

Quote of the Day

The truth is more important than the facts.

Frank Lloyd Wright

171 Countries Gather to Sign Paris Pact, Record Day One Signatures

UNITED NATIONS - Leaders from 171 countries gathered on Friday to sign the landmark Paris Agreement on climate change, which is the first step toward the pact's entry into force.

"I urge all countries to move quickly to join the agreement at the national level so that the Paris Agreement can enter into force as early as possible," said United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the opening ceremony of the event.

Noting that the window for keeping global temperature rise below 2 degrees Celsius is rapidly closing, Ban called on the global community to "intensify



efforts to decarbonize our economies." Adopted by 196 parties last year in Par-

is, the agreement sets a target of holding the global average rise in temperature below 2 degrees Celsius, and preferably below 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Moreover, the UN chief pointed out that "we must support developing countries in making this transition," as "the poor and most vulnerable must not suffer further from a problem they did not create."

Taking place on the International Mother Earth Day, the signing ceremony would break the first-day record for signatures which is previously set in 1982 when 119 states signed the Convention on the Law of the Sea. (Xinhua)

UNHCR Voluntary Return of Afghan Refugees Declined in 2016



KABUL - The UN refugee agency has commended the Iranian government's efforts for educating the Afghan children living in the neighbouring country. UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner George Okoth-Obbo also thanked Tehran for providing medical insurance for Afghan refugees. The Islamic Republic News

Agency (IRNA) quoted him as telling journalists that 60,000 Afghan refugees had returned to their country from Iran and Pakistan in 2015. But voluntary returns had declined decreased in 2016 because of security concerns in Afghanistan, the official explained. The return of Afghan refugees to their ... (More on P4)...(1)

Dostum Clears Jawzjan Districts of Taliban

KABUL - Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum, First Vice President, said Thursday during his visit to Jawzjan province that Aqcha, Khaniqa and Mingajik districts have been cleared of Taliban insurgents.

Dostum said that large-scale operations have been conducted in different parts of the province. He said the operation will continue until the complete elimination of insurgents from the province.

"The situation was not good here hence I came to Jawzjan, then I will go to Faryab and Sar-e-Pul provinces and I will go to any place where necessary but of course I will first get the permission of the president," said Dostum. Afghan forces in the area strengthened with the arrival of the First Vice as additional forces from Kabul joined them. They are now making good progress in Khaniq district.

"There is a village called Sabz Poshan where the enemy is located. They have seized the village," said Satar Khan a commander.

"It is many nights we have not seen Taliban but a few nights ago they [Taliban] were coming and taking men ... (More on P4)...(9)

Govt. Vows Tit-For-Tat Response to Taliban Raids

KABUL - Officials on Thursday said the Afghan government would respond 'tit-for-tat' to Taliban's attacks and would show no mercy to them in future.

This was stated by National Security Council (NSC) spokesman Tawab Ghorzang at a joint news conference with the spokesmen of the Presidential Palace, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) here.

Ghorzang said the government had been of the view it wanted to reach a peace deal with the insurgents, who responded in negative, shattering the Afghans' hope for peace.

"Therefore, we will continue to



use all our resources to eliminate the rebels and protect our country and our people," he said.

He said the president had ordered all security forces to show no mercy to militants during clashes.

Currently 15 military operations are underway in different parts of the country and security forces are advancing, Ghorzang added.

CEO spokesman Javed Faisal said the Afghan government would respond to insurgent at-

tacks with attacks.

"The Taliban and other terrorist groups have responded to our peace request with war, therefore we are also ready to give them a similar response," he said.

Faisal added politicians should not focus only on criticising the performance of the government, but should also raise their voices to protect national interests and condemn terrorist groups.

He said militants were fighting for the interests of foreigners. "We know the situation will not get better until training centers and financial sources of terrorists remain intact and the entire region remains silent and Pakistan does not honour its promises about ... (More on P4)...(3)

Karzai Hopes Kazakhstan will Continue Offering Educational Grants



ASTANA - Former President Hamid Karzai thanked President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev for offering 1,000 educational grants to Afghan students and expressed hope Kazakhstan will offer even more grants.

"One of President Nazarbayev's initiatives was to offer Afghan students thousands of scholarships to pursue their studies in Kazakhstan. This is the best way to expand potential and support our youth. This program is successful; we are grateful for it and hope this program will be continued in the future," said the ex-President of Afghanistan, talking to journalists on the margins of the 13th Eurasian Media Forum in Astana on Friday. Earlier Hamid Karzai stressed that scholarships and grants offered to Afghan students were a huge contribution for the country that had been denied the opportunity to offer education to its youth for a long period of time.

It is worth mentioning that Hamid Karzai also highly praised peacemaking efforts of President Nazarbayev. (Agencies)

Billions of Dollars Lost to Illicit Financial Flows: IWA

KABUL - Illicit financial flows have affected the country's stability, security and economic development, paving the ground for terrorist activities, Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA) said in a report on Thursday.

The report titled "Curbing Illicit Financial Flows in Afghanistan" claimed 67 percent of financial processes in the country were illegal, facilitating money-laundering, tax evasion and corruption, particularly bribery. Corruption, which influenced all layers of the government, was cited as one of the major causes of illicit financial flows, and the hawala system as a key factor



aiding money-laundering and fuelling terrorist activities.

