

Quote of the Day

It requires more courage to suffer than to die.

Napoleon Bonaparte

Ghani, Carter Discuss Afghanistan Security Situation

WASHINGTON - US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter met President Ashraf Ghani discussed the security environment in Afghanistan on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Pentagon Press Secretary Peter Cook said on Friday.

"In their meeting, Carter and Ghani discussed the ongoing mission to train, advise and assist the Afghan forces as they confront the Taliban, secure their country and work closely with the US to prevent terrorist groups from using Afghanistan as a safe haven," Cook said.



In a statement, the Pentagon spokesman said the two leaders discussed the current security situation and the important role Afghanistan's new A-29 aircraft would play in the future. Carter welcomed Ghani's appreciation of the continuing sacrifice of American forces and President Barack Obama's decision to maintain a significant US military presence in country, both in 2016 and beyond. They also discussed Afghan international outreach efforts in advance of the July 2016 NATO Warsaw Summit. Carter underscored US... (More on P4)...(1)

NATO-Funded Printers to Help MoI Process up to 1,000 Passports Daily



KABUL - The Central Passport Department operating within the framework of the Ministry of Interior (MoI), has received new passport printers, purchased by NATO-led Resolute Support (RS) mission.

The purchase of the new printers comes as the number of applicants acquiring passports has been on the rise with the Central Passport Department personnel working in two shifts to respond to the demands of the Afghan citizens. ... (More on P4)...(2)

Shinwari Elders Ask Govt. to Support Uprising



JALALABAD - Tribal elders of Shinwari district of eastern Nangarhar province on Saturday asked the government to support the public uprising which had brought positive changes to the security situation of the Shinwari zone. During a ceremony marking the opening of an office for resolving issues facing the Shinwari tribe, a tribal elder Malak Kamin told Pajhwok Afghan News the uprising had a positive impact on security of the area, but the government had failed to keep its promises on equipping and supporting the militia. According to Kamin, schools and clinics remained closed in some districts ... (More on P4)...(3)

President Ashraf Ghani

ANSF Effectively Suppressing ISIS

KABUL - President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani has said the counter-terrorism operations to suppress the loyalists of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group are successfully and effectively being conducted in Nangarhar province.

The Office of the President in a statement said President Ghani shared the issue during a meeting with the US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter during his two-day state visit in Switzerland. President Ghani urged the US defense chief to further equip the Afghan Air Force and Afghan National Army (ANA) forces, specifically the 205th Atul Corps in a bid to eliminate the threat of the ISIS loyalists in the country.



He said the menace of terrorism is not only threatening Afghanistan but is a threat to the region and the world and to fight terror will require short term, mid term and long term cooperation. The remarks by President Ghani comes as there have been growing concerns regarding the growing activities of the

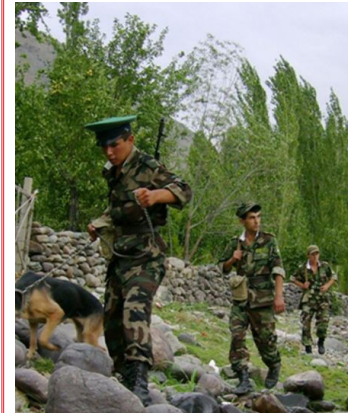
loyalists of the terror group as they have been trying to expand foothold in the country. The U.S. Department of State recently designated the Khorasan branch of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) as a terrorist organization. The Khorasan branch dubbed as 'Khorasan province - Wilayah Khorasan' is the territorial scope of ... (More on P4)...(4)

Kandahar Hospital Donated Chairs, Tables, Beds

KANDAHAR - A charity group has provided tables, chairs, beds and wheelchairs to a hospital belonging to the Kandahar university's medical faculty in the southern province. Qalam Lar group head Mawlawi Weesa told Pajhwok Afghan News that the assistance had been arranged by Afghans living in Europe thanks to efforts by the group founder, Rana Masleh. He said their organization had paid customs and other taxes on the equipment upon arrival in the country from Europe. He said the aid given to Kudri hospital included 100 chairs, 41 tables and 11 beds and all these things were direly needed by the faculty students. He said the assistance also included 100 wheelchairs for children with disabilities who could not afford to buy them.

Weesa said their organization had previously provided similar assistance to disabled children in Spin Boldak, Dand and Daman districts and to children with disabilities from Zabol, Uruzgan and Maidan Wardak provinces living in Kandahar. Kandahar University's finance and administrative affairs head Abdullah Jawak thanked the Qalam Lar group and the Afghans living in Europe for the assistance. He said students often needed various kind of materials which the university could not ... (More on P4)...(6)

Tajikistan Reinforces Afghanistan Border with 1,000 Troops



DUSHANBE - Tajikistan is reinforcing the most dangerous sections of its border with Afghanistan with more than 1,000 extra troops, military sources told Agence France-Presse on Friday. Military sources told Agence France Presse that more than 1,000 troops were serving in the new unit and the numbers could grow, amid fears of jihadist violence spreading into Central Asia. Rakhmonali called the situation on the border "complex," with "Taliban fighters controlling a significant part of the Afghan border region." Last year Tajik border guards took part in 30 armed skirmishes with drug smugglers from Afghanistan, killing 16 smugglers. Afghanistan has long been the world's largest producer of opium and heroin, with profits from the illicit trade helping fund Taliban insurgents who have been waging a deadly insurgency against the Western-backed government. (Agencies)

Baghlan Residents Forced into Digging Trenches for Taliban

PUL-I-KHUMRI - Some residents of northern Baghlan province on Saturday accused the Taliban of forcing them to dig trenches for the fighters.

