



Afghan Forces Increasingly use Schools as Bases: HRW

KABUL - The influential Human Rights Watch (HRW) has asked donor countries to press the Afghan government to prevent the increasing use of schools by government forces in northern Baghlan province. The watchdog in a statement said several policemen were gunned down inside one classroom in a school in Postak bazaar village in Baghlan in 2010 in a Taliban attack. "Their blood wouldn't wash away... So we had to chip it away from the wall with an axe," one of the school officials told Human Rights Watch, describing the aftermath of the attack on Afghan security forces who had occupied the school. By 2015, the same school was once again occupied by government forces while students tried their best to continue their studies.



The school officials managed to get Kabul authorities to write a letter ordering the military forces to leave, but the commander ignored the order. When the students

needed to take exams, school officials again presented the letter to the commander. Officers fired their guns in the direction of the assembled teachers and students.

In an investigation during 2016, Human Rights Watch found that Afghan security forces are increasingly using schools as bases during military operations against the

Taliban, including schools supported by international donors. A HRW report documents the occupation and other military use of schools by state forces and the Taliban in the northeastern province of Baghlan. Military use of schools turns school buildings into possible targets of attack, and puts children and teachers at risk of being injured or killed. The HRW said donors must work with the Afghan government to discourage military use of schools and make funding for schools contingent on Afghan government commitments that donor-supported schools will not be used by Afghan security forces. They must also work with the Afghan governments to ensure the implementation of its commitments under the Safe Schools Declaration. (Pajhwok)

Pakistan Aims to Sign Water Treaty with Afghanistan

KABUL - Pakistan Government aimed to sign a treaty over share water with Afghan Government, amid officials in Ministry of Energy and Water insisted on implementation of International law and regulations over distribution and sharing of water with neighboring countries. According to Da Nation Newspaper of Pakistan the Pakistan officials are busy drafting a mutual agreement over water of Kabul river, the news paper also reported that the move apparently comes after recent statements by Indian leaders that New Delhi wants to gift a water reservoir to Kabul over the river as a token of friendship with Afghanistan. Officials in Ministry of Energy and Water insisted and saying that we will not sign any agreement to harm the Afghanistan National inter-

ests. Deputy Minister of Energy and Water Abdul Baseer Azimi said, "We will not sign any agreement on sharing of water of Afghanistan to harm the country's National interests." Economy experts said Afghanistan water should be managed based on the International laws and regulations, insisting Afghanistan does need its water itself more than its neighboring countries. Economy expert Najmuddin Sais said, "We need our water more than our neighboring countries do, we need to manage our water, it has been years our water used by our neighboring countries." The experts have also insisted that Afghan Government should use the water for irrigation thousands acres of lands in the country, greening... (More on P4)... (7)

Political Tension Takes Heavy Toll on Af-Pak Trade

PESHAWAR - The Pakistan-Afghanistan trade has sharply fallen over the last six months as a result of political tensions and strict border controls, an official says. Afghanistan's exports to the neighbour slumped by 21.9 percent while imports declined by 14.9 percent during the period, Model Collectorate of Customs chief said. The News International quoted Qurban Ali Khan as saying the export of 30 main items to Afghanistan accounted for \$103 million,



but the overall trade volume dropped. Pakistan's exports to Afghanistan stood at Rs53 billion in the two quarters (July-December) of the current

fiscal, compared to Rs62.49 billion in the corresponding period of last year. Wheat flour, amounting to Rs13.51 billion in the first two ... (More on P4)... (8)

Appoint Envoy to South Asia, Zardari Asks Trump

PESHAWAR - US President Donald Trump should play a proactive role in bringing closer Afghanistan and Pakistan to ensure stability in South Asia. Former president Asif Ali Zardari said in an interview with The Washington Times that the war on terrorism in both countries was the same. "We're losing the battle for minds against extremists in Afghanistan. "We've lost it in Pakistan, we've lost it in Syria, we've lost it in Yemen, we've lost it in Iraq, we've lost it Libya, we've lost it everywhere," Zardari remarked. The ex-president, who is also the Pakistan People's Party co-chairman, urged Trump to contact regional and world leaders and draft



a new policy on fighting extremism. "With the world being as it is, with the mindset of terrorism as the new war in the world, the least the US can do is sit down with us and have a strategy, which we

can work on together to fight this mindset." He asked the US president to seize an opportunity missed by his predecessor Barack Obama and appoint an envoy to the South Asia region as soon as possible. (Pajhwok)

Afghan Health Professionals Being Trained at PIMS

PESHAWAR - Afghan health professionals are attending a training programme, aimed to help the neighbouring country in rehabilitation of its health sector, in Pakistan's capital. Sixty-eight health personnel, including nurses and paramedics, will be trained for three months in different departments at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) in Islamabad. On completing the course, the Afghans will return to their country to serve in the three hospitals being built by the Pakistan government in different cities of the war-torn neighbour. Secretary Health Ayub Sheikh said that Pakistan was setting up hospitals in Kabul and Jalalabad. PIMS would arrange all facilities for the trainees, he promised.

