

Quote of the Day

Remember that happiness is a way of travel – not a destination.

Roy M. Goodman

Watchdog Warns of More Ghost Soldiers in Security Forces

KABUL - Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA) on Saturday said the number of ghost soldiers in security departments is more than what Resolute Support (RS) has reported. RS said on Friday the Pentagon had stopped the salaries of 30,000 ghost soldiers in the Afghan National Army (ANA) and that the U.S will only pay salaries of those soldiers who are registered biometrically. "Some soldiers are stationed in one province and then moved to a more secure province, or a soldier is assigned to work in a district, but he stayed in the province center. And there are soldiers working under security forces' structures, but they only maintain security of government officials. If you consider these and assess the ghost soldiers, the number will increase," said Mohammad Na-



sir Timori, a member of IWA. Ministry of Defense (MoD) however rejected the claims and said there is not a single ghost soldier in the ANA.

Ministry of Interior (MoI) meanwhile said they have started assessments to find out the exact number of police serving under the structure of the MoI. "In the past few months (war season), our security departments faced challenges in different parts of the coun-

try. We are working hard to overcome the problems. But ghost soldiers is a separate issue and we have addressed concerns raised in this regard" MoI spokesman, Sediq Sediqi said. However, concerns have been raised that if reports on corruption in security departments are proved to be correct, it will have negative consequences on the overall situation of the country. "Ghost soldiers is a big problem for ANA. We failed to recruit a big number of the soldiers for battlefields," said Atiqullah Amarkhil, a former military officer. According to the MoD the cost for an ANA soldier amounts to 1,000 AFs per day, and if RS's claims are correct that there are 30,000 ghost soldiers, 11 billion AFs is wasted annually. (Tolonews)

Concerns Raised over Corruption at Interior Ministry



KABUL - The High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption (HOOAC) and the Joint Committee of Monitoring Anti-Corruption said they appreciate the recent moves made against a number of officials at the Ministry of Interior (MoI) in fighting corruption but said corruption at the MoI should be eliminated completely. According to the HOOAC, the majority of MoI corruption cases, which includes embezzlement, are linked to contracts.

"Our findings reveal that most violations and corruption are linked to the MoI contracts and there is a need to follow the issue through judicial organizations," HOOAC chairman Ghulam Husain Fakhri said. "This is the beginning - which has started with the MoI - but this should continue in other security agencies as there are reports about corruption in the Ministry of Defense," said Omid Sharifi, a spokesman for the joint committee. In ... (More on P4)...(1)

MRRD Signs 13 Contracts worth 760 Million Afghani

KABUL - Officials in Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) have signed 13 contracts on the roads construction, water supplies worth 760 million Afghani with private construction companies on Sunday. In the contract 37 kilo meter of roads, 234 meter of bridge will be constructed in provinces of Ghor, Parwan, Baghlan, Kunar, Nuristan, Balkh, Paktia and Logar. Minister of the Rural Rehabilitation and Development Nasir Ahmad Durani has declared insecurity the main barrier insisting that the monitoring program of the Ministry on the implementation of the projects will seriously be launched and supervised.

He said, "Projects will be implemented with conditions required in the contract, for me quality of the projects based on the plan matters and important." Execution of the projects will create ... (More on P4)...(2)

ISIL Actively Recruiting in Kunar

ASADABAD - Provincial high peace council officials and some local tribal elders have informed regarding the recruitment process of the ISIL group in this province, Khaama Press reported. The head of the high peace council for Kunar, Mohammad Ismail Munib, said that loyalist of the terror group have started recruitment advertisements and are spreading propaganda among the residents of Kunar. He said the issue has sparked concerns among the local residents and ISIL loyalists move among the people to attract them to their ranks. Shahwali Salazarai, head of Kunar's labor association, has said the group could attract the jobless youths whose numbers are considerably high. This comes as the country's ministry of interior said Saturday ... (More on P4)...(3)

Trump Lashes Out at Millions of Protestors

WASHINGTON - Donald Trump has lashed out at the millions of people who took to the streets to protest against his presidency. Crowd estimates for the Women's March in Washington DC on Saturday topped one-million, while another 1.5 million were on the streets in Chicago, Boston, New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and more than 600 other cities across America and the world.

The number of people in DC alone for the demonstration appeared to dwarf the number who lined the same streets on Friday for Trump's inauguration. But that did not stop the Donald from taking aim at all those people in a tweet on



Sunday morning. "Watched protests yesterday but was under the impression that we just had an election! Why didn't these people vote? Celebs hurt cause badly," he wrote. But he then tried to backtrack on the remark, offering up

a much softer message in a tweet sent more than an hour later. "Peaceful protests are a hallmark of our democracy. Even if I don't always agree, I recognize the rights of people to express their views," he said. (Agencies)

Report Indicates over one Million Refugees to Return Home in 2017



KABUL - United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) in Afghanistan on Saturday launched its Humanitarian Response Plan for this year and said a staggering 9.3 million people - around one-third of Afghanistan's population - will need humanitarian assistance in 2017. In his foreword in the report, Mark Bowden, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, said Afghanistan is one of the most protracted humanitarian emergencies in the world. "Tragically for many Afghans, 2016 saw no let-up in the conflict. As a consequence, more than half a million people fled their homes, many of whom are now living in prolonged displacement."

