

<b>Jalalabad</b>	Clear	<b>Ghazni</b>	Partly Cloudy	<b>Kandahar</b>	Clear	<b>Mazar</b>	Partly Cloudy	<b>Herat</b>	Clear	<b>Bamayan</b>	Partly Cloudy	<b>Kabul</b>	Partly Cloudy
	19°C 3°C		9°C -3°C		18°C 2°C		16°C 4°C		17°C -3°C		1°C -7°C		12°C -3°C

Weather Forecast Brought to You by MTN Afghanistan

## 85pc of Ministers-Designate Lack Requisite Skills

KABUL - An overwhelming majority of the ministers-designate and heads of independent departments lack requisite professional expertise, Pajhwok Afghan News has found. Only 15 percent of the nominees have mandatory educational qualifications and 63 percent are inexperienced, according to documents made available to this news agency.

More than 105 days after its inauguration, the unity government on Monday announced a list of 25 ministers-designate, and heads of National Directorate of Security and Afghanistan Bank. Six officials-designate have doctorates, 11 masters and the rest bachelor degrees. The ministers of defence, interior, mines and hajj that constitute only 15 percent of the council have related

qualifications and experience. On the contrary, the ministers of communications and higher education do not have the required skills, something that belies claims of merit by the president and the chief executive officer. The findings show that ministers of foreign affairs, justice, labour and social affairs, public health, information and the central bank govern-

nor -- who constitute 28 percent of the designates -- had relevant degrees. Work experience of three ministers remains a mystery so far, but 10 of 24 others are apparently well-versed in their fields. Earlier, a group of civil society activists said the nominees were inappropriate choices and the president and CEO had failed to honour their pledges. (Pajhwok)

## Afghan Refugees in Balochistan Don't Want to Return: UN

KABUL - Most of Afghan refugees in Pakistan do not want to voluntarily return due to the deteriorating law and order situation in their country, a UN official was quoted as saying on Friday. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Representative in Pakistan Maya Ameratunga said officials from Islamabad, Kabul and Tehran recently discussed a repatriation plan. "Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iranian officials gathered in Geneva to devise a strategy to repatriate the refugees. Pakistan is the country that has hosted refugees for the longest period," Maya told a seminar in Quetta. Living under hard conditions in Pakistan, about 1.5 million refugees believe the security situation there was better than in Afghanistan, the Express Tribune quoted the UNHCR official as saying. UNHCR Sub-Office head in Quetta Fabio Varoli said the refugees were not involved in terrorist or subversive activity. "UNHCR cooperates with the local administration when it comes to security," he said. At least 626,000 Afghan refugees have been repatriated between 2002 and 2014 from Balochistan, according to Dunya Aslam Khan, another UNHCR official, who gave a presentation on the repatriation process and mechanism. The UN agency says there are 327,788 registered refugees in Balochistan. But the provincial administration claims there are around one million illegal Afghan immigrants in the province. (Pajhwok)

## Abdullah Has Devalued Votes of Herat Residents: Ismail Khan



KABUL - Former energy and water minister Ismail Khan on Thursday accused Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah of failing to give due representation to the people of Herat province in the cabinet. Speaking at the funeral ceremony for Dr. Noor Gul, a former jihadi commander who was killed in a shootout on Wednesday, Khan said Abdullah had no value for the votes he had won in Herat. He said Abdullah had received a high number of votes in Herat during the presidential election. More than 105 days after its inauguration, the unity government on Monday announced a long-awaited list of 27 ministers-designate, National Directorate of Security (NDS) and Afghanistan Bank heads. Earlier, some members of civil society organizations said a majority of cabinet nominees lacked professional experience. They ... (More on P4)...(13)

## US Welcomes Pakistan Plan to Ban 12 Outfits Including Haqqani Network

WASHINGTON - The United States has welcomed the reports that Pakistan plans to outlaw Haqqani Network and 11 other groups accused of carrying out terrorist attacks in the country. "We welcome the reports that the Government of Pakistan plans to outlaw the Haqqani Network, Jamaat-ud-Dawa, and I think about 10 other organizations linked to violent extremism," State Department Deputy Spokesperson Marie Harf, told reporters. Sources close to Pakistan authorities have told the country's Express Tribune that the announcement will be made by Pakistani



government in "coming days", a move apparently illustrating Pakistan's seriousness in combating terrorism after the Peshawar school massacre. "If they go forward with this, it is an important step, certainly, towards eliminating terrorist activity in Pakistan," Harf said.

The Pakistani newspaper noted that the decision was made after the U.S. State Department declared Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) leader Mullah Fazlullah a "Specially Designated Global Terrorist." Fazlullah claimed responsibility for the Peshawar

attack in which over 150 school students and teachers were killed on 16 December after the armed suicide bombers stormed an Army-run school in Peshawar city. Following this attack, Pakistan also lifted ban on executions. A total of ... (More on P4)...(12)

