

<b>Jalalabad</b> Partly Cloudy 17°C 7°C	<b>Ghazni</b> Chance of Rain 9°C 0°C	<b>Kandahar</b> Chance of Rain 16°C 7°C	<b>Mazar</b> Chance of Rain 6°C -1°C	<b>Herat</b> Partly Cloudy 8°C -1°C	<b>Bamayan</b> Snow 2°C -5°C	<b>Kabul</b> Chance of Rain 8°C 1°C
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**Daily Outlook Weather Forecast**

# Taliban Should Avail Peace Chance: Abdullah

KABUL - Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah on Wednesday said the Afghan government and the people had a strong will to bring peace and stability to the country and militants should avail the chance. Abdullah told a press conference here that the Taliban and other militant groups should not miss the opportunity for peace and realise an end to the war because they could not bring down the government through violence.



"The unity government and the Afghan people have the determination to bring peace and stability and to defend the country. We are honest and strictly in favour of sustainable peace," the CEO said, while calling on the Taliban to get benefit of the chance and quit the war. To a query, Dr. Abdullah said the Afghan security personnel had recently inflicted heavy casualties on Daesh fighters in eastern Nangarhar province. He said maintaining security was government's responsibility and the security forces were fighting to defeat militants in different parts of the country. (Pajhwok)

## 35 Areas in Badakhshan Prone to Natural Disasters

FAIZABAD - At least 35 areas in northeastern Badakhshan province are prone to natural disasters amid troubles residents face in the wake of border closure with neighbouring Tajikistan, officials said on Wednesday. Sayed Abdullah Dehqan, Afghanistan Natural Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) director for Badakhshan, told Pajhwok Afghan News they had identified 35 areas prone to natural calamities in Argo, Daraim, Yafal-i-Pain, Shahri Buzurg, Arghanj Khwa, Tishkan, Yawan, Baharak, Tagab, Shuki, Khwahan and Kasham districts.

"These areas become more risky when rains continue for a long time because rains and snowfall trigger sliding of mountains and hills," he said, asking the government to provide safe places for residents in vulnerable areas. The official said supporting people of the vulnerable areas was beyond the provincial government's ability. Dehqan said the government should act decisively in handling the issue.

However, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah, chairing a meeting of the High Commission on Managing Natural Disasters two days, discussed the vulnerable areas in Badakhshan. Abdullah ordered members of the commission to appoint a delegation to assess these areas in the province. In 2014, a landslide buried hundreds of people in Argo district and displaced 700 families.

In last winter, 70 families were displaced from Ajal village of Yawan district after a crack appeared in a nearby mountain. The epicenters of several earthquakes, including a stronger one, in the last few months were in Badakhshan, where residential buildings were threatened to collapse. In October, 2015, a 7.7 magnitude earthquake shook several parts in the north and northeastern zone of the country. (More on P4)...(12)

## US Might Stay in Afghanistan for Decades



KABUL - Top U.S. military commanders, who only a few months ago were planning to pull the last American troops out of Afghanistan by year's end, are now quietly talking about an American commitment that could keep thousands of troops in the country for decades, The Washington Post reports. The news agency citing senior military officials say that

the shift in mind-set, made possible by President Obama's decision last fall to cancel withdrawal plans, reflects the Afghan government's vulnerability to continued militant assault and concern that terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda continue to build training camps whose effect could be felt far beyond the region. "What we've learned is that you... (More on P4)...(9)

## Paktika Police Ranks Thinned by 'Ghost Personnel'

SHARANA - Residents claim security in various districts of southeastern Paktika province has been assigned to "ghost policemen," who are paid salaries but exist only on paper, a claim rejected by officials. The deputy head of the provincial council, Nimatullah Babri, told Pajhwok Afghan News that "ghost policemen" thinned the ranks of national and local police in a number of districts. He said the no-shows had threatened the security situation of many areas, adding

that the issue had been discussed with the provincial officials who had assured to resolve it soon. "Very soon we with security officials will start an inspection of all check posts in Paktika," the public representative said. Residents of the province also said a number of areas were being protected by imaginary police personnel. A resident of Argun district, Abdul Khaliq, said a 50-member local police force had been deployed in the district. (More on P4)...(13)

## Kabul Adds A-29s to Air Force



KABUL - The A-29 turboprop attack aircraft may play an important role in helping the Afghan Army destroy the Taliban, according to the military news website warisboring.com. Despite having some hurdles to overcome, the Afghan Air Force's use of A-29 turboprop attack aircraft may add significantly to the country's military getting the better of the Taliban, journalist Joseph Trevithick wrote in an article for the

military news website warisboring.com. He recalled that four such planes touched down at Hamid Karzai International Airport in Afghanistan on January 15, in an event that Trevithick touted as a "major milestone." He also recalled that the A-29, a version of the Embraer EMB-314 Super Tucano, can be described as a "light, flexible turboprop that serves as a trainer and supports troops on the ground." (sputniknews)