Hawala dealers and money service companies were not registered with the government, the report said.

IWA Director Syed Akram Afzali told a news conference illicit financial flows fuelled corruption besides seriously damaging stabil-

ity, security and economic development of the country and paving the ground for terrorist activities.

He said Afghanistan lost billions of dollars during the process each year. The exact amount of the money thus lost could not be estimated because of hidden deals, he added.

Afzali ... (More on P4)...(5)

Stanikzai

Taliban Wanted to Capture Kunduz to Enter Central Asia



KUNDUZ CITY - Security ministers on Thursday said militants had the plan to enter central Asian counties by capturing northern Kunduz province.

Acting Defence Minister Masoom Stanikzai said Kunduz was like a gateway to central Asia and militants had been trying to capture the province, but their plan was frustrated by Afghan security forces with their sacrifices and bravery.

He assured the people of the country that large-scale operations would be launched against militants to clear Kunduz from their presence.

Interior Minister Taj Mohammad Jahid said Taliban's Operation Omari had been made ineffective by security forces. The Taliban wanted ... (More on P4)...(7)

National Flag to Fly Half-Mast on Friday & Saturday

KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani has said the national flag will fly half-mast on Friday and Saturday as a token of mourning for the victims of Tuesday's suicide bombing in the Kabul.

At least 64 people were killed and 347 wounded in the car bomb attack on the VIP protection unit in the 16th police district of the capital.

Ghani's deputy spokesman Dawa Khan Minapal told a press conference here on Thursday the flag would be hoisted at half-mast tomorrow.

After Juma congregations, special prayers would be offered for the victims, he said, adding the flag would fly half-mast at all offices in the country and Afghan diplomatic missions abroad.

However, a presidential decree stated that the flag will fly half-mast on Friday and Saturday. Holy Quran would be recited in all mosques and headquarters of the security forces and government departments across the country.

Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) spokeswoman Manizha Yusufzada said over the ... (More on P4)...(8)

Iran, Afghanistan Agree to Implement Alternative Livelihood Scheme



TEHRAN- Iran and Afghanistan on Thursday agreed on implementing pilot project of alternative livelihood scheme in one of the border provinces to fight against narcotic drugs. Iran, Afghanistan agree on participation to implement alternative livelihood scheme

Iranian Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli visited Counter Narcotics, Salamat Azimi. Both sides agreed on launch-

ing the pilot project of alternative livelihood scheme with the contribution of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the world society.

Meanwhile, Rahmani Fazli and his Singaporean counterpart agreed on forming a joint expert-level committee to study ways and means of cooperation for the purpose and compiling a related MoU. He also visited Head of Ukraine ... (More on P4)...(6)

Nawaz Sharif

Terrorism is A Global Threat



ISLAMABAD - Pakistani Prime minister, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, on Friday strongly condemned deadly Kabul suicide attack in a condolence letter to CEO Abdullah Abdullah.

In his letter, Pakistani prime minister said that I am deeply shocked at the brutal terrorist attack in Kabul on Tuesday causing loss of precious lives and leaving a

large number of people injured.

He further added that I strongly condemn this dastardly terrorist act. The menace of terrorism is a global threat. It continues to erode not only the peace and security of our States, but progress and prosperity of our societies. Undoubtedly, terrorism is our common enemy and ... (More on P4)...(2)

'Education Star' Contest Commenced in Kabul

KABUL - Nearly 10,000 students have registered for a nationwide "Education Star" contest in Kabul, an organizer of the event said on Friday.

Saif-ul-Islam, the Najam Society in-charge in Kabul, told Pajhwok Afghan News, the competition would be conducted in 25 provinces under the title "Education Star" among school students.

Nearly 1,000 students appeared in the exam on the first day of the contest held in the Eid Gah Mosque of Kabul where 10,000 students have so far registered for the contest of "Education Star" and the exams for the rest of the students would be conducted by April, 29, 2016, he said.

"The contest for Education Star of Afghanistan will be conducted in two phases. The first round will be on provincial level while the second will be national level competition. The winner and qualified students will be named during a ceremony at the end of the race," he said.

A best student and 14 other students from Kabul would participate in the national level ... (More on P4)...(4)

Paktia Clerics Ask Govt. to Establish Official Fatwa Centre

GARDEZ - Religious scholars in southeastern Paktia province on Thursday demanded the establishment of an official fatwa centre, Dar al-Ifta, in the country.

Religious scholar Mufti Atiqur Rahman Khalid told a gathering held in support of Afghan security forces here that the government should establish a Dar al-Ifta in the country in order to enable Afghan scholars to issue fatwas in support of the government.

He called for unity among the Afghans and said one of the reasons of the continued war in Afghanistan was the lack of a fatwa centre in the country, allowing figures outside of the country to easily issue improvised fatwas against the government and the people of Afghanistan.

Ulema Council chairman Qari Khwajaudin Haqbayan condemned earlier remarks of a Pakistani cleric Maulana Samiul Haq, who called the insurgency in Afghanistan as legitimate.

"Islam doesn't allow anyone to kill a Muslim," Haqbayan said, adding the current war in Afghanistan had nothing to do with religion and Afghan clerics would continue ... (More on P4)...(10)