

Quote of the Day

Health is the greatest gift,
contentment the greatest
wealth, faithfulness the
best relationship.
Buddha

Ghani to Issue Decree on Electoral Reforms within Days

KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani will issue a constitutional decree regarding electoral reforms within three days, said his senior advisor, Mohammad Akram Khpalwak.

He said that consultations over the decree are underway and will end within three days.

He said government is trying to improve security and provide funding for the elections. "Work on the decree is underway and progress has also been made... consultations have taken place and it will be concluded within two to three days and then the decree will be issued," said Khpalwak.

He urged political and civil



institutions to discuss the decree with lawmakers. To prevent a rejection of the de-

creed, he said Ghani is taking suggestions from political parties and other organiza-

tions. "The president will issue the decree and he wants both houses of parliament

(Wolesi Jirga and Meshrano Jirga) to approve it," he went on to say.

The Independent Election Commission (IEC) announced the final results of the 2014 presidential elections a few days back. The move was widely criticized by a large number of political analysts. However, the Presidential Palace said that the IEC hadn't coordinated the announcement with it. Jawed Faisal, the deputy spokesman for the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), said that the president will issue the decree on electoral reforms during parliament's break. Meanwhile, a number of election ... (More on P4)...(1)

UN Assures Afghanistan of Strong Support

KABUL - The United Nations has assured the government and people of Afghanistan of its strong support, as the country has stepped up efforts for a negotiated end to the 15-year conflict.

UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson held out the assurance at a meeting with Ambassador Mohammad Saikal, Afghanistan's mission in New York said in a statement. "They had a productive discussion on the security, political and economic situation of Afghanistan," the statement



added. The fight against terrorism, the peace process and regional dynamics were discussed. The diplomats also spoke on improving defence capabilities of Afghanistan, political stability, electoral reform, fiscal deficit, poverty reduction and employment issues. (Pajhwok)

25 Percent of Police Desert Force



KABUL - As insurgency attacks increase and security deteriorates, reports have emerged that about 25 percent of Afghan police members deserted the force last year.

According to an article in the Wall Street Journal, thousands have deserted amid increasing Taliban attacks and poor leadership.

The WSJ stated that a confidential interior ministry report to aid donors shows that more than 36,000 police officers left the force last year - the first year that the Afghan security forces have been solely responsible for security following the December 2014 draw down of foreign troops.

As reported by the WSJ, Afghanistan's police are often on the frontline of the battlefield in the war against the Taliban and other insurgent groups. They are also used to secure roads nationally and man checkpoints in the provinces and in cities.

According to interior ministry statistics, 200 police were killed in January - a casualty toll that has raised concerns among donors, read the news report.

Reports emerged recently that the Taliban reportedly controls or influences an estimated third of the country.

However, the Wall Street Journal stated that the interior ministry did not comment on the figures but did say that the desertion of police had caused the death toll of members to rise. ... (More on P4)...(5)

MoI Rejects Claims that 36,000 Police Have Deserted Force



KABUL - Reports emerged this week that about 36,000 Afghan police officers, which is 25 percent of the total number, deserted the force last year - claims that the Ministry of Interior have rejected.

The Afghan Ministry of Interior (MoI) has dismissed the reports as baseless. But a number of experts said that poor leadership and the lack of coordination between the country's security institutions has created serious challenges for the police force in the war-hit country.

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As reported by the WSJ, Afghanistan's police are often on the frontline of the battlefield in the war against the Taliban and other insurgent groups. They are also used to secure roads nationally and man checkpoints in the provinces and in cities. The ministry of interior however rejected the claims as groundless.

"The total number of officers serving in the force is around 157,000. But the ... (More on P4)...(6)

Gen. Dostum to Move Court against His Critics

MAIMANA - First Vice-President Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum on Saturday warned to move court against some so-called political commentators accusing him of tribal discrimination and genocide.

Dostum, who is spearheading a clearing operation in northern Jawzjan province for the past one week, told reporters here that some "narrow-minded" people posing as experts



were propagating against him and trying to defame the ongoing operations in the northern region.

"I came here to defend our territory, improve the national unity and eliminate enemies of our people," he said.

"But some people who call themselves experts are conspiring against me and trying to create the impression that our ... (More on P4)...(2)

Pakistan, Afghanistan Build Bridges to Mend Relations

ISLAMABAD - Leaders of Pakistani and Afghan parliaments called for improving the level of relations between the two countries and preventing mistrust caused by mutual accusations, official sources reported Saturday.

The presidents of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly of Pakistan, Awaiz Leghari, and the Wolesi Jirga (lower house of the Afghan parliament), Abdul Raouf Ibrahim, agreed on the need to mend bilateral ties, according to a statement released by the national legislature.

