

## Quote of the Day

You cannot always have happiness, but you can always give happiness.

Lorraine Hansberry

# UNAMA Reports 3.7% Increase in Overall Civilian Casualties

KABUL - The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) stated in its annual report for last year on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict that between 1 January and 31 December, UNAMA documented 11,418 civilian casualties - 3,498 deaths and 7,920 injured; marking a two percent decrease in civilian deaths but a six percent increase in civilians injured.

The report also stated that casualties perpetrated by Daesh increased by ten times in 2016 compared to 2015.

UNAMA documented 899 civilian casualties (209 deaths and 690 injured) in comparison to 82 civilian casualties (39 deaths and 43 injured) in 2015. Daesh used suicide attacks and targeted killings as primary tactics against civilians, particularly targeting members of the Shia Muslim religious minority. The report stated that "UNA-



MA notes with grave concern the almost six-fold increase in civilian casualties from attacks targeting places of worship in 2016." UNAMA documented 378

civilian casualties (87 deaths and 291 injured) compared to 56 civilian casualties (42 deaths and 14 injured) in 2015, mainly due to deliberate sectarian attacks targeting

the Shia Muslim religious minority.

On the overall civilian casualty toll, the report stated: "These figures amount to a three percent increase in to-

tal civilian casualties compared to 2015. Since 2009, the armed conflict in Afghanistan has claimed the lives of 24,841 civilians and injured 45,347 others." ...*(More on P4)...(1)*

## ARG Responds to UNAMA Report on Record Civilian Casualties

KABUL - The Afghan government on Monday said it is taking all necessary steps to protect the lives of civilians and to minimize damage to their property during military operations.

In a press release issued by ARG (the Presidential Palace) it was stated that government had carefully studied the report released on Monday by the UN Assistance Mission in Af-

ghanistan (UNAMA) on the civilian casualties in Afghanistan in 2016.

"The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan puts the safety of lives and properties of the civilians among its fundamental agenda and main objectives. Government will consider legal action in case damage is caused by the security and defense forces to civilians," the ...*(More on P4)...(2)*

## Taliban Reject UN Civilian Casualties Report

KABUL - The Taliban on Monday rejected a United Nations (UN) report that blamed the militants for 60 percent of civilian casualties in 2016.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) on Monday released its annual civilian casualties report, saying 11,418 civilians suffered casualties in 2016. The report said 3,498 civil-

ians were killed and 7,920 others wounded during the conflict in Afghanistan last year.

The report held Taliban militants responsible for 61 percent of the casualties, government forces 24 percent and foreign forces two percent.

However, the Taliban rejected the report. The group's spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, ...*(More on P4)...(3)*

## Afghan Diplomat Killed by His Guard in Pakistan

KARACHI - An Afghan diplomat was shot and killed by his security guard inside the consulate in the Pakistani port city of Karachi on Monday, officials said.



Mohammad Zaki Abdul, the third secretary at the consulate, died of his wounds shortly after the shooting, according to the consulate's spokesman, Haris Khan.

"We were working at our office when we heard gunshots," he said. "Everybody was running in panic."

The guard, identified only as an Afghan national named Rahatullah, was taken into custody, said Pakistani police official Azad Khan. Both officials said the motive behind the killing was not yet known.

Rahatullah was the slain diplomat's personal bodyguard, and it wasn't clear whether the Afghan Consulate had hired him officially, said Khan, the police official.

Noor Wali Khan Noor, a Foreign Ministry official in Kabul, said a delegation from the Afghan Embassy in Islamabad has been dispatched to Karachi to investigate the incident.

Pakistan's Foreign Office said police intervened immediately after the shooting, which took place in the lobby of the consulate. It said Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry spoke by phone with the Afghan ambassador to offer condolences and assistance in the investigation. (AP)

## Special Envoy

# China to Support 4-Way Talks Resumption

KABUL - China's special envoy on Afghanistan affairs Deng Xijun on Sunday said his country, in case of need, would support resumption of the four-way talks to revive the stalled Afghan peace process.

A statement from the CEO Office to Pajhwok Afghan News said CEO Abdullah Abdullah met Deng Xijun and both discussed bilateral relations.

The statement said Xijun extended the Chinese prime minister's best wishes to the CEO and stressed expanded friendly ties between the two countries.

Deng Xijun mentioned the People's Republic of China constructive and effective role with regard to peace in Afghanistan. He said his country was ready to play more active role in ensuring



ing peace in its neighboring country.

He went on to say China in case of need would support the recommencement of peace talks and quadrilateral sessions on peace in Afghanistan.

The statement said Abdullah while wishing Xijun a happy new Chinese Year asked him to convey his greetings to the Chinese prime minister. He called China one of Afghanistan's friends and allies

and wished further strengthening of the bilateral ties. Abdullah also praised China's efforts at ensuring peace in Afghanistan.

