

Jalalabad	Clear	Ghazni	Clear	Kandahar	Clear	Mazar	Clear	Herat	Partly Cloudy	Bamayan	Partly Cloudy	Kabul	Clear
	20°C 6°C		7°C -3°C		14°C 2°C		13°C 6°C		14°C 1°C		-2°C -8°C		11°C -2°C

Daily Outlook Weather Forecast

UNICEF Finds 40 Percent of Afghan Kids out of School

KABUL - Nearly one in four children growing up in conflict zones are missing out on education, with Afghanistan among the four worst-affected countries, the United Nations children's agency (UNICEF) said on Tuesday. An estimated 24 million children of school age are not in school in 22 countries affected by conflict, the agency found. South Sudan has the largest proportion of children out of school, 51 percent, followed by 47 percent in Niger, 41 percent in Sudan, and 40 percent in Afghanistan.



"When children are not in school, they are at an increased danger of abuse, exploitation, and recruitment into armed groups," said Jo Bourne, UNICEF's head of education.

"School equips children with the knowledge and skills they need to rebuild their communities once the conflict is over, and in the short-term it provides them with the stability and structure required to cope with the trauma they have experienced," said Bourne. Education is one of the least funded sectors by humanitarian agencies. In 2014, it received 2 percent of humanitarian aid. The UN said 10 times as much is needed for education in conflict zones. (Reuters)

US Pumps Billions into Afghan 'Ghost Soldiers'



KABUL - Afghan soldiers are struggling against the Taliban, in part because close to 40% of Afghanistan's forces are "ghost soldiers," troops that exist only on paper. Karim Atal is the head of the provincial council in Helmand, where the resurgent Taliban has seized large areas of land since the United States handed over control to Afghan forces a year ago. "At checkpoints where 20 soldiers should be present, there are only eight or 10," Atal told the Associated Press. "It's because some people are getting paid a salary but not doing the job because they are related to someone important, like a local warlord." ...*(More on P4)...*(7)

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Tajikistan, Pakistan Reviewing Cooperation, Including Details of CASA 1000 Project

BISHKEK - President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon and Federal Minister for Water and Power of Pakistan Khawaja Muhammad Asif discussed cooperation prospects between two countries, including implementation of CASA 1000 project at the meeting in Dushanbe on January 12, reports the press service of the President. The Pakistani delegation arrived in Dushanbe to discuss the details of the project on power flows from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Afghanistan and Pakistan (CASA 1000) during the two-day day visit. The sides agreed that the project on power flows from



Central Asia to South Asia (CASA 1000) plays an important role. The Tajik side noted that Tajikistan is interested in attracting investments from Pakistan for the development of infrastructure and hydro-power. The sides are considering the construction of 500 kV transmission line from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to

Pakistan through the territory of Afghanistan. The total cost of the project exceeds \$1 billion. According to the Embassy of Tajikistan in Islamabad, 300 MW of electricity from Kyrgyzstan and 1000 MW from Tajikistan are planned to be exported to Afghanistan and Pakistan through this line. (AKIpress)

Stability in Pakistan Linked to Peace in Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD - Peace in Afghanistan is essential for regional stability, particularly in Pakistan given the historical, ethnic and cultural ties between the two countries, Pakistani experts and politicians agreed Tuesday. Speaking to Radio Pakistan, National Assembly Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Chairman, Awais Khan Leghari, highlighted the importance of a meeting held Monday in Islamabad to promote the dialogue process in the neighboring country. For his part, the Pakistani Minister of Housing, Akram Khan Durrani, considered that peace in Afghanistan is part of national interests



since both countries are affected by terrorism. This scourge is a serious threat to global and regional peace, agreed Senator Nehal Hashmi. For analyst Anwar Zahid Khan, both the Afghan government and the Taliban must be flexible in their

terms and conditions for reaching an agreement. The four-nation meeting is crucial for defeating terrorism and economic development of this area, considered expert Ghulam Mustafa when saying that achieving peace will require time. (Agencies)

AAF to Receive 12 Warrior Helicopters from US

KABUL - Amid efforts to bolster the capabilities of the Afghan Air Force (AAF), the MD Helicopters announced Monday that 12 additional MD-530F helicopters will be manufactured and delivered to the Afghan armed forces. "This award, contracted through the Department of the Army Non-Standard Rotary Wing, reflects and reinforces the confidence of the U.S. Army in MD Helicopters' ability to deliver reliable, mission-ready aircraft to support the United States Military and our partner nation Allies," according to a statement by MD Helicopters. MD Helicopters delivered the first twelve MD 530F Cayuse Warrior helicopters to the Afghan Air Force in support of the 2015 fighting season. These twelve aircraft were operational in theater in fewer than 9 months from contract award, and have participated in a number of successful operations. In addition, five MD 530F helicopters, already serving as primary training aircraft in Afghanistan, have been upgraded ...*(More on P4)...*(8)

