

Latest Amendment to Mining Law Criticised

KABUL - Some analysts criticise latest amendments to one of the mining law's articles by the Wolesi Jirga, believing it would increase corruption in contracts. The amendment to Article 29 of the law allows a mining contract to change hands in principal. The new mining bill was signed into law by then President Hamid Karzai in late April after being endorsed by parliament after a long delay. However, the government once again tabled the law in parliament with some amendments in November. Obaidullah Ramin, who heads Wolesi Jirga's natural resources commission, said the government had sought amendments to two articles and two clauses. But the lower house agreed to amend ...*(More on P4)...*(1)

KABUL - President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani has expressed concerns regarding potential threats by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) to Afghanistan. The concerns by President Ghani comes as recent reports suggest the terrorist group is to make influence in Afghanistan and occupy parts of the country. Ghani the CBS program "60 Minutes" that he was concerned about the Islamic State militant group and its potential threat to Afghanistan "because the past has shown us that threats, that networks change their form." The Islamic State group is not believed to have operations in

Ghani Concerned on Potential Threat of ISIS



Afghanistan. However, insurgents belonging to a faction of the Hezb-e-Islami led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar said earlier in September last year that they consider to join the Islamic State militants who are currently fighting in Syria and Iraq. A notorious anti-government armed militant commander who is believed to have links with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), has been arrested by Afghan security forces in Paktia province. According to reports, around 3,000 Afghan nationals have been deployed to take part in the ongoing Syria conflict. The participation of Afghan militants ...*(More on P4)...*(2)

Impossible to Name New Cabinet This Week: Official

KABUL - Officials close to the unity government on Monday ruled out naming of new cabinet this week and revealed that a decision could be reached next week. Wishing not to be named, an official told Pajhwok Afghan News that both President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah could not achieve any breakthrough to form the cabinet. Earlier, the president had promised to announce the new cabinet within one week—a pledge that could not be materialized. The official said that the source of contention between the president and the CEO was that they did not develop agreement on the name of minister of interior. Earlier, ...*(More on P4)...*(3)

Japan Supports Afghan Refugees in Iran: UNHCR



TEHRAN - The government of Japan has supported efforts to promote education, livelihood opportunities and access to health care for Afghan refugees in Iran so they may be healthy and better equipped to contribute to the Afghan society when they choose to return in a safe and dignified manner, UNHCR announced. "It is important that in spite of escalating crises in other parts of the world and the global economic turmoil, Japan stands committed to support Afghan refugees. We are grateful for this gesture," said Sivanka Dhanapala, UNHCR Representative in Iran. In addition to the 6 million US dollars donated in February 2014 to assist Afghan refugees in Iran, the government of Japan recently donated a further ...*(More on P4)...*(5)

Jawzjan Residents Warn Militants to Join Peace Process

SHIBERGHAN - Thousands of residents of northwestern Jawzjan province on Monday voiced their support to Afghan security forces and warned insurgents that locals would form an uprising group to flush out militants from the area. At least 3,000 people, including women, held a mammoth rally in Shiberghan City, the provincial capital, in support of Afghan security forces. Some of the women equipped with weapons chanted: "Long live Afghanistan and we want peace." Qamar 50, a protester, said that she demanded the Taliban to reconcile with the government or they would face for a decisive fight by the locals. ...*(More on P4)...*(8)

Massoud Asks PC Members to Enhance Oversight Role



KABUL - President's special representative for reforms and good governance Ahmad Zia Massoud said Afghanistan could become self-sufficient if its political and economic institutions properly worked. Addressing Provincial Council (PC) members coming all the way from various provinces to attend a conference in Kabul, Massoud said the elected bodies had huge responsibilities towards security, development, education, health and improving communities' relations with the government. He emphasised on an enhanced role for provincial councils to play in overseeing government's performance in provinces. He said development projects should be carried out based on people's needs. He called provincial councils as mini parliaments, saying they should keep keen vigil on the performance ...*(More on P4)...*(6)

Afghanistan to Hold Major Operation against Taliban

BISHKEK - Faryab Afghan authorities are getting ready for a major operation against Taliban militants in the border areas with Turkmenistan. The operation targets Faryab and Jawzjan provinces, provincial police chief Faqir Mohammad Jauzjani told Afghanistan.ru. He said Ashgabat is concerned over the location of the Talibs in the border areas. According to him, the government bodies are preparing for the upcoming operation. The police chief said the law enforcement forces of Afghanistan are going to strengthen their presence in the border areas creating additional roadblocks. ...*(More on P4)...*(10)

Noor Not in NATO Target Killings List

KABUL - The governor for northern Balkh province of Afghanistan At Mohammad Noor was not included in the targeted killings list of the NATO forces. A statement released from the governor's office said that the issue was discussed during a meeting between Noor and Gen. Haral Gant the commander of NATO forces in northern Balkh province. Gen. Gante quoted in the statement said the recent report by Der Spiegel was baseless and their findings shows that another individual by the name of Ata Mohammad is in the target list of NATO forces. He said the named individual is in Chemtal district and is being followed for his links with the militant groups. Der Spiegel, citing ...*(More on P4)...*(11)

