

Jalalabad Partly Cloudy 18°C 7°C	Ghazni Partly Cloudy 11°C -3°C	Kandahar Partly Cloudy 18°C 4°C	Mazar Partly Cloudy 6°C 1°C	Herat Partly Cloudy 8°C -2°C	Bamayan Partly Cloudy 2°C -9°C	Kabul Partly Cloudy 12°C -2°C
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Daily Outlook Weather Forecast

Minister Sets Record Straight, Only Six Million Children in School

KABUL - Minister of Education Assadullah Hanif Balkhi said on Sunday a recent study has found that only six million Afghan children are at school - contrary to the 11 million as previously stated by the former government. Afghan government officials from former president Hamid Karzai's administration said on a number of occasions that over 11 million Afghan children were attending school, said Balkhi. This was untrue as only six million children are actually in school, he said. He said the 11 million figure was fabricated by government. Meanwhile, Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA) has called for the prosecution of officials in the previous government who released fabricated statistics. "On one hand it indicates



that there might have been corruption in the ministry of education. Huge amounts of money could have been embezzled through ghost schools and ghost students. On the other hand, they (education ministry officials)

gave false information to the international community and portrayed the education sector as one of the more successful projects. The international community also never focused on the topic," said Sayed Ekram Afzali,

chairman of IWA. According to Balkhi, currently up to six million children are attending 17,000 schools across the country. A total of nine million children are registered ...*(More on P4)...(11)*

School Building Being Constructed in Paktika

SHARAN - Construction work on a school building was launched on Sunday in the Yahyakhel district of southeastern Paktika province, an official said. On the occasion, acting education director Mohammad Nasim Wajid told Pajhwok Afghan News that the school building would have eight classrooms, a proper water system, toilets and a surrounding wall. The structure would cost 14 million afghanis to be provided from the Education Ministry's development fund and would take six months to complete. Wajid said there were 19 schools in total in Yahyakhel district and four of them had buildings and the rest without buildings. Governor Ilyas Wahdat said the school building would enable its students to learn their lessons in a comfortable environment. The students are currently taught in the open. The governor asked residents to send their children to school.

Bahloul Khan, a resident of Kodal locality, said except in four schools, all students attended classes under the open skies across the district. He said insecurity had decreased in the district thanks to tribal elders' efforts, but the central government should pay attention to health and education problems of the people. There are 347 schools in Paktika, a border province, and 60 percent of the schools have buildings. A total of 155,000 students are studying in the province, with girls constituting 30 percent of them. *(Pajhwok)*

Shelter Remains Major Problem of Returnees

JALALABAD - Deputy Refugee and repatriation minister Ahad Wali Hakimi on Sunday identified the lack of shelter as main problem being faced by recently returned families.

Addressing a gathering marking the World Refugee Day in Jalalabad, the capital of eastern Nangarhar province, the deputy minister said his ministry was making efforts to resolve the shelter problem. Hakimi said more than one million refugees returned to Afghanistan this year, most of them through the Turkham border crossing. He said nearly 60 percent of the returning families had settled in Nangarhar province. He said the main problem the returnees faced was shelter and they were making efforts to resolve that problem. He said construction work on a township for the returning families had been



started in Qasim Abad area of Behsud district. He said the township would house 30,000 refugee families. UNHCR public relations officer Nasir Ahmad Haiderzai said refugees' problems compounded with the arrival of unregistered refugees. He said UNHCR was assisting refugee families in border areas but they could not assist unregistered refugees. "We first register names in border areas and then we assist them in area of health and food. ...*(More on P4)...(12)*

Neighboring Countries Plot to Sabotage Afghan Peace Talks



KABUL - On Sunday, tribal elders from ten provinces gathered in Kandahar city where they called on the warring factions to end the war and endorse peace talks. Kandahar police chief General Abdul Raziq on Sunday said that certain countries in the region do not want to see the Afghan government and the Taliban engage in talks to end the ongoing turmoil in the country. Raziq claimed that some of

the Taliban leaders are willing to endorse peace talks but were taken hostage along with their families, adding that the Taliban has also realized the war is not the solution. "Over the past thirteen years, neighboring countries have provided all our resources to the Taliban, but when the Taliban said that we are going for peace, they were put into jails and the fate of their families ...*(More on P4)...(13)*

80 Percent of Old Indian Banknotes Changed

KABUL - Money exchangers at the Shahzada market have however criticized the Central Bank for not helping them with the process. Eighty percent of the old 500 and 1,000 rupee banknotes in circulation in Afghanistan have been swapped for the new notes with the help of Hindu money exchangers. Money exchangers at the Shahzada market have however criticized the Central Bank for not helping them with the process. They said that it was only with the help of Hindu and Afghan money exchangers in Khost and Paktia provinces that they were able to transfer the old notes to the Indian Central Bank. So far, of the 60 million rupees worth in old bank notes that were in circulation, 50 million rupees worth in new bank notes has been exchanged. "Our Hindu brothers who are mostly living in Khost province came and collected all old Indian banknotes from all Afghanistan markets especially from Shahzada market in Kabul and they transferred the old banknotes to India," said Haji Zarak Shahzada market spokesman. Meanwhile officials at the Afghan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) accused the Central Bank of neglect over the exchange of the Indian banknotes and said the Central Bank took no action in terms of helping people resolve the issue. The chamber said that in the past month the bank made no effort to utilize the available opportunities to swap out the old notes. "It is the job of the Central Bank to prepare, follow and evaluate monetary policies and to think about the future and take necessary measures. It was the Central Bank's job to negotiate with India and solve the issue as soon as they could but unfortunately they did not do that," said Sayam Pesarlay, spokesman of the ACCI. When the issue was first raised a month ago, the Central Bank said it was not its responsibility to exchange new notes for old ones. *(Tolonews)*

Russia Support Effective in Talks with Taliban: Karzai



KABUL - Former president Hamid Karzai on Sunday called Russia's help in reviving peace talks with the Taliban as 'necessary and effective.'

