

CEO Dr. Abdullah

Talks Underway on Setting up Electoral Reform Panel

KABUL - Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dr. Abdullah on Saturday said creating a joint commission for brining reforms to the election process was mandatory based on a political agreement between government leaders.

Asif Ashna, deputy spokesman for the CEO, told Pajhwok Afghan News reforms in the electoral system were a responsibility of the national unity government. He said the CEO had shared its recommendations with the parliament. "After the cabinet formation, we



plan to create a joint commission. Discussions in this regard have been underway and the panel would be formed soon to start work."

Ashna said it would be impossible to win people's trust and have a clean system in Afghanistan in the future if the election process continued to be flawed. The presidential and the CEO might have differences on the subject but the creation of such a commission was mandatory, Ashna ... (More on P4)...(1)

75 Percent Doubt Election Commissions' Independence: Poll



KABUL - In new survey conducted by civil society group "Rawand 3 Afghanistan" (Afghanistan 3rd Trend), 75 percent of respondents reported not trusting that the national election commission can act independently, which could provide fuel for the cause of some both inside and outside the government who have pushed for reform before this year's parliamentary elections.

The survey, which involved 2,571 respondents, also showed that 60 percent of Afghans oppose the current election commission officials - who oversaw the troubled 2014 election process - ... (More on P4)...(2)

AYO Calls for Eliminating IS from Afghanistan



KABUL - The Afghanistan Youth Organisation (AYO) on Saturday demanded elimination of the Islamic State (IS) in Afghanistan. Hashimi Parwani, the founder of AYO, alleged the IS was trying to expand its network in Afghanistan as it has done in Iraq and Syria. He dubbed the group as a terrorist outfit involved in mass killings, violating the rights women and children rights and espousing an extremist ideology.

He likened the IS to Taliban, saying the group was defaming Islam and bringing bad name to Muslims with their nefarious actions. Parwani expressed concerns over the growth of IS in south and southeastern parts of the country. He asked the government to take effective steps against it.

If state institutions failed to eliminate IS, the people of Afghanistan would fight against the organisation, he concluded. (Pajhwok)

Gates Warns Polio Could Spread to Other Countries



KARACHI - Microsoft founder Bill Gates has said that polio could spread to different parts of the world if it is not eradicated from Pakistan and Afghanistan.

According to the Express Tribune, Gates said during a session on social media that Pakistani army and government is taking things seriously.

Gates had funded polio eradicating campaigns in various countries including Pakistan.

He said that polio eradication is a big focus for him and that they are hoping that that the problem of Polio will not show up anymore, after having worked for six months in Africa. (ANI)

16 Dead, 39 Injured in Funeral Bombing

MEHTARLAM - At least 16 people, mostly civilians, were killed and 39 others wounded on Thursday when a suicide bomber struck a funeral for victims of an earlier Taliban attack in eastern Laghman province.

The suicide attack took place in Pahlawan Baba area of Mehtarlam, the provincial capital. The dead included four policemen, including crime branch Chief Col. Khalil Rahman Niyazi and 12 civilians, the governor's spokesman, Sarhadi Zwak, told Pajhwok Afghan News. (Pajhwok)

Anti-Blasphemy Protest Turns Violent, 7 Injured

KABUL - The Kabul Police confirms at least seven people were injured during a protest against the publication of Prophet Mohammad published by the French Magazine Charlie Hebdo after it was attacked earlier in January for what was seen as "blasphemous" cartoons.

The protest, which took place Saturday morning in Hootkhail area of Kabul, turned to violence after the protestors wanted to storm a private bank branch, said the Kabul Police Chief Gen. Abdul Rahman Rahimi.

The protestors began clashing with the police after they were stopped from entering the buildings, Rahimi added. But according to the claims of eyewitnesses two protestors were killed in the clash between police and protestors, something that was not confirmed by the police.

"We have started investigations to arrest the protestors who turned the protests into violence and began shooting at the police forces," Rahimi said. The protestors called on western leaders to stop such outlets from playing with ... (More on P4)...(4)

Freed Taliban Leaders under Enhanced Monitoring: WH

WASHINGTON - Amidst reports that one of the five Taliban prisoners released last year from the Guantanamo Bay detention centre trying to establish contact with the militants, the White House on Friday said their monitoring in Qatar had been increased.

