

Quote of the Day

Experience is a hard teacher because she gives the test first, the lesson afterward.

Vernon Law

Kabul-Delhi Enjoy Friendly Relations Historically: Modi

KABUL - Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday reiterated his country's commitment to Afghanistan's rehabilitation, reconstruction, peace and stability.

He reaffirmed the pledge in a video conference at the inaugural ceremony for the Storai (Star) Palace at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) after its rehabilitation.

Almost a century old, the palace was in dilapidated condition before it was rebuilt at a cost of \$7 million provided by the Indian government.

Modi renewed his promise to help bring durable peace and stability to Afghanistan. India would stand by Afghanistan through thick and thin, the prime minister vowed.

Modi said: "The rehabilitation of this



palace is a reminder for those who don't want to see Afghanistan being steered out of violence towards peace. The rehabilitation of the beautiful building is

a gift from Indian to our Afghan brothers and sisters."

He added: "The hearts of the people of the two countries beat together. Kabul and New Delhi have enjoyed friendly relations historically," the Indian leader remarked, hoping the cooperative ties would grow further with time.

He voiced India's concern over the current security situation in Afghanistan, where the insurgents, supported by outsiders, have targeted civilians and security forces on a daily basis.

"Our partnership is enduring and today's gathering is evidence of our continued commitment to a stable Afghanistan. We want every Afghan to play a vital role in the economic development of their country," he observed.

President Ashraf ... (More on P4)...(1)

Rebuilt with Indian Assistance, Storai Palace Inaugurated

KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani and India Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday inaugurated the historic Storai (Star) Palace at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).

Almost a century old, the palace was in dilapidated condition before it was rebuilt at a cost of \$7 million provided by the Indian government.

Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani said: "We have witnessed the historic inauguration of a building after its rehabilitation." He called the structure a symbol of Afghanistan's foreign policy.

He said the facility had been constructed during the government of Amir Habibullah Khan. Its walls developed cracks with the passage of time and as a result of decades of war.

"The building was damaged in recent decades due to the lack of proper maintenance. It has been rehabilitated with the assistance of the Indian government, the minister said.

He added Afghanistan-India relations were not limited to the diplomatic level but were based on strong cooperation in different fields, including culture, arts, poetry and Sufism.

Both countries were facing a common challenge of terrorism and extremism in the region, Rabbani noted, saying Kabul and New Delhi were committed to cooperation in this regard. (Pajhwok)

Afghan-Pakistan Trade Drops By 50% in Two Months: ACCI

KABUL - Officials at the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) said this week that trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan is down by more than 50 percent in the past two months.

They said that the lack of interest among Afghan businessmen to do business with Pakistan has caused this dip - which will also result in the projected trade income target between the two countries - of \$1 billion USD - not being reached.

On the basis of ACCI figures two months ago, around 9,000 tons of flour, cooking oil, rice, beans, sugar and cement was imported from Pakistan to Afghanistan on a daily basis. Now only about 4,000 tons of these items are imported to Afghanistan daily.

Officials at the ACCI said that an upswing in problems in dealing with Pakistan for Afghan businessmen were one of the reasons ... (More on P4)...(2)

Ghani, Abdullah Set to Meet Today to End Dispute



KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani and his CEO Abdullah Abdullah are set to meet on Tuesday (today) in an attempt to settle their disputes which emerged earlier this month after Abdullah criticized Ghani over certain policy issues. The Presidential Palace said in a statement on Monday that the two leaders are scheduled to hold a one-on-one discussion on Tuesday.

Presiding over a meeting of Council of Ministers (CM) on Monday, the CEO also voiced his hopes that there would be a positive outcome to the meeting with the president.

This new development takes place ten days after relations soured between the two leaders of the national unity government.

In rare change of tone, Abdullah lashed out at Ghani over what he called a reluctance by the president to discuss issues of national importance and Afghanistan's foreign policy track.

