

<b>Jalalabad</b> Clear 39°C 29°C	<b>Ghazni</b> Clear 32°C 20°C	<b>Kandahar</b> Clear 40°C 27°C	<b>Mazar</b> Clear 38°C 29°C	<b>Herat</b> Clear 36°C 23°C	<b>Bamayan</b> Clear 26°C 12°C	<b>Kabul</b> Clear 34°C 21°C
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# Afghan Taliban Optimistic About Peace Process: Mutasim

KABUL - A former top leader of the Taliban group Agha Jan Mutasim has said the group is optimistic about peace process with the Afghan government. Mutasim was serving as the minister of finance during the Taliban regime and political head of Taliban's Quetta Council. The remarks by Mutasim come as the group rejected the earlier calls by Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) consisting of Afghanistan, Pakistan, US and China to participate in peace talks. "Taliban are optimistic about the peace process and they believe China could play a key role," former Taliban minister Agha Jan Mutasim told The Express Tribune. The latest remark by Mutasim comes as the Taliban-led insurgency has been rampant since the

group announced its spring offensive in mid-April this year. The Afghan government was expecting to participate in direct peace talks with the Taliban group earlier in March this year but the group responded the Afghan government call with deadly attacks. Afghanistan was forced to stop peace efforts following a series of deadly attacks in the country, including a major attack on VIP protection unit in Kabul that left at least 64 dead and 347 others wounded. The Afghan government opted a strict military option to weaken the group on the battlefield after the attack and announcement of the group's spring offensive.(KP)



## Helmand Battle Moves Closer to Lashkargah City

NAD ALI - The war has moved closer to Helmand's capital city, Lashkargah, after Chah Anjir area in Nad Ali district fallen to militants, local officials and residents said. The officials said reinforcement troops have arrived at the area and that air raids have also started to help the ground forces. Helmand residents warned that Lashkargah city will fall to militants if serious measures were not taken by government to push back the Taliban. Representatives and elders from Helmand, Kandahar, Uruzgan and Zabul provinces also said the troops are faced with some problems on the battlefield. "You know that nearly 576 troops were killed or wounded over the past four days, but these figures are kept secret," said Helmand provincial council member Karim Atal. "The security force members including army, ...*(More on P4)...(13)*

## Herat AIHRC Raises Concern over Child Vendors

HERAT CITY - Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) in Herat on Friday raised concerns over child vendors in Herat province. The commission's head Abdul Qadir Rahimi said that nearly 4,000 children are working in markets and streets and that those children are deprived of an education. Hundreds of children in Herat province are forced to work due to financial problems at home - many of whom are their families' breadwinners. "We don't have any one to work for us, we even don't have a carpet for our room," Fatima the mother of four children said. Most of the child shoe polishers on the streets said their income did not exceed more than 50 Afghani a day. One of the child vendor's Mohammad Ewaz told TOLONews he wants to be a doctor in the future but he said that if he goes to school his family will go hungry. "I have to ...*(More on P4)...(11)*

# President can not Issue New Electoral Reform Decree: MPs

KABUL - Electoral watchdogs on Thursday welcomed the Independent Commission for Overseeing the Implementation of the Constitution (ICOIC)'s remarks about a new presidential decree on electoral reforms, but some lawmakers said a new decree couldn't be issued until the fate of the previous one was decided. President Ghani had issued two decrees on composition, authorities and duties of the two electoral bodies as part of the electoral reform, a key component of the unity government agreement.



His first and second decrees were rejected by the lower house of parliament or Wolesi Jirga, but the upper house or Senate approved the second decree. As a result of differences between the two houses of

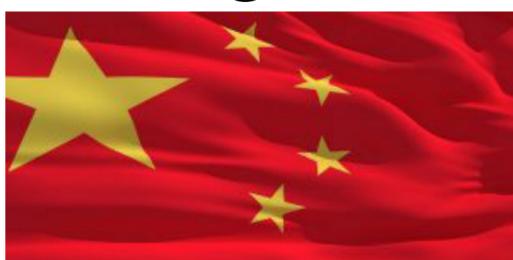
parliament over the decree, a joint commission comprised of equal members from both the houses was established. The joint panel is yet to resolve the issue. Then the government asked the ICOIC to find a solution to the impasse. The ICOIC on Wednesday declared President Ghani had the mandate to issue a new decree on electoral reforms when the parliament had risen for a recess. The ICOIC said under article 109 of the Constitution, proposals for amending election law shall not be included in the work ...*(More on P4)...(12)*

## Pakistan Sought Permission to Use Afghan Airspace: Copter Crash

KABUL - The Afghan Ministry of Defence (MoD) on Friday said that Pakistan had sought permission to use the Afghan airspace for sending a helicopter to Uzbekistan and an investigation into the helicopter crash had been launched. The Pakistani Mi-17 helicopter crash landed in Azra district of central Logar province on Thursday about 40km east of the district centre due to technical problems. The Azra district chief, Hamidullah Hamid, told Pajhwok Afghan News six Pakistani military officials and one Russian were onboard the helicopter when it crashed. He said the Taliban then captured all the six and took them to unknown location. ...*(More on P4)...(14)*

# China Pledges \$2.2 Million in Fresh Aid to Afghanistan

KABUL - The government of China has pledged a fresh aid package of \$2.2 million to Afghanistan as the country attempts to expand role in civilian and military aid to the country. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan (MoFA) said the latest aid package was announced by the Chinese Ambassador to Afghanistan. According to a statement by MoFA, the Chinese envoy to Afghanistan announced the aid package during a meeting with the deputy foreign minister for administrative affairs Nasir Ahmad Andisha. The statement further added that the Chinese envoy also discussed regarding programs to train the Afghan diplomats.



