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Protesters want water accords with Iran, Pakistan

By Zubair Babakarkhail

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KABUL - Participants of protest demonstration here demanded of the government to work out a procedure for the water flowing into Iran and Pakistan.

The protest demonstration was organised by member of the Wolesi Jirga Najeebullah Kabuli here on Sunday. The protest demo started from the Shar-e-Naw Park and concluded in front of the Iranian embassy.

The protesters, carrying banners and placards inscribed with slogans regarding right of Afghanistan on its water sources, asked the government to decide the water issue with Iran and Pakistan in line with the international laws.

The organisers of the demonstration asked the rest of Afghans to join hands with them for their rights. Addressing the gathering, Najeebullah Kabuli said the water issue was a matter of life and death for Afghans.

"We want to stop the water flowing into Iran and Pakistan. Every Iranian is benefiting from the water but not the Afghans who have right over it," said Kabuli.

He said they would not allow any one to usurp the rights of their country and their people. He alleged that Iran was not allowing construction of Salma Dam on Harirod River and this was why construction workers of the dam were attacked more than once.

A declaration was also released upon the conclusion of the protest demonstration. The declaration said Afghanistan could not become a sovereign state unless it define its frontiers with the neighbours.

The declaration said the people of Afghanistan would not accept the control of foreigners on their water and other resources.

The protesters asked the government to ascertain the capacity of the water flowing from Afghanistan into Iran and Pakistan and then enter into an agreement with the two countries in light of the international laws.

According to a survey of the Ministry of Water and Energy, Afghanistan has 75 billion squares feet water resources.

Twenty per cent of that is under ground. The survey said that only 25 to 30 per cent of the water is used in Afghanistan and that too, only in traditional ways.