

Quote of the Day

History is the witness that testifies to the passing of time; it illumines reality, vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life and brings us tidings of antiquity.

Cicero

SIGAR Report Speaks of Corruption in Mines Ministry

KABUL - The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) on Thursday spoke out about corruption in the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum and said flawed infrastructure, unprepared projects, and corruption were all inhibiting factors in the development of Afghan resources.

In this report SIGAR has reviewed some \$488 million USD spent on a number of projects in the country.

The SIGAR report found that the Department of Defense's Task Force for Business Stability Operations (TFBSO) and the US Agency for International



Development (USAID) are failing to accomplish their collective mission - funded by nearly half a billion dollars since 2009

- to develop the "extractive" industry in Afghanistan. The inspector general found that the fail-

ures were the result of a combination of circumstances both within and outside the agencies' control.

The SIGAR analysis pointed out corruption in the Afghan Ministry of Mines and Petroleum and also noted both the TFBSO and USAID devised programs that overestimated the Afghans' capacity to carry them out. SIGAR made the same observation in its 2015 report, according to Pro Publica - a non-profit corporation based in New York City.

Afghanistan's minerals, natural gas, and oil resources are estimated to be worth \$1 trillion and extracting them could drive multi-billion dollar revenue streams for the Afghan government, ...*(More on P4)...(1)*

NUG Assures to Combat Against Any Terror Groups



KABUL - The National Unity Government (NUG) has assured Afghans to fight against any terrorist groups under any name; Taliban or Daesh beside supporting Peace Process.

The Chief Executive Officer, Abdullah Abdullah said that the government supports a peace that protects the impunity of all citizens.

"We assure our people to fight against any terrorist group under any name beside supporting the peace process," said CEO, Abdullah Abdullah. CEO announces that the good days are to come and people will have a stable country. (ATN)

MPs Urge Ghani to Propose Amendment Bill to Election Law



KABUL - Legislators in the Wolesi Jirga (Lower of House of Parliament) asked President Ashraf Ghani to present a proposed amendment bill to parliament to implement the necessary amendments to election laws.

This comes just weeks after the house rejected a presidential decree on introducing a number of amendments to the election law, raising concerns among critics who have pushed for swift reforms to be in place in the law in a bid to revive the nation's trust in the process.

As part of the efforts to bring about key reforms in election laws, Ghani on Thursday met a number of MPs where the legislators recommended a proposed amendment bill to be presented by the president to consider necessary amendments to the law.

"Both houses emphasized that the selection committee is in contradiction to the law. Therefore, the work of the committee must be suspended. If the government of Afghanistan is committed to reforms in the electoral commission, then it must recommend it to the national assembly so that the assembly approves their amendments," senator Mohammad Asif Sediq said.

The development comes a few days after the Afghan government announced that the parliamentary and district councils elections are expected to be held next year.

"Wolesi Jirga wants swift holding of parliamentary elections and a timeline should be announced for polls, but by whom? The government does not have the authority to announce a date for elections, it is the job of the election commission," MP Obaidullah-Barakzai said. There are some reports that a number of lawmakers opposed the ...*(More on P4)...(4)*

Govt. Launches Online Passport Application Service

KABUL - Government on Thursday formally announced its online passport application process and home delivery service.

At a gathering at the Passport Department, CEO Abdullah Abdullah, officially announced the program and said that the initiative will help Afghan citizens to get passports. "Good governance means to speed up the work, eliminate corruption and to attain satisfaction and contentment of the citizens through services," Abdullah said.

Meanwhile, the head of the passport department Sayed Omar Saboor said that the new system will enable applicants to fill out the forms and pay the fees on line. The initiative is a joint project between the Ministry of Com-



munication and Information Technology (MoCIT), Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the Central Bank of Afghanistan.

"The main importance of this system in-fact is to bridge a digital connections between the two - citizens and government institutions," said the minister of MoCIT, Abdul Razaq Wahidi said. So far 900,000 computerized

passports have been issued in total in the past two years. The home delivery service will however start by Saturday, said in a statement.

"On the basis of the new system introduced and on the basis of international standards, the passports which are printed should be delivered to the applicants swiftly through the post," said Saboor. ...*(More on P4)...(2)*

Second Quadrilateral Meeting to Assess Peace Talks Structure: HPC

KABUL - The High Peace Council (HPC) on Friday said that the second quadrilateral meeting between Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the United States will assess the structure of direct talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

Shafiullah Shafi Nuristani, a member of the HPC, said that the structure and manner of the peace process will be worked out so that efforts for direct talks with the Taliban will start.

"However, direct talks will be



between the Afghan government and the Taliban and it is going to be an intra-Afghan dialogue," he added.

Meanwhile, the government terms the role of regional countries in bringing peace to Af-

ghanistan as important. Sayed Zafar Hashemi, the deputy spokesman for President Ashraf Ghani, said that they have been trying to create a regional and international consensus ...*(More on P4)...(5)*

US Designates Daesh Branch in Afghanistan as Terrorist Organization



WASHINGTON - The US State Department officially declared a group operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan linked with the Islamic State (IS) as foreign terrorist organization.