A statement from Karzai's office said the former president met Alexander Mantytski, Russian Ambassador to Afghanistan, in Kabul on Sunday. It said the ex-president expressed his support and termed the Russian Federation's keenness to bring peace to Afghanistan as commendable. He dubbed the war and terrorism a threat to the region. "Neighboring and regional powers' assistance especially of Russia in bringing peace and starting negotiations with Taliban is needed and effective." The Russian envoy stressed his country's continued assistance to Afghanistan and reiterated his country's promise to continue efforts at securing peace in the war-torn country. *(Pajhwok)*

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MoI Team in Nangarhar to Probe Forced-Marriage Case

JALALABAD - Local officials on Sunday said a Ministry of Interior (MoI) delegation has arrived in eastern Nangarhar province to investigate a forced marriage case in the Shewa district. The girl nicknamed Saima had told reporters at the Nangarhar Women's Affairs department on November 20 that her husband on the very first night of their marriage accused her of losing her virginity before the wedlock and the same night married her younger sister by force. Governor's spokesman, Attaullah Khogyani, told Pajhwok Afghan News the MoI delegation headed by a senior crime branch official reached the province today. He said the delegation was sent to Nangarhar in compliance with orders from the president to investigate the forced marriage in Shewa. The delegation met the deputy governor, the intelligence chief and the provincial police chief and they all assured the team of their cooperation in the investigation, he said. Khogyani said the governor's house was also following the case and four people including the groom's father, the imam who signed the marriage contract and two others involved had been arrested. *(Pajhwok)*

War-Affected Families Receive Aid in Kunduz, Jawzjan



KUNDUZ CITY/SHIBERGHAN - More than 2,200 war-affected families have received cash and food aid in northern Kunduz and Jawzjan provinces, officials said on Sunday. Kunduz governor's spokesman Syed Mahmood Danish told reporters 50 million afghanis would be distributed to 200 families of those killed and 500 households whose members were wounded in recent fighting. The aid has been ordered by the president and the distribution process began today, he added. "Each family that lost a member would receive 100,000 afghanis and those injured, 50,000 afghanis. The aid would be distributed by a delegation from the capital Kabul." War affected families in Kunduz, meanwhile, demanded more aid. Rahima, whose husband was killed in Kunduz clashes, recalled: "My spouse was killed

while bringing bread for our four daughters and a son. We are in a poor economic situation and the money I have received will not meet our needs." Feroza asked the government to provide her more assistance. "My son was killed in the war in Kunduz City. Now we have no one to meet our needs; we thank the government for giving us aid but it would not be enough," she commented. On the other hand, more than 1,500 poor families in Jawzjan province received food aid. Abdur Rashid Mansoori, labour and social affairs director, said: "Aid has been distributed to 1,568 families of martyrs, people with disabilities and war victims in Jawzjan." He added each family received 100 kilograms of flour, 10 litres of ghee, 1.5 kilograms of salt and 15 kilograms of lentil. The aid was provided ...*(More on P4)...(15)*

'Narcotics Become a Silent Tsunami in Afghanistan'

KABUL - Counter Narcotics Minister Salamat Azimi on Sunday said besides insecurity, narcotics and drug addiction was gripping the country like "a silent tsunami" that she said needed to be fought by all people and judiciary. Her ministry signed a memorandum of understanding

(MoU) with the Ministry of Border and Tribal Affairs (MoBTA) and physical training department, on strengthening relations and better coordination in the anti-narcotics fight.

Azimi called the tribal affairs ministry's role as important in countering narcotics and

hoped the MoU would help prevent usage and smuggling of drugs in tribal regions and borders.

She said the physical training department should also try to traditionalize sports and encourage the youth to play games, a move she hoped would help reduce using or smuggling of narcotics in the country. She called cultivation of narcotics a serious challenge and said, "Besides insecurity, drug business has become a silent tsunami in Afghanistan and all people and government institutions should together work for eradication of the problem."

Azimi called on all people and government, private and ...*(More on P4)...(14)*



ANSDF Receive Light Attack Aircraft in Kandahar Airfield

KABUL - The Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANSDF) received the first A-29 Super Tucano light attack aircraft in Kandahar Airfield amid ongoing efforts to boost the airpower of the Afghan forces to suppress a resurgent Taliban. (U.S. Air Force photos by Tech. Sgt. Jennifer Noonkester)

The planes were deployed earlier this month and a ceremony was organized to mark the arrival of the aircraft. The members of the 738th Air Expeditionary Advisory Group at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, participate in a ceremony for the arrival of A-29 Super Tucanos with Afghan Air Force members

from Kandahar Air Wing Dec. 1, 2016," according to 438th Air Expeditionary Wing. The statement further added "The ceremony marked the arrival of the A-29s to KAF. Participants from both the AAF and US Air Force welcomed the arrival of the increased combat capability to the region." The ...*(More on P4)...(16)*