

Afghan Schoolgirls Hit by Poisoning Attack

TALUQAN - About 62 Afghan girl students were hospitalized Tuesday due to a possible gas poisoning in the country's northern province of Takhar, police said. "Up to 62 students of the Sar-e-Rustaq Girl High School in Rustaq District were shifted to district hospital after they showed symptoms of vomiting, and several had fallen unconscious. Most of the students were discharged shortly after receiving treatment," Abdul Asir Khalil, provincial police spokesman, told Xinhua. An investigation has been initiated to find



the facts behind the incident, he said. No group or individual has claimed the responsibility for the incident so far. Radical Islamic groups and anti-government militants had in the past been blamed for such gas attacks. The conflict-related violence resulted in the partial or complete closure of nearly 400 schools across the country last year, affecting more than 139,000 students and 600 teachers, according to a report released by the UN mission in the country on Monday. ...*(More on P4)...*(9)

Pak Diplomat

Quadrilateral Talks Fail to Bring Peace to Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD - A senior Pakistani analyst says Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) of Afghanistan, China, Pakistan and the United States to bring peace in Afghanistan is a complete failure. Talking to IRNA, former Pakistani Ambassador to Afghanistan, Rustom Shah Mohmand said there was complete lack of trust by Taliban in the QCG as the group has no knowledge of dynamics of Afghan issue. He said Pakistan must bring Iran to the Afghan peace process because it is a vital country. "Iran has to be inducted in the dialogue process," he said. He said peace talks are meaningless because the actual representatives of Taliban have not been contacted yet. "There are two main conditions of Taliban to start peace talks, one is the release of prisoners and

the other is scraping of black lists, unless these demands are met Taliban would not join the peace process," he said. The expert on Afghan affairs said no consideration was given to the demands of Taliban which makes them away from the peace process. "Now Taliban are expanding their Spring Operation and launching attacks in Kabul to make Afghan government give them incentives," he viewed. The analyst went on to say reason for the failure of QCG in bringing peace to Afghanistan is that it failed to understand the dynamics of insurgency in the country and the root cause of insurgency. He said major demands of Taliban need to be accepted to resume the peace process and later other things can be discussed. (IRNA)

Ghani Waives off 5.7m Afs Fine of 5 Iranian Drug Smugglers

KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani has written off fines worth millions of afghanis imposed on Iranian citizens convicted on drug smuggling charges by Afghan courts. Fines of 5.7 million afs, which were payable by five Iranian nationals who were arrested and jailed for smuggling narcotics, the Criminal Justice Task Force (CJTF) said. A statement from the CJTF said the Afghan

government had handed over the inmates, who had already served 16 years of imprisonment, to the Iranian embassy in Kabul. The Ghani administration waived off the fines based on a request from Iranian authorities. The men completed their jail terms in the Pul-e-Charkhi prison on the eastern outskirts of Kabul. Earlier, the government



handed over three Ugandan prisoners charged with drug smuggling after completed their imprisonment terms in Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

Noor Calls for Public Uprising Against Taliban

MAZAR-I-SHARIF - The acting governor of northern Balkh province, Atta Mohammad Noor, on Tuesday invited people to launch a massive public uprising against the Taliban. Noor was addressing a gathering attended by provincial council members, ulema council members and civil society activists, traders and youth. The participants declared their support for Afghan security forces at the gathering in



Mazar-i-Sharif, the provincial capital. Calling Taliban "the slaves of slaves", Noor said cruelties of the rebels should not be ignored. He said Taliban shed the blood of Afghans in return for money from outsiders. The governor said he was concerned over the increasing insecurity in Badakhshan, Takhar, Kunduz, Baghlan, Sar-i-Pul, ...*(More on P4)...*(10)

42 Development Projects Costing 74m Afs Executed in Khost

KHOST CITY - Forty-two development projects have been completed in some districts of southeastern Khost province under the National Solidarity Programme (NSP), an official said on Tuesday. Governor Hukam Khan Habibi said the projects were executed in Zazai Maidan, Mandozai, Tanai, Bak, Sabri, Gurbuz, Musakhel and Tarazai districts at a cost of 74 million afghanis. He added some irriga-

tion projects were the schemes executed to help irrigate hundreds of acres of farmland. Some other long and short-term projects are underway in different districts of the province. Officials of NSP, a flagship development initiative of the government, promised the ongoing projects would be completed soon. Many residents would benefit from the schemes, they hoped. (Pajhwok)

