

Jalalabad Clear 27°C 14°C	Ghazni Clear 17°C 2°C	Kandahar Clear 27°C 9°C	Mazar Clear 20°C 11°C	Herat Clear 24°C 10°C	Bamayan Clear 9°C -3°C	Kabul Clear 19°C 6°C
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NATO an Effective Partner in Afghanistan: White House

WASHINGTON - NATO has been an effective partner of the United States in the war against terrorism in Afghanistan, the White House said Monday, as a leading presidential candidate claimed that the alliance was no longer required. "We welcome the valuable contribution that NATO has made to our efforts in Afghanistan. Much of the progress that we have made would not have been possible without the significant contributions that NATO has made," said the White House press secretary. Josh Earnest told reporters at his daily news conference the partnership had enabled the US to succeed in decimating Al Qaeda, which previously operated with



virtual impunity in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region. "And we've made enormous progress in helping the Afghan government begin to assume much more control for the security situation," he argued. "That is ultimately the key to our success. That has been a long road and we've got a substantial journey ahead of us before we can see the kind of resolution in Afghanistan that we would like to see. But there is no denying that we've made important progress," he said. Earnest was responding to a question on a meeting between President Barack Obama and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the White House on Monday, during which the ...*(More on P4)...(6)*

Army Pensioners Protest for Rights in Kabul

KABUL - Dozens of military pensioners on Tuesday protested against what they said government's double-standards policy toward them and asked the authorities concerned to observe justice about their rights. Around 150 ex-service members held a rally in capital Kabul and said military officials who retired in the 1380s solar years were paid 50,000 afghanis in annual pension, but those recently retired received up to 300,000 afghanis. The protestors gathered in front of the Ministry of Finance and were chanting slogans "We want justice", "the government should at least pay 40 percent pension to us," "we hate the government's double-standards." Mohammad Daud, one of the retired Afghan National Army (ANA) generals, told Pajhwok Afghan News the government was not observing the law about pensioners' rights. He said based on new ANA norms, earlier retired pensioners should receive the same amount of privileges as the recently retired pensioners. "The government pays 50,000 to 75,000 afghanis to the earlier retired government officers, but those recently retired receive up to 300,000 afghanis each year," he said. Afzali asked the government not to forget their sacrifices in the defence of the country. Retired major Mubarak Shah, another protestor, also said the distribution of their pensions by following the old norms was against the law. He asked the government to give them their pensions under the new military law. Meanwhile, Pensioners Union head, Abdul Ali Sayed, told Pajhwok Afghan News the issue of renewing the law about their ...*(More on P4)...(9)*

USAID to Fund Expansion of Lending to Farmers

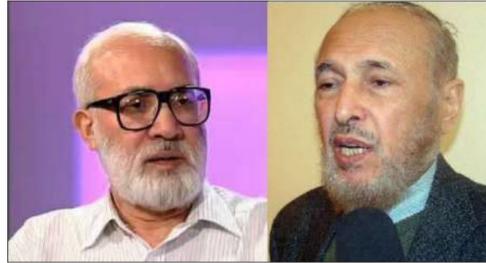
KABUL - USAID will provide \$6 million long-term loan to two Afghan financial institutions through the Agriculture Development Programme (ADP) to fund the expansion of lending to farmers and small and medium-size agribusinesses. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) to the effect was signed among Minister of Agriculture Asadullah Zamir, Afghan Rural Finance Company (ARFC) CEO Hashmat Sayar Amarkhel and First Microfinance Bank (FMFB) Chief Financial Officer Faburama Ceessay on April 3. Each fi-



ncial institution would receive a \$3 million loan under the USAID's Agricultural Credit Enhancement Program - II (ACE-II) in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, ...*(More on P4)...(7)*

Pak Analysts Use of Force Would Fail to Bring Afghan Taliban to Peace Talks

ISLAMABAD - Senior Pakistani analysts say efforts are underway to persuade Taliban to join Afghan peace process but any coercive measures to force Taliban to sit for talks would not be fruitful. Pak analysts: Use of force would fail to bring Afghan Taliban to Peace talks Talking to IRNA separately, Former Pakistan ambassador to Afghanistan, Rustom Shah Mohmand and Rahimullah Yusufzai said that 'Islamabad has not stepped back from Afghanistan peace process and is very eager to bring peace in Afghanistan.'



Former Pakistani Ambassador to Afghanistan Rustom Shah Mohmand said Pakistan government is in touch with Taliban on peace process but talks cannot succeed unless basic demands of Taliban are addressed. He said that Pakistan and Afghanistan have to accept ground realities to make talks fruitful. Another senior Pakistani analyst, Rahimullah Yusufzai

said that efforts are still made behind the scene to persuade the Taliban to come to the negotiating table. "Efforts are also being to persuade the Afghan government to give some concession to Taliban," he said. Both the analysts strongly believe that Pakistan government has not stepped back from the Afghan peace process and they are still very keen on their agenda. Rustom Shah Mohmand expressing his views on some reports that Pakistani authorities have sent a warning letter to ...*(More on P4)...(8)*

Over 2,400 Unregistered Sims Collected in Badakhshan



FAIZABAD - More than 2,400 illegal SIMs of different telecommunication companies have been seized in northeastern Badakhshan province, officials said on Tuesday.

The Ministry of Communication launched a campaign a few months ago for the collection of the SIM cards that were sold without registration by vendors. More than 2,400 have been collected so far.

