or by the ability to protect traditions while welcoming progress? China, through Inner Mongolia, is offering its answer: modernization with identity, with ecology, with inclusiveness. And for all who witnessed it—including myself—it is an experience not easily forgotten.

This unforgettable experience was made possible not only by what we saw and learned but also by the people who shared it with us. In gratitude, I extend my heartfelt thanks to the people and residents of Inner Mongolia. Their hospitality, resilience, and deep connection to land and culture made this journey not just informative but truly unforgettable. I would also like to extend my special thanks to Mr. Wu Hailong,

President of the China Public Diplomacy Association, who accompanied us from Ulanqab to Beijing. He traveled about 500 kilometers from his hometown to join us, warmly embraced us, and

personally saw us off before returning to Ulanqab. His gracious presence and support enriched this experience beyond measure.

Nik Mohammad Nikmal

First-ever Afghanistan-Russia Business...

Meanwhile, Overchuk expressed Russia's interest in importing Afghan agricultural products, such as grapes, mixed nuts, and dried fruits, and highlighted plans to develop transport and supply chains, recognizing Afghanistan's critical role in ensuring regional connectivity.

He announced Russia's willingness to invest in Afghanistan's infrastructure, including mining, hydroelectric projects, power generation, railway network expansion, transportation manufacturing, and enhancing regional trade and connectivity.

Overchuk also announced

the signing of an agreement to establish a joint trade center between Moscow and Kabul, intended to facilitate new avenues for bilateral cooperation.

Both Afghan and Russian officials underscored the importance of such economic forums in expanding bilateral economic and trade relations and

committed to continuing these engagements in the future. It was anticipated that significant trade agreements between Afghan and Russian businesses would be signed during the Kazan Forum to further enhance trade volumes between Kabul and Moscow.

The Kabul Times