He said large scale displacement in Afghanistan has also been accompanied by another major population movement with the return of hundreds of thousands of Afghan citizens from both Pakistan and Iran. The scale of this return movement was largely unanticipated, he added. "Up to a million more returns are expected to arrive in Afghanistan from Pakistan and Iran in 2017. "Despite a decade of some of the highest levels of international assistance in the world, the poverty rate has increased since 2011 and will likely increase further in 2017. 40 percent of the population are food insecure and over 1 million children need treatment for acute malnutrition." Bowden ... (More on P4)...(4)

US, UK, Pakistan Condole Pir Gilani's Demise

KABUL - The United States, the UK and Pakistan on Sunday condole the death of Afghanistan High Peace Council (HPC) chairman Pir Syed Ahmad Gilani. Pakistan's Foreign Office in a statement said: "We are deeply saddened to learn about the demise of Pir Syed Ahmed Gilani, Chairman of the HPC of Afghanistan."

It said Pir Saheb was an influential religious leader who was widely respected in Afghanistan and throughout the region for his contributions towards Islam and the Afghan nation. He would always be remembered for his tremendous efforts to bring peace to Afghanistan and promote reconciliation, the statement said. The government and people of Pakistan express their heartfelt condolences to the family and the people and government of Afghanistan, the FO said. The US and the United Kingdom (UK) embassies in Kabul also issued statements and condole the demise of Gilani. In a tweet, the US Embassy said they were saddened by the news of HPC chairman death ... (More on P4)...(5)

NPC Approves 5 Projects, Rejects 2

KABUL - The National Procurement Commission (NPC) has approved five project contracts, rejected two and sent as many back to the departments concerned for assessment, a statement said Sunday.

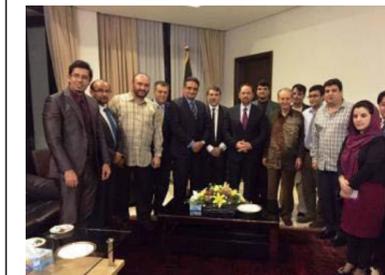
The statement from the Presidential Palace said President Ashraf Ghani chaired the NPC meeting which approved an eight-kilometre road construction from Borg village to Surkhab village in the Mohammad Agha district of central Logar province at a cost of 160 million afghanis and buying five vehicles for the Afghanistan central bank. The statement added a contract was also approved for purchasing of ATRA machine for the bank and other contracts were about construction of 40 classrooms in nine months at the Sayed



Jamaluddin Afghan teacher college. The NPC rejected construction works on two buildings at the Herat university and Parwan's Al-Bironi university. A new building construction project at the Afghan Embassy in Pakistan and a road construction from Nawabad to Sangar Sari in Kama district of eastern Nangarhar

province were sent back to the departments concerned for reassessment due to high costs. Some construction projects were delayed until next NPC meeting. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah, Second Vice President Mohammad Sarwar Danish, finance, economy, justice ministers and some senior advisors attended the meeting. (Pajhwok)

Malaysia to Cooperate in Addressing Problems of Afghan Refugees: Rabbani



KABUL - During his visit to Malaysia, Salahuddin Rabbani, Minister of Foreign Affairs has met with a number of Afghan lecturers, students' representatives and traders to Malaysia. In the meeting, Afghan representatives of students and traders to Malaysia shared problems of Afghanistan traders' visas with minister of foreign affairs. Afterwards, minister of foreign affairs by stressing on efforts of MoFA for solution of the problems asserted that during his visit to the respective country, he had met with the Malaysian foreign affairs minister to discuss relations of the two countries and problems of Afghan citizens to Malaysia, adding that the Malaysia government while promising to address problems of visa for Afghanistan diplomatic passports pledged to cooperate in connection with solution of trading visas and providing higher education scholarships to Afghan students. (Agencies)

Municipality Plans to Privatize Sanitation Services



KABUL - The Kabul Municipality (KM) announced on Sunday that sanitation and cleaning services of the capital would be privatized soon. "Contract of cleaning and sanitation services of Kabul's five districts will be given to a private sector in the next six months," said Kabul Mayor, Abdullah Habibzai. He said that this project would be initiated as a test case within six months, if it had better results, the municipality would award long-term contract of Kabul's sanitation to a private company. Pointing to increase in garbage heaps and pollution in the capital city, the mayor said that insufficient personnel and equipment as well as lack of cooperation on part of the local community and increase in population are main factor behind the issues. Scarcity of a system for sanitation and cleaning of Kabul city, outdated bureaucracy and existence of aged staffers are other challenges faced by the KM, he added. Pointing to the presence of ghost staff, he said the KM has ... (More on P4)...(6)



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