Another Blast Heard in Kabul after Deadly Suicide Attack

KABUL - Another bomb explosion was heard in Kabul late on Tuesday evening hours after a deadly suicide car bombing left 28 dead and hundreds wounded. Interior Ministry spokesman Sediq Seddiqi told Pajhwok Afghan News the latest blast took place at 7:15pm in Sherpur area of Kabul on a street. He said it was a remotely-controlled landmine blast that caused no casualties. The official said the target of the blast was not immediately known. Earlier in the day, a suicide car bombing killed 28 people and injured hundreds others in the 16th police district of Kabul. The blast allowed other attackers to enter government offices, sparking an hours long gun-battle with security forces. (Pajhwok)

MAIL Torches Expired Imported Veterinary Drugs



KABUL - The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) on Tuesday said it had torched a large amount of expired and fake veterinary drugs and pesticides. A MAIL statement received by Pajhwok Afghan News said the 96 types of veterinary drugs included vaccines, pesticides and insecticides. It said the drugs and insecticides had been collected from nine importing companies and 23 wholesale shops during the past one month. The ministry during its monitoring identified two companies as importers of fake drugs and referred them to the attorney's office for investigation. However, the statement did not provide more details about the accused companies. The statement said the ministry's veterinary department always monitored importing companies and wholesales in capital Kabul and provinces to prevent expired or fake drugs from reaching animals. (Pajhwok)

CEO Orders Ministry to Facilitate Afghan Students in India

KABUL - Chief Executive Officer Dr. Abdullah Abdullah has directed the Ministry of Higher Education to address the problems of Afghan students in India, his office said on Tuesday. At a meeting on Monday, Minister of Higher Education Farida Momand explained her ministry's plan to resolve the issues being faced by Afghan students in India, a statement from Abdullah's office said. She said the ministry's contract with an Indian company for deliver-



ing services to Afghan students had expired. A new deal should be inked with another Indian firm, the minister suggested. Momand acknowledged the company could not deliver effective services to the Afghan students. Abdullah instructed an agreement should be signed with APSI, approved by the Indian embassy. He asked the ministry to send a delegation to India and the Afghan embassy in New Delhi to finalize the deal. (Pajhwok)

UK, US, Pakistan, NATO, UN Condemn Deadly Terrorist Assault

KABUL - The government of Pakistan, US, UK, UN and NATO's Resolute Support mission strongly condemned the terrorist attack in Kabul on Tuesday when hundreds of people were killed and wounded. At least 28 people were killed and 327 wounded at 9am in a car bombing in front of the VIP protection unit in the 16th police district of the capital. Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif condemned the deadliest suicide attack on Tuesday in Kabul and called for coordinated approach with Afghanistan to counter the common threat. On behalf of the people and the Government of Pakistan and my own behalf, I strongly condemn this brutal act and offer



my heartfelt condolences to Your Excellency and the bereaved families," Sharif said. He said such incidents continue to remind us that the scourge of terrorism remains a major threat to peace and stability of the two countries, societies and the region. "It serves as a tool for perpetuation of senseless violence in our societies inflicting immense pain and suffering to the people. Eliminating this menace requires firm resolve as well as coordinated approach on our part," the Pakistani PM said. The Taliban's claim of responsibility underscored their continued disregard for civilian lives, said the US embassy, while denouncing the attack as a senseless act of violence. "Afghanistan deserves peace and security, not attacks that victimise parents taking their children to school, workers on their...*(More on P4)...*(11)

Alleged Killer of US Advisors Arrested in Bamyan, MoI Claims

KABUL - Police have arrested the killer of two US advisors after four years of efforts in the Yakawalang district of central Bamyan province, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) said on Tuesday. MoI spokesman Sedique Sediqui told reporters in Kabul that Abdul Saboor had shot dead the US advisors four years back inside the ministry compound. At that time police had named the attacker as Abdul Saboor, a resident of central Parwan province who worked for the intelligence wing of the ministry. (Pajhwok)

