

### Taliban Aiding Helmand Poppy Growers



LASHKARGAH - Police officials in southern Helmand province on Tuesday accused militants and some tribal elders of encouraging farmers to cultivate the illicit poppy crop.

In an exclusive interview with Pajhwok Afghan News, police chief Col. Juma Gul Himmat alleged in addition to Taliban and tribal elders, a number of smugglers were also aiding poppy growers.

He admitted it was impossible to maintain security if residents and tribal elders refused to cooperate with the government. Some tribal elders support militants to protect their poppy cultivation and weaken the government's writ. Himmat added most of farmers in Taliban-controlled areas had cultivated poppies but police had warned them to eradicate the crop. If the crop was allowed to mature, income from it would be used to fuel the insecurity, he continued.

But Mohammad Karim, a tribal elder and head of the provincial council, claimed security forces themselves had allowed farmers to cultivate poppies. Security personnel planned to take bribes from during eradication campaigns, he charged.

Tribal elders had already discussed the issue with the government and were ready to help police eradicate opium plants, the elder said, urging authorities to provide alternatives to growers. The funds spent on eradication campaigns should go to ...*(More on P4)...*(1)

### Insecurity Closes 146 Zabol Schools

QALAT - More than 50 percent of schools remain closed owing to insecurity in southern Zabol province, but tribal elders have been requested to help reopen them, education officials said on Tuesday.

Besides threats posed by Taliban insurgents, there are many other issues crippling the key sector, say a number of students, tribal elders and officials.

Though education officials claim more schools are open in Zabol than the past, it has been learned that six in 10 schools are closed.

Zabol Education Director Rahimullah Ludin told Pajhwok Afghan News 146 out of 238 schools had been shut in Zabol and the remaining 92 open.

He said they availed some necessary equipment to run schools, but it was insecurity that impeded progress.

Ludin said they could not monitor schools in remote areas due to security concerns and tribal elders should extend their support to the education department in this regard.

Some schools were reopened last year and sent text books and furniture, but later complaints surfaced that the equipment were being misused, the official said. The education director said if tribal elders and ...*(More on P4)...*(3)

### Pak Politician Suggests Peace Treaty with Kabul



KABUL - A senior leader of the Pakistan People's Party on Tuesday urged the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to sign a peace and cooperation pact with Afghanistan.

Also the opposition leader in Senate, Chaudhry Aitzaz Ahsan, floated the suggestion during a debate in the upper house on a recent Peshawar school attack, which left 150 people dead and more than 245 wounded.

The treaty would pave the ground for a joint campaign for eliminating the menace of terrorism from the region, Aitzaz argued, saying foreign and defense ministries be directed to start initial work on the agreement.

According to Pakistani media, the renowned barrister said the murder of innocent children was unacceptable. "We should turn this time of grief into strength. Terrorists are hitting soft targets including mosques, schools, seminaries, army men and polio workers..." (Pajhwok)

# Cabinet Announcement in Final Stages: Abdullah Aide

KABUL - The nomination process of cabinet members is almost complete and the nominees would be introduced to parliament for approval within a few days, an aide to Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah said on Tuesday.

Javed Faisal, a spokesman for Abdullah, said President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and the CEO were committed to honouring their promise they held out at the London Conference earlier this month.

At the conference, President Ghani and Abdullah had the cabinet



would be announced within four weeks.

Earlier, some sources said the president and the CEO had agreed on some cabinet nominees and Monday had been set the deadline to introduce them to parliament for a vote of confidence.

Faisal ruled out any difference of opinion between the president and the CEO over selection of some individuals as cabinet members.

However, he cited naming of professional persons the only reason behind the delay in announcing the cabinet. (Pajhwok)

## China to Continue Supporting Afghanistan: Ambassador

KABUL - Chinese Ambassador to Afghanistan Deng Xijun said Tuesday China would continue to support the post-war country in every field.

"We sincerely expect to join hand with Afghanistan to continuously promote tangible cooperation in every field with a view of consistently deepening the bilateral ties and striving to blaze a trail for a better future of the two countries together," the ambassador said in his remarks after the inauguration of two newly constructed Chi-

na-aided buildings -- the Chinese Language Department and the Guest House in Kabul University.

In the ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by Kabul University dean Habibullah Habib and acting Minister for Higher Education Mohammad Usman Babury, among others, the ambassador said the China-aided teaching building of the Chinese Language Department is to serve as the compound of the Confucius Institute where students can learn



about China and its culture while the Guest House will help provide international professors and teachers with better working and living conditions.

"The two buildings are not only a symbol of the continuous support of the Chinese government to the post-war reconstruction of Afghanistan, especially in the field of education, but also a manifestation of the long-lasting friendship of the two peoples of China and Afghanistan," the ambassador said. (Xinhua)

## Iran Bans Afghans in 9 Provinces



KABUL - Iranian Ministry of Interior on Monday banned the stay of Afghans in nine provinces of the country.

