

Quote of the Day

The beginning is the most important part of the work.

Plato

CEO's Office Rejects Parliamentary Election Date

KABUL - The Chief Executive Office on Sunday said the schedule for parliamentary and district council elections would be announced by new commissioners and the current schedule had no justification and was unacceptable.

Javed Faisal, deputy spokesman for the Chief Executive Office, said the election date announced by the Independent Election Commission (IEC) had no justification because the government and the people of Afghanistan wanted the country's electoral regime to be reformed before new elections.



He said the electoral system needed to be reformed and restructured before holding new elections. He said future elections would be held under new commissioners and a reformed system.

Faisal said the international community was ready to financially support elections in Afghanistan but they linked their support to transparency and electoral reforms. He said reforms suggested by the Election Re-

form Commission should be implemented before holding the Wolesi Jirga and district council elections.

Last Monday, the Independent Election Commission (IEC) announced it had set an Oct 15 date for the long-delayed parliamentary and district council elections. IEC Chairman Yousuf Nuristani told a news conference that the panel made all technical preparations to conduct the election process on October 15, 2016. He promised mistakes of the 2014 presidential vote would not be repeated. The coming polls would ...*(More on P4)...*(1)

Ghani Stresses on Practical Regional Cooperation in Fight Against Terrorism



KABUL - Ghani urges regional cooperation in fight against terrorism unless regional countries take practical steps to fight insurgency terrorism will not be eliminated, said President Ashraf Ghani. He said that regional countries should realize that terrorism is a common threat. "What cannot be permitted is for states to behave like non-state actors and to sponsor malign non-state actors," Ghani added. He said that peace without women's participation was also impossible. ...*(More on P4)...*(2)

New Indian Envoy Vows More Strong Relations



KABUL - India's new ambassador to Afghanistan on Sunday promised efforts to further cement ties between the two friendly countries, the Presidential Palace said.

The credentials of the newly-appointed Indian ambassador to Afghanistan, Manpreet Vohra, were approved by President Ashraf Ghani during a ceremony held at the president's office, a statement from the Presidential Palace said. The two sides discussed strengthening of mutual relations and cooperation at the meeting during which President Ghani wished the new envoy success in his career, the statement said. Meanwhile, a statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Vohra called on Deputy Foreign Minister Hikmat Khalil Karzai in his office. Karzai thanked India for its years-long assistance with Afghanistan and said ...*(More on P4)...*(3)

Taliban Reaffirms Authority of Its Qatar 'Political Office'

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates - The Afghan Taliban said Sunday that its "political office" in Qatar is the only entity authorized to carry out negotiations on its behalf, reinforcing the authority of the man who took control of the group amid a tussle over command following the death of longtime leader Mullah Mohammad Omar.

The Taliban made the declaration in a summary emailed by spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid of a statement it made during unofficial, closed-door talks taking place in the Qatari capital, Doha. Calling itself the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan," the group also laid out a series of



demands including the release of an unspecified number of prisoners and the removal of senior members from a U.N. blacklist. It described the demands as "preliminary steps needed for peace." The talks in Qatar are organized by Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, a Nobel Peace Prize-winning group focused on resolving

conflict. Pugwash last year organized similar talks that were also attended by Afghan officials. The discussions are separate from official peace efforts involving Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the United States. Those negotiations, which do not include the Taliban but aim to pave the way for talks between the ...*(More on P4)...*(4)

WB to Provide \$128m Grant for Naghlu Dam, Water Management



KABUL - The World Bank would provide \$128 million in aid grant to Afghanistan for water management and reconstruction of the Naghlu dam under agreements signed on Sunday in Kabul, officials said.

The contracts were signed between WB country director in Afghanistan and the Afghan finance and agriculture ministers and the head of Da Afghanistan Breshna Shirkat in Kabul. Up to \$45 million would be spent on the project of on-farm water management while the rest (\$83 million) would be spent on the reconstruction of the Naghlu dam in Kabul, Finance Minister Eklil Hakimi said.

Hakimi said the hydropower dam had the capacity to produce 96 megawatts of power but the capacity would be increased to 75 MW after the completion of the schemes.

Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Minister Asadullah Zameer said 120 water channels would be reconstructed and 175 others designed during the four-year project which would provide irrigation water to nearly 22,000 hectares of land and would resolve the water shortage for 3,000 additional hectares of land. DABS chief Qudratullah Dilawari said \$83 million allocated for the reconstruction of Naghlu dam would be spent over the next six years.

Robert Saum, the WB country director for Afghanistan, said they would provide the grant to support the agriculture sector, agricultural production and energy sector of Afghanistan. The World Bank has spent more than \$41 million on on-farm water in Afghanistan under the Afghanistan Reconstruction Fund since 2012. (Pajhwok)

MoD Contract Rejected, 4 Road Contracts Cancelled

KABUL - The National Procurement Commission (NPC) approved two contracts worth 600 million afghanis, rejected a third belonging to the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and cancelled four roads construction contracts for poor quality, the Presidential Palace said on Sunday.



According to a statement from the Presidential Palace, the committee made these decisions during a meeting chaired by President Ashraf Ghani on Saturday evening. The meeting discussed procurement issues of different government departments, the statement said, adding that two contracts, one belonging to Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) and another to the Ministry of Public Works worth of 600 million afghanis, were approved.

One contract of the MoD was rejected and four others about road constructions were cancelled due to poor progress and low quality materials use by the construction companies.

The NPC has previously appointed a joint delegation led by the Ministry of Economy to assess these projects. The delegation was tasked with discussing the construction contracts with the Ministry of Public Works and providing

suggestions to the NPC, the source said.

The statement said the companies' officials, who failed to carry out their responsibilities as agreed in the contracts, had been introduced to judicial organs.

The president said the selection of construction companies for future construction projects should be classified based on their quality, the statement added.

Any contractor failing to abide ...*(More on P4)...*(5)

USAID to Reconfigure Funding of Afghan Workforce Programme

KABUL - In support of the Afghan government's "Jobs for Peace initiative" and to focus the resources on the urgent creation of more jobs, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and Afghan Minister of Education Dr. Asadullah Hanif Balkhi agreed to reconfigure the funding of the Afghanistan Workforce Development Program, the agency said on Sunday.

In order to support this shared goal, USAID has de-obligated \$18.5 million from the on-budget component of the Afghanistan Workforce Development Program, the USAID statement said.

The two parties agreed, in an implementation letter dated December 27, 2015 that "it is in our joint interest to create as many jobs as possible in as short a time as possible."

In April 2012, USAID invested \$32 million in an off-budget, Afghanistan Workforce Development Program, implemented by Creative Associates Int'l.

Since that time, the program completed 74 short term grants which conducted at least 2000 short-term training programs tailored to the needs of Afghan employers, such as financial and project management, information communication technology (ICT), sales and marketing, and construction.

More than 27,028 mid-career/semi-professionals participated in the train-



ings, of which, 17,656 have been placed in jobs, or have received promotions in their current job with at least a 3 percent salary increase. Thirty-six percent of all those completing the training programs are women.

USAID's Afghanistan Workforce Development Program helped establish four profitable job-training and placement service companies.

In September 2013, USAID entered into a complementary on-budget workforce development program with the Ministry of Education to invest an additional \$30 million through April 2016 to enable the Ministry of Education to design and procure training programs that reflect the current employment needs of the Afghan market. Since 2013, the Ministry of Education has spent \$1.4 million of the \$30 million and has awarded 11 contracts to Afghan firms to deliver training services. Of this amount, \$18.5 million will be de-obligated to make it available for the urgent creation of more jobs in Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

Ministry of Interior

Plans for Protection of Journalists Drawn up

KABUL - The counter-terrorism department at the Ministry of Interior (MoI) on Sunday announced drawing up plans for the safety of media outlets.

"In order to curb hostile activities of the enemies, the media should cooperate with us," Gen. Amarullah Aman, the head of the department, told a press conference in Kabul.

With the insurgents still posing threats to journalists, the police force would try its best to prevent terrorist attacks, the official pledged.

Media outlets in Afghanistan were incompared in the region, he acknowledged, accusing the militants of trying to stifle the voice of independent news organizations.

Without giving details of the safety plans, he urged the owners and employees of the media organizations to inform the security personnel in time.

He also asked people not to be misled by the enemies,

who were out to spread confusion among the people and anarchy across the country. (Pajhwok)

