

# Ghani Takes Steps on Electoral Reform out of Sync with Abdullah

KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani has ordered his Second Vice President, Mohammad Sarwar Danish, to review proposals for reform in the national electoral system along with members of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) and civil society groups. The announcement comes as the momentum of calls for electoral reform before the next parliamentary elections has picked up in the National Assembly and among the public. According to a Presidential Palace press release on Thursday, Ghani has met with civil society activists,



political parties and members of the electoral commissions, and is committed to bringing about reform. However, while Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah has been a major proponent of reform, sources close to him have raised issue with the move by the Presidential Palace. According to Mahmood Saiqal, a close advisor to Abdullah, pursuing reform without forming a special, independent commission is in violation of the agreement Ghani and Abdullah made that in part allowed them to come together ... (More on P4)...(1)

## Ulumi Stresses Coordination with Masses to Ensure Peace

KANDAHAR CITY - Interior Minister Noor-ul-Haq Ulumi said on Friday that arms would be used against enemy but stressed close coordination with masses to ensure greater peace and stability in the country. Ulumi held detailed deliberations with tribal elders, youth, security officials and representatives from Kandahar, Helmand, Uruzgan and Zabul provinces at the Mandigak Palace. Earlier, speaking on the occasion, Dr. Toraylai Weesa, the acting governor, said it was a matter of great satisfaction that the new interior minister had kicked-off his work from his home province. Praising Ulumi, Weesa said the interior minister had broad experience in handling officials activities. He said that people should not demand the government to give them development projects for their personal interests rather every Afghan should keep his/her national interests supreme. Ulumi also said he was satisfied to launch his work from his home province. "We have been searching for peace since last 35 years. Keeping in view my ... (More on P4)...(3)

## Carter Supports Ghani's Plan for Talks with Taliban

WASHINGTON - President Barack Obama's nominee for the defence secretary told lawmakers he would recommend changes in current plans of drawdown, both in size and pace, if security conditions on the ground in 2016 degrade in Afghanistan. "Yes," said Ashton Carter, when asked during a confirmation hearing if he would consider recommending revisions to the size and pace of the drawdown plan in case security conditions in Afghanistan deteriorated in 2016.



Carter said the next two years represented an important transition period from more than a decade of war toward an enduring defence relationship with an Afghan partner that ... (More on P4)...(2)

## NATO Renews Commitment to Building ANSF Capacity

KABUL - With the opening of a new chapter in Afghanistan-NATO ties, the alliance said on Thursday it would continue to train, advice and assist Afghan forces and institutions under the Resolute Support Mission. In a statement, Oana Lungescu said: "On 1st Janu-



ary, 2015, we launched the Resolute Support Mission. Now, we are fully implementing it. Our troops are on the ground and are working in close cooperation with their Afghan counterparts." Lungescu said that this had been ... (More on P4)...(4)

## Gen. Karimi All Praise for New Army Graduates



KABUL - Expressing satisfaction over a graduation ceremony for newly trained Afghan National Army (ANA) officers, the chief of army staff said on Thursday the graduates would help overcome the personnel shortage problem. Speaking at the graduation ceremony in Kabul, Gen. Sher Mohammad Karimi said the Marshal Mohammad Qasim Fahim Military Academy (MMQFMA) was one of the leading military training centres. Stressing the need for professionalism among ANA staffers, Karimi told the 256 graduates to serve the nation with zeal and patriotism. He said the current strength of ANA would ... (More on P4)...(5)

## Senator Faults US Plan for Military Exit from Afghanistan



WASHINGTON - The United States should not make a hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan as it did in Iraq, and instead should keep current troop levels through 2017, a newly elected influential Republican senator said Thursday. In a speech at the U.S. Institute of Peace, Sen. Tom Cotton of Arkansas said the U.S. is safer because of the military effort in Afghanistan, which he called "the heart of U.S. national security strategy." "We should not make the mistakes of Iraq in Afghanistan. ... We should commit 10,000 troops there through 2017," Cotton said. Cotton, a former U.S. representative from his state, is a military veteran who served in both Iraq and Afghanistan. ... (More on P4)...(6)

## 6 ANA Cadets in Pakistan for Training

KABUL - Six Afghan National Army (ANA) cadets arrived in Islamabad late Thursday evening. The six cadets would get military training at the PMA in Abbottabad. Earlier, Pakistani Army Chief Gen. Raheel Sharif had offered training

to Afghan cadets following his visit to Kabul late last year. The Afghan cadets are scheduled to take part in one-and-a-half month course at the academy. It merits mention that it would be the first ... (More on P4)...(7)

## Ghani Attends Munich Security Conference

KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani has left Kabul for Germany to attend the 51st round of the Munich Security Conference on Friday morning, the Presidential Palace said in a statement. In his three-day official trip,

Ghani is accompanied by National Security Adviser Mohammad Hanif Atmar and the newly-appointed Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani, the statement noted. Ghani will also deliver a speech

at the conference to share Afghanistan's views on the current security situation, it added. The participant countries are expected to share their views on global security situation and also present ... (More on P4)...(8)

## IEC Staff Accused of Fraud Still Occupying Seats: Analysts



KABUL - According to the electoral analysts, the government has not yet identified and prosecuted the Independent Election Commission (IEC) officials who were accused of paving grounds for massive fraud allegedly took place in the last year's Presidential Election. The analysts strongly criticize the government for not bringing reforms in the electoral commission, something President Ashraf Ghani and CEO Abdullah Abdullah considered as one of their key points of the agreement to form the National Unity Government (NUG).

The critics warned that the presence of these officials in the election commission would likely take the Parliamentary elections to the irreparable crises. "If the government and the election commission want to have transparent elections in the future, they must identify and prosecute the defrauders," electoral analyst Jamal Nasir Osoli said. "If the changes are not considered, the coming Parliamentary elections will likely be worse than the Presidential Election." But the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission ... (More on P4)...(9)



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