

Jalalabad Clear 23°C 10°C	Ghazni Clear 17°C 1°C	Kandahar Clear 22°C 7°C	Mazar Partly Cloudy 18°C 8°C	Herat Partly Cloudy 24°C 9°C	Bamayan Partly Cloudy 8°C -1°C	Kabul Clear 16°C 1°C
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President Meets Indian PM Ahead of Key Event in Punjab

KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday met in the Amritsar city of Punjab before the Heart of Asia ministerial conference. "Beginning together before the Heart of Asia Ministerial, PM Narendra Modi and President Ashraf Ghani held an important bilateral meeting," the Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesperson said. Vikas Swarup, however, gave no further details of the meeting between Modi and Ghani, who are all set to jointly inaugurate the ministerial conference. Greater defence and trade cooperation during the two countries is believed to have figured at the weekend meeting. Faced with cross-border terror threats, Kabul and Delhi have joined hands to mount pressure on Islamabad.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on Sunday held bilateral talks focusing on a range of key issues including boosting trade and investment, India's reconstruction activities in the war-ravaged country and ways to strengthen defence and security partnership. The issue of firming up an air cargo service pact between the two countries is

understood to have figured in the talks which will give India a leverage in Afghanistan as Pakistan continued to deny transit link through its territory. Modi is learnt to have assured Ghani of India's continued support for peace and stability in Afghanistan. Ghani sought increased supply of military hardware from the ally. Last week, India delivered last of four military helicopters to Afghanistan. Hundreds of Afghan security personnel have been trained by India. Delhi has been supportive of an Afghan-led process of reconciliation and long-term international commitment to Afghanistan. A trilateral framework with Russia is being developed on supplying spares and conducting repairs on other aircraft in Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

UNAMA Study Finds Improvements in Juvenile Centers



KABUL - A new United Nations report released on Sunday indicates positive trends in Afghanistan's juvenile detention and rehabilitation facilities while also outlining a critical need to improve in-detention education and post-rehabilitation care for young Afghans. Extensive research carried out by the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) into juvenile rehabilitation centers (JRCs) indicates the need for the Afghan government to focus, in particular, on helping young Afghans re-enter society. "Our research shows an improved intra-governmental effort to address the needs of juvenile detainees," said Michael E. Hartmann, Director of UNAMA Rule of Law. "Still, the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Education require continued international support for accommodation improvements as well as existing rehabilitation and new re-entry programs for juveniles." Overall, UNAMA's research demonstrated Afghanistan's progress in meeting the minimum and acceptable international standards. However, the field research found that improvement was not uniform or consistent across all centers. Shortcomings were particularly evident in those JRCs that were not the Ministry of Justice's custom-built facilities. The report stated: "Juveniles had regular access to clean drinking water and consistently received three meals a day, consisting of a diet of milk, bread, rice, meat, vegetables, and various seasonal fruits. Additionally, JRCs permitted juveniles with broad ... (More on P4)...(7)

Russia's FSB Says it Killed North Caucasus Daesh 'Emir'

MOSCOW - Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) said Sunday it had killed a Daesh emir in a raid in the volatile North Caucasus. The FSB said in a statement that "among the neutralised bandits was the head of the Caucasus region's branch of the Islamic State (Daesh) Rustam Aselderov, and four of his close associates." The FSB said that 35-year-old Aselderov was involved in blasts in the southern Russian city of Volgograd which killed 34 in 2013. He was fighting for another Caucasus insurgent group at the time. It also linked him to twin car blasts in Dagestan in 2012 that killed 14 and injured at least 120. The FSB said he also organised a foiled attack that was to take place on Moscow's Red Square on New Year's Eve 2010 involving two female suicide bombers. The warlord pledged allegiance to Daesh leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in December 2014, the first major militant to do so in the Caucasus. Daesh named Aselderov, also known as Sheikh Abu Mohammad al-Qadari, the governor of a new Caucasus province. Daesh has since claimed responsibility for a number of attacks on police in Dagestan. Aselderov previously fought with the local Caucasus Emirate insurgent group, taking over as leader of its Dagestan branch in 2012, the FSB said. In 2015 the U.S. Department of State imposed sanctions on Aselderov as a "foreign terrorist fighter" after the jihadist group appointed him leader of its North Caucasus franchise. Russia in October offered a five million ruble (\$78,000 USD) reward for information on Aselderov's whereabouts. The FSB said a joint operation with the interior ministry had cornered Aselderov and his fighters in a private house in the city of Makhachkala, where they found "automatic weapons and a large amount of ammunition and explosives." (AFP)

OPEC's Power Slips Amid a Spurt in U.S. Oil Production

WASHINGTON - Only time will tell whether OPEC will effectively implement its recent decision to curb oil supplies and reverse a price slump that's persisted for 2½ years. But amid the many prognostications over oil prices, something else is clear: When it comes to energy security, the U.S. is in a much better position today than it has been in years. Carlos Pascual, a top energy official at the State Department early in the Obama administration and once an ambassador to Ukraine and Mexico, offered a reminder the other day that the resurgence in U.S. oil and natural gas production in recent years has given



