

Jalalabad Chance of Rain 27°C 17°C	Ghazni Partly Cloudy 22°C 6°C	Kandahar Partly Cloudy 30°C 12°C	Mazar Chance of Rain 17°C 13°C	Herat Partly Cloudy 20°C 9°C	Bamayan Chance of Rain 9°C 1°C	Kabul Chance of Rain 18°C 10°C
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Decisive Anti-Militants Offensive in Badakhshan Demanded

KABUL - The provincial council chief of northern Badakhshan province on Saturday urged President Ashraf Ghani to deploy more troops and launch decisive anti-state elements offensive to purge the province of insurgents.

Addressing a gathering which was attended by the president, Naji Nazari stressed the need for a clearing operation in Juram, Yamangan and Wardoj districts rife with militants who



posed great security threat. The president today traveled to Badakhshan following the tragic killing of 27 Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers in Khoshtak area of Juram by heavily-armed militants.

Naji suggested involving Jihadi leaders in the ongoing reconciliation process for durable peace and stability in the country.

Acting Governor Shah Waliullah Adeb asked president to distribute plots among those who suffered from natural calamity.

He expressed his concerns over the slow-paced development in Badakhshan and demanded to establish vocational training centres to enhance capacity of the people. (Pajhwok)

38 Dead, 129 Wounded in Twin Blasts

ALALABAD - A suicide bomber blew himself up in front of Kabul Bank, leaving 38 persons dead and 129 others injured in Jalalabad City, the capital of eastern Nangarhar province, on Saturday morning, a doctor at the provincial civil hospital said.

Brig. Gen. Fazal Ahmed Sherzad told Pajhwok Afghan News that the suicide bomber was riding on motorbike which exploded his suicide vest in front of the bank. Chil-



dren were among the fatalities.

But Dr. Najib Kamawal, director of Nangarhar Civil Hospital, confirmed 38 persons dead and 129 wounded. He said a state of emergency had been declared at the hospital, with most of the injured were struggling for life.

Mohammad Ayub, an eye witness, said that many people gathered near the Bank's checking point when the suicide ... (More on P4)...(8)

Protest Held outside Parliament for Passengers' Release

KABUL - A number of protesters on Saturday blocked the way leading to parliament house, demanding the release of 31 passengers kidnapped two months back from Kabul-Kandahar Highway by armed gunmen.

However, lawmakers entered the house from another gate and the session was formally initiated.

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.

Enraged demonstrators blocked the way to parliament and chanted slogans: "Ter-



rorists are committing crimes and the government is backing them." Safar Ali, a fiery protester, said parliament the way to parliament would be blocked ... (More on P4)...(9)

300 Teachers Complete New Masters Degree at AUAF

KABUL - Officials of the Afghan Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), Ministry of Education (MoE) and the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF) have announced the completion of a master's program for over 300 teachers. The main objective of the program is to enhance the quality of instruction at government-sponsored teacher training institutions around the country.

The World Bank provided financial assistance for the one year teachers master's program at AUAF, which will graduate its first class this year. According to the mutual agreement between the bank and the Afghanistan government, financial assistance is committed for at least 1,000 Afghan teachers to study at AUAF over three years.

"Alongside the training programs, you also learnt the prospects of democracy, justice and human rights, and with the knowledge you gained, you will be able to suggest changes in the education sector and finally to whole country," AUAF academic department chair Sharif Fayez told the graduating teachers on Friday.

Officials hope the program in the coming years will help raise the overall quality of education being provided around the country by improving the quality of instructors. "The program has been very helpful to our teachers. We expect that by ... (More on P4)...(11)

Protesters Want Badakhshan Carnage Probed

KABUL - A number of residents of northeastern Badakhshan province on Saturday staged a protest against Warduj district attack that left 30 Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers dead, demanding the government to investigate the incident thoroughly.

Taliban gunmen killed 30 ANA soldiers, with beheading eight personnel last week in Juram district of the prov-



ince. A number of civil society organizations and government institutions vehemently criticized the Taliban's brutality and also questioned the ability of ... (More on P4)...(10)

Jalalabad Suicide Attack Widely Condemned

KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani, the UNAMA, the Resolute Support mission and the government of Pakistan on Saturday condemned in categorical terms the terrorist attack which resulted in the killing and injuring of scores of civilians.

A suicide bomber blew

Afghan forces." Brig. Gen. Fazal Ahmed Sherzad told Pajhwok Afghan News that the suicide bomber was riding on motorbike which exploded his suicide vest in front of the bank. Children were among the fatalities.