## 2,060 Kandahar Students Sit Entry Text Exam

KANDAHAR CITY - Though 4,000 students graduated from high schools last academic year in southern Kandahar province, only 2060 of them sat the university entrance test on Tuesday, officials said. Of 2140 registered students for the university entry test, 80 were absent from Tuesday's exam conducted on the Kandahar university campus, the university's vice-chancellor, Tawab Bala Karzai, told Pajhwok Afghan News. The participants included 230 girls. Kandahar education director Abdul Qadir Paiwastoon said he was shocked over the participation of only 2060 students in the examination out of 4000 students who completed 12-grade in the past year. He said his department had opened 13 entry test preparation centres and campaigned through... (More on P4)...(10)

## Logar's Azra District Becomes Major Hashish Hub

PUL-I-ALAM - The Azra district of central Logar province has become a major hub of hashish crop cultivation and drug smuggling, local officials say. The district's chief, Hamidullah Hamid, told Pajhwok Afghan News that most residents of the town used their land to cultivate hashish and poppy crops. He said by cultivating poppy and smuggling drugs, the residents resolved their economic problems. "90 percent of the land in Azra district is used to grow hashish crop and the growers by selling the yield earn millions of afghanis each year and the 10th part of their income is given to Taliban as ushr," the district chief said. He said the Taliban used to collect the ushr amounting to millions of afghanis during the harvest season. Hamidi said arable land in the district was insufficient and residents instead of growing food crops used to cultivate poppy and hashish crops. The official said the cultivation of the illicit crops could be prevented only when the government provided alternative source of income to the farmers. A member of the provincial council... (More on P4)...(14)

## Afghanistan Calls on EU to Accept its Migrants

KABUL - Officials from the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations (MRR) said Wednesday that the Afghan government has urged the European Union (EU) to accept Afghan refugees in European countries that have completed their migration documents. The officials also said the Afghan government will sign an agreement with the European Union in the few next months in order to overcome the migrant and refugee crisis. "The MRR had specific recommendations at a meeting with the European delegation [which is in Kabul to assess the reasons behind migration of Afghans to European countries]," said the MRR media advisor Hafiz Ahmad Miakhel.



"First we recommended a joint campaign against illegal migrations and second the Afghan government should be prepared for accepting those Afghans that return to their country," he added. Reports say that Afghans pay huge amounts of money to

make their way to European countries. "I cannot reject or accept the issue of paying high amounts of money for migration, but we have sent official letters to all money exchangers to avoid collecting and transferring the money... (More on P4)...(8)

## McCain Faults Obama's Plan for Troop Pullout

PESHAWAR - An influential American lawmaker has voiced serious concern over the plan for US military withdrawal from Afghanistan. In an interview with Voice of America on Wednesday, Senator John McCain alleged President Barack Obama's plan was encouraging the Taliban. In early October 2015, Obama announced keeping more than

5,500 troops in Afghanistan beyond the end of his term. Under his decision, 9,800 American troops would remain in Afghanistan through 2016. The US military will keep 5,500 troops in Kabul and at a few bases, including those in Bagram, Jalalabad and Kandahar. But the Republican senator from Arizona said the pull-

out strategy worried him a great deal. He said the next US president would have to maintain a much larger force in Afghanistan. As the security environment in the war-torn country has considerably deteriorated due to a spike in insurgent-linked violence, the former presidential runner believed Afghanistan could even need a... (More on P4)...(11)

## Refugees Critical of Tough New Danish Immigration Laws



KABUL - Denmark's parliament passed measures on Tuesday aimed at deterring refugees from seeking asylum, including confiscating valuables to pay for their stay, despite protests from international human rights organisations. The measures, which also include extending family reunification among refugees from one year to three years, are the latest sign that the Nordic welcome for refugees is waning as large numbers flee war in Africa and Middle East for a better life in Europe. The "jewellery bill" is the latest attempt by Denmark's minority center-right government to curb immigration to a country that took in a record 20,000 ref-

ugees last year. Under the bill, refugees could keep possessions amounting to 10,000 Danish crowns (\$1,450 USD), raised from 3,000 crowns after criticism from human rights organisations. Valuables of special emotional value such as wedding rings will be exempt. At the Trampoline House in central Copenhagen, which offers support to asylum seekers and refugees, people were critical of the new laws. "I think it's a wrong law and we don't accept this. We condemn it and we protested today and we are going to keep going to protest against this new law because this doesn't work... (More on P4)...(15)

## Ulomi Speaks out about Delay in Baghlan Operation

KABUL - Interior Minister Noorullah Ulomi on Wednesday said there were lots of efforts by some elements to cancel the military operation in parts of Pul-e-Khumri city in northern



Baghlan province, but the security forces made the operation happen based on the suggestions of the people. "There were efforts by some circles to stop the Baghlan operation, but the security forces started the operation after they were requested by the people," the minister said at a graduation ceremony of 327 police officers. "It is the duty of the Afghan security and defense forces to eliminate insurgents if they avoid accepting Afghanistan's Constitution," he added. Meanwhile, the Interior Ministry administrative deputy Ikramuddin Yawar said the policemen were trained in technical

and other issues that will help them carry on their duties in an effective way. "You have a new responsibility for the upcoming war season because you will get new equipment in the near future," he said. The graduates meanwhile said they are ready to serve in every part of the country. "We will use our skills in maintaining law and order in the country," said Ahmad Fayeeg, a graduated police officer. The police officers graduated at a time that militants in some parts of the country are reportedly preparing for the next war season. (Tolonews)