

## Quote of the Day

Accept the challenges so that you can feel the exhilaration of victory

George S. Patton

# Pakistan Tasked to Bring 10 Influential Taliban Figures to Afghan Peace Talks

KABUL - The Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) has given a task to Pakistan to bring 10 influential Taliban figures for the upcoming direct peace talks with the Afghan government.

An Afghan government official privy of the development has told Radio Free Europe (RFE) that the 10 influential Taliban figures have been identified by the Afghan government.

The official speaking on the condition of anonymity further added that leaders of the Haqqani network were also



among those influential given regarding the identities of the senior Taliban figures keen to bring to negotiations table. The first round of direct peace talks between the

Afghan government and Taliban group is expected to take place in the first week of March. Pakistan has offered to host the first round of direct talks between the Afghan government and Taliban representatives following the conclusion of the fourth round of Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) meeting on Tuesday. Meanwhile, the representatives of Taliban in Qatar have said they are "unaware of plans for talks" and that they had not changed its preconditions for joining the peace process. (KP)

## Selab Military Corps Equipped with Fighter Jets, Helicopters



JALALABAD - The Ministry of Defence (MoD) on Sunday equipped the 201st Selab Military Corps with four warplanes delivered by the US and India to counter militants in the eastern zone. Two months back, the government of India donated three Mi24D and the US A29 warplanes to Afghan forces for fighting against militants. Brig. Gen. Mohammad Zaman Waziri, commander

of the 201st Selab Military Corps, told Pajhwok Afghan News four of the aircraft had been delivered to them. "These two helicopters and two fighter jets will provide air support for our ground operations aimed at eliminating militants from the eastern zone," the commander hoped. Selab Military Corps conducts operations in Kunar, Laghman, Nuristan, ...*(More on P4)...(1)*

## MoRR Refugee Exodus is a Capital Outflow



KABUL - The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) said on Sunday the exodus of Afghans was a human capital flight.

The MoRR said that every asylum seeker spends between \$6 thousand and \$20 000 USD to reach Europe.

Their statements comes as thousands of Afghan refugees are stranded at borders, mostly in Greece and Macedonia.

This has not however, put people off and thousands would like to leave the country.

The International Organization of Migration (IOM) meanwhile said the government should take more steps to create jobs.

A large number of people leave their country by selling all what they ...*(More on P4)...(3)*

## MPs Term Dostum's Counter-Insurgency Operation Dramatic



KABUL - Legislators from Faryab on Sunday said the ongoing counterinsurgency operation led by First vice president Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum, was dramatic and that the operation is not being carried out strategically so as to permanently eliminate insurgents.

MPS said this in turn fuels insurgents motivation and once the operation is over they return stronger than ever.

As the Taliban insurgency across the nation shows no sign of ending, some military experts have criticized the Afghan government for not having an effective war strategy to fight the terrorists, a gap which experts believe has heightened the war morale of the militants.

Dostum has led a number of counter insurgency operations in various regions of the country particularly in northern Faryab, Sar-e-Pul and Jawzjan provinces aimed at ending a growing Taliban insurgency.

This month, Dostum launched an operation against the Taliban in Qisar, Almar, Pashtonkot, Khawja Sabzposh, Shireen Tagab and Dawlat Abad districts in the north.

Dostum also led similar operations in Kohistanat of Sar-e-Pul province, but as soon as Dostum was back in Kabul, the insurgents returned.

"Whenever an area is cleared, Dostum claims that Taliban were eliminated, when he returns, Taliban again seize the area, because government can not secure it, so this dramatic," MP Fatullah Qaisari said.

Recently, the Taliban launched an offensive on Khamab district where the Afghan security forces sustained a massive casualty toll.

"This indicates a strategic lapse, when they capture an area and can not save it, Taliban again get access to weapons and casualties rise," MP Fawzia Kofi said. (Tolonews)

## Govt. to Talk Only with Taliban Groups that Denounce Violence

KABUL - The Afghan government said on Sunday that it will hold negotiations only with Taliban factions that denounce violence.

This comes amid rampant Taliban-led insurgency in the country - as well as raised hopes for direct negotiations with the insurgent group.

However, Sayed Zafar Hashemi, a deputy presidential spokesman said Sunday that



government will not talk peace with Taliban factions that carry out acts of violence in Afghanistan on the orders of foreigners. "The government of Afghanistan will negotiate only with those groups that renounce violence. The groups which work for foreigners and commit violence, they will not be included in the talks and the security forces will suppress them," he said. ...*(More on P4)...(2)*

## Watchdogs Blast Delay in Decree on Electoral Reform

KABUL - Election watchdogs have expressed their concern over the delay in releasing a second presidential decree on reforming the country's electoral regime.

Reliable government sources say President Ashraf Ghani is expected to issue his second decree on electoral reforms before the Wolesi Jirga returns from its winter recess.

Ghani's previous decree in this regard had been rejected by the lower house, jeopardizing efforts at revamping the electoral system and barring the Selection Committee from continuing its job.

Habib Rahman Nang, the Afghan Civil Society Network (ACSEN) chief executive, told reporters in Kabul that the government had failed to keep its promise of taking concert steps toward reforming the country's election system.

