

## Quote of the Day

The highest possible stage in moral culture is when we recognize that we ought to control our thoughts.

Charles Darwin (1882 - 1809)

## Constitution

The National Assembly convenes two ordinary sessions each year. The term of the National Assembly in each year is nine months. When necessary, the assembly can extend this period.

Article 107

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# Order Suggests President Ghani Seeks to Consolidate Power

KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani has reportedly issued an order directing government institutions that all executive decrees and orders will from now on be overseen and executed by the Presidential Palace's Office of Administrative Affairs. The move could mark an unprecedented step to consolidate power to the president.

Afghan political commentators have expressed shock and outrage at the news, calling it an obvious step toward authoritarianism. Others suggested the move exposed obvious tensions between the president and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah.

News of the order came in the form of a letter received by TOLONews. In the first and second articles of the five paragraph order, it is stated that all ministries and government institutions are obliged to process all recommendations and documents ...*(More on P4)...*(1)



## Ghani Holds Telephonic Conversation with King Salman



KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani held telephonic conversation with Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia. The state-run Saudi Press Agency reports both the leaders discussed bilateral relations between "the two fraternal countries and the whole spectrum of regional and interna-

tional situation." However, the news agency did not give further details into conversation between the two dignitaries. Talks between Ghani and king Salman held at a time when rumours about peace negotiations between Afghan government-Taliban were circulating. A Saudi-led airstrike ...*(More on P4)...*(2)

## Backed by Donors, CASA-1000 Getting Final Touches

KABUL - A Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) official on Tuesday said the World Bank (WB) had pledged a grant of \$526 million for finalisation of CASA-1000 power project.



When completed, CASA-1000 will allow Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to profit from existing, unused summer generation capacity by selling electricity to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Afghanistan would doubly benefit from the project as a consumer and as a transit country, generating revenue. Pakistan would add 1,000mw to its national grid during the summer months.

MoFA spokesman Ahmad Shekib Mustaghni told a news conference in Kabul that the WB, USAID and other ...*(More on P4)...*(4)

## President Inaugurates Expo of Locally Made Products

KABUL - President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani inaugurated a four-day exhibition of locally-manufactured products in the capital Kabul on Tuesday. The expo has been arranged by the Afghanistan Investment Support Agency (AISA) at the Loya Jirga tent, where different brands of domestic products are on display.

The president visited different stalls and lauded manufacturers, a statement from the Presidential Palace said. However, he did not speak to the media. *(Pajhwok)*

## Pentagon

# Afghan Govt. Agencies May Have Wasted Billions in Aid

KABUL - Highlighting the Afghan government's money-management weakness, the U.S. Defense Department officials have been reported by Washington Examiner as saying that the Afghan government agencies may have wasted billions of dollars in direct U.S. aid.

The source revealed that the officials with the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) told the Pentagon's Inspector General that they felt "pressure to maintain hard-fought gains" in the development of



Afghan security forces and as a result, were willing to "overlook" troubled contracts made possible by U.S. and coalition funds.

"The Pentagon watchdog found that Afghan agencies enforced no formal spending require-

ments to protect the flood of funding the U.S. and other nations poured into the country to support the developing national security forces," it added.

The inspector general, according to ...*(More on P4)...*(3)

## Afghans Demand Elected Mayors

KABUL - A provision in the Afghan constitution requiring mayors to be elected has never been put into practice.

Instead of the system of directed elected mayors and municipal councils set out in Article 141 of the constitution, appointments to these posts are filled by Afghanistan's interior ministry, subject to presidential approval. Speakers at IWPR-organised debates in the Zabul, Khost and Kunar provinces on March 16 agreed that this system allowed officials to be selected through personal connections and bribery rather than merit.

"A mayor is currently only accountable to the government or to a particular individual, and this generates corruption," said Hajji Mohammad Ismail Zabuli, a tribal elder in the southern province of Zabul. "If mayors are elected by the people, they will be accountable to the public and will therefore perform better." Zabuli claimed that senior municipal-level positions were often sold to the highest bidder. "How we can expect real service from ...*(More on P4)...*(7)

## Ghani Meets with Investigators of Kabul Bank Case

KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani has met with the investigators of Kabul Bank case, as part of his commitments during his inauguration to finalize the country's largest corruption scandal, his office said in a statement on Tuesday.



During the meeting held in the Presidential Palace on Tuesday evening, the

statement added that the investigators reported about their performance

on implementation of court's verdict to recover the ...*(More on P4)...*(5)

## China's aid to Afghanistan is Sincere: Xijun

KABUL - Participants in a seminar on China-Afghanistan relations on Tuesday called for enhancing bilateral relations between the two neighboring countries.

Addressing the seminar, Chinese Ambassador Deng Xijun said he will spare no efforts in enhancing people-to-people relations and maintaining frequent strategic communication between the two nations.

"We should give play to the irreplaceable leading role of



high-level exchanges in boosting bilateral relations and promote the exchange of visits and meetings in multilateral arenas

such as international conferences between the leaders of both sides," Deng told the seminar. ...*(More on P4)...*(6)

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## 190 Policewomen Assumes Duty after Training in Turkey



KABUL - The Ministry of Interior (MoI) announced Monday that 190 policewomen assumed duty by joining the Afghan National Police (ANP) forces after completing their training in Turkey. The policewomen were deployed to Turkey last year to participate in training courses and recently returned to country to serve with the ANP forces.

A ceremony was organized in Kabul to celebrate the successful completion of the courses by the policewomen and their return to Afghanistan. MoI officials said 112 of the policewomen would serve in capital Kabul while the remaining would be deployed to the other provinces. The officials further added

that 325 more female police officers would be deployed to Turkey to participate in training courses which would be conducted over a period of six months.

Head of the Gender Department in the Ministry of Interior (MoI) Gen. Hekmat Shahi said the ministry would be unable to achieve its main goals in the absence of female police officers.

Gen. Shahi urged the newly appointed female police officers to remain committed in attracting trust of the people and implementation of law.

Around 2,300 women are currently serving with the Ministry of Interior (MoI) which includes police officers, soldiers and administrative clerks. (KP)