

## Quote of the Day

Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.

Winston Churchill

# China Calls for Afghanistan Reconciliation Roadmap Acceptable to All

BEIJING - China on Tuesday called for concerted efforts to agree upon a reconciliation roadmap acceptable to all. The Afghan government and all political parties should map out a reasonable reconciliation program. Pakistan could play a positive and special role. Stakeholders, including the United States, should take necessary measures to support the peace process, said Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

Wang was speaking during a



joint press briefing following talks with visiting Afghan Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani.

On Jan. 18, Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the United States held the second round of talks on the Afghan peace process in Kabul.

The four nations issued a joint statement following the meeting calling on the Taliban to join the peace process. The four parties also made some progress on the roadmap... (More on P4)...(1)

## President Ashraf Ghani Govt. Responsible for Media Security



KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani on Tuesday directed the security personnel to try their level best to ensure the protection of journalists, his office said. Ghani issued the directives during a meeting with leaders and employees of Tolo TV, Tolo News and Kabura Production at the Presidential Palace in the morning.

He said media was free and the government was responsible for providing it security to uphold the freed of expression, according to a statement from the president's office.

"The aim of terrorists was to challenge the freedom of speech. We are all in the... (More on P4)...(2)

## Pneumonia Claims Lives of 28 Children in Faryab



MAIMANA - Twenty-eight children of 2,000 hospitalised with pneumonia have died of the infection in one month in western Faryab province, officials said, warning against the rapidly spreading virus.

The provincial health department lacked certain facilities to deal with the increasing number of child pneumonia patients, said the director, Dr. Maroof Samar.

He said the pneumonia disease had rapidly increased in children under the age of five years and they received around 100 patients in one day and 2,500 in one month.

Most of the infected children were hospitalised in the Afghan-Turk hospital and over 600 of them had been discharged after medical check-up.

The public health director lamented the loss of 28 children in one month period despite hard work by provincial health officials at different health centers.

Hayatullah, a resident of first municipal district in Maimana, the provincial capital, said her two and a half years old daughter had pneumonia and she died, although doctors provided her with medicines and drops but she couldn't be saved.

"I took my daughter to Pakistan when she fell sick for the first time. She... (More on P4)...(3)

## Media Watchdogs Call for Taliban to End Attacks



KABUL - Media watchdogs on Tuesday said that guarantees need to be gotten from Taliban supporters that they will stop targeting civilian institutions such as the media ahead of planned peace talks with the Afghan government.

Nai, an independent media supporting group, said that government also needs to ensure the protection of media staff.

Nai director Mujeeb Khilwatgar said: "Our demand from government is that they guarantee the safety of public services employees in general and media staff in particular and leaders of institutions who are supporting, directly or indirectly, terrorists should be removed and only then should peace talks continue."

Meanwhile the Council of Protection and Stability in Afghanistan argues government must take practical steps to support the media following last week's attack on TOLO TV staff.

"The first commitment is respect to freedom of speech, second commitment is commitment to supporting freedom of speech, and third commitment is practice of freedom of speech," said Masood Treshwal spokesman for the Council of Protection and Stability in Afghanistan.

In the past ten years, 57 journalists and media employees have been killed in such attacks - including last week's attack that claimed the lives of seven TOLO TV employees. (Tolonews)

## Taliban will not Stand a Chance in Coming War Season: Govt.

KABUL - The Afghan Ministry of Defense (MoD) and the Ministry of Interior (MoI) said on Tuesday that the Taliban will face a heavy onslaught in the coming war season.

Afghan Ministry of Defense (MoD) said now that the air force is better equipped and has new combat helicopters, the battle fields will turn into a graveyard for the Taliban. "We have 20 planned operations in 17 provinces, also 10 planned operations are underway by our special units and commandos and dozens of opposition forces have been eliminated," said MoD



spokesman Dawolat Waziri. Meanwhile Afghan Ministry of Interior (MoI) added that it is expected that within two months Afghan police equipment will be up to NATO standards. "We are prepared for a bad

situation, but we will increase air strikes and operations. Better U.S. equipment is another merit in the next war season," said MoI spokesman Sediq Sediqqi. Meanwhile, Mirdad Najrabi, Chairman of Parliament's

## Focus on Unvaccinated Children as Anti-Polio Drive Begins

JALALABAD - Some 340,000 children in three restive districts of eastern Nangarhar province could not be administered polio drops, public health officials said on Tuesday.

However, vaccinators have been able to implement anti-polio campaign in two other districts that were left out of previous drives for reasons of insecurity, authorities said.

Deputy Director of Public Health Dr. Muqadasi Miraj told Pajhwok Afghan News insecurity prevented past campaigns from covering 62,000 children in the five districts.

But now the number of such cases in Haska Mina, Lalpura, Achin, Chaparhar and Batkot towns has come down to 32,000. About 28,000 unvaccinated children in Chaparhar and Batkot will be inoculated during the campaign that started today.