NYT Reporter Wins Pulitzer for Stories on Afghan Women

KABUL - A senior American journalist has been awarded a Pulitzer Prize in recognition of her reporting on the life of women in Afghanistan. Alissa J. Rubin, a reporter for The New York Times, has filed thought-provoking stories on the work of Afghan policewomen and the 2015 mob killing of Farkhunda Malikzada. She was one of 20 recipients of the prestigious award announced on Monday afternoon. Each winner will receive a \$10,000 prize, according to the Pulitzer Committee. Rubin's piece on Afghan policewomen highlights the clash between Western ideals and Afghan realities for the female police officers in a conservative culture. She won the accolades in acknowledgement of her "thoroughly reported and movingly written accounts giving voice to Afghan women who were forced to endure unspeakable cruelties," the committee said. (Pajhwok)

5 Daesh Insurgents Killed in Nangarhar Drone Strike

KABUL - Five militants of the Islamic State (IS) group, also known as Daesh, have been killed in a US drone strike in eastern Nangarhar province, an official said on Tuesday. Attaullah Khogyani, the governor's spokesman, told Pajhwok Afghan News the drone struck a house in the Shadal locality of Achin district, where

the fighters were hiding. Meanwhile, security forces launched a clearing operation in the Ghanikhel district of the province to enable residents to live a peaceful life, Khogyani said. He added 13 villages had been cleared of insurgents as a result of the operation. However, militants have not yet reacted to official claims. (Pajhwok)

12 Killed, 100 Homes Destroyed in Baghlan Floods

PUL-I-KHUMRI - Flash floods triggered by recent heavy rains killed a dozen people and swept away more than 100 houses in northern Baghlan province, an official said on Tuesday. Afghanistan Natural Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) director in Baghlan, Abdul Naseer Kohzad, told Pajhwok Afghan News eleven people, including a woman and a

child, died in flooding in Barka district and another person died in Nahrain district. More than one hundred houses were partially damaged and 50 others completely destroyed by the floods, he said. He said Shurqul area of Barka district was remote area and they were trying to send an assessment team to there to assess the damage. (Pajhwok)

Joint Afghan-Iran Investment in Chabahar Port Stressed

KANDAHAR CITY - Joint investment in the Chabahar port of Iran is not only in the interest of Afghanistan, but it could bring peace and stability to the entire region, the governor of southern Kandahar province said on Tuesday. Dr. Mohammad Humayun Azizi, during a meeting with Iranian Ambassador in Afghanistan, said Afghanistan and Iran had been friends and lived in brotherhood throughout the history. He said relations between the two countries should be strengthened in areas of economic cooperation and trade. He said joint investment and availing shared opportunities could bring about peace and stability to Afghanistan and the entire region.

The governor said they had recently sent a delegation to Chabahar port to visit infrastructure and facilities there and inform Kandahar traders and entrepreneurs about the facilities. Iranian Ambassador Mohammad Reza Bahrami said his visit to Kandahar was aimed at expanding trade relations between the two countries. He said the port was not only in the interest of Iran and Afghanistan, but was vital for regional countries. He said Iran, Afghanistan and India had decided to jointly invest in the port's development. A treaty among the three countries to benefit from the port would be signed soon, which would enable the port to be a...*(More on P4)...*(12)

Officials Concerned Over Drawn out War in Kunduz

KABUL - A number of Kunduz provincial council members said Tuesday they are concerned that the war in the province could carry on indefinitely if government does not pay serious attention to the matter. "We call on government to pay attention to Kunduz. It has not paid the required attention to the province so far. People are very concerned about this," said Kunduz provincial council member, Toryalai Kakar. "It is three days now that the province [Kunduz] is being attacked from four sides. They [militants] wanted to take control of [parts of] the province once again, but the security forces prevented them," said



Amruddin Wali, another member of the council. Meanwhile, security forces in Kunduz said insurgents have taken to hiding inside people's houses which has hindered efforts by troops to eliminate insurgents for fear of harming civilians. "The security forces including commando troops have come here to Kunduz and some of them are busy

in military operations in parts of the province," said Khoyal Nabi Ahmadzai, an army commander in Kunduz. He added: "Other troops meanwhile are ready to take orders from their commanders. They [security forces] will eliminate insurgents if they try to attack them." (Toloews)