Abdullah hoped China would use its influence on Pakistan for the sake of peace and stability in Afghanistan. The Chinese special envoy also met Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani before noon at his office, with both the sides exchanging views about ...*(More on P4)...(5)*

## 107 Killed by Snowfall, Hundreds Rescued: CEO



KABUL - Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dr. Abdullah on Monday said 107 people had been killed due to the heavy snowfall while hundreds had been rescued and operation to reopen roads and highways was underway.

Addressing the Council of Ministers, Abdullah said the continued wet spell had harmed scores of countrymen. But he stopped short of giving an exact figure. He said 22 provinces had been hit by heavy snowfall. Most of the casualties hap-

pened in Nuristan and Badakhshan provinces, the CEO added. Efforts to rescue the people trapped by avalanches were almost complete while the evacuation of the injured from Badakhshan and Parwan were already suffering from the effects of conflict and are home to at-risk and vulnerable communities.

The statement further stated that Australia remains firmly committed to assisting Afghanistan in addressing its humanitarian needs. Australia ...*(More on P4)...(7)*

## Australia Firmly Committed to Assist Afghanistan: Embassy

KABUL - The Australian Embassy is saddened to learn the substantial loss of life following a series of avalanches in Eastern Afghanistan, a statement from embassy in Kabul statement on Monday.

Initial reports suggest many have been killed and that more may be missing or injured. Our thoughts are with those directly affected and their families, friends and communities. It added.

The most affected communities in Nuristan, Badakhshan and Parwan were already suffering from the effects of conflict and are home to at-risk and vulnerable communities.

The statement further stated that Australia remains firmly committed to assisting Afghanistan in addressing its humanitarian needs. Australia ...*(More on P4)...(7)*

## Deprived Provinces at Top of Govt's Priorities: Ghani

KABUL - President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani on Monday said 10 provinces deprived of some important developments would be paid special attention.

The president said this while presiding over a meeting that discussed requirements of provinces at the Presidential Palace, a statement from the palace to Pajhwok Afghan News said.

Deputy ministers of education, energy and water, agriculture, mines and petroleum, labor and social affairs, rural development, tribal and border affairs and others attended the meeting, the state-



ment added. It said President Ghani thanked the officials for presenting their reports to the meeting and said 10 deprived provinces were at top of government's priority programs. He also asked relevant ministries to consider the provinces in their development pro-

grams. He said soon a delegation would be sent to Paktika province to identify people's problems.

The president asked ministries to add Paktika province to a special table in their operational plans. He said one of the ...*(More on P4)...(4)*

## Kabul Looks to Expand Political, Military, Trade Ties with Russia



KABUL - Moscow is ready to boost support to the Afghan security forces in their campaign against Daesh, the Russian foreign ministry has said.

The comments by the Russian foreign ministry come as Afghan acting foreign minister Salahuddin Rabbani is in Russia for talks aimed at coordinating actions on bilateral ties between the two countries on some key issues including political, military, economic and trade relations.

"Meetings are expected to focus on bilateral relations, InshaAllah (God willing) and outcomes of the trip could have positive impacts on enhancing the relations between the two countries," CEO Abdullah Abdullah said on Monday.

In the meantime, the Afghan Ministry of Interior (MoI) has said that Afghanistan supports any move that can help eliminate the terrorist group in the region and the world.

"We welcome any move which can help to weaken terrorist groups especially Daesh. But we should not forget that the Afghan security forces have inflicted major blows to Daesh," said MoI deputy spokesman Najib Danish. ...*(More on P4)...(8)*

## Marble Traders Sign Multiple Contracts at Indian Tradeshow

KABUL - Several USAID beneficiary traders of marble, onyx and lapis from Afghanistan signed a number of contracts this week with international buyers at the India Stone Mart, the country's largest stone industry exposition.

The event was held from February 2-5 at the Jaipur Exhibition and Convention Center and drew more than 25,000 guests and 15,000 traders from 60 countries.

"Afghanistan's mountains hold massive reserves of marble and other minerals, yet the industry remains underdeveloped. India Stone Mart gives Afghan marble traders the opportunity to negotiate deals, network and make sales," said Afghanistan's Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industries Mohammad Qurban Haqjo. "This not only contributes to the Afghan economy; it also has the important effect of attracting foreign investment in the Afghan mining sector."

USAID's Afghanistan Trade and Revenue Project worked with the Ministry of Commerce and Industries to select the Afghan marble exporters to join more than 500 exhibitors from nine countries attending the bi-annual tradeshow. Afghanistan is home to 35 varieties of marble and its Chesht and Khogiani varieties have been compared with Italy's Carrara marble, regarded as one of the best in the world.

"Afghan traders participating at this year's India Stone Mart are not just going as businessmen to make sales; they are representing a largely untapped industry with huge potential for growth," ...*(More on P4)...(9)*



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