

Quote of the Day

Do not do an immoral thing for moral reasons.

Thomas Hardy

Senators Call on Ghani to Dissolve the High Peace Council

KABUL - Senators from the Meshrano Jirga (Upper House of Parliament) on Sunday asked President Ashraf Ghani to dissolve the High Peace Council (HPC) following the insensitive remarks uttered by former HPC advisor Abdul Hakim Mujahid. According to the senators, those who call the Taliban peace angels and say they are a sacred group are disrespecting all civilians who have been killed by the Taliban. This comes after Mujahid said last week, in the wake of Tuesday's deadly bombings in Kabul and Kandahar, that the Taliban were angels of peace and the group is a sacred group. Mujahid was however fired from his position as HPC ad-



visor on Sunday. The senators argued that the HPC has failed to make any major breakthrough in the peace process and has in-

stead been a financial burden to the country. The senators also implied that irresponsible HPC members should be prosecuted.

In the Sunday session, the Meshrano Jirga discussed the overall security situation in the country and the recent spate of violence - includ-

ing the Taliban attacks in Helmand and Kabul and the bombing at the Kandahar guesthouse.

More than 50 people were killed when two Taliban suicide bombers targeted a convoy of Afghan parliament workers on Tuesday. More than 50 people were killed and over 150 wounded.

"We call on the supreme commander of the armed forces to dissolve the High Peace Council and instead use the money on the security forces," said senator Rana Tarin.

"Today there are concerns in everyone's minds including shopkeepers, the poor and laborers about the situation in the country and they want to see what government will do to ... (More on P4)...(1)

Only 72,000 IDPs Resettled out of 550,000: MoRR



KABUL - Reiterating calls for humanitarian assistance, the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) said on Sunday that out of 550,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) registered in the country, only 72,000 of them have been resettled in their regions.

This comes amid a harsh winter, with temperatures expected to continue to drop. As the weather deteriorates, the plight of IDPs worsens, said the ministry. Thousands of IDPs are currently housed in flimsy tents in Kabul and other regions after being

forced to flee to safety due to ongoing violence.

Mohammad Noor is IDPs who fled Kunduz three months ago and along with his wife and eight children are living in desperate conditions.

"We are here and praying to God, no one is there to help us, we lost everything we had and our children are suffering from a food shortage," he said.

"We go out and collect plastic and paper and burn them to keep ourselves warm," said Noor's daughter Kalima. "If ... (More on P4)...(2)

Taliban Leader Swallows Memory Cards after Arrest

SHIBERGHAN - A key Taliban commander swallowed two memory cards immediately after he was arrested by security forces in the capital of northern Jawzjan province, an official said Sunday.

Jawzjan police chief Brig. Gen. Rahmatullah Turkistani told Pajhwok Afghan News the Taliban commander, Mohammad Yaqob, was operating against the government in Faryab province.

He said the man swallowed two memory cards immediately after being arrested by security forces at the entrance checkpoint in Shiberghan city.

He believed the memory cards contained important content which the Taliban commander did not want to share with security forces. He added the detainee was currently under investigation.

The Taliban have not yet commented about the incident. ... (More on P4)...(4)

Kandahar Attacks was Planned by Taliban: Siddiqui

NEW DELHI - In an exclusive interview to NewsX, Spokesperson of the Interior Ministry of Afghanistan Sediq Siddiqui has claimed that the recent attacks in Kandahar, Kabul near the United Arab Emirates were actually carried out by terror agents from Pakistan.

Siddiqui has said that preliminary investigation on the matter reveals that the attacks were planned by Taliban in Quetta in Pakistan.

He added: it was a very unfortunate incident what happened in Kandahar. Unfortunately, the victims were our diplomats and guests. Our government and security forces have launched an investigation. It is unfortunate to say that this attack was planned in Quetta by the ... (More on P4)...(5)

Kabul, Delhi Strategic Partnership Meeting Soon



KABUL - The second meeting of Afghanistan and India Joint Strategic Partnership (AIJSP) would be held in the near future, a statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) has said.

The matter was discussed during a meeting between

Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani and Indian Ambassador in Kabul Manpreet Vohra on Saturday, the statement said. The Indian envoy extended his condolence to the Afghan government over recent terrorist attacks that claimed several precious lives in the

country. During the meeting the third foreign secretary level meeting of Afghanistan, Iran and India was also discussed. The meeting would be held next month. In addition the trilateral meeting between India, Afghanistan and US. (Pajhwok)

ADB Operations Hit Record \$31.5b in 2016



KABUL - Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Sunday said its operations for Asia and the Pacific reached an all-time high of \$31.5 billion in 2016. The Manila-headquartered bank said its operations in the outgoing year went up by 17% from \$26.9 billion in 2015. ADB loans, grants, technical assistance, and co-financing have been growing steadily.