## 600 ANA Commandos Complete Training in Kabul



KABUL - A batch of 600 Commandos celebrated their successful completion of three-month special training from Afghan National Army (ANA) Commando Training Center in a ceremony attended by senior Army officers in Kabul. The joining of these fresh graduates into commando ranks came two weeks after the Afghan security forces assumed the full security responsibility of the country as NATO formally declared end of their combat role in the country. During the ceremony, the fresh commandos promised to protect their soil and suppress armed oppositions until their last drop of blood. "We want to let our enemies know that they are not able to confront us at all," commando Azizullah said, promising to eliminate militants from all over the country. Their instructor, Abdul Jabbar Wafa, praised the graduates had successfully completed tough trainings and were able to confront the insurgents at any situation. "Now they can practice the tactics they learned upon the enemies," he added. Also present at the event, the commander of ANA commando forces, Gen. Abdul Karim, called on the security forces to attack the enemies without mercy. "Our basic job is to protect our ... (More on P4)...(15)

## 2,763 Maidan Wardak Youth Join Police, Army

MAIDAN SHAHAR - As many as 2,763 youths from central Maidan Wardak province have joined police and Afghan National Army (ANA) ranks in the past 10 months, an official said on Thursday. Col. Gul Agha Mayar, police recruitment chief, said 661 youth were inducted into the regular force, 826 in Public Safety Police and 776 into Afghan Local Police (ALP) since the beginning of the ongoing solar year. Meanwhile, ANA Recruitment Director Col. Shafiqullah Habibi said over 500 youth from Maidan Wardak had joined the army in the last 10 months. Among the recruits are 130 12th-graders, who will become ANA officers after completing necessary training. He said 170 youth had been referred to the ANA Academy for a four-year course. But the small number of women in security organs has disappointed officials. Women Affairs Director Wahida Shkoli confirmed women had shown less interest in joining security organs. (Pajhwok)

## 2014 a Deadly Year for UN-Backed Demining Project

KABUL - The UN-backed Mine Action Programme in Afghanistan (MAPA) has said it lost 34 personnel in different security incidents across the country in 2014. Another 27 workers suffered injuries, with one attack on a de-mining project near the copper mine in Logar province in June and a second in Helmand in December accounting for 19 of the deaths and nine injuries. A statement from the Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan (MACCA) said: "The total of 34 deminers killed in 2014 is almost equal to the total number over the previous four years combined." MAPA said it was involved in clearing explosive hazards but only in cases where fighting in an area had ended and internally-displaced people had returned to their homes and requested the clearing of lands. "The preservation of MAPA's neutrality is the key to its continued services to communities in Afghanistan," said the statement, stressing that support from the people was paramount to its success. MAPA comprises 50 national ... (More on P4)...(17)

## Karzai Raises Funds for Afghan Kids with Heart Defects

KABUL - Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai made phone calls on television Thursday to urge the Afghan business community and broader public to contribute funds to a Red Crescent initiative to treat the nearly 5,000 Afghan children with congenital heart defects, one third of which he said would die in less than 180 days if not treated. The former Afghan leader called on the Afghan public through via a TV announcement to purchase Isara tickets as part of the campaign to cure Afghans



kids suffering from Ventricular Septal Defect (VSD). Karzai himself dialed 1313 from his phone and participated in the campaign, looking straight at the camera and entreating potential donors. "Help in this life-saving program so that our children who have heart diseases can recover with the help of Allah and donors," President Karzai said. ... (More on P4)...(14)

## 46 Inmates Released from Kunduz, Nangarhar Prisons



JALALABAD/KUNDUZ CITY - At least 46 prisoners have been released from Nangarhar and Kunduz central jails in compliance with a presidential decree, officials said on Thursday. Col. Abdul Wali Hesarak, Nangarhar prison superintendent, told Pajhwok Afghan News 27 inmates, including nine women, were freed based on a decree issued on the occasion of Eid Milad-un-Nabi. He added in the next phase, a special commission would decide on the release of more prisoners. Forty prisoners had their jail terms remitted. Hesarak said the released inmates were petty criminals. Juma Gul, one of the beneficiaries, said he was set free ... (More on P4)...(18)

## Afghans Fret over U.S. Troop Withdrawal: Poll

WASHINGTON - With the U.S. and NATO forces wrapping up combat missions in Afghanistan in 2014, many Afghans remain pessimistic about what the future holds after the troops are gone, according to a Gallup poll released Wednesday. Nearly four in 10 believe they will be worse off with the withdrawal of the majority of the U.S. and NATO forces, while fewer expect the situation to be the same, Gallup found. The threat from the Taliban is a major factor, with 2014 being one



of the deadliest years on record for civilians in the country, due to a surge of Taliban attacks. Although Afghans are somewhat more positive now than they were in 2013, they largely expect this situation to get worse. Nearly half

of Afghans believe the presence of the Taliban will increase when international forces depart, while half as many expect it to decrease, according to Gallup. The Taliban ramped up attacks across Afghanistan in 2014, and fears of ... (More on P4)...(19)

## IS Emergence Worries Sar-i-Pul Residents

SAR-I-PUL - Residents on Thursday said they were concerned about the emergence of gunmen claiming allegiance to the Islamic State (IS) in the Kohistanat and other districts of northern Sar-i-Pul province. Provincial council secretary Masooma Ramazan told Pajhwok Afghan News some groups had recently emerged in Sar-i-Pul, exhibiting tendency to the IS, a group fighting in Iraq and Syria. "As we know, these elements carry black flags of Daesh and this has caused panic and fear among people," she said, adding that terrorist attacks and bombings had lately increased in the province. Calling the proscribed groups a serious threat, ... (More on P4)...(16)