

## Quote of the Day

We must give lengthy deliberation to what has to be decided once and for all.

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# Wolesi Jirga Sent Presidential Decree on Electoral Bodies

KABUL - State Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Ghulam Nabi Farahi said the presidential legislative decree on composition, powers and duties of election commissions was sent to the Wolesi Jirga or lower house of parliament for approval on Saturday. Speaking to reporters in front of the parliament building, the minister said the government hoped the Wolesi Jirga would soon make a decision on the decree. Abdul Rauf Inami, the Wolesi Jirga secretary, confirmed receiving the decree by the lower house secretariat on Saturday and said it would be included in the agenda soon. Article 79 of the Constitution



states: "During recess of the House of Representatives, the government shall, in case of an immediate need, issue legislative decrees, except in matters related to budget and financial affairs." Legislative decrees, after endorsement by the president, shall

acquire the force of law. Legislative decrees shall be presented to the National Assembly within 30 days of convening its first session, and if rejected by the National Assembly, they become void." The Independent Election Commission (IEC) has set an October 15 date for holding the long-delayed parliamentary elections, but the government seems to have not yet made any preparations for conducting the vote. Civil Society activists have been criticising the government for failing to conduct the elections to the Wolesi Jirga, a vote, according to the constitution, was due between April 23 and May 23 last year. (Pajhwok)

## Abdul Rauf Ibrahimy Expanding Iran Ties, Afghan Priority



MOSCOW - Clear historical and Islamic realities call for enhanced ties between Iran and Afghanistan, says the Afghan parliament speaker. "Achieving such a goal is a priority for Kabul," Abdul Rauf Ibrahimy told IRNA in an interview in the Russian capital. "Enjoying resilient historical relations, Iran and Af-

ghanistan have maintained positive cooperation under very difficult situations," said Ibrahimy who was in Moscow to participate at a Conference for Eurasia Speakers of Parliament. "We hope that under the current appropriate atmosphere, Kabul and Tehran could promote ties in different... (More on P4)...(1)

## Govt. Unable to Reclaim its Usurped Land: Zahir



KABUL - The Environment Protection Agency, Shahzada Mustafa Zahir, on Saturday said the Afghan government has been unable to reclaim its usurped land from land mafia in different parts of the country. Shahzada Mustafa Zahir told a ceremony marking Earth Day here that 2.1 million acres of government land had been grabbed by powerful men across the country. However, he said the government last year recovered some of its land from illegal occupants while recapturing the entire land remained a big challenge. Earth Day is annually... (More on P4)...(2)

## Pakistan 'Assures' Talks with Taliban will Resume in a Month

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan has assured neighboring Afghanistan that peace talks with the Taliban "will resume in a month" to find a peaceful end to the Afghan conflict. Taliban-led insurgent violence has spiked in Afghanistan with the onset of spring, prompting fears this year could see record levels of bloodshed across the war-torn country. This week's deadly Taliban assault in Kabul that killed around 70 people and wounded hundreds more has observers concerned that Afghan urban centers could be the focus of the insurgency's fighting in 2016. The rise in violence has led to increased calls from within Afghanistan for President



Ashraf Ghani's government to abandon its policy of seeking peace talks with the Taliban and instead intensify military operations against the insurgent group. Prospects for peace But, despite the pressure, visit-

The Afghan minister says that Aziz "assured him the (Afghan) peace process will resume in about a month" and it will encourage nearly three million Afghans living in Pakistan as refugees and economic migrants to return to Afghanistan. Taliban leaders are believed to be sheltering and allegedly directing insurgent attacks from sanctuaries in Pakistan. Afghan officials have been urging Islamabad to bring those leaders to the negotiating table. Islamabad admits having "limited" influence over some insurgent groups but says it has no control over Taliban activities inside Afghanistan. An initial round of peace talks between... (More on P4)...(3)

## CASA-1000 Power Project to be Launched in May

KABUL - The Central Asia South Asia electricity import project CASA-1000 would be inaugurated on May 12 by government leaders in Tajikistan, the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) said on Saturday. Technical level issues concerning the project have been resolved between energy and water ministers of Afghanistan, Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Pakistan at a meeting in the Kazakh city of Almaty, a statement from the MoFA said. The ground-breaking ceremony of the long-awaited project would take place in Tajikistan in the presence of partner countries heads of state and representatives of the fund providing organizations. According to the MoFA statement, Afghan Chief Executive Dr. Abdullah Abdullah would represent Afghanistan in the ground-breaking event. CASA-1000, a \$1.17bn project, would supply surplus central Asian power in summers to energy hungry Afghanistan and Pakistan. The high voltage direct current... (More on P4)...(4)

## Experts Rally for Loya Jirga to Avoid Political Crisis



KABUL - Law experts and critics on Saturday queried the future credibility of Afghanistan's National Unity Government (NUG), arguing that its establishment was not in accordance with the nation's constitution and that government leaders must comply with the political agreement they sealed in the wake of the 2014 disputed presidential elections, which paved the way for the present government. They warned government leaders against violating the political agreement, and urged them to convene the constitutional Loya Jirga according to the timeline so that it can determine the fate of the present administration. According to legal experts, the NUG could face credibility challenges unless it takes steps to convene the Loya Jirga to amend the constitution and define the office of the Chief Executive Officer. The 2014 presidential elections faced a serious deadlock in the wake of accusations of large scale fraud and vote rigging. However, a political agreement was later brokered by the U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry to create the unity government under President Ashraf Ghani and CEO Abdullah Abdullah. The... (More on P4)...(7)

