

Jalalabad Clear 17°C 2°C	Ghazni Clear 3°C -7°C	Kandahar Clear 13°C -1°C	Mazar Clear 8°C -5°C	Herat Partly Cloudy 14°C -3°C	Bamayan Partly Cloudy -3°C -12°C	Kabul Clear 9°C -4°C		Daily Outlook Weather Forecast
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TAPI Engineering Design Agreement Signed

KABUL - Agreement for the engineering design of the project was signed by the Afghan Gas Enterprise and Germany's ILF Company on Tuesday, the Presidential Palace said in a statement.

The acting mines minister, Ghezal Habibiyar, said the practical implantation of the Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India (TAPI) gas pipeline project will take three years while the design, management and other tasks of the project will be completed in an additional year.

President Ashraf Ghani, the deputy chief executive Mohammad Mohaqiq, the Meshrano Jirga (Upper House of Parliament) speaker Fazl Hadi Muslimyar and a number of foreign officials attend-



ed at the signing ceremony which was held at the Presidential Palace.

"The TAPI pipeline project will cost \$7.4 billion and will be completed in two phases," Habibiyar said.

He added: "The first phase of the project - which includes

the security of the project, agreements, design, social and environmental study, demining, a survey of the pipeline's route and expropriation will be completed in one year." The two phases will take four years.

The pipeline will 1,735 kilometers long and has the capacity of transferring 33 billion cubic meters of gas from Turkmenistan to Pakistan and India through Herat, Farah, Helmand and Nimroz provinces of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan will earn \$400 million USD per year from the pipeline, he added. "The pipeline will change Afghanistan into a transit hub for Central Asia. It will be an important economic corridor for ... (More on P4)...(10)

Farah Hospital Employees' Salaries Robbed

FARAH CITY - Gunmen robbed the provincial civil hospital in western Farah province of employees' salaries amounting to 760,000 afghanis, an official said on Monday.

The official in the civil hospital in Farah City spoke on the condition of anonymity. He said the robbery took place two days back.

Dr. Abdul Hakeem Rasooli, the hospital's head, confirmed unknown gunmen entered the hospital two days back and took away money from the finance sector of the hospital.

He said the thieves besides breaking into the finance sector also broke locks of the hospital's director office room. The robbers also destroyed some documents in the director's office. He said the matter had been officially referred to the provincial police headquarters. The police headquarters said the incident was under investigation. (Pajhwok)

Taliban Suffer Heavy Casualties in Helmand Airstrikes



KABUL - The Taliban insurgent's heavy casualties in a series of airstrikes conducted in southern Helmand province of Afghanistan.

The provincial government media office in a statement said the militants were killed or wounded in Nawa and Sangin districts.

The statement further added that the first airstrike targeted a house belonging to Taliban insurgents in Ainak area of Nawa district, leaving a Taliban commander Haji Geran dead together with his 6 fighters.

Scores of Improvised Explosive Device kept inside the house were also destroyed in the airstrike.

The second airstrike was carried out in Sangin district targeting a hideout of the Taliban insurgents, leaving at least 8 militants dead, including their commander Haji Muslim, the statement said.

At least 7 Taliban insurgents were also wounded in the airstrike.

The anti-government armed militant groups including the Taliban insurgents have not commented regarding the report so far.

Helmand is among the volatile provinces in southern Afghanistan where the Taliban insurgents are openly operating in its various districts and often carry out insurgency activities.

The group conducted numerous large attacks against the government forces during the recent months as they aimed to take control of the key districts of the province. (KP)

3 Sentenced to Jail over Corruption in Mosque Construction



JALALABAD - The appellate court of eastern Nangarhar province on Tuesday fined the head of a Construction Company and sentenced three other individuals to six months of jail over corruption in building the Spin Jumat Mosque in the provincial capital.

According to a statement from Nangarhar appellate court received by Pajhwok Afghan News, the decision was made in an open trial attended by the court's head, Abdul Wali Qazizada.

The source said that the judiciary delegation handed down the verdict in presence of both sides of the cases.

The owner of the construction company tasked for building Spin Jumat Mosque confirmed he was in debt to a number people and promised to give that money to their owners, the statement added.

However, the source said it was not final decision of the appellate court and the individuals accused can request for changes.

Dr. Mohammad Hanif Hashemi, a civil society activist and member of the Transparency Monitoring Commission in Jalalabad, the provincial capital, said that the embezzlement in Spin Jumat Mosque was a serious issue.

He said that he most of the times watched courts' meetings; however, he did not provide more details about the appellate court's trial.

Another civil society activist, Niamatullah Hamdard, said the convicts should be charged with more jail terms and cash fine.

Calling the appellate court action a positive decision, he said the government needed to provide more information about embezzlement in the Spin Jumat Mosque construction. (Pajhwok)

NATO Returns Advisory Role to Basics Amid Extra Troops Rumors

KABUL - NATO commanders in the southern province of Kandahar have said their training advisers have started spending more time in the field with the Afghan army to enhance the fighting capabilities of the conventional forces in their campaign against the Taliban.

