

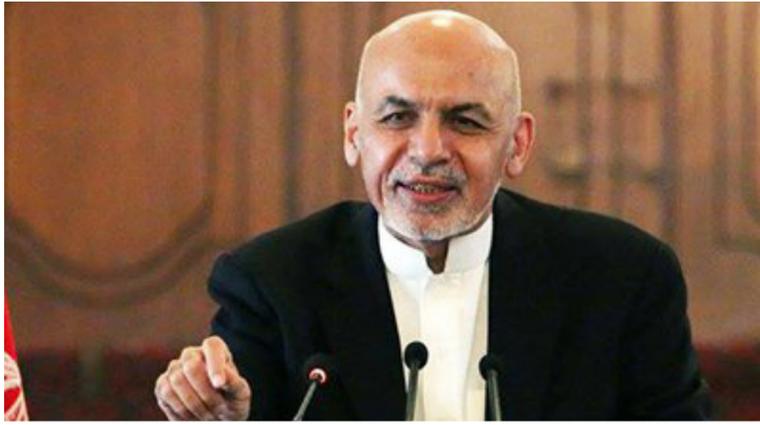
Quote of the Day

Quality is not an act,
it is a habit

Aristotle

Ghani Speaks on Heart of Asia Achievements

KABUL - At a press conference on Friday, President Ashraf Ghani said the biggest achievement at the Heart of Asia Conference was that Pakistan finally agreed to act against groups that do not want to lay down arms. Ghani said Afghanistan wants to stop the 'blame game' and create a trust environment (with Pakistan). However he said "we should be cautiously hopeful." He said at the conference, the Afghan side raised the issue of militants and made it clear practical steps need to be taken against them. Referring to ties with Islamabad, President Ghani said govern-



ments' relations are not about trust but about interests and benefits. "We should choose a moderate level in our relations with other countries." Ghani said that this week's Heart of Asia Summit tried to create consensus and that he made practical promises. "We are trying to change Afghanistan into the Heart of Asia in real, by connecting it to all regional countries. We had meetings with world leaders on the sidelines of Heart of Asia Conference." He said terrorism is not just a threat to Afghanistan but to the entire region and the world. He stated ...*(More on P4)...(1)*

Putin Warns to Destroy Any Forces Threatening Russian Military in Syria

MOSCOW - Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday warned of immediate destruction to any forces threatening Russian military troops in Syria.



"Any targets threatening Russian forces or our ground infrastructure should be destroyed immediately, and I order (them) to act as tough as possible," Putin, who is also the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Armed Forces, said at a meeting of senior Defense Ministry officials. Warning those attempting to organize any kind of "provocations against the Russian military," he

said Russia has adopted additional measures to ensure security of its military and air bases, which have been reinforced by "aviation groups and anti-aircraft systems with all air operations covered by fighter jets." Since the ...*(More on P4)...(2)*

Ghani Appoints Andarabi as Acting NDS Chief



KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani appointed the deputy head of the National Directorate of Security (NDS), Massoud Andarabi, as acting chief of the spy agency following the surprise resignation of Rahmatullah Nabil on Thursday afternoon. At an emergency meeting Thursday evening, which was attended by Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah among others, Ghani said Andarabi will take over. In a statement issued by the Presidential Palace, Ghani said: "On the basis of consultations we agreed upon, Massoud Andarabi will take charge of the National Directorate of Security going forward." ...*(More on P4)...(4)*

Karzai Rejects Ghani's Remarks for Calling Waziristan Residents 'Pakistanis'



KABUL - The former President Hamid Karzai on Thursday has rejected the remarks by President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani for calling the residents of Waziristan tribal regions 'Pakistanis'. The office of the Former President issued a statement following President Ghani's remarks he delivered during the Heart of Asia summit in Islamabad, the capital city of Pakistan. The statement further added that the Former President has expressed hopes that President Ghani's visit to Pakistan will result to peace and stability in the region and lead ...*(More on P4)...(6)*

Nabil Resigns after Fallout with President

KABUL The Chief of the National Directorate of Security (NDS), Rahmatullah Nabil, resigned on Thursday over disagreements with President Ashraf Ghani, laying bare divisions that have hindered efforts to fight the growing Taliban insurgency.

The resignation of Rahmatullah Nabil follows a series of setbacks in recent months including the fall of the northern city of Kunduz to the Taliban and an insurgent raid on Kandahar airport in the south on Tuesday in which 50 civilians,



police and security personnel were killed. Nabil, who strongly opposed Ghani's moves toward a rapprochement with Pakistan, said

in his letter of resignation from the National Directorate of Security (NDS) that there had been "a lack of agreement on some policy mat-

ters" in recent months. He said the president had imposed unacceptable conditions on the way he did his job, with "repeated verbal summons" that put him under impossible pressure and forced his resignation.

Relations between Ghani and the NDS had been strained since at least the fall of Kunduz, which caught security forces badly unprepared and which an inquiry last month blamed on poor leadership.

Later, Ghani dismissed some NDS ...*(More on P4)...(3)*

Consultation Process for Peace Dialogue to Start Soon: Aziz

ISLAMABAD - Advisor to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz on Friday said that

consultation process for peace dialogue between the Afghan government and Taliban would be started in days ahead.