## Name Picks for Defence Minister, Spymaster, Ghani Asked

KABUL - The Wolesi Jirga speaker on Saturday welcomed the government's decision to consult parliamentarians on the current situation, but asked the president to nominate his picks for spymaster and minister of defence. President Ashraf Ghani is expected to hold a meeting with members of both houses of parliament and senior government officials on important issues facing the country. The meeting is expected in the next few days. "I expect the joint meeting will not be a formality. The current war in Afghanistan is the legacy of the US-Russia cold war and since then our people are giving sacri-



fices. The US should either protect our people or leave Afghanistan," a lawmaker from northern Balkh province, Abbas Ibrahimzada, said. He asked the president to explain the policy of war and update the people on the current issues and also take urgent steps towards ending the plight of Af-

## Khalilzad Reflects on Missed Opportunities



KABUL - The former U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, says one of the biggest problems facing Afghanistan continues to be its poor relationship with its neighbor, Pakistan. Khalilzad told VOA in an interview Friday that "the two countries need each other and they should cooperate." He said the United States did not succeed in bringing Afghanistan and Pakistan together after 9/11 and "we have not succeeded still." "This is going

on so many years later. And I think this is the mother, in my view, of the problems of Afghanistan," Khalilzad said. The Afghanistan-born scholar said the biggest failure of the United States in Afghanistan was not being able to develop a plan "where Afghanistan and Pakistan could cooperate." Khalilzad said the main reason why the United States could not achieve more in... (More on P4)...(6)

## Embassy Russia Not Cooperating with Taliban to Fight ISIS



KABUL - The Russian Embassy in Kabul, has dismissed reports about Moscow cooperating with the Taliban to fight loyalists of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). In a statement, the embassy said statements made by Russian Presidential Special Envoy for Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov have been repeatedly altered. Khaama Press quoted the statement, as further saying that such distorted and misinterpreted reports have sparked anger among Russian officials. Asserting that the rumors circulating in social media are aimed at provoking public view against the Russia, the statement warned that such moves will have a negative impact on relations between the two nations. Insisting that Moscow's stance towards the Afghan peace process... (More on P4)...(8)

## Qahraman 60pc Taliban Ready for Talks in Helmand



KABUL - President's special representative for security in Helmand province has said 60 percent of Taliban militants in the southern province are ready to hold talks with the government as they consider the war not a solution. Abdul Jabbar Qahraman told reporters in Kabul on Saturday that they had launched 'inclusive' talks with Taliban insurgents in Helmand province and a large number of them had agreed to negotiations. Qahraman, a lawmaker from Helmand, was appointed by President Ashraf Ghani as his representative to lead operations in Helmand about three months ago. After his appointment, Qahraman had said his appointment was aimed at strengthening coordination among... (More on P4)...(9)

## US Pushes Pakistan Not to Discriminate Terror Groups

WASHINGTON - Amid reports that the deadly Kabul attack was plotted and carried out by the notorious Haqqani terrorist network, the United States has pressed Pakistan to follow up on Islamabad's expressed commitment not to discriminate between terror groups. "We have consistently expressed our concerns at the highest level of the Government of Pakistan about their continued tolerance for Afghan Taliban groups such as the Haqqani Network operating from Pakistani soil," Elizabeth Trudeau, Director of Press Office for the State Department said. Speaking during the daily press briefing here, she was

responding to a question regarding the Kabul attack as reports suggest the deadly attack was plotted by the Pakistan-based Haqqani terrorist network. "And we did again - after this week's attack, we have pressed the Government of Pakistan to follow up on its expressed commitment not to discriminate between terror groups regardless of their agenda or their affiliation by undertaking concrete action against the Haqqanis," she added. At least 64 people were killed and 347 others were wounded in the latest toll of casualties in the deadly suicide car bombing in Kabul city on... (More on P4)...(10)

## Religious Scholars in Kunduz Condemn Killing of Civilians

KUNUZ CITY - Dozens of religious scholars from Kunduz province on Saturday condemned the recent attack in Kabul and said the killing of civilians and innocent people is against the teachings of Islam. The scholars said insurgents follow their nefarious ends in the name of Islam. Tuesday's deadly truck bombing, that targeted an intelligence unit in the capital, killed 64 people and wounded over 340. "Suicide [attacks] is a cruel act. This has to be slammed by religious scholars, but unfortunately they [religious scholars] are not doing it. Those who stain their hands with people's blood should be termed as criminal - by the clerics," said Mawlawi Abdul Rashid, a religious scholar in Kunduz. Another religious scholar, Mohammad Nasir Hamidi, meanwhile said: "Those who kill innocent people and those who harm the people are the enemy of God, the enemy of religion and the enemy of the people. They [militants] will not kill other Muslims if they have faith in God." Scholars at the gathering called on all armed opposition groups... (More on P4)...(11)