Amendments to Registration Act Being Held Off

KABUL - Some Wolesi Jirga members on Monday accused the house Interior Security Commission of illegally holding off a draft amendment bill to the Population Registration Act. The interior security commission was scheduled to present before the lower house a set of amendments to some articles of the controversial act on Wednesday last. After being approved by the assembly, the Population Registration Bill was signed into law by President Ashraf Ghani amid objections from some lawmakers, civil society



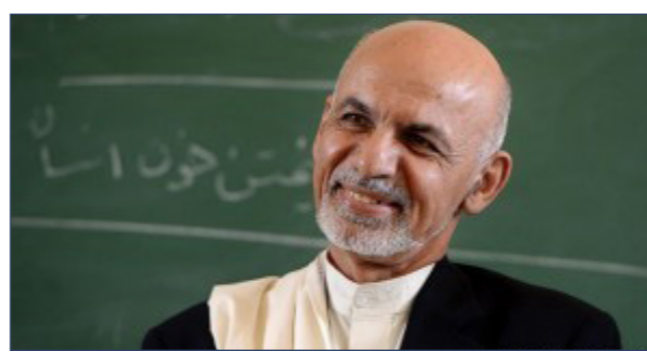
groups and political parties over not mentioning word "Afghan" in the Computerized National Identity Cards (CNICs). As the protests continued, the president referred the issue to the Supreme Court, but the apex court is yet to deliver a ruling in this regard. The issue of bringing amendments to the law became a hot topic in the lower house after some members proposed changes to the law's article three and ...*(More on P4)...*(4)

Probe Team to Share Sangin Findings with Ghani

LASHKARGAH - A delegation assigned by President Ghani on Monday said it would share its investigation into the mortar shelling on a wedding party in southern Helmand with the president. Meanwhile, Helmand acting governor confirmed the Afghan National Army troops had fired the shells that killed 21 wedding guests and injured more than 45, mostly women and children, in the Sangin district on Wednesday. The bride, who injured in the incident, had died in a hospital in Lashkargah, the provincial, on Thursday night. After the shelling, hundreds of Sangin residents reached Lashkargah and protested in front of the governor's house, calling for a government investigation into the incident. President Ghani has sent a delegation to Helmand to investigate the incident. The delegation met with leaders of the protesting people on Sunday evening. After the meeting, the protestors called off their protest and removed the tent. Haji Azizullah Din Mohammad, who heads the delegation, told Pajhwok Afghan News they had talked to family members of the victims as well as local officials about the tragic incident. He said ...*(More on P4)...*(7)

US May Want to Re-Examine' Pullout Deadline: Ghani

WASHINGTON - President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani said that the United States might want to "re-examine" the timetable for removing the remaining US-led coalition troops in the country by the end of 2016. "Deadlines concentrate the mind. But deadlines should not be dogmas," Ghani told in an interview broadcast on Sunday with the CBS program "60 Minutes" when asked about the "If both parties, or, in this case, multiple partners, have done their best to achieve the objectives and progress is very real, then there should be willingness to re-examine a deadline," he added. Asked if he had told that to US President Barack Obama, Ghani said: "President Obama knows me. We don't need to - to tell each other." Afghanistan assumed full responsibility on Thursday for security from depart-



ing foreign combat troops, in a test of the readiness of 350,000 Afghan forces who will bear responsibility for fighting Taliban insurgents. The US-led coalition troops formally ended their combat mission more than 13 years after the Taliban ...*(More on P4)...*(9)

Muslims in Trouble for Shunning Islamic Teachings'

KABUL - Wolesi Jirga speaker Abdul Rauf Ibrahim believed Afghanistan and some other Islamic countries faced wars, terrorism and other problems because they had stopped practicing Islamic teachings. Ibrahim was addressing a gathering marking Eid Milandun Nabi, the birth anniversary of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). The festival is celebrated on the 12th day of Rabi-ul-Awwal, the third month of the Islamic calendar. "Most Muslim countries are gifted with vast natural



resources, they own various mineral deposits, they have brave and intelligent individuals, but wars, terrorism and other such bad things also happen in these countries. The reason is their detachment from Islamic teachings. Muslims don't follow Islamic orders and the practices of the Prophet and lessons of the holy Quran." Ibrahim said if the Muslim world shunned differences and lived like brothers, the success in this world ...*(More on P4)...*(12)

Percentage of Americans Favoring Afghan War Increased: Poll



KABUL - The numbers of Americans believing the war in Afghanistan was worth fighting has increased as compared to 2013, according to poll which also found majority support for the plan to keep thousands of troops in the country. With the record low in 2013 when only 28 percent Americans supported the Afghanistan war, this year the figure has increased by 10 percent (38). Overall, the Americans based on poll findings remain downbeat over the war as the 13-year NATO combat mission formally ended a week ago. However, more than

half of Americans (54 percent) favor keeping U.S. troops in the country to help Afghan forces train and perform counter-insurgency roles. The poll came a week after the United States and its NATO allies ended their combat mission, 13 years after the U.S.-led invasion toppled the Taliban regime. The NATO combat mission has now replaced with the "Resolute Support" aimed at training, advising and assisting the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). But many believe the U.S. and its allies are yet to accomplish for what ...*(More on P4)...*(13)