"None of these individuals (five Taliban) has returned to the battlefield; none of them is allowed to travel outside of Qatar and none has engaged in physical violence," the White House Press Secretary told his daily news conference.

In fact, Josh Earnest said, each of them was still in Qatar,



where they were subject to monitoring and other mitigation measures limiting their activities. He added the US had been in touch with the Qataris about the mitigation efforts.

"I can tell you those mitigation and monitoring efforts have been updated to reflect those concerns," he said, when asked about news reports that one of the released Taliban prisoner was trying to re-establish ... (More on P4)...(3)

President, CEO in Talks on Naming More Ministers-Designate

KABUL - Talks are underway between President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah on introducing the rest of ministers-designate to the Wolesi Jirga (WJ), an official said on Saturday.

CEO spokesperson Mujib Rahimi told Pajhwok Afghan News a series of meetings were being held between the two leaders to introduce more cabinet nominees to the lower house without further delay.

"Both leaders have held nego-



tiations to finalise names for ministries and introduce them to the lower house for a vote of confidence. The talks will reach a conclusion soon," he hoped.

If the two leaders concluded their talks on a successful note, the ... (More on P4)...(5)

Wolesi Jirga's Decision: 4 More PC Offices Closed



CHARIKAR / SHIBERGHAN - Provincial councils in Parwan, Jawzjan, Ghazni and Paktika also announced closing their offices in protest against the Wolesi Jirga decision barring them from overseeing local departments, officials said on Saturday.

Sticking to its stance, the lower house decided last week provincial councils did not reserve the right to supervise or evaluate the performance of local departments. A day earlier, 17 PCs closed their offices in protest.

Qari Abdur Rahman Ahmadi, a member of Parwan council confirmed to Pajhwok Afghan News they had shut down their offices against the decision. The protest will continue until the assembly reverses its decision.

Supervision of local government institutions by the provincial councils could play a vital role in eliminating corruption Ahmadi believed, alleging the decision was supported by owners of private companies.

Meanwhile, Jawzjan council members also closed their office. Its chairman Maulvi Abdulhai Hayat said: "We are representatives for our people and the existence of our office would be meaningless if we can't oversee the ... (More on P4)...(6)

Afghanistan Shares Optimistic Outlook on Business Situation



KABUL - The Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI) shared an optimistic outlook on business situation in the country which was undermined by controversial presidential election and growing instability.

ACCI Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Atiqullah Nusrat said there are growing optimism that the business situation could get better although no considerable changes have been noted in estate of investment and business activities.

Nusrat was presenting a survey report by ACCI where 1,209 enterprises and companies were inter-

Germany Invests over Afs 39m in Education Facilities

KABUL - Germany funds establishment of education and library facilities in Baghlan and Kunduz provinces in an attempt to improve the local education situation.

New public buildings-one administrative building for the Department of Education (DoE) in the district of Baghlan Markazi and a new school in Dahana-e-Ghori district-were handed over to Afghan officials in Baghlan province.

In Kunduz, the Qal-e-Zal district public library officially reopened following renovation work by the local government, and on 26th January construction started on a new public library in Khan Abad.

In Baghlan-e-Markazi, the new administrative building will be used for management and administration of primary and secondary schools in the district. The new school in Dahana-e-Ghori district has eight classrooms, three administrative offices and a library. Located near Dara-e-Kalan village around 10km from Pul-e Khumri, the new building can accommodate up to 514 students, both girls and boys.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Habibullah Zarifi, Director of the DoE in Baghlan, said, "These two projects will help us improve the local education situation. Education is essential for development, growth and prosperity. The money invested here is invested in a bright future for our country."

The renovation of the Qal-e-Zal public library and start of construction of a new library in Khan Abad will improve access to information and literature. The libraries will be particularly helpful for students and aspiring public servants, by making it easy for them to study and prepare for exams. With better opportunities for education, they will be able to offer proper services for the community in future.

In Qal-e-Zal, the newly furnished library now stocks more than 1,500 volumes of books on a wide range of subjects. In Khan Abad, the library will also be stocked with up to 1,500 books, furniture and facilities, which will generate a comfortable atmosphere for learning and study.

Habibullah Mohtashim, ... (More on P4)...(8)