

Jalalabad Partly Cloudy 17°C 3°C	Ghazni Partly Cloudy 7°C -3°C	Kandahar Clear 20°C 3°C	Mazar Mostly Cloudy 16°C 6°C	Herat Partly Cloudy 21°C 7°C	Bamayan Mostly Cloudy 2°C -6°C	Kabul Partly Cloudy 10°C -2°C
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Pakistan Won't Forcibly Expel Afghan Refugees: MP

KABUL - Pakistan has renewed its pledge to extend all possible support for peace and stability in Afghanistan and reassured not to forcibly deport Afghan refugees, an Afghan lawmaker said on Friday. Baz Mohammad Zurmati, who headed a seven-member Meshrano Jirga (Senate) delegation to Islamabad on Sunday, told Pajhwok Afghan News they held wide-ranging talks with Pakistani leadership and counterparts. He said their talks with Pakistani officials concerned issues of mutual interests. The delegation included members of Meshrano Jirga and Wolesi Jirga or lower house of parliament. Zurmati said they held wide-ranging talks with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, his advisor on na-



tional security Sartaj Aziz and other senior officials. Sharif assured support to Afghanistan's peace and stability and said Afghan refugees would not be expelled by force, he said. ...*(More on P4)...(11)*

Over 8,000 Bulgarian Soldiers Served in NATO's Afghanistan Mission



KABUL - Over 8000 Bulgarian soldiers served in the longest mission of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to date - that in Afghanistan. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was in operation from December 2001 until the end of 2014, when it was succeeded by its natural continuation the Resolute Support mission. In contrast to Iraq, where Bulgaria also contributed troops, the country suffered no casualties in Afghanistan. The first Bulgarian contingent was deployed to Afghanistan in 2002, the last one returned in December 2014. The last Bulgarian contingent had been deployed to the Taliban cradle of Kandahar, where it guarded the airport. Although the rocket attacks against the base have decreased, the risk for foreign troops remains, private bTV stations reports. Over the years 1000 medics treated both troops and the local population in the military hospitals of Kabul, Kandahar and Herat. Following the end of ISAF, only 110 Bulgarian military advisers and instructors have remained in Afghanistan. (Agencies)

Taliban Release Abducted Health Workers in Uruzgan



TRINKOT - Officials in Uruzgan province say four health workers who were kidnapped by Taliban last week has been released unharmed. Dost Mohammad Nayab, spokesman for the provincial council of Uruzgan says that Taliban released these health workers after finding them not risky for Taliban. He says the local elders who mediated the release were told by Taliban that they had kidnapped the health workers based on incorrect reports. Taliban had kidnapped these workers from Ashir village of Khas Uruzgan district who were on their way to deliver health assistance. (KP)

Pakistani Politicians to Visit Kabul on Ghani's Invitation

President Ashraf Ghani has invited a number of leaders from Pakistani political parties to meet with him in Kabul to discuss strengthening relations between the two neighboring countries and their mutual struggle with terrorism.

KABUL - President Ghani's spokesman has said that the goal of these discussions is to encourage opportunities for cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan in combatting terrorism and securing their shared border region, which has been a hotbed of militancy in the region for decades.

According to Pakistani media, the meeting is expected to take place on January 8. Former Afghan President



Hamid Karzai visited Pakistan over 20 times during his presidency without any significant results. Experts have long said support from Islamabad is the only way the Taliban insurgency and al-Qaeda ...*(More on P4)...(12)*

Pakistan Intelligence Arranged Taliban China Visit: Faizi



KABUL - Pakistan's premier intelligence agency had arranged the Taliban delegation's visit to China in November last year, Aimal Faizi, spokesman of the former president revealed on Saturday. A day earlier, a leading Pakistani newspaper said that a two-member delegation of Afghan Taliban visited China where they held extensive negotiations with Chinese officials. The newspaper while quoting diplomatic sources said that Qari Din Muhammad, Afghan Taliban member in Doha, Qatar, visited China last November. The delegation, the paper said had discussed issues pertaining to Afghanistan and the latest political situation in the region. However, no specific details are available into the negotiations but the Taliban may have started thinking about China's role to ensure peace in the war-torn country and kick-start the stalled reconciliation process. ...*(More on P4)...(13)*

