

Jalalabad Clear 24°C 8°C	Ghazni Partly Cloudy 10°C -3°C	Kandahar Partly Cloudy 21°C 2°C	Mazar Clear 16°C 5°C	Herat Partly Cloudy 15°C 3°C	Bamayan Clear 1°C -10°C	Kabul Clear 14°C 0°C
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Daily Outlook Weather Forecast

US wants NATO to Step up Fight Against Islamic State

BRUSSELS - The United States is pressing NATO to play a bigger role against Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, putting Washington at odds with Germany and France which fear the strategy would risk confrontation with the alliance's old Cold War foe Russia.

All 28 NATO allies are already part of a 66-nation anti-Islamic State coalition, so the United States is looking to NATO as an institution to bring its equipment, training and the expertise it gained leading a coalition in Afghanistan. "It is worth ex-



ploring how NATO, as NATO, could make an appropriate contribution, leveraging for example its unique capabilities, such as force generation,"

U.S. Secretary of Defense Ash Carter said after meeting allies at NATO headquarters in Brussels last week and referring to NATO's know-how in drumming-up troops, planes and ships from allies. Seeking to recapture the Islamic State strongholds of Raqqa in Syria and Mosul in Iraq, Washington wants a bigger European response to the chaos and failing states near Europe's borders.

Carter's call for NATO's help came as defense ministers from the anti-Islamic State coalition met last week at NATO headquarters in Brussels for the first time, albeit with NATO insignia removed from the walls. (Reuters)

ANA Defuses 27 Bombs, Landmines in Southern Provinces

KABUL - The Afghan National Army (ANA) has found and defused 27 Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in two southern provinces, Defense Ministry said on Wednesday.

"The Afghan National Army's 205 Attal Corps personnel during operations in southern Zabol and neighboring Uruzgan provinces, recovered and defused 27 rounds of roadside bombs and IEDs over the past 24 hours," the ministry said.

The army soldiers also seized a weapon cache in Naw Bahar district of Zabol.

About 11 kg explosive materials, two BM1 rockets, three rounds of heavy gun shells, and two mortar shell rounds were among the ammunition found in the cache, it noted.

The Taliban militant group has been using IEDs to target security forces but the lethal weapons also inflict casualties on civilians, according to military officials. More than 3,540 civilians were killed and over 7,450 others injured in 2015 as the violence spread in different places of the country, according to a report released by the UN mission in the country on Sunday.

Out of the casualties, 713 civilians were killed and more than 1,650 injured by IED attacks last year. (Xinhua)

4-Day Polio Drive Kicks off in Nangarhar

JALALABAD - A 4-day polio campaign has kicked off in eastern Nangarhar province. Mobile polio teams are going door-by-door to give polio drops to some 667,000 children under five years of age. The drive was officially launched when health officials give the drops to a few children during a ceremony in the compound of the Directorate of Rural Rehabilitation and Development in Jalalabad city on Tuesday morning.

Doctor Muqadisa, Director of the Public Health in Nangarhar said that the drive would be executed in other eastern provinces Laghman, Kunar and Nooristan for three days while it will take four days in Nangarhar which is hub to eastern region of the country.

She said 3,910 volunteers are taking part in the campaign. Muqadisa added that 10 of the 20 polio cases registered in the country are in the eastern region.

Eight of these cases have been recorded in Nangarhar and two others in Kunar province. This comes as 18,000 children were left unvaccinated during the previous polio campaign but the Public Health Director said that now they have gained more access to rural areas and this scale would decrease to 13,000. Health officials called on parents to allow their kids to be given the polio drops for saving them from disability. (KP)

10,000 Balloons Distributed to Support Peace



KABUL - A number of youths on Wednesday distributed 10,000 balloons to Kabul citizens as part of a campaign to support peace, security and the culture of reading books among the young generation in the country.

Slogans about peace and book reading were written on the balloons to encourage the youth to read books and support peace in the war-hit Afghanistan.

Organizers of this initiative said their goal was to support the security forces, condemn violence against women, spread the culture of reading books and encourage the youth to stay in the country. The balloons were distributed to Kabul residents in 10 areas. (Tolonews)

Iran Calls for Collective Global Effort to Fight Extremism

TEHRAN - The Iranian ambassador to the United Nations has called for concerted global efforts to counter the rising trend of extremism.

In an address to a meeting of the UN General Assembly on Tuesday, Gholam Ali Khoshrou described extremism as the most serious threat to global security and stability.

The Iranian envoy said that arming and funding extremist groups as well as foreign military interventions are among the factors contributing to the rise of extremism.

"Destabilizing legitimate governments through arming and funding violence-seeking



groups along with foreign military interventions" and policies aimed at changing governments have been among the factors that have fueled the growing trend of violent extremism at the global level, he said.

He further denounced efforts by certain media in inciting sectarianism, zero tolerance, xenophobia and discrimination, which he said, have inclined many young people towards extremism and violence. (PressTV)

Kabul Rally Condemns Raise in Civilian Casualties



KABUL - Some civil society organizations members and residents of capital Kabul on Wednesday staged a rally in support of security forces and urged the conflicting parties to prevent civilian casualties.

