

Quote of the Day

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

'Regional Rivalries Give Birth to Extremists in Afghanistan'

KABUL - The acting defence minister, Masoom Stanikzai, on Tuesday said regional and local rivalries had led to the creation of extremist groups in Afghanistan, urging unity among the Afghans to deal with the complex situation. Masoom Stanikzai, acting National Directorate of Security (NDS) chief Massoud Andrabi and Deputy Interior Minister Maj. Gen. Mohammad Ayub Salangi were summoned by the Meshrano Jirga or Senate to brief the upper house about the country's security situation. "The withdrawal of most of foreign troops from Afghanistan a year ago, the operation in North Waziristan, the in-



filtration of extremists into Afghanistan, their inroads into the north from two directions, the facilitated movement of rebels to the north are some of the reasons behind the increased influence of militants in the north," Stanikzai told the lawmakers.

Extremist elements including Uzbek, Tajik, Chechen and Kazakh fighters had made the north insecure through Ghazni, Zabul, Badghis, Faryab and Chitral district of Pakistan, he said, adding that "there are some people who shifted the insurgents to the north in their vehicles." While pointing to Lapis Lazuli mines in Badakhshan, he said the enemies of Afghanistan wanted to disrupt security of areas where the income resources were located. He said Afghan security forces could not resolve all problems alone because they fought a war involving all militant groups of the region. "The problem will be solved with unity and support of politicians," he said, insisting on people's support with security forces. ...*(More on P4)...(1)*

2nd Round of Afghan Peace Process to be Held in Kabul



KABUL - The second round of four-party meeting on Afghan peace process will be held in Kabul on January 18, Afghan Foreign Ministry said on Monday. Earlier on Monday, senior officials from Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States and China met in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad to work for the revival of stalled peace talks. "The meeting adopted terms for the work of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) and agreed to continue regular meetings to advance the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan. The group would hold discussion on a roadmap at its next meeting to be held on 18 January 2016 in Kabul," a joint press release said. The meeting underscored the importance of bringing an end to the conflict in Afghanistan that continues to inflict senseless violence on the Afghan people and also breeds insecurity throughout the region, the statement said. ...*(More on P4)...(2)*

UN Mission in Afghanistan Praises Four-Nation Meeting on Peace Talks

KABUL - The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) on Tuesday welcomed the positive start made by the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) in its work on the Afghan peace and reconciliation process, the mission said in a statement. "UNAMA notes the recognition by all QCG participants at the meeting held yesterday in Islamabad of the immediate need for direct talks between representatives of the government of Afghanistan and representatives from Taliban groups. The QCG is composed of officials from Afghanistan, China, Pakistan and the United States," the statement said. On Monday, senior officials from the four countries met in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad to work for the revival of stalled peace talks between the Afghan government and Taliban representatives. "This renewed commitment to an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process is of real importance," ...*(More on P4)...(4)*

Beijing to Play Role in Afghan Settlement

BEIJING - China is willing to play a constructive role in the reconciliation process of Afghanistan, said Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei on Tuesday. Hong's comment came after officials from Pakistan, Afghanistan, China and the United States met in Islamabad on Monday and issued a joint statement calling for the Afghan government to start peace talks with Taliban immediately. Chinese special envoy for Afghanistan Deng Xijun attended the meeting, where all four parties agreed to implement the consensus reached in the fifth foreign ministerial conference of the Istanbul Process held last year and push for a reconciliation process "led and owned by the Afghan people". China regards the statement positively, and is willing to help on the precondition of respecting Afghan sovereignty and the will of various parties, the realization of long-term peace and stability in Afghanistan, said Hong. (Agencies)

Vladimir Putin Russia, West Should Work Together Based on Mutual Willingness



MOSCOW - Russian President Vladimir Putin said Moscow is ready to interact with NATO and within the Group of Eight (G8) provided that the other side shows the same willingness. Putin made the statement in an interview on Jan. 5 with Germany's Bild newspaper, the second part of which was published online by the Kremlin on Tuesday. Expressing a feeling that Russia has been treated as an outlier, he said Russia has never become a full-fledged G8 member as there were always separate negotiations among the other seven countries. "It is not Russia that cut off cooperation with the G8 or the Russia-NATO Council. We are willing to interact with everyone...but a relationship can be happy only when the feeling is mutual," he said. Putin emphasized Russia's presence is useful within the group of world leading industrialized nations as the country could provide an alternative view on various issues, citing the role it has played within such multilateral frameworks as the G20, APEC, and BRICS. Asked about the strained relations with Turkey, which is a NATO member, the Russian leader said he hoped incidents like the downing of Russian fighter jet by Ankara would not cause large-scale hostilities, while warning that Russia would defend its security interests by all available means, should such threats against Russia arise. (Xinhua)