During a meeting held on Friday, Leghari reiterated strong support from Islamabad to the negotiating process to end the conflict that has been bleeding the neighboring country for decades, intensified after the US aggression in 2001.



Any hostile propaganda against Pakistan from Afghanistan must end, also warned Leghari.

We must continue the exchange of parliamentary delegations to raise the level of confidence and identify the true enemies, considered Ibrahim.

During a meeting this week with the president of the Wolesi Jirga, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif called for closer ties between his country and Afghanistan, re-

presented by mutual accusations, and defended the peace process driven by his neighbor, which he considers a key to the region. In this regard, he recalled the visit of President Ashraf Ghani in December and said that his administration aims to improve trust between the two governments. In recent months, relations between the two countries fell to minimum levels by mutual allegations of support for insurgent organizations. (Agencies)

G20 Economies Pledge "All Policy Tools" to Strengthen Global Recovery



SHANGHAI - Financial policymakers from the world's 20 major economies on Saturday pledged to use all policy tools, including monetary, fiscal and structural ones, to strengthen global recovery amid growing concerns of further downward risks.

"The global recovery continues, but it remains uneven and falls short of our ambition for strong, sustainable and balanced growth," noted a communique issued after the two-day G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting in Shanghai. The poli-

cymakers cited volatile capital flows, slumping commodity prices, escalated geopolitical tensions, a potential UK exit from the European Union and increasing refugees as major vulnerabilities of the global economy. The gathering came amid weak economic growth worldwide and increasing financial volatility that saw frequent and drastic falls in the stock markets across the world. Japan's surprising adoption of negative interest rates, uncertainties over the prospect of rate hikes in the United States, plunging oil prices and

concerns over the financial strength of leading banks in Europe have combined to add uncertainties to the global financial landscape. Despite the challenges, the group judges that the magnitude of recent market volatility has not reflected the underlying fundamentals of the global economy. "We expect activity to continue to expand at a moderate pace in most advanced economies, and growth in key emerging market economies remains strong," the group said. (Xinhua)

Afghan Special Forces Free 35 from Taliban Custody

KABUL - The Afghan special operation forces set free 35 civilians from a Taliban militants' prison overnight, the country's Defense Ministry said on Saturday.

"Those released included five women, five men and 25 children. They were rescued following a special operation from a Taliban prison in Nad Ali district, Helmand province last night," the ministry said in a statement.

"Up to seven armed militants were also detained following the raid," the statement reads. Helmand, notorious for poppy growing, is also a known Taliban stronghold.

Some 120 people, including soldiers and military officers, had been released in Helmand in similar ... (More on P4)...(4)

UN Disappointed Over Fresh Border Restrictions by EU

NEW YORK - UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon has expressed deep concerns over increased limitations and fresh asylum restrictions imposed by European countries, urging EU member nations not to close their borders from the flow of migrants coming through Greece.

Stephane Dujarric, a spokesman for Ban said that the secretary general hopes that the EU countries realize their responsibility toward the refugees and that he is deeply concerned over the fresh restrictions imposed on Afghan asylum seekers and that the refugees must not be discriminated against. Ban voiced concern on Friday about increasing border restrictions in the Balkans and Austria for migrants and refugees streaming toward Europe and urged all countries to keep their frontiers open.

Dujarric said the restrictions were not in line with the 1951 ... (More on P4)...(7)

President Confers Prestigious Medal on Gen. Campbell



KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani conferred a prestigious medal on outgoing commander of US Forces and NATO-led Resolute Support (RS) mission Gen. John Campbell.

The Stora medal was awarded to Gen. Campbell during a ceremony at the Presidential Palace late on Friday, a statement from Ghani's office said. Senior Afghan and Resolute Support mission officials attended the event.

Ghani praised Gen. Campbell's services in the fields of supporting and equipping Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Campbell coordination with the Ministries of Defence and Interior in maintaining security was also hailed.

Campbell took over as commander ... (More on P4)...(3)

1,500 Children Suffering from Thalassemia in Nangarhar

JALALABAD - A cricket tournament involving four teams was launched on Saturday as part of a week-long campaign to collect blood for children suffering from thalassemia in eastern Nangarhar province. The tournament titled "Donate blood and Save life" is organized by a charity "Jwand Charity Community" in Jalalabad, the provincial capital.

Speaking at the tournament launch, Nangarhar public health director Dr. Najibullah Kamawal said more than 1500 children were suffering from Thalassemia, a blood disorder, in the province and the patients needed blood every month.

"So we all should cooperate and show solidarity with the patients," he said, adding the Jwand charity had launched the cricket tournament to collect blood for the patients.

A volunteer with the charity, Ikramullah Ikram, said the campaign to collect blood for thalassemia patients would continue for a week.

He said a number of journalists in Nangarhar had been included in the four teams participating in the cricket tournament which would simultaneously continue with the ... (More on P4)...(8)