In a policy statement in the National Assembly, he said, it is too early to say when phase-two of the Murree peace talks between the Afghan government and Taliban would be initiated.

He said that the process and consultations to initiate the dialogue would be started soon and expressed the hope the time for it was very ripe as there was a calm in fighting in Afghanistan in these days. He said all members of the conference recognized the role and ...*(More on P4)...(5)*



Germany Contributes AFN 5 Billion to ARTF

KABUL - The government of Germany has pledged to contribute AFN 5 billion in a bid to start and run development projects in Afghanistan as well as covering recurrent costs, such as salaries.

An agreement was signed between Afghanistan and Germany in this regard. "Germany will pay the sum into the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF). More than thirty donor countries provide financial assistance for the Afghan government through the trust fund. This year, the German government's contribution to the fund is the highest it has ever made," a statement by German government said.

With an aim to help the Afghan government manage its financial resources efficiently and for the long term, ...*(More on P4)...(7)*

Security Incidents Drop 23 Percent in November: Report



KABUL - A monthly security report by TOLOnews found security incidents in the country had dropped by 23 percent in November compared to October.

Civilian casualties dropped by two percent in November against October, the report said. The Afghan security forces launched several counterinsurgency operations in eastern Nangarhar province in November - widely seen as a response to insurgent attacks - putting the province on top of the volatile provinces list in terms of security in November, the report added.

Based on the report, 190 counterinsurgency and militant incidents were reported in November. However, an exact figure on human casualties, including that of insurgents was not available, but security officials said more than 1,000 insurgents had been killed in November and 215 security personnel, 86 civilians along with nine public order personnel died.

Based on the report the most insecure provinces were Nangarhar with 88 security incidents, Helmand with 85, and then Faryab with 39, Kunduz with 28, Kandahar with 21, Ghazni with 22 and Zabul with 25.

"Aside from that, the country also saw 352 military operations taking place, 14 air strikes, 102 attacks by insurgents, 33 cases of mine explosions, 92 arrests, 36 armed attempts, 26 cases of violence and kidnappings and 13 armed encounters among rival militant factions," the report said.

However, abduction cases increased by 27 percent in November ...*(More on P4)...(8)*

Activists Job Opportunities Can Prevent Afghans from Leaving



JALALABAD - A number of civil society activists in eastern Nangarhar province said on Thursday that the only way to prevent Afghans from leaving the country for Europe is to provide job opportunities.

At a gathering in Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar, civil society activists also expressed their concerns over the increase in human traffickers in the province and urged government to provide job opportunities.

One civil society activist, Latif Mal said: "One of the main problems for the people is that they don't see a future for Afghanistan. Unemployment has increased and because of this the youth are leaving the country."

Another civil society activist, Anwar Sultani said: "The Afghan security forces are finding [and seizing] hashish but why are they not [arresting] human traffickers. We call on them to stop the youth from fleeing and that human traffickers be arrested and brought to justice."

Meanwhile, local officials said with the support of security officials they are trying to clamp down on human traffickers in the province.

Attallah Khogyani, the provincial governor's spokesman, said so far a number of human traffickers have been arrested by security forces in Nangarhar.

"In Nangarhar a number of private organizations were moving the youth to Europe after receiving money but the security forces have stopped their ...*(More on P4)...(9)*

Russian FM IS Penetration in Afghanistan Threatens to Destabilize CA



MOSCOW - Russia calls on to take seriously the possibility of "overflow" of the terrorist threat from Afghanistan to Central Asia.

Terrorists of the banned group in Russia "Islamic State" (IS) tend to turn Afghanistan into a base for the destabilization of the entire region, including the countries of Central Asia. This was stated at a press briefing by the director of the Department of Information and Press of the Russian Foreign Ministry Maria Zakharova.

"Radical Islamists have long ago proven their ability to use any crises situations in their advantage, exacerbating old conflicts and creating new one, violence and tensions," - she said. - These developments pose a direct threat to Afghanistan, which for many years is going through a military and political crisis. The military successes of the IS in the Middle East until recently served as a very important propaganda trump card, which allowed and still allows to bring into the ranks of the organization new supporters, new suicide fighters, and, importantly, in almost all the regions".

"When Russia launched a decisive military IS eradication and other terrorist organizations in Syria, a partial shift to Afghanistan may allow the IS to represent themselves as an effective military structure that has opened a "second front" in spite of the offensive by the anti ISIL forces in the Middle East and North Africa," - said Zakharova.

According to her, the recent events in Afghanistan, "are associated with a significant intensification of competition and various terrorist groups, in particular, we are talking about a split in the ranks of "Taliban" movement (banned in Russia), as well as the active penetration of the IS in Afghanistan".

"All this confirms that the territory of the country remains one of the main sources of global terrorist threat", - added the Foreign Ministry spokesman. "We regret that our concerns ...*(More on P4)...(10)*



Afghan policemen secure the area after Taliban attack in Kabul city on Friday December 11, 2015. A loud explosion rocked Kabul in a heavily protected area close to many foreign embassies and government buildings, with initial police reports suggesting at least three attackers had targeted a guesthouse close to the Spanish embassy. (REUTERS/Omar Sobhani)