Director of Communications Ghulam Rabbani Haideri told Pajhwok Afghan News the illegal SIMs were collected in Kisham, Bahd and Argo districts with co-operation from security organs "Smuggled from neighbouring provinces to the local market, the SIMs may have been used for bothering and threatening people," he added. The Afghanistan Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (ATRA)'s provincial manager, Nisar Ahmad Haideri, said they received complaints on a daily basis regarding the illegal use of such SIMs. "We have shared the issue with security organs and the ATRA main office in Kabul and urged them to take action the sellers. But, unfortunately, no one has detained so far," he regretted. Unregistered SIM cards provided to the Taliban were used them in the Warduj district of the province, he said. (Pajhwok)

Taliban Seek Health Services in Remote Areas of Kandahar

KANDAHAR CITY - Local officials say the Taliban have demanded the opening of health centres in unstable districts of southern Kandahar province. The Taliban's demand comes as several districts of Kandahar are faced with a shortage of health facilities due to insecurity and for other reasons. Governor Dr. Hamayon Azizi told Pajhwok Afghan News the Taliban's call for providing health services to the people was positive. He said it was impossible in the past to open health clinics in restive areas due to security threats.



The departments concerned should take advantage of the opportunity and open health centers in remote districts and border areas, the governor said. Azizi asked the Ministry of Public health to set up at least 20 more healthcare centers in Kandahar province during the ongoing solar year. "There are limited health services in the districts. Only one clinic is functional in each of big districts. At least two districts don't have even a single clinic," he ...*(More on P4)...(10)*

As War Escalates, Schools Forced to Close

KABUL - One of Afghanistan's proudest achievements has been getting millions of children, especially girls, back into school since the toppling of the Taliban. But that success is crumbling across the south and in other battleground areas of the country, where hundreds of schools have been forced to shut down. Sometimes the cause is fighting, sometimes it's intimidation from the Taliban. Sometimes it's both, as in the case of the Loy Manda high school in southern Helmand province, part of the Taliban heartland. When the Taliban waged an offensive last winter, the school in the Nad Ali district was caught in the fighting between the militants and Afghan government forces. "We had six rooms, books, chairs, but now everything is destroyed," said Hekmatallah, the headmaster, who like some Afghans goes by one name. He's working toward ...*(More on P4)...(11)*

12 Militants Surrender in Takhar

TALUQAN - A dozen militants surrendered to the government in northern Afghan province of Takhar, an army spokesman said on Tuesday. "A total of 12 militants renounced the violence and surrendered to Afghan National Army's Shaheen 209 Corps officials in Ishkamish District, Takhar Province," spokesman Nasratullah Jamshidi told Xinhua. The surrendered group also handed over 10 rounds of their weapons to army officials in the province, 245 km north of the Afghan capital, he said. Some of the former rebels requested the military to withhold their identities for fear of reprisal by their former comrades. He said the former militants were all active members of the Taliban militant group in the district. The Afghan government launched a peace and reconciliation process in 2010 to encourage Taliban to disarm and give up militancy. Since mid-2010, more than 10,000 Taliban militants have laid down arms and joined the government-backed peace process, according to officials, but the claim has been rejected by the armed outfit as "baseless." (Xinhua)

Cream Industry Calls for Govt's Support to Expand Business

KABUL - Officials from Afghanistan Industries Association said at least \$120 million has been invested in the ice cream industry in Afghanistan but the sector needs government's support in order to expand. Head of the association, Sakhi Paiman, said that lack of raw materials, electricity, a market for the products, the lack of support from



government and the presence of imported ice cream products in local markets are among the challenges faced by the industry. According to him, at least 20 ice cream ...*(More on P4)...(12)*

Complex for Agriculture, Engineering Faculties Inaugurated

MAZAR-I-SHARIF - A modern complex -- housing agriculture, engineering and vocational training institutes-- was inaugurated in northern Balkh province on Tuesday, officials said. Representative of education and economy ministries participated in the opening ceremony for the

Germany-funded complex in the Takhta Pul area of Nahr-i-Shahi district. On the sidelines of the ceremony, Deputy Minister of Education Racheel Ahmad Formali told Pajhwok Afghan News the building could accommodate 2,160 students. Equipped ...*(More on P4)...(13)*

More Than 190 Welfare Projects Implemented in Badakhshan



FAIZABAD - Under the National Solidarity Programme (NSP), 193 projects, benefiting more than 26,000 families, have been implemented in northeastern Badakhshan province, an official said on Tuesday. The projects were executed in Argo, Shuhada, Baharak, Warduj, Kufab, Wakhan, Yamgan, Zibak, Pishgan and Shahr-i-Bozurg districts of the remote province, NSP Director Abdul Wali Marufi told Pajhwok Afghan News. He said the projects included the construction of public bathrooms, reservoirs for irrigation and drinking water, embankments, bridges, small power dams, drinking water networks, roads and footpaths. He said the projects benefited 26,500 families in the districts. The second

phase of executing projects was underway in other districts, the official added, explaining some schemes had already been completed. A flagship development initiative of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), NSP is aimed at generating jobs and implementation of reconstruction projects. Jan Aqa Sultani, administrative head of the Argo district council, said the welfare projects implemented under NSP had created job opportunities for people in addition to bringing development to their areas. Under the NSP, a 22.45 kilometres canal in Faizabad, the capital of Badakhshan province, is being cleaned -- a project that will cost 11,100,000 afghanis. Marufi said ...*(More on P4)...(14)*