Washington more discretion in dealing with Saudi Arabia and other members of OPEC, not to mention Russia and other countries. When it comes to oil, "the capacity to have a dialogue and to have a discussion as equals, and not as an importer speaking to an exporter, changes the nature of the relationship and the dynamics around the issues that you can address," Pascual, a senior vice president with the analysis firm IHS, said on the Columbia Energy Exchange podcast last week. (USA Today)

'Pakistan Trying to Change Russia, Iran Mentality on Taliban'



KABUL - Pakistan has been trying to change Russia's and Iran's perception about Taliban, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) said Sunday. MoI spokesman Sediq Seddeqi told Pajhwok Afghan News in an interview on Sunday that NATO's Resolute Support commander in Afghanistan Gen. John Nicholson had recently told a Pentagon briefing that Russia and Iran supported Taliban in the war-torn country. Gen. Nicholson denounced Russia and Iran during the Pentagon briefing on Friday, charging the two nations were "legitimizing" the Taliban inside Afghanistan. "Russia has overtly lent legitimacy to the Taliban," Nicholson told reporters. "This public legitimacy that Russia lends to the Taliban is not based on fact, but it is used as a way to essentially undermine the Afghan government and the NATO effort ... so it's not helpful."

MoI Orders Wardak Police to Arrest Suspects in Student's Hanging

KABUL - The Ministry of Interior (MoI) has ordered central Wardak province's police to arrest the suspects involved in the public hanging of a student. On Friday, Taliban insurgents hanged a Kabul Polytechnic University Faculty of Engineering student after accusing him of spying, local officials said. The incident took place in Chak district of the province and the student was hanged publicly, the MoI confirmed. According to local officials the student, named Faizul Rahman Rahmani, was in his fourth year in engineering. Rahman had apparently been on his way home from Kabul to Wardak when the Taliban stopped him in Chak. They accused him of spying and carried out a public hanging in Saydabad district, officials said. Officials said he was a resident of Chak district. A source said that a few days ago Mirwais, a senior local Taliban commander, was killed in Wardak and this move was in retaliation for the death of the commander. Officials said the Taliban accused Rahman of cooperating over the killing of their commander. (ToloneWS)

Some Seminaries in Ghazni Training Militants: Matin



GHAZNI CITY - Some madaris in southern Ghazni province are training armed militants, the governor alleged on Sunday - a claim vehemently rejected by the insurgents. Abdul Karim Matin told a press conference here that religious schools in Taliban-controlled areas were training terrorists. A number of militants detained after clashes were students of local madaris, he said. The Taliban misused the students as fighters, Matin charged, saying: "Unfortunately, our seminaries and the education process are being exploited by the enemies as part of their new tactics." He added most of the time Afghan forces were targeted by students of madaris. Efforts were underway to put an end to the problem but local residents ... (More on P4)...(8)

Unknown Assailants Kill ISIL's Afghan Commander in Mosul

TEHRAN - Local security sources disclosed that unidentified men killed a senior ISIL commander in a knife attack in the center of the city of Mosul. "An Afghan commander of the terrorist group has been stabbed dead by an unknown assailant as he was leaving an ISIL military base in al-Nasr region in Mosul city center," the Arabic-language media quoted an unnamed security source as saying on Sunday. The source, meantime, said that the number of ISIL terrorists is decreasing as the Iraqi forces are heading towards Mosul city center. In a relevant development in late November, local security sources disclosed that a senior Moroccan ISIL commander was gunned down by unknown assailants West of the city of Mosul. "Unknown armed men killed ISIL's commander while he was driving in his car in the town of Ba'aj West of Mosul city," the Arabic-language media ... (More on P4)...(10)

Watchdog Criticizes Dostum over Eshchi Saga

KABUL - Afghanistan Human Rights Organization (AHRO) on Sunday sharply criticized First Vice President Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum over his alleged actions, including the assault of Ahmad Eshchi, former governor of Jawzjan, ten days ago. AHRO urged the United Nations and other countries to take a stand against those who violate the law. Dostum was accused of not only being involved in the alleged assault against Eshchi but also the apparent unlawful arrest of the former governor. However, Eshchi was reportedly handed over to the NDS last week. "This is not the first time that Dostum does such a thing and it will not be the last time. We urge the UN and other countries involved in Afghanistan to stop these powerful men. Such actions have increased the violation of human rights in the country," said Lal Gul Lal, chairman of AHRO. Eshchi's family meanwhile said they were told that Eshchi will be released from NDS custody on Sunday, but this has not yet happened. "My father was transferred to the Directorate of National Security (NDS) last Tuesday and they confirmed that he is in ... (More on P4)...(11)