MPs Criticize CEO's Recent Statements on Drugs



KABUL - A number of Wolesi Jirga Members on Tuesday criticized the recent statements of Chief Executive Officer, (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah regarding the increase of selling drugs in the country. MPs declared that CEO states irresponsible actions; adding he should take practical measures instead of ordering to track the causes of increasing selling drugs. Afghanistan Chief Executive Officer, (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah during his visit from Fenix hospital warned that if selling drugs not prevent in the country, the combat against eliminating this phenomenon will be failed. "We instructed the ministry of interior to take serious measures in fight against this dangerous phenomenon," CEO, Abdullah Abdullah said on Monday. Ahmad Shah Ramazan, representative of Balkh said, "Such irresponsible statements are shameful and is not expected from Executive Officer." Meanwhile, counter-narcotics commission of Parliament said that the government must seriously act instead of noting irresponsible words. (ATN)

Govt. Warns Taliban on Staying out of Peace Talks

KABUL - Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai on Tuesday warned the Taliban against staying out of the peace process with the government in Kabul, saying that insurgents who opt for war will face serious consequences. The remarks by Khalil Karzai came after he returned from a four-country meeting in Islamabad to work on a roadmap for ending Afghanistan's 14-year war. Karzai said all participants at Monday's gathering - Afghanistan, the United States, Pakistan and China wanted to bring "permanent peace" to Afghanistan. Most Taliban want peace, he told reporters, but he added that "we will use all the means we have against those who do not." Karzai described the country's conflict as "not a war between Afghans," pointing to the in-



volvement of "foreign elements." Officials in Kabul have long accused Pakistan of sponsoring the Taliban in cities near the Afghan border, including Quetta and Peshawar. Pakistan has denied the accusations. Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Karzai said the first meeting in Islamabad on Monday had mainly been intended to set a framework for the process before a meeting in

Kabul on Jan. 18 to draw up a roadmap for talks with the Taliban. "After 30 years of war, I think they are interested and they are inclined towards joining this process," Karzai told a news conference in Kabul. "I think there are some problems among the Taliban themselves. They do not talk with one voice but we have to be open to talk to all of them," Karzai said. "In the next ...*(More on P4)...(3)*

Over 100 Afghan Companies to Invest in Chabahar

KABUL - Over 100 Afghan companies have registered to invest in the Chabahar free trade area, officials said Tuesday. The head of Chabahar free trade zone, Hamid Ali Mubarak, said that some of the Afghan companies will jointly invest in the port along with Iranian investors. "Up to now, at least 110 Afghan and Afghan-Iranian companies have registered to invest in Chabahar Port and most of them have started work in the area," he said. "We want to help Afghans invest in the port by providing them with different opportunities," he added. Logistically, Chabahar port is the closest harbor to Afghani-



stan. It is 700km closer than the other Iranian port, Bandar Abbas Port. It is also 1,000 kms closer than Karachi Port in Pakistan. Meanwhile, officials from the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI) urged Iran to prepare the ground for loading and unloading of cargo ships in the port. They said the cost of shipping goods should drop by 50 percent

for Afghan businessmen if they use Chabahar Port. "Afghanistan will be able to find its place as a transit hub for Asian and Central Asian countries - once the Chabahar Port is activated," said Khan Jan Alokozai, the deputy head of the ACCI. High tariffs and shakedowns from local officials have been a persistent problem for many in the Afghan business ...*(More on P4)...(5)*

European Court

The Netherlands Can Deport Five Afghans

KABUL - The Netherlands has been given the green light to deport five Afghan men who have lived in the Netherlands for at least 15 years by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. The men all worked for the Afghan authorities during the period of Soviet rule. The Netherlands says everyone who worked for the Soviet government in a position of responsibility was aware of human rights violations and may have been involved themselves. Thus, they are not entitled to asylum. The five men, in five separate cases, claimed the Netherlands was

ignoring their human rights by sending them back to a country which is unsafe. The court ruled, however, that deportation would not contravene Article 3 of the treaty on human rights and the men had failed to prove their lives would be in danger if they were sent back. In addition, the situation in Afghanistan is no longer dangerous enough to consider 'there would be a real risk of ill-treatment simply by virtue of an individual being returned there,' the court said. The court ruling will become effective within three months, unless the men launch an appeal. The court did say none ...*(More on P4)...(6)*

Sartaj Aziz

Pakistan will not Send Ground Troops as Part of Saudi-Led Military Alliance

ISLAMABAD - Adviser to the Pakistani Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz, on Tuesday said Pakistan will not send ground troops to Saudi Arabia or any other country after having joined the 34-state Islamic military alliance led by Saudi Arabia. In a briefing to the National Assembly Foreign Affairs Committee at the Parliament House, Aziz said all matters between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have been settled. He said Pakistan will be sharing intelligence with Saudi



Arabia to counter terrorism. Aziz told the committee that Pakistan is playing its role to diffuse tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia. "An emergency meeting of OIC foreign ministers has been summoned in Jeddah

where Pakistan would present important proposals to reduce Iran-Saudi tensions." The adviser said Pakistan wishes for peaceful settlement of the Syrian conflict and supports all efforts for resumption of dialogue. (Agencies)