

Quote of the Day

Anger blows out the lamp of the mind.

Robert G. Ingersoll

AIHRC

About 500,000 Afghan Children at Risk

KABUL - Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) on Tuesday said that there are serious concerns about the lives of between 300,000 and 500,000 Afghan children employed as laborers or work on the streets.

The AIHRC stated that the issue of child labor affects hundreds of thousands of children who are deprived of a formal education.

"We have suggested the Afghan government increase the social security for supporting children," CEO of the AIHRC Musa Mahmoudi said.

The Afghan government and international children rights groups have failed to address the plight of these children, the AIHRC said.

Faisal, 13, is an Afghan child who struggles to earn a living on the streets. In



order to support his five-member family, who polishes shoes. "I work for 50 to 100 Afs

a day and take some bread home," said Faisal.

Like Faisal, another child, Haseeb, also has to work

for a living. He works at a metalwork shop alongside his brother and father.

Haseeb's father argues that

teaching his child metalwork skills is more beneficial - opposed to working somewhere else. However, the father does not know about any possible impact metalwork could have on the boy's health.

"I work to earn some money," said Haseeb. Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD) claims that the number of street children has decreased in the country.

MoLSAMD said of the 30-odd million people in the country, children represented about 50 percent. However, more than 3.5 million of these children were in need of help. They said more than one million of these children are subjected to manual labor in one form or another. (Tolonews)

EU Project to Monitor Afghan Agro System



KABUL - The signing ceremony of a European Union (EU)-funded project, aimed at assisting the Afghan government to assess agriculture production systems and to strengthen institutional capacity, was convened by the Afghan Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Ministry (MAIL) in Kabul on Tuesday. A statement from the EU special representative and head of EU delegation to Afghanistan said the ceremony for

the 5.5 million Euros project was convened by has been developed by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Designed for three years, the overall objective of the project is to improve monitoring and analysis of agricultural production systems to support agricultural policies and food security in the country. Keeping in view MAIL's priorities, the National Agro-... (More on P4)...(1)

Hekmatyar Expected in Kabul within Next Three Weeks

KABUL - Amin Karim, head of Hekmatyar's Hizb-e-Islami's negotiations delegation on Tuesday said their leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar is currently on the battlefields in Afghanistan but is expected to arrive in Kabul in the next couple of weeks.

"Our Mujahid brother is in Jihad strongholds. He is in the country and will come to Kabul," he said. According to Karim, the joint committees implementing the peace deal are working on ways to maintain Hekmatyar's security and on finding him accommodation. This will take between two to three weeks to finalize, he said. "Hekmatyar is not in Kabul, but Hizb-e-Islami members are in prisons or living as refugees and we hope these technical problems will be solved in the next two to three weeks," Karim said. According to him, Hizb-e-Islami submitted a list of



names of 2,500 prisoners to be released, but Mohammad Akram Khpalwak, a senior adviser to the president said the list was shortened to 480 names and that more names may be deleted as some could be Taliban members. Khpalwak said some prisoners will be released as a sign of good will before Hekmatyar arrives in Kabul. The peace accord between Hizb-e-Islami and the Afghan government was signed four months ago, and according to Karim, since then, joint committees have not only been working on the ... (More on P4)...(4)

Abdullah Wants Rebels Defeated in Helmand before Spring



KABUL - Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah on Tuesday directed security officials to defeat insurgents before the arrival of spring in southern Helmand province. A statement from his office said Abdullah on Tuesday visited Helmand province in compliance with a presidential order for assessing the security situation in the province. On his arrival in Lashkargah, the provincial capital, the CEO laid a floral wreath at the memorial of martyred Helmand security personnel. Later he participated in a security meeting and was thoroughly briefed ... (More on P4)...(2)

Ghani Tasks Delegation to Assess Helmand Security Situation

LASHKARGAH - President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani has held a video conversation with top officials of southern Helmand province and tasked a delegation to visit the province and assess the security situation closely, a statement from Presidential Palace said on Tuesday. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah and other high ranking officials were present during the video conference held Monday evening with Helmand governor, police chief and other local officials, the statement said. After hearing from officials, the president decided to send a delegation to the restive



province to assess security situation closely. Governor and police chief briefed the president on security situation in Sangin and Marja district. Ghani stressed the need for coordination and more cooperation among differ-

ent security institution in Helmand. On Monday, fierce clash reported between security forces and Taliban militants in the Sangin district. The clash erupted after dozens of armed militants stormed security posts in the ... (More on P4)...(3)

