

Jalalabad Partly Cloudy 17°C 4°C	Ghazni Clear 8°C -2°C	Kandahar Partly Cloudy 17°C 1°C	Mazar Partly Cloudy 9°C 2°C	Herat Partly Cloudy 21°C 3°C	Bamayan Partly Cloudy 8°C 0°C	Kabul Partly Cloudy 14°C -2°C
--	---------------------------------------	---	---	--	---	---



Moscow Meeting Against International Norms: MPs

KABUL - Some Meshrano Jirga or Senate members on Sunday called an upcoming meeting between Russia, China and Pakistan on Afghanistan as interference in the country and against international norms. Senator Amina Afzali told Meshrano Jirga session, that Russia, China and Pakistan were expected to meet in Moscow in the absence of Afghanistan representatives. The trilateral meeting between Pakistan, Russia and China will be held in Moscow on 27th of this month to discuss regional peace and stability including situation in Afghanistan. More details about the meeting are not yet shared with media, but China and Pakistan foreign ministries had said the meeting was aimed



at ensuring peace and stability in Afghanistan. However, Afzali called the meeting a violation of international norms and an as-

sault on Afghanistan's privacy. Such meetings were illegal and the Afghan government should condemn it. Safiullah Hashemi, another

senator, said, "Such acts of our neighboring countries mean ignoring Afghanistan's national sovereignty." Any meeting on peace in

Afghanistan should be participated and led by Afghan representatives, he said. "This meeting in fact recognizes Taliban, no regional country should have contact with Taliban or hold a meeting with them," he added. Second deputy chairman, Eng. Hasibullah Kalimzai, chairing today's meeting, also condemned the meeting and said such meetings should be led by representatives from Afghanistan. He asked the government to ask embassies of the relevant countries through diplomatic channels to avoid interfering in Afghanistan's affairs. Former Russian special envoy to Kabul, Zamir Kabulov, last month told Interfax news agency that his country contacted Taliban in order to jointly ...*(More on P4)...(7)*

Karzai Wishes Sharif on His Birthday, Calling Pak Nation as 'Brother'

KABUL - The former Afghan President Hamid Karzai joined the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to wish the Pakistani Prime Nawaz Sharif on his birthday. "Honourable Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif sahib, happy birthday! Best wishes to you and the brotherly people of Pakistan," Karzai said in a Twitter post. Earlier, the Indian Prime Minister published similar Twitter post, saying "Birthday wishes to Pakistan PM Mr Nawaz Sharif. I pray for his long and healthy life." This comes as tensions remain high between India and Pakistan, mainly due to war against terrorism and cross-border incursions. On the other hand, the relations between Kabul and Islamabad also witnessed

some low during the recent months. The Afghan officials are saying that the leadership councils of the Afghan militant groups are based in Peshawar and Quetta cities of Pakistan, slamming the country's officials for remaining reckless to act against the groups which are planning and coordinating attacks in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan summoned the Pakistani Ambassador last week to lodge a protest against the resumption of artillery shelling by Pakistani military and militia forces. According to the Afghan officials, the Pakistani envoy was summoned after rockets were fired in Maruf district of Kandahar and Sarkano district of Kunar. *(KP)*

'Ghani-Abdullah Differences not in Afghans' Interest'

KABUL - A senior American diplomat said that the differences between the Presidential Palace and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Office "are not in the interest of the government and the Afghan nation." Hugo Llorens, chargé d'affaires at the US Embassy in Kabul, met first deputy chief executive officer (CEO) Mohammad Khan and the two discussed the ongoing situation in Afghanistan, the region and the world, a statement from Khan's office said. They also talked about the peace process. The American diplomat reiterated his country's pledges with Afghanistan and vowed continued cooperation with both teams of the national unity government. The two met after sources said Balkh governor Atta Mohammad Noor entered talks with President Ghani



about Jamiat-i-Islami Party's alliance with the unity government. Mohammad Khan said the differences between the unity government leaders had been resolved to a great extent and coordination between them was on the increase. He said honesty, eligibility and ability should be made principles for appointment of people on higher posts in civil and military institutions. He said the unity gov-

ernment's anti-corruption was impressive but still serious steps were needed to make people feel positive change. In this regard, the international community's support was essential, Khan said. The deputy CEO said peace was the demand of Afghans and the only way to end the conflict, calling the peace agreement with the Gulbadin Hekmatyar-led Hezb-i-Islami Afghanistan "a big achievement of the unity government." *(Pajhwok)*

Anger in Afghanistan at Female Pilot's U.S. Asylum Bid

KABUL - There was an angry reaction in Afghanistan to news that the first female fixed-wing pilot in the country's air force was requesting asylum in the United States after completing an 18-month training course. The Afghan defence ministry confirmed on Sunday that Captain Niloofar Rahmani, 25, had sought asylum after the Wall Street Journal quoted her as saying that she feared her life would be in danger if she returned home. A recipient of the U.S. State Department's "Women of Courage" award in 2015, Capt. Rahmani had been a symbol of efforts to improve the situation of women in her country, more than a decade after the fall of the Taliban regime. Mohammad Radmanish, a defence ministry spokesman, said the government hoped that her request would be denied by U.S. authorities who have spent billions trying to build up Afghan security forces. "When an officer complains of insecurity and is afraid of security threats, then what should ordinary people do?" he said. "She has made an excuse for herself, but we have hundreds of educated women and female civil right activists who work and it is safe for them." Capt. Rahmani, who graduated from flight school in 2012 and qualified to fly C-208 military cargo aircraft, had been in the United States on a training course and had been due to return home on Saturday. In a conservative country notorious for the restrictions placed on women, Rahmani's story stood out as a rare example of a woman breaking through in areas normally reserved for men. Her success came at a price, however. The citation for the "Women of Courage" award said she and her family had received direct threats not just from the Taliban but also from some relatives, forcing her family to move house several times. However, there was little sympathy on Afghanistan's active ...*(More on P4)...(9)*

