

Quote of the Day

The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Yusuf Nuristani

IEC 'Fully' Ready to Hold Parliamentary Election

KABUL - The chairman of the Independent Election Commission (IEC), Yusuf Nuristani, who was summoned by the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of Parliament) on Saturday, said the commission is 'fully' ready to hold parliamentary and district council elections.

He said he will announce the parliamentary and district council elections' schedule within the next two days.

Nuristani once again criticized the electoral process for being politicized and said there is a need for proper review of polling stations and other technical-



ities in the electoral process.

"IEC, as a body responsible for holding elections, has decided to announce the schedule of

parliamentary and district council elections in the next two days - on Monday. I hope that government will work on the provision of a

budget and will take security measures," he said.

Meanwhile, Nuristani said government has shown an interest in holding the elections with the current commissioners.

"Both houses of parliament - Wolesi Jirga and Meshrano Jirga - have placed their trust in us to hold the elections. That's why the two houses summoned us to brief them on our preparations for holding elections. Yes, government is interested to hold elections," he added.

A number of MPs meanwhile said the election will be held after ... (More on P4)...(1)

EU Seeks Political Solution for Challenges in Afghanistan



BELRIN - The European Union (EU) Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos Stylianides, called on European institutions to deal with "the root causes" of the migrant and refugee crisis.

In a meeting with Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic in Belgrade, Stylianides said that "political solutions" must be found in Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq.

"This unprecedented [migrant] crisis is obviously very complicated. I recognize that maybe we can see more influxes ... (More on P4)...(2)

Qadir's Armed Men Join Nangarhar's Public Uprising Groups



KABUL - Scores of armed men related to Zahir Qadir, the Deputy Speaker of Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of Parliament), on Saturday joined public uprising groups in eastern Nangarhar province. Security officials in eastern Nangarhar province said that the armed men will cooperate with Afghan security forces in the fight against militants in Nazian and Achin districts in the province. Nangarhar Police Chief Fazel Ahmad Sherzad said that he appreciates Qadir, because hundreds of his people, under the framework of public uprising, are fighting alongside Afghan security forces and are playing an important role in ensuring security of the province.

"These people have their own weapons, but we will see if they need anything, so that we provide for them," said General Dad Muhammad Harifi, Nangarhar National Security Director.

Meanwhile, members of the High Peace Council (HPC) and tribal elders lent their support to Afghan troops and public uprising forces.

Malek Nazir, a member of the peace council of Nangarhar, urged government not to prosecute these armed men, because they were fighting to ensure security of Nangarhar and killings and beheadings are part of war.

The public uprising members vowed that they will fight till the last drop of their blood to defend their country.

These armed men joined public uprising groups at a time that Daesh militants have intensified their activities in Nangarhar, particularly Nazian district. (Tolonews)

Religious Scholars Warn of a Rise in Extremism

KABUL - Minister of Hajj and Religious Affairs Faiz Mohammad Osmani on Saturday raised concerns over threats which he believes is emerging from extremism in the country, calling for collective efforts to curb the trend.

Speaking at a seminar of Islamic scholars on Saturday, Osmani called for wider efforts to be taken to end the phenomena before it causes more damage.

Religious scholars from across Afghanistan participated at the event where they declared the Taliban insurgency and atrocities of Daesh militants against Islamic principles and human rights.

The scholars said that ongoing insurgency can not be justified as Jihad, adding that those involved in such issues aim to



tarnish the image of Islam and Muslims, referring to activities of Taliban and Daesh hardliners.

The three day seminar is aimed at finding a way to curb extremism in the country.

"Comprehensive and effective [measures] weren't taken so far in Afghanistan to combat extremist groups, hence, this makes us to review the ongoing

process and map out a scientific and cognitive strategy to tackle the issue," Osmani said.

The Afghan people have long suffered from insurgency in their country, he said.

"The discussion involves a war which is being justified in the name of Jihad, the war which is controlled by foreign intelligence aimed to destroy our home ... (More on P4)...(3)

Villages in Helmand's Gereshk Fall to Taliban

LASHKARGAH - The Taliban militants have captured several villages in Gereshk district of southern Helmand province.

Muhammad Karim Atal, the chairman of Helmand Provincial Council, said: "We witnessed the collapse of a village in Gereshk two days ago. Unfortunately, Adam Khan village also fell to the Taliban last night."

He said at least 14 Afghan troops have been killed and nine others wounded.

Local residents voiced their



concerns that prolonging the war in Gereshk will lead to civilian casualties.

"We are concerned about prolonging the war and the Taliban have captured several villages during the fighting," said

Muhammad Khan, a resident of Gereshk district.

The Provincial Police Chief, Abdul Rahman Sarjang, however, said Afghan forces have the upper hand in the fighting. He added that 20 ... (More on P4)...(4)

First Consultative Meeting on Lapis Lazuli Corridor Held in Kabul



KABUL - The first consultative meeting on Lapis Lazuli Corridor was held in Kabul to exchange views on the five-pronged agreement among Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey.

The meeting was attended by representatives from Afghanistan's ministries of foreign affairs, finance, transport and commerce.

Waheedullah Waisi, Head of Economic Cooperation in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stressed on the economic benefits of the project and highlighted the progress achieved so far.