"Political issues are happening in the country. There are discussions about the National Unity Government and the implementation of the NUG agreement... There were a number of problems over the past two years. We hope that talks on the NUG agreement end with results," Abdullah said. ... (More on P4)...(3)

OIC to Host Conference on Afghan Reconciliation

KABUL - A three-day international conference of religious scholars will be organized in the holy cities of Makkah and Madina on promoting peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan. Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) Secretary-General Iyad Amin Madani informed Chief Executive Dr. Abdullah Abdullah and Foreign Minister Syed Salahuddin Rabbani about the event. "The conference is a good opportunity for Ulema to make a decision about the ongoing unwar and brutalities in Afghanistan in light of the Islamic injunctions," Dr. Abdullah

said during a meeting with Madani. A statement from Abdullah's office said the two sides conferred on the role of the upcoming conference in bringing durable peace to Afghanistan. To be hosted by Saudi Arabia, the gathering will feature elite scholars from Islamic countries. The OIC secretary general said insecurity and militant-linked violence against the Afghan nation would be discussed by the participants. The conference will have a positive impact on peace and stability across the region, in particular Afghanistan.



Madani said the conference would not only help restore peace in Afghanistan but would also play a key role in changing the mindset in the region, according to a statement issued by Dr. Abdullah's office. (Pajhwok)

CEO Meets Businessmen over Rising Crime Rate

KABUL - At a meeting with businessmen on Monday, CEO Abdullah Abdullah discussed the issue of crime in the country, particularly that targeting the business community.

He said that in recent days, several incidents had been reported in major cities across the country where businessmen and investors were affected. At the meeting, a delegation of businessmen told Abdullah that the problem is having a severe impact on investment in the country. In his address Abdullah said: "Over the last several weeks,



our nation, our businessmen and their family members have faced threats or incidents." This comes just days after money exchangers at Kabul International Market

(Saray Shahzada) protested against the high crime rate in the country - which has forced some people to close their businesses. However, a while back, ... (More on P4)...(4)

ERC Skeptical Over Govt's New Election Plan

KABUL - The Electoral Reform Commission (ERC) on Monday raised doubts over a government plan to conduct Afghanistan's parliamentary elections under a new procedure.

Although the new plan is still under consideration, the Afghan government reportedly hopes to hold parliamentary elections on a single-seat basis, replacing the current system.

The ERC argues that the single-seat election plan will undermine election



transparency and fairness and that this will help local lawbreakers exploit the poll for their own benefit. In addition, a number of election observer groups

have also said that the new plan does not fit in with the abilities of the election commission. "I think that single-seat elections would face ... (More on P4)...(5)

Nad Ali Still under Siege By Taliban

NAD ALI - Despite security forces having launched an operation in Nad Ali district of southern Helmand province, the district remains under siege by insurgents. Soldiers battling the insurgents in the district have said that Nad Ali is only a few kilometers from Lashkargah, the provincial capital. They said negligence on the part of local officials is the reason for the ongoing problem. The soldiers also blasted



government for not supplying them with enough military equipment. (Tolnews)

Fierce Fighting on As Security Forces Retake Khwaja Ghar

TALOQAN - Security forces retook the control of the Khwaja Ghar district of northern Takhar province on Monday after hours of heavy clashes with the Taliban, an official said.

The forces entered the district centre at around 10:00am, pushing back the Taliban from the police headquarters, main bazaar and other areas, said Sunatullah Taimur, the governor's spokesman. He added the Taliban had

torched several shops in the main district bazaar and security forces were fighting them in Qarraq locality. Two policemen and two guards of the governor have been killed and five police personnel wounded in the clashes so far.

Taimur claimed the Taliban had suffered heavy casualties but there was no exact information about the group's losses. Irfanullah, a resident of the ... (More on P4)...(6)

Taliban Suffers Heavy Casualty Toll in Takhar: Officials

TAKHAR - Taliban insurgents have suffered a heavy casualty toll in the Khwaja Ghar battle against security forces - who are driving the insurgents back from the district, local officials said. The Khwaja Ghar attack took place at about 3am local time Monday after dozens of Taliban insurgents attacked the district and took control of it for a few hours. However, by mid-morning, security forces were able to re-take control of the district - after hours of heavy clashes, a spokes-



man for the provincial governor, Sonatullah Taimur, said in a statement. The Provincial Governor Yaseen Zia is meanwhile leading ... (More on P4)...(7)



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