5,000 Historical Sites in Afghanistan Detected by Satellite

KABUL - The MoIC said they started identifying historical sites last year in collaboration with a number of foreign organizations. At least 5,000 ancient sites have been detected by satellite including some in areas under the control of armed groups, the Ministry of Information and Culture (MoIC) said on Sunday. The ministry said they will draw a map of all the ancient places as part of their five-year plan and will send archaeologists abroad to develop their knowledge of archaeology in order to maintain the areas. The MoIC said they started identifying historical sites



last year in collaboration with a number of foreign organizations. "Our plan has just started and it will continue for five years. I am sure our activities will increase once the final map is ready," said Abdul Qadir Temori, head

of archaeology department of the MoIC. Figures by the MoIC reveal that 5,260 ancient sites were identified in different provinces over the past 10 years. "We want to build a new building, because lack of space ...*(More on P4)...(8)*

Women's Vocational Center Opens in Nimroz

ZARANJ - A newly established vocational training center for capacity building and empowerment of women was inaugurated on Sunday in southwestern Nimroz province. Governor Eng. Mohammad Sami told the centre's inauguration ceremony that the center was a huge achievement for Nimroz women as it would increase their talent and abilities. He asked women to work in every department. Shema Siddiqi, provincial women's affairs director, said the vocation centre has 13 administrative rooms and the project cost more than 9.5 million afghanis paid from the Women Affairs Ministry's budget. She said women would learn short courses of tailoring and carpet weaving and other vocational subjects at the centre. *(Pajhwok)*

NATO Soldiers in Afghanistan Hold Christmas Football Match



KABUL - The match between German and British forces who serve the Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan ended 1-0 in favor of the British soldiers. Troops from NATO's Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan on Sunday celebrated Christmas Day with a football match - which also commemorated a match between German and British soldiers in the first World War. In 1914, a number of German and British soldiers stopped fighting for a while and played a football match to celebrate Christmas. The ceasefire was not written into history books but it has been recognized as a symbol of peace in the world. The match between German and British forces who serve the Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan ended 1-0 in favor of the

British soldiers. "It is a way of celebrating Christmas Day. I am far away from my family, it gives us the sensation of being home a little bit, which is nice. But the second half is in memory of those who lost their lives in the first World War," a British officer said. "Everyone here on the NATO mission is working very hard for peace in Afghanistan. It would be nice to play often, but we can't. So it has been a very special day to come and play on the occasion of Christmas Day," another British officer said. "I got to play the last five to 10 minutes. It had really been interesting for our people to come together on Christmas Day. I really enjoyed it and I think everyone else enjoyed it as well," a British sergeant said. *(Tolonews)*

More Balkh Land Brought Under Poppy this Year



MAZAR-I-SHARIF - Farmers have grown poppy crop in their fields for a second year in northern Balkh province, which once remained poppy-free for eight years. Poppy cultivation has increased by several times in some districts of the province. Balkh farmers say the government has assured them their poppy farms would be not destroyed. On the other hand, the government says it plan to eradicate poppy is unalterable. Farmers in Balkh district resumed poppy growing two years back. Mohammad Younas, a resident of Wazirabad area of the district, told Pajhwok Afghan News more land was brought under poppy cultivation in their area compared to last year. The illicit plant, cultivated about a month ago, has recently sprouted, he said. "Last year we cultivated poppy on one acre of land and the government did not say anything about it, we this year cultivated the plant on three acres of land," he said. Most farmers cultivated pop-

py in areas farmlands where water was inaccessible or in short supply, he said, adding some farmers had cultivated poppy on up to 10 acres of land in the area. A resident of Chamtal district, Sayed Gul, said most farmers had cultivated poppy in their area. He said some farmers had cultivated the plant on up to 30 acres of farmland. "Poppy costs less and need little effort to grow," he said. He said if a farmer grew cotton in one acre of land, it would earn him 50,000 afghanis, but the same area would earn around 150,000 afghanis from poppy crop. Local officials said they would enforce the law on any farmer who cultivated poppy in Balkh. Balkh governor's spokesman, Munir Farhad, confirmed last year's poppy cultivation and said they had heard rumors about cultivation of the plant this year as well, but there were no credible reports about it. He said the government had planned to eradicate poppy farms in Balkh. "Balkh ...*(More on P4)...(10)*

AFC Issues Certificates of Merit to Goal Keepers

KABUL - Nearly 20 goal keepers from Kabul, Takhar, Herat, Balkh, Badghis, Kunduz, Baghlan, Kandahar, Logar, Parwan and Paktia provinces graduated this week from a six-day training session by Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and the best goal keepers were issued certificates. The goal keepers received theoretical and practical training by an AFC trainer. "Afghanistan Football Federation (AFF) is working with AFC and FIFA to hold training workshops for coaches and we are happy that our goal keepers attended such a workshop," said Yusuf Kargar, technical deputy of AFF. "Afghanistan football teams, especially the national team, need technical and professional goal keepers that have made good progress. Professional goal keepers are useful in identifying the best players and can encourage other players," said Jalal Basharzad, trainer of AFC. "I am happy to have participated in the workshop. I really learned new tips about goal keeping that I had never heard of," said Hamidullah Yusufi, a Shaheen Asmayee a goal keeper. AFF says that from the beginning of 2016 nearly 13 ...*(More on P4)...(11)*