The Lapis Lazuli Corridor is a lynchpin in reviving the ancient Silk Road by connecting South Asia to Central

Asia and then to Europe, where Afghanistan serves as the connecting bridge.

Its name comes from the fact that Afghanistan's lapis lazuli and other semi-precious stones were exported through this route to Caucasus, Russia, Europe, the Balkans and Northern Africa over 2,000 years ago. Lapis Lazuli Corridor runs from Aqina in northern Farayab province and Turqundi in western Herat province of Afghanistan to Turkmenbashi of Turkmenistan which arrives in Baku, capital city of Azerbaijan, after passing the Caspian Sea. It connects Baku to Tbilisi, Georgia's capital, and also the ports of Potli and Batumi of ... (More on P4)...(6)

Kabul Ready for 2nd Round of Four-Nation Talks

KABUL - Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) announced Saturday that all necessary arrangements to convene the second round of the four nation talks on Afghan peace process are in place.

After concluding the first round of their consultations on mapping out the framework for peace, senior officials from Afghanistan, Pakistan, US and China are set to meet in Kabul on Monday.

Afghanistan expects that groundbreaking and positive outcomes will be achieved from the talks, Ahmad Shekib Mustaghni, a spokesman for the ministry of foreign affairs said on Saturday.

As expectations for the resumption of the stalled peace process with the Taliban gather momentum, the Afghan High Peace Council (HPC) urges the Afghan government officials to move cautiously in the talks.

"We must cautiously be optimistic of the talks, because the issue is quite sensitive and vulnerable," HPC member Ismail Qasimyar said. The second round of the talks are set



to be held in the Afghan capital Kabul on Monday, in which officials from Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the US will focus on structuring a framework for the peace process in Afghanistan.

"With consideration of the commitments sought by the four countries at the Heart of Asia conference and also in the first coordination meeting of the four countries, InshaAllah (God willing) positive outcomes from the talks ... (More on P4)...(7)

160 Afghan Nationals Deported from KP

LANDI KOTAL - The Khyber Agency political administration deported 160 Afghan nationals to their country via the Torkham border.

Officials said the deported Afghans were arrested in different cities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) on separate occasions and were lodged at various lockups of the province for staying in Pakistan without proper travelling documents.

All the arrested Afghans were handed over to Khyber Agency political administration by the Peshawar police on Friday who were later transported to the Torkham border under Khasadar and Levies escort.

At Torkham, they were handed over to Afghan border authorities after completion of necessary documentation.

Meanwhile, Shahid Khan Shinwari and Engineer Saiful Islam were elected president and general secretary, respectively, of the Fata Olympics Association in its annual elections held here on Friday. Other office-bearers included Haji Miraj senior vice-president, Dr Wazir Akar and Nawaz Orakzai vice-presidents (male) and Safeena Tabassum and Mehreen Afridi vice-presidents (female), while Khurshid Khan and Sajid Ali Kikikhel were elected as finance and press secretaries, respectively.

A rival ... (More on P4)...(5)

Mogherini Iran, EU Meet to 'Finalise' Nuclear Deal

VIENNA - Iran's foreign minister and the EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini met Saturday in Vienna to "finalise" last July's nuclear deal, Mogherini said on Twitter.

Her meeting with Mohammad Javad Zarif came ahead of an expected announcement by the UN atomic watchdog that Tehran has complied with the landmark agreement with major powers.

Once the International Atomic Energy Agency gives the green light, a raft of US, EU and UN sanctions on Iran will be lifted, including on its lifeblood oil exports.

Italy's Mogherini speaks on behalf of the P5+1 group - the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany - that agreed the deal in Vienna on July 14 after two years of rollercoaster talks. (AFP)

David Petraeus US Should Unleash Airpower in Support of Afghan Partners

WASHINGTON - The retired US Army General David Petraeus recommends unleash-



ing airpower in support of the Afghan national security forces who are fighting a resurgent Taliban amid deteriorating security situation.

Petraeus said US should adopt a new policy that expands airstrikes in Afghanistan to target a resurgent Taliban and an emerging threat posed by the loyalists of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist group. In an Op-Ed published by Washington Post, Petraeus wrote "We should unleash our airpower in support of our Afghan partners in the same way that we support our Iraqi and Syrian partners against extremists."

"We should unleash our airpower in support of our Afghan partners in the same way that we support our Iraqi and Syrian partners against extremists," Petraeus said, adding that "We have the tools in place to step up our game considerably."

This comes as the security situation has rapidly deteriorated since the Afghan national security forces assumed full charge of the security in the start of last year with the conclusion of the coalition forces combat mission.

The Afghan forces were largely depending on US and coalition air support in fight against Taliban-led insurgency and have been in critical need of close-air support.

Meanwhile, the United States and other allies of Afghanistan have stepped up efforts to bolster the capabilities of the Afghan Air Force.

The Afghan Air Force received the first batch of 4 A-29 Super Tucano light attack aircraft from United States on Friday which followed days after India delivered three Mi-25 gunship helicopters to Afghanistan.

The new additions in Afghan Air Force inventory are ... (More on P4)...(8)