

Jalalabad Clear 29°C 18°C	Ghazni Clear 24°C 8°C	Kandahar Clear 36°C 19°C	Mazar Clear 28°C 16°C	Herat Clear 31°C 18°C	Bamayan Partly Cloudy 15°C 4°C	Kabul Chance of Rain 25°C 12°C
---	---------------------------------------	--	---------------------------------------	---------------------------------------	--	--

Weather Forecast Brought to You by MTN Afghanistan



Senior UN Human Rights Official Visits Kabul

KABUL - The United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Ivan Šimonović, will visit Afghanistan from 15 to 21 April to assess the human rights situation a statement from the office of the United Nations Human Rights Commissioner said Wednesday. In addition, the statement said that the official visit would focus particularly the human rights impact of the handover of security responsibilities to Afghan forces and increased ground engagements across the country. During his visit, Šimonović is scheduled to meet with President Ashraf Ghani, government officials, including Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ministers of Justice, ...*(More on P4)...(9)*

Efforts on to Ensure Abducted Passengers Safe Release: NSC

KABUL - The National Security Council (NSC) has reiterated all options are being employed to ensure safe release of the 31 abducted passengers. A statement from the Presidential Palace on Wednesday said the thorny issue of passengers kidnapping was discussed at length in the NSC meeting held on Tuesday. Some family members of the kidnapped passengers were briefed about the ongoing efforts at the meeting. During the meeting, the families of the abducted persons were asked to demonstrate patience and the government was doing all to release them. Almost two months back, as many as 31 passengers were on their way from Herat to Kabul when armed insurgents picked them from buses in Shah Joy district of Zabul province. The NSC discussed law and order in Badakhshan and Helmand provinces. (Pajhwok)

Pak, Afghan Officials for Boosting Bilateral Trade Volume

KABUL - Officials during an exhibition arranged by Pak-Afghan traders on Wednesday stressed to enhance bilateral trade and ban smuggling and import of low quality goods from Pakistan to Afghanistan. In the Pak-Afghan joint trade exhibition, several products were displayed manufactured in the two countries. From Pakistan, products of 41 companies were put on display, including electronic items, ...*(More on P4)...(8)*



No Insurgent Hideouts Left in Sangin: ANA

KABUL - All insurgent hideouts were destroyed during the Zulfiqar military operation which ended a week ago in Sangin district, southern Helmand, said the Afghan National Army (ANA) operation's commander Hamid Saifi. The anti-insurgent operation, which was carried out over a period of almost two months, resulted in a heavy casualty toll for the Taliban, Saifi stated. He said that during the operation, ANA forces neutralized more than 2,000 landmines, and killed more than 200 insurgents. "A top Taliban commander who was fighting here was also killed during the operation," Saifi said, who also leads the 6th ANA Battalion. Meanwhile, residents in Sangin have asked the government ...*(More on P4)...(10)*



Leaders Urged to Shun Differences, Maintain Unity

KABUL - The Young Activists Network for Reform and Change (YANRC) urged the government leaders to shun difference and maintain unity among their ranks at a time when the country was passing through critical juncture. YANRC on Wednesday expressed deep concerns over hike in recent security incidents and warned the government not to sacrifice soldiers for their vested interests. Leaders of the network said instead of focusing on resolving vital issues in the country, the leaders were busy dividing posts and ministries. Sayed Maisam Ehsani, YANRC deputy head, said: "The president and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) have not paid attention to the country's stability and issues of national interest." Ehsani blasted the government for not having a defence minister, saying the leaders' differences over the nominees were major reason for Badakhshan killing. The ...*(More on P4)...(12)*

Islamabad to Propose Joint-Anti Polio Drive to Kabul

ISLAMABAD - In the backdrop of stepped up bilateral contacts, Pakistan is set to propose Afghanistan coordinated, simultaneous polio vaccination campaigns to tackle cross-border transfer of the virus. Pakistan's Dawn.com quoted a senior health official with polio programme on condition of anonymity that the issue would be discussed at a meeting scheduled in Kabul on Thursday and Friday. In the past, the paper said that the polio virus had been transmitted between the two neighbouring countries which share a long ...*(More on P4)...(11)*



AUAF to Train 245 Afghan Businesswomen



KABUL - The American University of Afghanistan (AUAF) is set to launch a training course for Afghan businesswomen. Up to 245 women are expected to benefit from this. Training courses that will be offered include financial management, accounting, communications, leadership, management, marketing and other business related programs. "The program will help women enhance their knowledge about business issues. We always try to help Afghan women extend their ...*(More on P4)...(15)*

