

Quote of the Day

Education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man a more clever devil.
C. S. Lewis

New Taliban Leaders Trying to Strengthen Control: US

WASHINGTON - A senior Obama administration official has said new Taliban leaders are resorting to violence, as reflected in a series of terrorist attacks in Kabul, to establish their credibility.

"That's what we all want to avoid," the special assistant to President Barack Obama and senior director for South Asian affairs at the National Security Council of the White House told Pajhwok Afghan News in an interview.

Peter R Lavoy said: "I would highlight the statements that President Ashraf Ghani has made in light of recent attacks in Afghanistan ... the succession under Mullah Mansoor, they are seeking to justify themselves as leaders of this movement, and they are resorting



to violence to establish their credibility."

Lavoy added aid all countries in the region - Afghanistan, Pakistan and India - along with the United States agreed to pursue a political process, seeking peace and stability in Afghanistan.

"So we are very hopeful that the new Taliban line-up would see a value on this as well as oppose continuing years and years of bloodshed in Afghanistan," the official remarked.

He said the United States was genuinely surprised to recently learn about the report that Mullah Omar had died two years ago. The administration was unaware of his death in Pakistan two years ago, the official insisted.

"When I was in Pakistan last week, I asked senior ... (More on P4)...(1)

Ashraf Ghani Pilgrims be Provided with All Facilities



KABUL - President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani on Thursday welcomed start of Hajj flights and ordered authorities concerned to make sure Afghan pilgrims were provided with all needed facilities.

The first Hajj flight took off early morning from the Hamid Karzai International Airport in capital Kabul. A total of 24,250 pilgrims would depart for Hajj from Kabul, Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif and Kandahar airports to the holy place. A statement from the Presidential Palace said that Ghani ordered Hajj and Religious Affairs Ministry to utilize all available resources to facilitate ... (More on P4)...(2)

Carter Assures Kabul of Continued Support, Advice



WASHINGTON - Afghan national security forces have performed well this year, US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter has said, promising the ally continued financial support and advice. In an interview with the Foreign Affairs magazine, Carter said Afghan security

forces had done well this year when, for the first time, the amount of direct combat support provided by the coalition was minimal. "We certainly hope this success continues, and we're trying to set Afghanistan up for more success by continuing ... (More on P4)...(4)

ANSF Killed 118 Militants in Past Two Days

KABUL - Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) have killed 118 insurgents during operations in past two days, the Ministry of Defense announced on Thursday.

A statement issued by the ministry states that the operations were carried out in Nangarhar, Laghman, Paktia, Paktika, Urozgan, Daikundi, Kandahar, Badghis, Kunduz, Sar-i-Pul, Takhar, Faryab, Helmand and Khak-i-Jabar and Sorubi districts of Kabul.

The statement adds that 118 militants were killed, 62 wounded and four others detained during these operations. 14 soldiers from the Afghan National Army (ANA) have also embraced martyrdom in these operations.

According to the statement government forces suffered casualties in landmine explosions and armed conflicts. (KP)

Jamiat-I-Islami Govt. Lacks Political will to Reform Electoral System

KABUL - The Jamiat-i-Islami political party on Thursday alleged the government lacked the political will to reform the electoral system of the country.

The observation committee of the party held a meeting on "Transparent Election Key to Political Stability". The meeting aimed at a reviewing last presidential election and exploring roadmap to avoid rigging in upcoming ballots.



During the meeting, members of political parties, civil society networks and election watchdogs presented their suggestions regarding reforms in electoral system. The suggestion would be shared with the Electoral

Reform Commission (ERC). Sayed Burhanuddin Khalili, head of the observation committee, said: "We don't believe government officials are serious to reform the ballot system in the country. ... (More on P4)...(3)

Gen. Dostum Seeks to Cut Ties with Pakistan

KABUL - Afghanistan's first Vice President Abdul Rashid Dostum seeks to cut diplomatic relations with Pakistan whom he said had not been honest with Afghanistan in counter-terrorism efforts during the past 14 years. Expressing these statements while being on the frontline in Faryab, Dostum urged that Afghans should not be deceived by Pakistan anymore.



"We should have a clear and serious stance. If Pakistan is playing with us for many years, we must also cut our diplomatic relations with them," Dostum said, following soured relations between the two neighboring countries.

Furthermore, he stressed the need for mobilization of citizens against the enemies of Afghanistan. He however denied speculations that he is ... (More on P4)...(5)

Council of Ministers Pushes Out e-NIC Decision



KABUL - Despite reports that the National Unity Government (NUG) would finalize a plan for the pilot phase rollout of the e-NIC program at its meeting on Thursday, the issue was not discussed in the end, stoking fears of further delays and funding shortfalls at the e-NIC department.

Officials at the e-NIC department said continued delays in the rollout would likely mean the termination of jobs. Funding organizations such as the United States Agency ... (More on P4)...(6)

'Foreign Propaganda Reinforces Violent Streak among Youth'

JALALABAD - Afghanistan Liaison Office (TLO) officials on Thursday said the youth and influential figures should take part in efforts at countering the philosophy of violence because foreign propaganda and problems at home had reinforced violent streak among the youth.

TLO foreign relations official Mohammad Nabi Tadbir told Pajhwok Afghan News they held a workshop involving youth from various provinces and from Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Jalalabad to consult them on efforts at countering violence.

He said the workshop was aimed at encouraging the youth to work with their communities for preventing violence in their respective areas.

"Problems at home like joblessness and propaganda by some countries have reinforced the violent streak among the youth," he said. He claimed some Afghan youth who held government posts ... (More on P4)...(7)

US Blocks Pakistan Funding for Fighting Haqqani



WASHINGTON - In a move that has blocked the disbursement of the next tranche of Coalition Support Fund (CSF), the United States has told Pakistan that it would not be certifying to Congress that the Pakistani counter-terrorism operation in North Waziristan damaged the Haqqani network, AFP and Pakistan media report. This was conveyed by the US Department of Defense to the Pakistani mission in Washington as well as to the authorities in Islamabad, according to a highly placed source.

The Foreign Office did not immediately reply to a question about the US communication, but a senior official based at the foreign office, speaking on condition of an-

onymity, said they had been informally told about the decision.

The Obama administration reportedly refuses to certify to Congress that the group was damaged in the Zarb-i-Azb military operation.

The US move is politically more damaging for Islamabad than its financial impact, which is significant nevertheless for being an important source for narrowing the current account deficit.

However, this has coincided with the deterioration in ties with Afghanistan because of Kabul's allegations that Islamabad has continued to harbor Taliban bases from where attacks are being launched.

The US decision is also likely to sour ties in the run-up to Prime ... (More on P4)...(8)

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