UK Lawmakers Start Debate on Bill Authorizing Brexit Talks

LONDON - The British minister in charge of quitting the European Union warned lawmakers Tuesday not to block the start of divorce talks, saying the country had passed a "a point of no return" in its decision to leave. The House of Commons is holding two days of debate on a bill authorizing Prime Minister Theresa May to trigger two years of exit talks, as the government races to meet a self-

imposed March 31 deadline to begin the process. The government was forced to introduce legislation after a Supreme Court ruling last week torpedoed May's effort to start the process of leaving the 28-nation bloc without a parliamentary vote. The brief piece of legislation says that "the prime minister may notify, under Article 50(2) of the Treaty on European Union, ... (More on P4)...(5)

At least 47 Killed in Heavy Snow, Severe Cold



KABUL - At least 47 people have died in the last three weeks because of the severe cold and heavy snowfall in Jawzjan province, an official said Tuesday. Access to health centres was limited

as roads were closed off because of the snowfall, Rahmatullah Hashiri, district governor of Darzab told DPA. "Ten women gave birth to dead babies as they had no access to health facilities in past ... (More on P4)...(6)

Noor Pushes for Role on National Stage

KABUL - Atta Mohammad Noor is in talks with President Ashraf Ghani to join the central government, a move that could shake up the country's politics ahead of elections scheduled for 2019. Negotiations have been going on for weeks, and while the outcome is uncertain and it is unclear what role Noor would take if any, his ambitions have implications for the balance of power between Ghani and government co-leader, Abdullah Abdullah. "I am here in Kabul to continue my negotiations with the president," Noor told Reuters in an interview at his house in the capital, where hundreds of visitors and petitioners crowd in daily to seek his help. "If our negotiations succeed, we will leave Balkh to new and young faces," he said, referring to the northern province where he has built a far-reaching regional power base. "We are ready to support the government and work together."



Abdullah is CEO in a U.S.-brokered power-sharing government, but he is under growing pressure to deliver more for his followers, many of whom consider he has failed to protect their interests. Some political commentators see Noor's initiative as a challenge for the leadership of Afghanistan's powerful ethnic Tajik group, currently led by Abdullah, a former ally whom he backed in the 2014 election. Ghani is a Pashtun, traditionally the strongest ethnic

Afghan group that is often viewed with suspicion by Tajiks and other minority communities. Noor's relations with Ghani have been strained in the past, and the president tried to dismiss him as Balkh governor. But recent talks point to a thaw and have sparked keen interest in the mainstream and social media. There has also been a steady stream of politicians and foreign diplomats to Noor's residences in Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif in the north. ... (More on P4)...(7)

Afghan Troops Battle Taliban Offensive in Helmand Province

KABUL - Afghan forces said they were holding off a Taliban offensive in Helmand province on Tuesday, as reinforcements and air support arrived. Both sides reported heavy fighting as Taliban militants attacked government positions in Sangin district, an area where insurgents have made major gains in the past two years. "There is heavy fighting still ongoing between the Taliban and our forces but those places that were captured by the Taliban yesterday have been taken back," said Omar Zwak, a spokesman for the governor of the southern province. Among the reinforcements sent to the embattled district were new commando units, he said. A regional Taliban spokesman, Qari Yousuf Ahmadi, said fighters had captured at least 25 government checkpoints and killed more than 100 soldiers and police. The Taliban used tunnels dug from houses to attack the government's front-line checkpoints, General Wali Mohammad Ahmadzai, commander of the 215th Army Corps, said on Monday. Army officials said they had killed at least 19 Taliban and wounded 25 British, American and other international forces battled the Taliban in Helmand for years after the ouster of the militant group from power in late 2001. Sangin and other districts saw sustained heavy fighting. (Reuters)



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