"Across Nangarhar, 627,000 children will be administered



anti-polio drops during the four-day campaign. But 34,000 minors in Achin, Lalpura and Haska Mina will be left out due to insecurity there," she said.

In 2015, eight polio cases were reported in Nangarhar, but no incident has been reported this year. "We have appointed locals to vaccinate children easily in their respective areas, a step that will hopefully yield positive results."

Roohullah, a resident of the Chardara area of Batkot, hoped the large number of unvaccinated children in the district would

be covered by the ongoing drive. "No one here impedes vaccination. A door-to-door campaign must be implemented here." A tribal elder from the Shinwari zone, Bacha Khan, confirmed that many children had been left out of anti-polio campaigns over the past two years in several areas of Achin, Spinghar, Haska Mina and Nazyan districts. Earlier, Governor Saleem Khan Kunduzi said they had negotiated with tribal elders from some areas to facilitate the campaign. (Pajhwok)

## Power Utility Owed 850m Afs in Herat Unpaid Bills

HERAT CITY - Local Breshna Sherkat (power utility) officials on Tuesday said a number of consumers owed 850 million afghanis in unpaid bills to the company in western Herat province.

Herat Breshna Sherkat acting head Wahid Kamrani told Pajhwok Afghan News that the power utility incurred 168 million afghanis losses as a result of non-payment of electricity bills by consumers and the recent decrease in the Afghan currency's value.

He said the electricity tariff would be increased from the start of next solar year due to the devaluation of the afghani against the US dollar and the huge amount of unpaid bills. "The Herat industrial park, government offices and residential homes owe 850 million afghanis in unpaid bills



that have a negative impact on our services. We would be unable to provide better services if the situation continues," Kamrani added.

Of the 850 million afghanis arrears, 150 million has to be paid by government offices, 80 million by industrial companies, 90 million by commercial areas and 530 million by residential buildings, he added. Kamrani did not name government departments defaulting

on power bills. He said most residents of Kahsan and Gulran districts were refusing to clear their dues.

"Some villages even do not allow power utility officers to collect electricity bills," he said.

However, residents of Herat City said the increase in electricity rate could not be justified by the decrease in the Afghan currency value. ... (More on P4)...(5)

## USAID-Funded 5-Year Health Programme Launched



KABUL - A United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded five-year programme to improve the Afghanistan health sector was launched on Tuesday, officials said.

A contract for the \$37.9 million project had been signed between USAID and the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) officials back in September, 2015.

According to USAID, the project would be focused on management, financial affairs and human resources at the MoPH.

US Ambassador to Afghanistan, Michael McKinley, on Tuesday told the project launch ceremony in Kabul that his country was strongly committed to working for Afghanistan's development.

He said the Afghan health sector needed international support to be improved and both the... (More on P4)...(4)

## Claims of Progress in Safe Drinking Water Supply Queried

KABUL - An independent research organisation on Tuesday questioned claims of progress in supplying safe drinking water to Afghan households over the past decade and a half.

The Kabul-based Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) suggested a careful evaluation of overoptimistic reports regarding success in the supply of potable water.

Recent reports from different agencies, including WHO and UNICEF, indicate Afghanistan has achieved before schedule the Millennium Development Goal for access to safe drinking water.

But in a discussion paper titled "Insecurity: changing paradigm for better framing the realities of sustainable access to drinking water in Afghanistan", AREU asked if access to safe drinking water in Afghanistan was really such a success story.

The paper refers to inflated data (as found in reports from WHO/UNICEF), methodological discrepancies among surveys, ... (More on P4)...(7)

## Pakistan Summons Afghan Envoy over "Use of Soil" for Attacks

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan has summoned Afghan envoy to share concerns over the use of Afghan territory for attacks in the country, the foreign ministry said on Tuesday.

Pakistan military said the recent attack on a university that killed 21 people, mostly students, was controlled by Pakistani Taliban commanders in Afghanistan.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said at the weekend that "rogue elements" in Afghanistan are involved in terrorists activities in Pakistan. He however said Islamabad does not blame the Afghan government.

"The Afghan Charge d' Affaires, Syed Abdul Nasir Yousafi was called to the Foreign Office yesterday to convey Pakistan's concern regarding the use of Afghan soil by certain terrorist elements in the recent terrorist attack on Bacha Khan University in Charsada on January 20," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

"He was told that investigations have revealed that handlers of this terrorist act were operating from Afghan territory and used Afghan telecommunication network for planning and executing this attack. In this regard, the relevant details have already been shared with the Afghan side," the statement said.

Afghan authorities have reported rejected the Pakistani statements.

Pakistan Army Chief, General Raheel Sharif, spoke to the Afghan President, the Afghan chief executive and the commander of the foreign forces a day after the attack and told them that a Pakistani Taliban commander controlled the attack.

A dreaded Taliban leader, Omar Mansoor, had claimed responsibility for the attack in a video... (More on P4)...(6)