NATO officers in Kandahar say that by training lower ranks within Afghanistan's armed forces will boost their professional abilities in combat.

On Saturday U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said that President Donald Trump is waiting for an assessment by US intelligence services before deciding whether or not to increase the number of American troops in Afghanistan and further increase the advisory mission to the conventional forces in the country that has been grappling with unprecedented waves of violence over the past months.

With the end of NATO's combat mission in Afghanistan in 2014, the alliance decided to reduce the number of its combat soldiers in the country, however NATO announced that it



would deploy its military advisors in the military corps and army units to advise, train and support the Afghan security forces.

"The further down you can reach the better," said U.S. Army Captain Everett Heiney, an advisor in Kandahar. The strategy now includes advising training of Afghan units at lower levels within the ranks.

"You can always use more advisers to push down to the lower levels because ... it's good if there are more people doing training, more people at each brigade able to be with the units on a regular basis," Heiney said.

Meanwhile, General Abdul Rahim, the commander of 203 Atal Army Corps in Kandahar has said that the wider engagement of NATO advisors in the ranks of the security forces will help local forces to boost their war capacities.

"They (Afghan soldiers) first begin their training in various fields, including artillery and the leadership of the army. When they start their active duties in the fight for the elimination of the enemy and for the peace ... (More on P4)...(11)

Suicide Bomber Arrested before Attacking Sar-e-Pul Governor

KABUL - A plot by the anti-government armed militants to assassinate the provincial governor of northern Sar-e-Pul province was foiled by the Afghan security forces.

Provincial governor Mohammad Zahir Wahdat said a suicide bomber was arrested before he manage to detonate his explosives near him.

Wahdat further added that the suicide bomber who has been identified as Najmuddin son of Khairuddin was identified as he was attempting to get closer and detonate his explosives.

He said his personal security guards identified the suicide bomber as he was only 15 meters away from him and a motorcycle packed with explosives was confiscated.

According to Wahdat, the bomber was handed over to the Afghan Intelligence operatives and is currently in their custody for further investigation.

Zahir said this was the fifth assassination attempt against him following four other failed attacks by the militants.

The last attack against Zahir took place earlier last year as a suicide bomber tried to ram himself into his vehicle but was shot dead by the security forces. The anti-government armed ... (More on P4)...(12)

Fresh Troops, Heavy Weapon Supplies Reach Eastern Borders

JALALABAD - Fresh troops and heavy weapons had been deployed to the border areas of eastern provinces, officials said on Tuesday.

On the other hand, Nangarhar governor, who observed the Lalpoora district and Torkham Township from close on Monday, said Afghan forces were ready for taking any needed measures.

Nangarhar governor's spokesman, Attuallah Khogyani, told Pajhwok Afghan News that Governor Gulab Mangal, accompanied by some civil and military officials assessed security situation and people affected by recent rocket strikes by Pakistani forces in Lalpoora district and Torkham Township.

During his visit, the governor



also shared President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah's messages with local security officials and tribal elders, he said.

Both the local and central governments were careful about Lalpoora district's people and efforts were underway to resolve the border tensions through diplomatic channels, he quoted the governor as saying.

If the diplomatic attempts did not bear fruit, then the brave Afghan nation was ready for any type of response to Pakistan's rocket shelling, he said, assuring victims of the attacks would be covered with essential care.

Mangal ordered officials concerned to deliver needed aid to victims' families in a transparent

Georgian Companies May be Able to Participate in Tenders in Afghanistan

KABUL - Georgian companies could be given the right to participate in tenders in Afghanistan. This was announced on Tuesday at a Government Meeting where Georgia's Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili talked about new opportunities between Georgia and Afghanistan.

The PM said he discussed the possibility of opening "different types of opportunities" with Afghanistan with the country's president Ashraf Ghani.

"I had a very interesting meeting with the Afghan President and I have to say that quite different types of opportunities are being opened with Afghanistan in the areas of transport, logistics and economic relations", said Kvirikashvili.

Also, we had the opportunity to speak about the possibility of Georgian companies' taking part in public procurement in Afghanistan. The President expressed readiness to consider such proposals", he added.

The meeting between Kvirikashvili and Ghani was held within the framework of the Munich Security Conference. (Agencies)

Women Join 'Complicated Operations' in Police Special Units



KABUL - Sayed Mohammad Roshandil, the commander of special units of the Afghan National Police (ANP) said on Monday that his forces have carried out more than 2,500 operations against terrorists and criminals in past six months.

The special forces include women.

"The women have a lot of interests to serve. We cannot say that females have only a symbolic role as they take part in the operations like the men and fight against the enemy," said Roshandil.

Several female snipers are also serving in the ranks of the special units of police. They carry out joint nighttime military operations with their male counterparts.

Ahmad is one of the officers who serves in special units of police for five years.

"We are participating in operations where the suicide bombers try to attack and also in other counter-terrorism operations in provinces," said Ahmad.

"I am the commander of the female officers and send them on operations. I also participate in complicated operations," said female officer Rahima Yousofi. (Tolonews)