

## Quote of the Day

Kind deeds often come back to the givers in fairer shapes than they go.  
**Louisa May Alcott**

# IEC Fails to Agree on Candidate for Secretariat Post

KABUL - The Independent Election Commission (IEC) has failed to reach a consensus on who to appoint to lead the IEC secretariat, former IEC chief Fazel Ahmad Manavi said on Sunday.

This comes two weeks after the IEC reportedly submitted the names of three candidates for the position to the National Unity Government (NUG). However, all three were reportedly rejected by President Ashraf Ghani and CEO Abdullah Abdullah. Meanwhile, election observers and monitoring groups have accused IEC officials of dealing with the appointment from a political perspective.

Afghan Civil Society Election Network (ACSEN) has meanwhile accused the IEC



of exploiting the election process for their own political purposes, warning that the weak performance and

weak management by the IEC would plunge the next elections in a crisis.

ACSEN believes that weak

leadership within the IEC will also raise questions over the credibility of the next elections in the coun-

try.

"On the one hand, the government itself appointed the election commission commissioners, on the other, government does not accept the decision of the commission members; if government did not deal with the issue politically, then why does it not accept their decision? This indicates that they (commission members) will not be able to protect the votes of people and this is quite concerning to us," said ACSEN chief executive Jandad Spinghar. Justifying government actions over the rejection of nominees, the CEO's office has said government wants to ensure the right candidate is appointed so that

...*(More on P4)...*(1)

## European Leaders Oppose Trump Travel Ban, Far Right Applauds

BERLIN - The leaders of Britain and Germany joined other American allies Sunday in criticizing President Donald Trump's U.S. entry ban for people from some Muslim-majority countries, even as far-right politicians on the continent celebrated the move. British Prime Minister Theresa May does "not agree" with Trump's order and will challenge the U.S. government if it has an adverse effect on British nationals, a spokesman said. The official comment came after May refused to condemn the ban during a visit to Turkey to meet with Turkish leaders. She said in Turkey that the decision was a matter solely for the U.S.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel also regrets the travel ban. "She is convinced that even the necessary, resolute fight against terrorism doesn't justify putting people of a particular origin or particular faith under general suspicion," Merkel spokesman Steffen Seibert said.



Merkel raised the issue during a phone call with Trump on Saturday, citing the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention that calls on signatories to take in people fleeing war, Seibert said. "The German government will now examine what consequences the U.S. government's measures have for German citizens with dual citizenship and, if necessary, represent their interests toward our American partners," he said. (AP)

## Greater Efforts Needed to Fight Drug Scourge



KABUL - Minister of Counter Narcotics (MoCN) Salamata Azimi said on Sunday at a conference in Kabul that more effort is needed to fight drug addiction in the country.

According to Azimi, this year, the ministry plans to help rehabilitate between 40,000 and 50,000 addicts but in order to do this, more money is needed.

"It is a big problem and more effort needs to be made. Everyone should feel responsible and help fight the phenomenon so we can solve the problem," she said.

The counter narcotics department at the Ministry of Interior said they have detained more than 300 drug dealers in Kabul city in the past two weeks. ...*(More on P4)...*(2)

## NPC Approves Contracts as SIGAR Chief Watches

KABUL - The National Procurement Commission (NPC) Has Approved Eight Contracts at A Meeting President Over By President Ashraf Ghani, the Presidential Palace said Sunday.

A statement from the palace to Pajhwok Afghan News said the contracts were signed on Saturday evening. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) John F. Sopko was also invited to the meeting as observer, the statement said. Pointing to the latest Transparency International (TI) report that saw Afghanistan improving the most by four points in the global corruption index, President Ghani congratulated and appreciated the NPC members for bringing reforms to the procurement system. The NPC members attending



the meeting also thanked the president and leaders of the commission for better leadership and strong support, and promised to work more for transparency and fighting against corruption.

The NPC also approved eight recommended contracts worth 7.4 billion afghanis while returned 11 other contracts for a review and technical research.

The contracts approved included designing and construction of Shadyan

Tangi Dam of Balkh province and Kali Dam of Samangan province as well as reconstruction of Shaflan Canal in Pashtun Zarghon district of Herat province.

Amendments to the Yatim Tapa Irrigation Dam construction and embankment of Amu River in Takhar province were also approved.