Such statement means that it is forbidden providing or attempting to provide material support or resources to the group, which is known as ISIL-Khorasan (ISIL-K).

In a statement, the US State Department said that the declaration of individuals or organizations as terrorist exposes and isolates them, by denying access to the US financial system. According to the statement, ISIL-K was founded on January 10, 2015, announcing it in a video posted on the

Internet, and was joined by former Taliban Afghans and Pakistanis that swore loyalty to head of IS Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Since then, the State Department said that the group has committed suicide attacks, attacks with small arms and kidnappings in eastern Afghanistan, while last May claimed responsibility for the attacks on civilians in Karachi, Pakistan. US Secretary of State John Kerry said yesterday that weakening and defeating the extremist group is the first cornerstone of the US foreign policy for 2016, and despite the condemnations given to the steps taken in this regard, he considered that undeniable progress has taken place. (Prensa Latina)

Khalilzad Islamabad Talks a Cover for Taliban Operations

WASHINGTON - Expressing his "disappointment" over Pakistan's role in reviving the Afghan peace process, a former top American diplomat has said he "feels Washington's assistance to Islamabad needs to be linked with its cooperation on bringing the terrorist groups to the peace talks table."

"(The Islamabad) meeting was not encouraging to me," the former US Ambassador to the UN, Afghanistan and Iraq told Pajhwok Afghan News in an exclusive interview. Khalilzad said Pakistan needed to demonstrate it would take action against terrorist groups not joining the peace process.

"And this kind of commitment is not visible from Pakistan and was absent from the Islamabad meeting," he said, referring to the first four-nation talks also involving US and Chinese officials.

"If they (terrorist groups operating from Pakistani soil) do not get involved in the peace process then Pa-



kistan should make it clear it would move against those (groups)," Khalilzad said. "If it does not, then I believe it (Pakistan) is not serious about the peace process," he claimed.

"What is really needed is to move against groups that are not reconcilable and are based in Pakistan so that their incentive to engage in the peace process increase or they are no longer able to military operations. That is the vital part moving toward the peace process, ...*(More on P4)...(6)*

U.S. Completes Delivery of 4 Light Attack Aircraft to AAF

KABUL - The delivery of the first batch of Light Attack aircraft to the Afghan armed forces formally concluded on Thursday in the presence of the Afghan defense officials. The first batch include four aircraft delivered by the United States of America as part of the efforts to bolster the capabilities of the Afghan Air force (AAF).

Acting Afghan Defense Minister Masoom Stanikzai reiterated that a long term plan is required to fully equip the Afghan Air Force (AAF), admitting the presence of will by the Afghan government and it's international allies in modernizing the air force.

Welcoming the delivery of the first batch of A-29 Super Tucano Light Attack aircraft by United States to Afghanistan, Stanikzai said the addition of the aircraft will add to the capabilities of the Afghan air power.

According to Stanikzai, the aircraft are capable to provide close-air support to the ground forces and is able to carry over 30 different types of ...*(More on P4)...(3)*

Protest Staged Over E-NIC Delay

KABUL - Civil society and cultural activists on Thursday carried out a demonstration over the continued delay in implementing the population census law and of not yet distributing the new electronic National Identity Cards.

Protestors started their demonstration near Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah's house in Karte-Parwan, Kabul, and had planned to march towards the Presidential Palace. However, security forces stopped them when they got to Dahan-e-Bagh square.

This move angered the protestors who proceeded to burn effigies of President Ashraf Ghani, Abdullah and National Security Advisor Mohammad Hanif Atmar. The protestors said that by not implementing the population census law, the Presidential Palace was promoting the culture of law breaking. Kakhshani Kofi, a cultural activist, said that it has been three years since parliament approved the population census law, but the president has not given the go ahead for the roll out of the e-NIC process.

"Elements inside the government, ...*(More on P4)...(7)*

Heavy Fighting Underway in Gereshk

LASHKARGAH - Heavy fighting between Afghan security forces and the Taliban is underway in Gereshk



district in southern Helmand province.

Tribal elders in the province warned if fresh troops are not sent in, the collapse of the district will also lead to the fall of Helmand province.

They called on government to send in reinforcement troops so as not to let Gereshk district to fall to the Taliban.

A tribal elder from the district said that Gereshk was a strategic district and its fall could lead to the fall of Helmand province.

"It has been almost one week that security troops in the district have not slept, they haven't received any equipment and as compared with the enemy they don't have enough weapons," he added. He stressed that if government failed to send in fresh troops and take other necessary measures, then the fall of the district will definitely lead to the fall of Helmand province.

Meanwhile, Gereshk district chief, Muhammad Sharif, said that if reinforcement troops are not deployed, they will not be able to ensure the security of the district.

"We urge leaders of security organizations to act on time and move forward, because it is still early. Send us more troops. The security troops that are currently stationed in the district are on the defensive," he said adding, "although the national army has supported police forces in the district, it was not enough and more measures should be taken."

Afghan soldiers, who are fighting on the frontline against the Taliban in Gereshk district, said due to lack of enough weapons they cannot move forward. They, however, claimed to have inflicted heavy casualties on insurgents.

An Afghan soldier said that dead bodies of the militants are ...*(More on P4)...(8)*