But Dr. Najib Kamawal, director of Nangarhar Civil



himself up in front of Kabul Bank, leaving 34 persons dead and more than 108 injured in Jalalabad City, the capital of eastern Nangarhar province, on Saturday morning, a doctor at the provincial civil hospital said.

A statement from Presidential Palace said that President Ghani condemned the blast in strongest terms. He said: "Bomb blasts in public places are the work of coward, senseless and anti-state elements who don't have the courage to fight

Hospital, confirmed 33 persons dead and over 100 wounded. He said a state of emergency had been declared at the hospital, with most of the injured were struggling for life.

A statement from the MoI said that the incident took place while a suicide bomber detonated his suicide vest among people queuing up for salaries near the New Kabul Bank branch at around 08:00 am.

Soon after the attack, the statement said that Afghan ... (More on P4)...(14)

President Blames IS for Deadly Bombing

KABUL - Afghan President Ashraf Ghani blamed the Islamic State (IS) group for a suicide bombing that killed at least 33 people outside a bank on Saturday in the eastern city of Jalalabad.

More than 100 people were also



wounded in the attack in Jalalabad, the provincial capital, according to officials. The attacker detonated an explosive-laden motorcycle, targeting a crowd of both military personnel and civilians who were gathered outside the Kabul Bank branch in Jalalabad to receive their monthly salaries.

"In the horrific incident in Nangarhar (province), who took responsibility? The Taliban didn't claim responsibility. Daesh claimed responsibility for it", the Afghan president said, using the Arabic acronym for the jihadist group.

"If that is true, local experts say that this would be the biggest attack by IS in Afghanistan", said Taha Siddiqi, FRANCE 24's correspondent in Islamabad. Ghani's government has ... (More on P4)...(13)

Daesh Claims Responsibility for Deadly Jalalabad Attack

JALALABAD - Daesh has claimed to have carried out a deadly suicide attack in eastern Afghanistan Saturday that killed at least 34 people and injured 125, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said, in what, if verified, would be the first major attack claimed by the extremist group in the country.

"Who claimed responsibility for horrific attack in Nangarhar today? The Taliban did not claim responsibility for the attack, Daesh claimed responsibility for the attack," President Ghani

said Saturday, reported AFP. Meanwhile, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has condemned the deadly suicide attack in which all the victims were civilians.

"The continuing use of suicide attacks in densely populated areas, that are certain to kill and maim large numbers of Afghan civilians, may amount to a war crime," said Nicholas Hayson, the Secretary-General's Special Representative ... (More on P4)...(15)

Kabul Pessimistic about Islamabad's Approach to Restart Peace Process



KABUL - The Afghan government is pessimistic about Pakistan's lukewarm approach to restart a stalled peace process with the Taliban, sources said.

President Ashraf Ghani visited Pakistan soon after he sworn-in as president of the country, which led to normalization of bilateral relations.

His visit to Islamabad led to series of contacts between Kabul-Islamabad. Pakistan Army Chief Gen. Raheel Sharif and Director General Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) visited Kabul four times since then.

Pakistani had been holding out assurances to completely support Ghani and to bring Taliban on negotiating table with the Afghan government. The talks were expected to take place in March, 2015 but no breakthrough could be achieved in this regard.

On Friday, President Ghani chaired a meeting of National Security Council (NSC) and discussed the talks process and subsequent Pakistan's pledge in greater detail, sources close to the meeting told Pajhwok Afghan News.

The NSC expressed grave concerns and resentment over Pakistan role for not being able to expedite the process.

A well-placed source said Pakistan initially showed interest to bring Taliban to Kabul for peace parleys but Afghan government demanded that Islamabad should stop support Taliban.

However, "Pakistan is not ready to stop supporting Taliban", he added. A senior official in the government said Pakistan only verbally held out support to keep the peace process forward but was not willing to take practical steps.

He also said Islamabad did not ensure to stop support militants if the peace talks with the militants failed. The source also confirmed that there was difference of opinion regarding peace talks with Taliban among government officials.

First deputy of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mohammad Khan said: "Time will prove how much Pakistan is sincere when talks with militants will be held." ... (More on P4)...(12)



Policemen inspect the site of a suicide bombing in Nangarhar province, eastern Afghanistan, April 18, 2015. At least 38 people were killed while over 139 others wounded in the suicide bomb attack in Jalalabad city, police said. (Xinhua/Tahir Safi)