Supplying IT equipment to the Kabul Polytechnic University, Kabul Medical University and higher education institutes ...*(More on P4)...*(3)

## Families of Fallen Soldiers at Odds with MoD over Privileges



KABUL - The Ministry of Defense (MoD) claims that it provides families of deceased soldiers with a house and regularly pay the salaries of these fallen troops - but some families reject these claims.

TOLONews reporter Wali Arian interviewed one of the families who lost a son to the war. They said they have not

been paid a cent in the past four months.

Amanullah was an Afghan Air Force pilot who was killed when his helicopter was hit in a Taliban attack in Dand-e-Ghori area of northern Baghlan province.

He left behind four children - the oldest being only six years old. His youngest is four months old. (Tolonews)

## SAARC Member States to Meet in Kathmandu

KATHMANDU - Senior officials of the eight member states of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) will meet this week in the Nepalese capital Kathmandu to attend the Programming Committee, officials said on Sunday. This will be the first meeting of the SAARC member countries since the postponement of the 19th SAARC summit in Islamabad last November. During the meeting, SAARC member states will discuss a number of issues including the budget of the SAARC Secretariat and five region-

al centers of SAARC, officials of the Nepalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

Nepal, current chair of the SAARC, had decided to postpone the SAARC Summit until further notice after four nations Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh and India decided to boycott the summit in Islamabad scheduled for November 9 and 10 last year.

India and three other nations had blamed Pakistan for not creating conducive environment and not cooperating on combating cross-border terrorism in ...*(More on P4)...*(4)

## Zarif Meets UN Special Envoy for Afghanistan



TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Minister, Mohammad-Javad Zarif, met with the UN Secretary General Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Tadamichi Yamamoto, here on Sunday. Zarif meets UN special envoy for

Afghanistan According to a report by Foreign Ministry Media Department, Zarif met with the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Tadamichi Yamamoto. (FNA)

## CASA-1000 Suffers Setback, French Firm Seeks Time



KABUL - The Central Asia-South Asia (CASA-1000) electricity supply project could not be completed on schedule due to a delay in the award of a contract for converter stations following a request from a French company, a media report said on Sunday. Four countries that are part of the project -- Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan and Pakistan -- have agreed to give relaxation in the timeframe, keeping in view the request of Alstom, a credible name and a major supplier of converter stations across the

world.

The Express Tribune quoted an official as saying that several interested companies, including the General Electric of the US, Siemens of Germany and Japan's Mitsubishi, had responded to the invitation for bids. However, Alstom sought more time. Two converter stations are planned to be set up in Tajikistan and Pakistan for transmitting electricity under the Casa-1,000 project that will link Central and South Asia through an energy corridor. Invited one year ago, the bids

were cancelled due to high prices quoted for setting up the converter stations, which would convert direct current into alternative current or the reverse. "A fresh process for awarding the contract is going on," the official said.

Casa-1,000 was expected to be completed by the end of 2017 or the beginning of 2018. However, the target will be missed due to the delay in the award of tender for the setting up of converter stations. "Now, this project is likely to be ready in 2020," the official said. (Pajhwok)

## 11 Afghan Tactical Air Coordinator Students Graduate in Helmand

KABUL - A group of at least 11 Afghan Tactical Air Coordinator students have graduated in southern Helmand province as efforts are underway to boost the capabilities of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF).

"The 215th Corps in Helmand Province graduated 11 Afghan Tactical Air Coordinator students on January 26," the NATO-led Resolute Support (RS) mission said in a statement.

The statement further added "They are now trained and ready to advise ground commanders on attack air operations, assist in operational planning, and provide target data through Air to Ground Integration from a maneuvering ground force to the aircrews flying in support of missions, which will allow them to defeat the enemies of GIRoA with greater success."

"These students are the most recent addition to the Corps' and the ANA's effort to enhance combined arms maneuver and integrate myriad lethal and nonlethal assets on tomorrow's battlefield," the statement said, adding that "The class began with 19 students, and after enduring 21 days of intensive study, 11 are now proud members of the ATAC community."

This comes as the close allies of Afghanistan have stepped up rehabilitation process of the Afghan Air Force in a bid to boost the capabilities ...*(More on P4)...*(5)

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