A cause for the new restrictions on Afghans in Iran is not made public yet.

Mazandaran, Gilan, Ardbil, East Azarbaijan, Kurdistan, Sistan

and Baloochistan, and Gulistan are said to be among the provinces where Afghans can no longer stay.

Al Arabiya also states that discussion is ongoing to apply the ban in some other parts of Iran but the final decision is not made yet.

This comes after Pakistan

decided to expel Afghan Refugees from its territory.

Pakistani Authorities say the Refugees are damaging the economy. However, UNHCR representatives have talked to Pakistani authorities not to expel the legal Afghan Refugees.

The ...*(More on P4)...*(4)

## Carters Urge Govt. to Secure Key Highways

KANDAHAR CITY/ FIROZKOH - Commuters and transporters on Tuesday complained of growing robberies and insecurity on the Kabul-Kandahar Highways and demanded the government bolster security along main routes.

Haji Ahmadullah, president of the Kandahar Transport Association (KTA), told Pajhwok Afghan News armed robbery cases in broad daylight had increased on highways. The robbers have deprived many passengers of valuables and cash besides fleeing drivers of heavy vehicles.

Armed men did not spare women either and deprived them of jewellery, he said, claiming the highwaymen often struck as close as 100 metres to security posts. "More often they not, police are in connivance with robbers."

Ahmadullah urged the unity government to secure the Kabul-Herat Highway. He warned of a series of protests if the authorities failed to control the situation within 10 days.

Armed robbers looted 18 passengers on the Charsadda-Ferozkoh highway in western Ghor province on Tuesday. Abdul Karim, a passenger bus driver, told Pajhwok Afghan News gunmen wearing masks opened fire on his vehicle.

He said money and mobile phones were snatched from passenger in Ferozkoh, the capital of Ghor province. The gunmen decamped with 80,000 afghanis.

"I am a poor farmer, having some sheep. I sold them for my medical treatment, but robbers have snatched all my money," said one affected passenger, Mohammad Karim.

Col. Abdul Hadi, Ghor crime branch chief, acknowledged the Kargosh area on Ferozkoh-Charsadda Highway ...*(More on P4)...*(5)

## 136 Rebels Killed in Dangam

ASADABAD - At least 136 militants have been killed during airstrikes and a ground offensive by the Afghan National Army (ANA) in the Dangam district of eastern Kunar province, officials said on Tuesday.

Lt. Haroon Yousufzai, spokesman for the 201st Selab Military Corps, told Pajhwok Afghan News that dozens of militants suffered casualties during air raids by NATO-led forces in the district over the past two days.

He said ANA troops were making significant headway in flushing



out militants. At least 136 rebels, including 17 Pakistanis, have been killed and 138 others wounded, Yousufzai said. One ANA officer was also killed and another wounded. But Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid rejected the claim as baseless. He said none of the militant had

suffered casualties during the overnight operation. Some 10 days ago, hundreds of militants stormed Dangam, leaving a large number of residents besieged. The brazen attack prompted Afghan security forces to launch an all-out offensive in the town near the Pakistan border. (Pajhwok)

## MoI Honors Police Sacrifices

KABUL - The Ministry of Interior Affairs (MoI) appreciated the sacrifices made by the police forces and honored with medals the soldiers who lost their lives while on duty.

The appreciation came Tuesday in an event where the National Police Recognition Week was announced.

The event was attended by the acting interior minister Gen. Mohammad Ayoub Salangi, Parliament members, civil society activists and families of slain police forces.

The MoI officials presented medals to the families of Mustafa and Mir Afghan, the policemen who lost their lives by saving lives of hundreds of citizens.

Addressing the participants, Salangi stated that with the new government came into being, the political support for police has also increased.

"Besides the resolute support of international community, our national police also need support from our people and politicians to have more equipped and united force," Salangi noted.

MP Iqbal Safai, who was also present at event, stressed the need for strong support of police and praised the sacrifices ...*(More on P4)...*(2)

## Armed Groups Continue to Threaten Badghis



QALA-I-NAW - Residents say illegal armed groups continue to exist in northwestern Badghis province, saying a campaign against them has apparently fizzled out.

Violence involving illegal armed men took place on Saturday, leaving five people dead and 10 others injured, including two women, in the Awal village of Jwand district.

A resident of Jwand, Mohammad Asif, told Pajhwok Afghan News the Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) programme has not been implemented in the town, where most residents were armed.

Last year, he recalled, 10 people were killed during a clash between illegal armed groups in the district. Jwand district is 160 kilometers from the provincial capital, Qala-i-Naw.

Afghan forces airlift equipment to the district center by helicopters because the land route is insecure. In Abkamari district, Noorullah, a dweller of Pada Daizang village, also said the DIAG process had failed to yield results what they had been expecting because illegal armed men still existed in most areas of the province. "The DIAG process is not ...*(More on P4)...*(6)