Over the past 10 days, the militants have been digging trenches and browbeating locals to help them, a resident of the Darqad village of Dand-i-Ghori district told Pajhwok Afghan News on condition of anonymity. "The insurgents bring together people and force them to dig trenches. They take dozens of youth for work daily," he alleged, saying the residents had no option but to comply with rebel orders. Meanwhile, the deputy police



chief, Col. Abdul Rashid Bashir, verified the digging of trenches by the Taliban, saying such a step would not bust the moral of the security personnel. "Plans for a clearing operation in the area have been drawn up. The security forces will destroy all trenches of Taliban," the police officer

pledged. Separately, people complained of disruptions of telecommunication services in some parts of the province from 6pm to 6am. A resident of Shahabuddin village, Mohammad Gul, said the Taliban had warned telecommunication companies to ... (More on P4)...(5)

Families of Wednesday's Victims Seek Public Prosecution



KABUL - Family members of the victims of the "Black Wednesday" incident on Saturday urged government to publicly prosecute the eight militants that they claim to have arrested in connection with the incident. They said that the arrested people should be prosecuted at the scene of the incident. Family members of the victims urged the government to support children of the victims and prevent a repeat of suicide blasts. Assadullah, a relative of one

of the victims, in a meeting with the commission assigned by President Ashraf Ghani to investigate the incident, said: "We urge the government to prosecute the eight arrested persons in public and at the scene of the incident."

Fatema, a staff member of TOLO TV who sustained injuries in the suicide attack, called on the government to bring peace and security to Afghanistan. "How can you expect people not to leave ... (More on P4)...(7)

Kerry Meets Gulf Arabs on Syria, Iran Nuclear Deal



RIYADH - U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry met Gulf Arab countries in Saudi Arabia on Saturday for talks aimed at pushing the Syrian peace process forward and calming their concern about the international agreement over Iran's nuclear program. Kerry began a stop in Riyadh by meeting with representatives of the six nations of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and the

United Arab Emirates. He is also due to have talks with Riad Hijab, chair of the Syrian opposition's High Negotiations Committee, which was formed in Saudi Arabia last month, amid uncertainty about whether Syrian peace talks slated to start next week in Geneva will take place. The Saudi-backed Syrian opposition ruled out even indirect negotiations with Damascus before preconditions are met, including a halt to Russian air strikes, contradicting Kerry's hopes for talks to start next week. The peace efforts are complicated by the worsening relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran, which back different sides in the Syrian conflict, and concern the Arab states have about how Tehran will benefit from implementation of a nuclear deal agreed with Western powers last year. (Reuters)

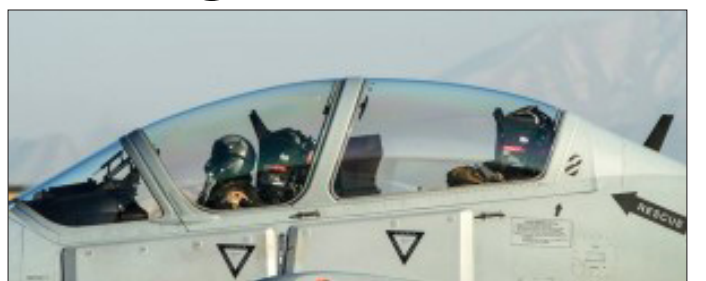
strongly condemn this incident. I want to say that only peace can prevent these miseries and the peace process is quite important to Afghanistan, media must support this process," Rula Ghani said. Meanwhile, a number of politicians have also termed attacks on civilians as war crimes, calling on government and civil society institutions, media and political forces to continue fighting terrorism. "Shedding the blood of the innocent civilians is against Islamic teachings. Those who shed the blood of the innocent ... (More on P4)...(8)

Rula Ghani Condemns Attacks on Civilians, Reiterates Call for Peace

KABUL - Afghanistan's first lady Rula Ghani has condemned the insurgents' attacks on the civilian population in Afghanistan and the recent attack on staff members of TOLO TV in Kabul that killed seven members employees. She said that only the establishment of long standing peace and security can determine a halt on civilian massacres. "The recent attack was tragic and shocked me. The entire people of Afghanistan have been affected by such events. How long must the innocent people lose their lives and their families get affected. I

strongly condemn this incident. I want to say that only peace can prevent these miseries and the peace process is quite important to Afghanistan, media must support this process," Rula Ghani said. Meanwhile, a number of politicians have also termed attacks on civilians as war crimes, calling on government and civil society institutions, media and political forces to continue fighting terrorism. "Shedding the blood of the innocent civilians is against Islamic teachings. Those who shed the blood of the innocent ... (More on P4)...(8)

US Awards \$55.2 Million in New Trainer Program for AAF



KABUL - The United States Department of Defense (DoD) has awarded \$55.2 million in new trainer program for the Afghan Air Force (AAF). "Cessna Aircraft Co., Wichita, Kansas, has been awarded a \$55,268,755 firm-fixed-price contract for the Afghanistan Trainer Program. Contractor will provide interim contractor support of 18 C-208 B aircraft and one C-208 aircrew training device, including maintenance and training," a statement by DoD said. The statement further added that the work will be performed at Kabul Air Base

and Kandahar Air Base, Afghanistan, and is expected to be complete by July 31, 2017. "This contract is 100 percent foreign military sales to the country of Afghanistan. This award is the result of a sole-source acquisition. Fiscal 2015 Afghanistan Security Forces funds in the amount of \$18,251,442 are being obligated at the time of award. Air Force Life Cycle Management Center, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, is the contracting activity (FA8617-16-C-6208)," the statement added. The new contract award by ... (More on P4)...(9)