ADB President Takehiko Nakao said in a statement: "The increase in our development financing to Asia and the Pacific is reflective of our strong commitment to reducing poverty and improving people's lives."

"As ADB celebrates 50 years of development partnership with its member countries, we will strive to remain the region's premiere development bank by providing the financing, knowledge and partnership." Nakao added Asia was grow-

ing at a steady pace, but more needed to be done to achieve development that was both sustainable and inclusive. ADB promised helping the region achieve its development objectives.

The region faces many challenges such as implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, climate change, increasing inequality, rapid urbanization, aging, and disaster risk management.

ADB approvals of loans and grants for sovereign (government) and non-sovereign (primarily the private sector) operations by ADB reached a record \$17.5 billion, signaling a 9% increase from \$16.0 billion in 2015.

Non-concessional loans from ADB's Ordinary Capital Resources (OCR) amounted to \$14.4 billion. Concessional loans and grants from the Asian Development Fund (ADF) reached \$3.1 billion, with ... (More on P4)...(6)

Insecurity in Kunduz Scaring away Professional

KABUL - The deteriorating security situation in northern Kunduz province has led to a decline in the number of women government servants besides forcing females to migrate to neighbouring provinces or foreign countries, an official says.

Acting Director of Women Affairs Naseba Holkar, in an exclusive interview, told Pajhwok Afghan News that growing insecurity had made the work environment difficult for women in the province.

She called the departure of talented professional women from the province a huge loss. "Due to increasing insecurity, some women have fled to other provinces and foreign countries."

She estimated the number of women staff in government departments at only 10 percent, believing the percentage could be enhanced if women's capacity improved.

Special programmes be arranged for increasing women's representation in the government, the director suggested. Provincial authorities had promised giving women more jobs and improving their overall situation, she said. ... (More on P4)...(7)

Whereabouts of Letter to Supreme Court Remains a Mystery

KABUL - Media supporting groups on Sunday slammed the Afghan government over its refusal to provide journalists with necessary information regarding a letter reportedly sent by President Ashraf Ghani to the Supreme Court regarding the issue of the seven dismissed ministers.

Ghani reportedly requested the Supreme Court interpret Article 92 of the Constitution following the vote of no confidence by MPs regarding the ministers and their development budget spend.

This comes after Ghani reportedly sent the letter two months ago - but details surrounding the letter have been vague.

According to media groups, government has basically failed to address questions relating to the letter. These



media outlets insist that government has a constitutional obligation to provide information to the media in such instances.

"This is a clear violation of the constitution of Afghanistan by government; the government systematically hides the information and tells the

people lies," said head of NAI Mujib Khelwatgar.

"Our expectations from the Supreme Court is to inform us about their verdict on the issue in line with the constitution so that a decision is made in the light of the court's verdict," said deputy spokesman to ... (More on P4)...(3)

ACJC Making Progress in Tackling Corruption Cases



KABUL - The Anti-Corruption Criminal Justice Center (ACJC) on Sunday said it has finalized investigations into a number of corruption cases relating to the Ministry of Defense (MoD) and the Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD) and will hold public hearings in the near future.

According to Erfani, they have sent dockets implicating nine MoD generals and four MoUD officials to the court.

"One case belongs to MoD in which nine generals involved (are implicated) in the embezzlement of 95 million AFs. The other case belongs to high (ranking) officials of the MoUD, but the accusations are not finalized. In the case of MoUD, 27 persons have been accused of whom three of them are in detention and one of them has been released on bail," said Mohammad Erfani, senior ACJC prosecutor.

Erfani also said they have investigated corruption allegations involving the Ministry of Communications and Technology and in accordance with the law, have sent the dockets to the Attorney General's Office. According to Erfani, ... (More on P4)...(8)

Kabul, Delhi & Islamabad Asked to Fight Terror Jointly



WASHINGTON - Describing terrorism as a regional challenge, the Obama administration's point person for South and Central Asia has said it would be helpful for India, Afghanistan and Pakistan to come together in the fight against the scourge.

"Absolutely," Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, Nisha Desai Biswal told Pajhwok Afghan News in an interview when asked if it would be helpful for India, Pakistan and Afghanistan coming together and talking on terrorism.

She added: "I think, the path to peace is ultimately through greater dialogue on creating some common understanding and common approaches. It is not the easiest path though. It would be a win-win situation for all if the three countries were able to reach common definitions, understating and approaches of what actions each must take to secure borders and stop non-state actors from operating within borders, Biswal remarked.

"I think that's an important initiative that the three countries can take. It is certainly something we value and ... (More on P4)...(9)

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