Ihsanullah, one of the rally participants, said the purpose of this rally was to demonstrate support with the country's armed forces. He said the insurgent should understand that they were not fighting only individuals in the armed forces uniform, adding that the entire nation was with security forces and supported them.

He asked the international community to equip the Afghan security forces to improve the law and order situations countrywide. They rally holders demanded the conflicting parties to avoid civilian casualties during conflict and they expressed deep concerns over raise in the loss of civilians during conflict.

Earlier, the United Nation said, At least 3,545 civilians were killed and 7,457 others injured in Afghanistan dur-

ing 2015, hitting an all-time high. The numbers exceed the previous record levels of civilian casualties that occurred in 2014. The latest figures indicate an increase of four percent during 2015 in total civilian casualties from the previous year.

In the 2015 Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) called increased ground fighting in and around populated areas, suicide and other attacks in major cities the main causes of the collateral damage.

Nicholas Haysom, the secretary-general's special representative and UNAMA head, said: "This report records yet another rise in the number of civilians hurt or killed. The harm done to civilians is totally unacceptable." He urged parties to the conflict to take concrete action to protect civilians and put a stop to the killing and maiming of non-combatants in 2016. Ground engagements caused the highest number of civilian casualties. (Pajhwok)

Pakistan Probe Provides No Clues on Missing Afghan Politician



ISLAMABAD - Authorities in Pakistan have reported no progress in their probe to ascertain motives or locate the whereabouts of a visiting senior Afghan politician, nearly a week after he was kidnapped in Islamabad.

Fazlullah Wahidi, former governor of Herat province, arrived in the capital city with his family to apply for a visa to visit Britain. According to the initial complaint registered with the Islamabad police, unknown men kidnapped him Friday afternoon from the guesthouse in which he was staying.

The British embassy in Kabul does not issue visas to Afghans.

Police and intelligence agencies have been working hard to resolve the matter but they have not yet made any progress, despite "some encouraging initial leads," according to a Pakistani government official with knowledge of the probe, who spoke with VOA on the condition of anonymity. Afghan diplomats said they are in touch with the Pakistani government and hope for quick progress in the case. They feared the incident, if not resolved, could setback efforts the two countries are making to improve their strained ties.

"The case if not resolved as hoped could severely impact prominent Afghan's traveling to Pakistan - something that actually needs to be encouraged and promoted for broadening positive interactions between our two countries as I want to push as part of my mission," Kabul's newly appointed ambassador to Islamabad, Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal told VOA on Wednesday.

Mysterious disappearance The mysterious disappearance of the former governor comes at a time when Pakistan and Afghanistan, together with the United States and China, have stepped up joint efforts to arrange direct peace talks between the Kabul government and the Taliban to end the Afghan war.

Officials from the four nations are scheduled to meet again in the Afghan capital on Monday to further the peace process amid expectations that peace talks between the warring sides could start before the end of this month.

For years, Wahidi ruled the eastern... (More on P4)... (9)

Baghlan Violence Fuelled by Breach of Agreement with Elders: Mangal

KABUL - Minister of Border and Tribal Affairs Mohammad Gulab Mangal has linked increased insecurity in northern Baghlan province to the breach of an agreement signed with local tribal elders.

On the other hand, Mangal said, the issue of Pakistani identity cards distributed to residents of border areas had been shared with the National Security Council (NSC).

In an exclusive interview with Pajhwok Afghan News, Mangal spoke on insecurity in Baghlan and other important issues.

Dand-i-Ghori agreement On September 3, 2015, a five-member Presidential Palace delegation, led by Mangal, travelled to Baghlan to assess the security situation. After spending 10 days there, the



delegation signed an agreement with Dand-i-Ghori elders.

Under the deal, elders promised residents would stand by security attacks in case of attacks in the area. Security forces were required not to arrest anyone without permission from tribal elders. Facilitating displaced families' return to their homes was also part of the pact.

However, a number of provincial council members and civil society groups claimed the militants had been given undue privileges under the agreement. But the agreement was violated a few days after it was signed.

Mangal said: "I still support the deal that was not signed with Taliban militants; it was reached with local tribal elders. ... (More on P4)... (8)

45 Daesh Insurgents Eliminated in Achin Offensive: Mol

KABUL - At least 45 Islamic State (IS) fighters have been killed in the Achin district of eastern Nangarhar province during the past 48 hours, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) said on Wednesday.

MoI spokesman Seddqi Seddqi told reporters at a news conference here the Daesh insurgents were killed in different parts of Achin district. He did not provide more details about the fatalities.

Daesh rebels have not yet commented on their casualties. Pajhwok Afghan News tried to contact local officials on the military action, but failed.



Calling Daesh a big threat to national security, Seddqi said: "Afghan forces are fighting valiantly against one of the world's most notorious terrorist groups." He added 12 other rebels had been killed and five Kalashnikovs and an RGP seized in

Baghlan, Kapisa, Kandahar, Kunduz and Badakhshan province in the past one week. On the other hand, Taliban militants claimed inflicting heavy casualties on security forces in Kandahar, Badakhshan, Kunduz and Baghlan provinces. (Pajhwok)