Suicide Bomber Kills 10 People, Mainly Germans, in Istanbul

ISTANBUL - A suicide bomber thought to be from Syria killed at least 10 people, many of them German tourists, in Istanbul's historic heart on Tuesday, an attack senior security officials said was probably planned by Islamic State. President Tayyip Erdogan condemned the bombing in Sultanahmet square, near the Blue Mosque and Hagia Sophia, major tourist sites in the center of one of the world's most visited cities. He said a Syrian was thought responsible and that the blast would only harden Turkey's resolve in fighting terrorism. Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus said the bomber had been identified from body parts at the scene, and was a Syrian national born in 1988 whose links were being investigated. Sources in Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu's office said most of those killed were Germans and he had spoken by phone with Chancellor Angela Merkel to express condolences. Merkel earlier said she was very worried Germans might be among the victims. Several bodies lay on the ground in the square, also known as the Hippodrome of Constantinople, ...*(More on P4)...*(9)

Erdogan Syrian Suicide Bomber Thought behind Istanbul Blast

ANKARA - A Syrian suicide bomber is thought to have been responsible for an explosion in the heart of Istanbul's historic tourist district on Tuesday which killed 10 people including Turks and foreigners, President Tayyip Erdogan said. "I condemn the terror incident in Istanbul assessed to be an attack by a suicide bomber with Syrian origin. Unfortunately we have 10 dead including foreigners and Turkish nationals... There are also 15 wounded," Erdogan told a lunch for Turkish ambassadors in Ankara, in a speech broadcast live on television. (Reuters)

Balkh Police Chief Pakistani Military Officers Behind Consulate Attack



MAZAR-E-SHARIF - Balkh police chief Sayed Kamal Sadat on Tuesday said Pakistani military officers were behind the Indian consulate attack in Mazar-e-Sharif earlier this month. He said the attackers, officers from across the border, were well-trained military men who fought Afghan security forces in the 25-hour siege. "We saw with our own eyes and I can say 99 percent that those attackers were from Pakistani military and used special tactics while conducting their operation," said Sadat. "The attackers were military personnel. They were educated and well prepared and had intelligence. They fought us and only by Allah's grace were we able to control them and eliminate them," Sadat added. This high-ranking official said that efforts are underway to track down, identify and detain those who assisted the attackers to gain access to the building that was opposite the consulate. "We are jointly working with the NDS director and have spoken about this - especially as they came here not able to speak in Dari or Pashtu but speaking in Urdu. It means obviously there is someone who guided those attackers and helped the attackers," Sadat said. The attack on the Indian consulate took place nine days ago. Three attackers entered a building opposite the Indian consulate - the siege lasted 25 hours. One police soldier was killed and nine others including ...*(More on P4)...*(10)

Hassan Rouhani Iran Resolute on Fight Against Terrorism

TEHRAN - Iran's President Hassan Rouhani says Tehran is ready to cooperate with other countries to tackle terrorism as a global challenge. "Peace and stability in the region are important to us and we are ready to make use of our utmost potential to fight terrorism as a global challenge," Rouhani said in a meeting with former German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder in Tehran on Tuesday.



He added that terrorism has undermined security and stability in the Middle East while extra-regional countries, in-

cluding Germany, are also affected by the consequences of this insecurity, mainly the influx of refugees. (PressTV)

US Has Wrong Coordinates for Several Afghanistan Medical Facilities: Inspector

ARLINGTON, Va - The special inspector general responsible for the oversight of rebuilding efforts in Afghanistan has determined that geographic coordinates given by U.S. officials for a handful of medical facilities there are inaccurate - in some cases by miles. The U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction said six of the 32 Kabul area facilities funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Afghanistan are more than six miles away from where the agency says they are. One facility's coordinates are between three and six miles off the official specifications, and three are between a half mile and three miles off. The remaining 22 were found to be within a half mile of where



USAID says they are. Further, inspectors said they weren't able to evaluate 10 facilities because they were missing location-specific technical data. "SIGAR found substantial inaccuracies in the geospatial coordinates USAID provided for many of these 32 health facilities and observed that not all had access to electricity and running water," SIGAR John F. Sopko wrote in a Jan. 5 letter to USAID administrators, noting that the

inspections were the second in a series across the war-torn country. The reported inaccuracies came at a time when special investigators are still trying to determine why an errant U.S. airstrike leveled an Afghan clinic operated by Médecins Sans Frontières, also known as Doctors Without Borders, in October. The coordinates included in an Alert Letter from October, which was a direct result of the ...*(More on P4)...*(11)

Canadian Held by Taliban Released in Remote District

KABUL - An Afghan official has described the dramatic scene surrounding the release of a Canadian hostage held by the Taliban for five years. It involved a helicopter landing to scoop the captive as fighter jets flew overhead in a remote district in Afghanistan. Police chief Gen. Aminullah Amarkhil said Tuesday that the hostage, Colin Rutherford, was released at 11 a.m. on Monday in Ghazni province's Giro district. Rutherford was seized in November 2010 and accused of being a spy. Rutherford, now in his late 20s, said at the time that he was a tourist. The Canadian Embassy in Kabul did not divulge his current whereabouts and it wasn't immediately clear if he had been flown out of Afghanistan. A Taliban statement says Rutherford's release was brokered by Qatar. (AP)