Cleaning up the election system was necessary, he said, asking the government to embark on the important



task. Any further delay in the process would lead to serious complications, he warned.

Roshan Seran, a member of ACSEN, also insisted on the implementation of reforms in the electoral system. He said "empty" slogans about electoral reform would not help democracy prosper.

Some months ago, the Electoral Reform Commission (ERC) presented the government an eight-point reform list. President Ghani decreed seven of the suggestions and called for urgent measures to provide legal cover for the proposals.

Major proposals include registration of voters, making the election bodies accountable

and the presence of two foreigners on the Independent Election Complaints Commission (IECC).

Also, the panel suggested the reservation of one Wolesi Jirga (lower house) seat for the Hindu minority and identification and shrinking of constituencies.

Other proposals are the distribution of computerised identity cards, 25 percent representation for women on provincial and district councils and invalidation of the current voter cards.

The ERC has also proposed the number of Independent Election Commission (IEC) members ...*(More on P4)...(6)*

## MRRD to Launch Employment Project in 12 Provinces

KABUL - Officials from the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) said on Sunday the second phase of the "employment, maintenance and protection" project will be launched within a month to create 375,000 short and medium term jobs in 12 provinces.

The first round of the project, the MRRD said was completed at the total cost of Afs2 billion funded by the World Bank. The second phase is expected to be funded by the United States, Germany, Italy and other donors.

"The project will create many job opportunities and during the next year we want to expand it to more provinces and villages," said Akbar Rostami, spokesman for the MRRD.

The Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled



(MoLSAMD) welcomed the project; however, it said insecurity is the main challenge before the market of jobs in Afghanistan.

"One of the main problems in Afghanistan is insecurity and it has a bad impact on jobs in Afghanistan. Although this project is very good for the creation of jobs, insecurity challenges most of the projects in Afghanistan," said Ahmad Shah, the Deputy Ministry of

Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled.

The MRRD has implemented some 84,000 upliftment projects in 32 provinces over the past 14 years. However, a large number of these projects are no longer viable. This is why the ministry in cooperation with donor countries is trying to not only rebuild or maintain the projects, but also create jobs for people in rural areas. (Tolonews)

## Some 100 Iranian Companies Due to Attend Iran Exclusive Expo in Kabul



KABUL - Some 100 Iranian companies are due to participate in Iran's exclusive exhibition in Afghanistan, Iran's commercial attaché in Kabul was quoted as saying by public relations department of Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO).

Some 100 Iranian companies due to attend Iran exclusive expo in Kabul

Mohammad-Reza Karimzadeh said that the number of Iranian companies attending the event shows nearly 25 percent growth in comparison to last year as 81 Iranian companies took part in the exhibition last year.

The expo will be held in a 2,200-square meter area. Afghanistan is one of main trade ...*(More on P4)...(4)*

## France to Help Attract Foreign Aid for Nangarhar



JALALABAD - The French ambassador on Sunday said he would persuade his counterparts in Kabul to increase their countries' cooperation and assistance with eastern Nangarhar province in areas of higher education, agriculture and development projects.

Many foreign organizations either suspended or reduced their activities in Nangarhar following the emergence of Afghanistan chapter of the self-styled Islamic State militant outfit in the Shinwari zone.

In this regard, French envoy Jean Michel Marlaud, during a meeting with Nangarhar governor Salim Khan Kunduzi, promised he would initiate talks with ambassadors of foreign countries on his return to Kabul from Jalalabad. Kunduzi's spokesman Attaullah ...*(More on P4)...(8)*

## 40 Taliban Insurgents Killed in Army Operation in Farah

KABUL - At least 40 Taliban insurgents were killed in the past three week's in an ongoing military operation in Western Farah province, local officials said on Sunday.

In addition, 50 other insurgents have been injured, the sources said, Tolonews reported.

"The operation has been conducted in a number of districts in the province. The operation will continue until all insurgents have been cleared," a military official of the 207 Zafar Military Corps, Raz Mohammad Oryakhil said.

Provincial Governor Mohammad Asif Nang said that there have been no civilian casualties recorded but five military force members have been killed.

However, ...*(More on P4)...(5)*

## Major Attacks in Afghanistan since Jan. 1

KABUL - The death toll of a Taliban suicide attack on an Afghan Defense Ministry's bus in Kabul on Saturday has risen to 15 and 31 others were injured, the ministry confirmed Sunday.

Those killed in the attack included 11 personnel from the ministry and four passersby, and the injured included 26 military workers and five civilians.

The following is the listing of major attacks in Afghanistan since January this year.

On Feb. 27, about 13 persons were killed and 40 others wounded after a suicide motorcycle bomber attacked a pro-government local leader, Khan Jan, in eastern Kunar province. Khan died in the attack.

On Feb. 22, a Taliban suicide attacker killed 13 people, including six Afghan Local Police (ALP) officers, and injured 11 others in eastern Parwan province.

On Feb. 17, three civilians were killed and 12 wounded by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attack in northern Faryab province. On Feb. 11, five ALP officers ...*(More on P4)...(7)*