The latest aid package announcement by Chian comes as the Afghan army chief of staff is in China to discuss Beijing's military support to Afghanistan. This comes as the Chinese envoy to Afghanistan met the Afghan National Security Adviser last month and informed regarding Beijing's willingness to consider the military support request from the Afghan side. Afghanistan received the first batch of military aid from China earlier this month which followed as the country has been attempting to increase ...*(More on P4)...(15)*

## Pak, Afghan Govts Urged to Resolve Refugees' Problems



KABUL - Representatives of Afghan refugees living in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Friday urged the governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan to resolve problems the refugees faced. The representatives of various Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan addressed a press conference in Peshawar and then also staged a protest demonstration. Gulduddin Hekmatyar-led Hezb-i-Islamic Afghanistan's political affairs in-charge and a refugee in Pakistan, Dr. Ghairat Baheer, told Pajhwok Afghan News they had constituted a 30-member commission tasked with resolving refugees' problems. He said seven members of the commission held a press conference in Peshawar and expressed their concern over the increasing problems of the refugees. He said the speakers urged the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan to resolve problems being faced by the refugee families. Dr. Baheer said Pakistan, which was hosting the Afghan refugees over the past few decades, should exercise more patience and extend the stay of Afghans beyond 2016. Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has extended the stay of legal Afghan refugees in Pakistan until the end of 2016. Dr. Baheer said Pakistan should not undermine its hospitality by forcibly expelling the Afghans. He called on Pakistan to pave the ground for a dignified ...*(More on P4)...(17)*

# 500 Afghan Refugees Return Home from Pakistan Daily: UNHCR

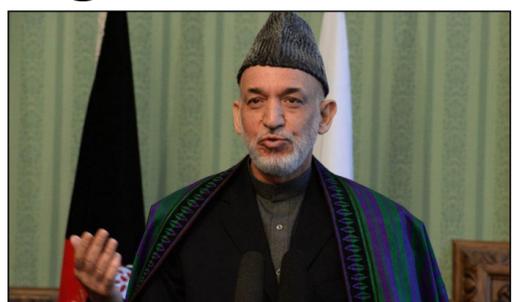
UNITED NATION - The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has said that the number of Afghan refugees voluntarily returning home has surpassed 500 families daily - a marked increase on the 10 families a day a few months ago. The surge in refugee repatriations comes only a few weeks after the Pakistani government set a new deadline of six months for Afghan refugees in Pakistan to leave. Meanwhile, Afghan Consular General in Peshawar has criticized the harassment of Afghan refugees by the Pakistani police, saying that huge numbers of Afghan refugees are willing to return to their country. The Afghan consular gen-



eral in Peshawar has blasted the Pakistan police and security forces for harassing the refugees. "Unfortunately some of these refugees are mistreated by the Pakistani police, these approaches are against international laws," said the Afghan consul general in Pakistan. He described the treatment of refugees by Pakistani police and security agencies as contrary to the refugees' rights and against the international conventions on migrants and refugees. "There has been an unprecedented surge in the repatriation of Afghan refugees, because these days four to five hundred families repatriate from ...*(More on P4)...(18)*

# US 'Owns' Afghanistan: Karzai

KABUL - Former president Hamid Karzai said foreign forces, led by the U.S., are doing more harm than good in Afghanistan and must leave. The U.S., NATO and Western forces in Afghanistan have been doing more harm than good for the country in its fight against the Taliban and other extremists as the country struggles with stability some 14 years since the U.S.-led invasion, former Afghan President Hamid Karzai said in an interview Thursday. "I have asked the Afghan government not to ask the U.S. for aerial bombings of our country," Karzai told The Guardian in an interview. "This is chemicals thrown on the country every day. This is killing our fields, spreading disease, and not bringing an end to the war." Karzai, who was supported by the U.S. and its allies in ruling



the country after the end of Taliban rule, is now Washington's biggest critic. In 2013, he refused to sign a security agreement allowing foreign troops to stay in the country. "NATO has been here for 14 years," Karzai, who served 13 years as the president of Afghanistan, said. "Are we better off? Do we have more security? No." He argued Western forces should leave Afghanistan and allow the country to deal with its own issues and conflict because their presence has only worsened the situation. "If we cannot fight it ourselves, then we cannot ask a foreign force to come take it for us," he said. "Those who take it have more ownership than we have." The ...*(More on P4)...(16)*

# Afghan American Police Sergeant Hailed As 'Hero' in New York

NEW YORK - An Afghan American police sergeant has been hailed as a 'Hero' for his bravery by taking a suspicious device out of a crowded area in the city by putting his life on risk together with another fellow cop. The incident took place on 20th July when police sergeant Hameed Armani was on duty together with Officer Peter Cybulski. The suspicious device was tossed into the

van by a man in a sport utility vehicle in Times Square. Recalling the suspicious move by the man, Armani told Voice of America "I looked at Cybulski and at the device. The lights started flashing, and it started to make noise." "Cybulski goes, 'Boss this is a bomb.' I looked around. The first thing I saw was two little kids right in front of my van and looked to my left. The area was packed with people." Armani decided to take the device and go as far as possible from the crowd. He said Cybulski was on board with the decision. Cybulski held the device as Armani drove to a more deserted location on Sixth Avenue. They put the device on the ground and called the bomb squad. The experts determined the object was a dud. ...*(More on P4)...(19)*