MPs 'Skip' Memorial Service for Sangin Victims

LASHKARGAH - A group of Wolesi Jirga members on Friday did not attend a memorial service for the victims of a rocket strike in the Sangin district and remained in Lashkargah, the capital of southern Helmand province. Hundreds of people attended the service in Sangin on Friday, two days after several people were killed and wounded when mortars fired by Afghan troops hit a wedding party in the Mian Rodi village. Six Afghan National Army (ANA) troops have been detained in connection with the deaths after the government launched a probe into the incident. Sources said 21 people had died and 50 others were injured in the incident on Wednesday evening. The military said the troops fired mortar shells at insurgents after they attacked their post near the house where the wedding was taking place. Most of the dead and wounded were women and children. Sangin residents said it were their own troops who fired the shells. The residents carried out a protest demonstration in Lashkargah, asking the government to investigate the tragic incident. A number of Wolesi Jirga members, including those from Helmand, on Friday arrived in Lashkargah, but they did ...*(More on P4)...(15)*

ANA Soldiers Held on Helmand Wedding Party Attack

LASHKARGAH - The rocket mortar which landed at a house holding a wedding party in Sangin district of southern Helmand was allegedly fired by Afghan National Army (ANA) forces that killed about 27 civilians and injured nearly 70 others, the acting governor Din Muhammad Baloch confirmed. The incident took place Wednesday night when a stray mortar hit the house after fierce clashes broke out in the area between the security forces and Taliban militants, Baloch said. Initially, the rocket fire was blamed on the Taliban, however the group later denied having any link to the attack. Later to Taliban denial, the local officials accused the ANA soldiers of attacking the party. "The rocket was fired by the security forces after they thought the Taliban were shooting at them from the same location," Baloch confirmed. According to local officials, 18 women and 24 children were among the injured who have been taken to a nearby hospital. Meanwhile, Gen. Mahmoud, the deputy commander for the 215 Maiwand Military Corps said that two ANA soldiers were being investigated in this regard. The incident sparked huge criticisms, ...*(More on P4)...(16)*

Ghani Sends Fact-Finding Team to Helmand

KABUL - Calling the reports of provincial authorities on Helmand wedding party attack unsatisfactory, President Ashraf Ghani has now sent a special fact-finding team to investigate the tragic incident in Sangin district. Ghani's decision of sending this team came after contradicted reports on who - Taliban or Afghan National Army (ANA) - fired rocket at a wedding party in which at least 27 people were killed and nearly 70 others were



wounded last week on Wednesday night. Initially, the Taliban were blamed for the attack but later to the group's denial, the ANA officials declared the rocket was fired by the security forces while targeting the insurgents who took shelter at a house holding the ...*(More on P4)...(14)*

ANSF to "Sacrifice Their Lives" to Ensure Citizens Safety

KABUL - After the assuming the 100 percent security responsibility of the entire country as the foreign forces formally ended their combat mission in Afghanistan, the Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) forces now assure the citizens to "fight for their safety until the last drop of their blood." Since the beginning of security transition process from NATO to ANSF troops which started in 2011 and completed in several stages by the end of 2014, the Afghan forces have been leading all the anti-insurgent operations



and fighting in the front line against the armed militants including the Taliban. Taking part in more than 200 anti-insurgent operations, an ANSF officer Fawad Jami from western Herat province noted that the Taliban had not the ability to fight face to face against the Afghan forces. "Today we are defending our country independently," Jami said. "I promise to my people that I will keep fighting for my country until my ...*(More on P4)...(17)*

Khost Security Has Improved: Police Chief



KHOST CITY - The security situation has improved in southeastern Khost province, where 2014 remained comparatively peaceful year, the provincial police chief said on Friday. Brig. Gen. Faizullah Ghairat told reporters in Khost City, the provincial capital, suicide and coordinated attacks were carried out in Kabul and other major cities and provinces last year, but Khost did not see such considerable violence. He linked the decline in violence to improved capacity of police, providing them with essential equipment and training and people's increasing cooperation with them. Ghairat acknowledged some terrorist attacks occurred in Khost in 2014, but gave no details about casualties among security personnel and insurgents. He said police had tightened security measures in border districts to prevent militants from sneaking into other parts for staging attacks. To a question about the creation and deployment of Afghan Local Police (ALP) in Khost, the police chief said they saw no need for the force in the province. He said serious steps had been taken to improve the capacity of national police, placing great emphasize on their close liaison with people and friendly behavior. A ...*(More on P4)...(18)*