France Boosts WFP Emergency Response in Afghanistan

KABUL - In a fresh development, the government France has announced a contribution of \$424,000 to the World Food Programme (WFP) to assist with emergency response in Afghanistan in 2015. A statement released by the WFP said the announcement was formalised at a signing ceremony on Wednesday at the French Embassy in Kabul attended by high-level representatives from the government of France and WFP. The new contribution from France, the statement hoped would enable WFP to transport and distribute locally procured food items to assist approximately 45,000 people who may be affected by natural or man-made disasters. "This donation is most welcome not only because it provides life-saving food assistance to people in the critical first 72 hours of an emergency and beyond. It will also help support local farmers and businesses because WFP is purchasing all the food commodities locally, including High Energy Biscuits," said Claude Jibidar, WFP's representative and country director in Afghanistan. WFP would use the funds to purchase wheat from small-scale farmers and farmers' organisations where possible and High Energy Biscuits produced in a local factory in Afghanistan's ...*(More on P4)...(17)*



Youths Rally in Support of ANSF Following Badakhshan Incident

KABUL - Dozens of the Afghan youths participated in a symbolic demonstration to support the Afghan National Security Forces and protest against the government's silence regarding the fate of abducted Hazaras by the militants. The demonstration was also organized with an aim to protest against the indiscriminate killing of the Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers by militants in northeast Badakhshan province. The rally participants marched from Pul-e-Surkh area to Shahid Farkhunda road and presented ...*(More on P4)...(14)*

Refugees in Pakistan Being Harassed: UN



PESHAWAR - The United Nations is faced with funding and legal problems in dealing with the issue of voluntary repatriation of 1.5 million Afghan refugees from Pakistan, an official said on Tuesday. In an effort to tackle the issue, the UN refugee agency is trying to convince Pakistan into integrating certain number of registered Afghans, said Jacques Franquin, head of the UNHCR sub-office in Peshawar. However, Pakistani authorities insist on the repatriation of registered Afghans, whose Proof of Registration (PoR) cards will expire at the end of the current year. "We have been working to convince Pakistan to open the door a little bit. For its part, Pakistan has ruled out any flexibility on the question of integrating the refugees or extending their stay, citing donor fatigue and security concerns. The UNHCR is not associated with the registration of ...*(More on P4)...(18)*

ISIS in Afghanistan "Psychological Warfare": Amrullah



KABUL - The former head of the National Directorate of Security (NDS) - Afghanistan's intelligence agency - Amrullah Saleh says that Islamic State is not a reality and it is "psychological warfare". Amrullah Saleh has told Radio Free Afghanistan that whatever ISIS is doing Iraq and Syria, Taliban are doing that in Afghanistan. "In reality, Daesh (the Arabic name for IS) will not be able to gain influence or spread roots here, because whatever Daesh has been doing in Iraq and Syria, the Taliban have been doing the same in Afghanistan for the past 20 years. The only difference is that the Taliban never executed their prisoners in orange jumpsuits." Another reason Amrullah Saleh has given is that most of ISIS leaders are Arabs who are in Iraq and Syria and therefore they won't be able to recruit many people in Afghanistan. "Another reason that Daesh won't be able to establish a firm footing here is that it is a Salafi or Wahhabi organization, most of whose leaders are Arab. Their leaders are in Iraq and Syria, and they are not able to attract and recruit many Afghans." ...*(More on P4)...(13)*

UNHCR to Assist Repatriation of Waziristanis

KHOST CITY - Senior United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) officials on Tuesday said they would try to pave the ground for voluntary repatriation of Pakistani refugees from southeastern Khost province as per their wishes. Ayaki Ito, the senior UNHCR official, who arrived from Geneva, was addressing a gathering of elders from refugee families of North Waziristan Agency (NWA) at their camp in the Garbuz district. Ayaki said UNHCR would provide necessary assistance to refugees wishing return to their home country. While talking to Pajhwok Afghan News, the UNHCR official said he visited Khost to know problems facing the refugees and see in which areas they could help them. Maya Ameratunga, the UN agency's country representative in Afghanistan, who accompanied Ayaki, expressed her concerns over the situation of refugees. She said living the life of immigrants was difficult and the refugees themselves could better understand what problems and difficulties they passed through. Elders from the Waziristan refugees said their repatriation to Pakistan in the current circumstances was not favourable and urged the provision of facilities in Afghanistan. As many as 500,000 families fled homes from Waziristan and migrated to Afghanistan after the Pakistani army launched a major offensive against militants in the country's tribal areas near the Afghan border. (Pajhwok)

Afghan Woman Awarded Int'l Women of Courage Award

Niloufar Rahmani, the first woman to serve in the Afghan military since the fall of the Taliban, was honored by the US State Department with the International Women of Courage Award last month. WASHINGTON - Rahmani was one of ten women recognized by the State Department for this prestigious award. Among them were women's rights leader and peace building advocate Majd Chourbaji of Syria, and May Sabe Phyu, who is leading gender equality efforts in Burma. Capt. Rahmani was only 18 years ...*(More on P4)...(16)*