Rights Watchdog Hits out at Germany over Deportations to Afghanistan

BERLIN - EU members including Germany should immediately stop the forced deportation of rejected Afghan asylum seekers, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said on Wednesday. The US-based group was responding to the news on Tuesday that 25 Afghans had been deported from Germany to Kabul. One more individual was refused entry into Afghanistan due to an illness and temporarily returned to Germany. "Extolling a 'safe' Kabul is a thin cover for what Western governments are too ashamed to admit," said Patricia Gossman, a senior researcher for HRW on Afghanistan. "Afghanistan is



not a success story. It's teetering on the edge of a humanitarian crisis," she added. The group of Afghans deported from Germany was the second to be returned to Afghanistan after an agreement was struck in October between Berlin and Kabul. The watchdog says that the

European Union "arm-twisted" the Afghan government into an agreement to send back tens of thousands of Afghans whose cases have been rejected. "While Germany is not alone in its efforts to speed up deportations of rejected asylum seekers, it has ... (More on P4)... (12)

Taliban Tell Trump: 'It's Time to Leave Afghanistan'

KABUL - In a long rambling letter, the spokesman for the Taliban is telling U.S. President Donald Trump that it's time to leave Afghanistan. The letter, emailed to journalists Wednesday, was written on behalf of the so-called Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban's spokesman, warns Trump that peace will be elusive as long as foreign troops are on Afghan soil. He adds that independence



from foreign dominance is "the only asset" that an impoverished nation like Afghanistan truly has. Written in English, as well as Afghanistan's two prominent languages Dari and Pashto, the four-page letter waxed ... (More on P4)... (9)

4 Foreign, Afghan Teams Probing Kandahar Assault

KANDAHAR CITY - Presidential Advisor Daud Gulzar on Wednesday said that initial investigations into the bomb attack on a guesthouse inside the governor's house in Kandahar City had been completed. Gulzar heads a high-level delegation to investigate all aspects of the blast that killed and wounded several individuals, including Afghan and foreign diplomats. He said the incident was of complex nature. Eleven people, including five diplomats from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), were killed and 18 others wounded in the powerful blast a couple of weeks ago. The UAE ambassador and the Kandahar governor were among those wounded. The deputy governor and other senior officials were among the dead. Gulzar said the incident was complicated and, therefore, key officials could be investigated. Officials from the CEO Secretariat, Defence Ministry, Interior Ministry, National Directorate of Security (NDS), parliament, Attorney-General Office are part of the commission. In an exclusive talk with Pajhwok Afghan News, Gulzar said he had travelled to Kandahar to investigate the incident from different angles, assisting and condoling with victims' families and meeting ... (More on P4)... (11)

Eshchi Welcomes AGO's Order to Arrest Dostum Guards

KABUL - Ahmad Eshchi, the former deputy head of the National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan, on Tuesday welcomed the Attorney General's order for the arrest of nine of First Vice President General Abdul Rashid Dostum's guards on charges related to the alleged abduction and sexual assault of a political rival, who accused the vice president of sodomizing him with a rifle. Eshchi said Dostum's guards should be arrested and the



first vice president should be suspended. He criticized what he called a delay in the assessment of the case by the Attorney General's Office (AGO) and said dozens of other victims will testify in court if the case against ... (More on P4)... (10)

Thousands of Addicts Await Treatment in Nangarhar

JALALABAD - The Nangarhar counter-narcotics department on Wednesday said the number of drug addicts has increased in the eastern province due to easy access to drugs, unemployment and improper treatment of the addicted people. Idrees Sapi, the department head, told Pajhwok Afghan News the number of drug addicts was estimated at

more than 100,000 in the province. "The survey hasn't finished yet, but the population of drug addicts is predicted at nearly 100,000 individuals. The number includes rehabilitated addicts as well." A 300-bed rehab hospital has been established where 400 addicts are currently under treatment, he added, saying the hospital couldn't solely

cope with the large number of addicts in the province. He also mentioned a 'harm reduction programme' set up to help the addicted people. "Addicts also receive lunch meal in the programme, they are cleaned and guided. The rehab centre also provides addicts with fresh syringes, which they use to inject drugs into their bodies." He ... (More on P4)... (13)

Of the 68 Afghan trainees, 18 are doctors. The rest are nurses and paramedics. Theory learning, observation and work under the supervision of medical trainers are the three major stages of the training course. An inaugural ceremony was held at the Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Medical University (SZABMU) auditorium under the banner 'Fostering Brotherhood through Human Resource'. (Pajhwok)