

Quote of the Day

Well done is better than well said.

Benjamin Franklin

IEC Unaware of Govt's Decision Over Secretariat Nominees

KABUL - The Independent Election Commission (IEC) on Monday said it had not received a formal notice from government confirming their rejection of the three nominees for the position of IEC secretariat chief. The IEC has done its duty, by submitting a list of candidates, but now it is up to the president and the CEO to make a decision, said an IEC commissioner on Monday. According to IEC commissioners, the election commission has completed its work on some key programs including the certification of electoral districts and sketching out three ballot paper samples. "We discussed our programs with civil society institutions, now we want political parties and institu-



tions to give their comments on it so that we can share it with government," said IEC commissioner Mazullah

Dawlati. Representatives from civil society institutions and the election commission gathered in Kabul on Monday where they held discussions on a number of programs by the IEC.

The activists also discussed a single-seat constituency, the voter list, voting cards and issues around other technical programs. "The commission has carried out its responsibility, we sent the names to government and now it is the president and the CEO's (responsibility) to take a decision," said IEC commissioner Gula Jan Abdul Badi Sayyad. Observers Concerned About Election Transparency: Observers have meanwhile, warned that holding elections without having an exact number of eligible voters could jeopardize chances of a transparent poll. "Electoral districts should not be small and old voting cards ... (More on P4)...(1)

Hakimi Assures Sopko of Information Sharing



KABUL - Finance Minister Eklil Hakimi and Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) John F. Sopko on Monday discussed the government's achievements in revenue and financial management. A statement from the Ministry of Finance (MoF) said Eklil Hakimi and Sopko exchanged views on government's progress in boosting revenue and financial management. "We discussed government's achievements, improvements in the National Procurement

Department, High Economic Council's efficiency and effectiveness of 5+3+3 meetings," Hakimi was quoted as saying. Counter-corruption initiatives, revenue reforms, integrated electronic systems in customs in revenue departments, dry port improvement, creation of a finance court and fuel tax exemption were also discussed. The statement added Sopko reaffirmed his commitment to accurate reporting on projects. The minister assured him of sharing information with SIGAR. (Pajhwok)

Escalating Conflict Made 2016 a Difficult Year: ICRC

KABUL - Intensifying conflict-related violence, insecurity, lack of access, attacks on health facilities and workers made 2016 a difficult year for Afghans and the humanitarian community, ICRC said on Monday. The organisation said its work in Afghanistan focused on visiting detainees to monitor their living conditions and treatment, as well as on assisting people affected by the ongoing conflict. It provided basic aid and medical care, improving access to water and sanitation, reconnecting families separated by conflict and working in cooperation with the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS). Last year, ICRC made 130 visits to 35 detention centres housing more than 30,617 detainees. It also met 1,682 people arrested in relation to the conflict, of whom 1,214 were visited for the first time. It exchanged over 10,915 Red



Cross messages between detainees and their families, with the support of the Afghan Red Crescent Society. It helped families of detainees in the Afghan National Detention Facility in Parwan to re-establish contact with relatives through more than 11,358 phone calls and more than 4,772 family visits. In a statement, ICRC said it organised 85 family visits for detainees in Pul-i-Charkhi prison; received 389 queries from families. At least 260 cases were successfully solved. The organisation facilitated ... (More on P4)...(2)

Fear Grips Sangin Residents as Clash Goes on



LASHKARGAH - A fierce clash continued on Monday between security forces and Taliban militants in the Sangin district of southern Helmand province. The clash erupted after dozens of armed militants stormed security posts in the troubled district, with each side claiming to have inflicted heavy casualties on the other. Omar Zwak, the governor's spokesman, told Pajhwok Afghan News the Taliban militants stormed security check-posts in Sangin in the morning and were pushed back and inflicted heavy casualties. ... (More on P4)...(3)

US Promises Continued Support for Anti-Graft Efforts

KABUL - The US embassy welcomed the establishment of a new permanent facility for the Anti-Corruption Justice Center in Kabul, hoping investigators would benefit from it. The new location would provide a secure and enabling environment for the investigators, trial attorneys and judges of the Anti-Corruption Justice Center, Ambassador Llorens Congratulates said. In a statement from the embassy, the diplomat believed the facility would help the officials carry out their vital mandate to investigate and prosecute major corruption



cases in Afghanistan. Llorens remarked: "Corruption is a cancer that plagues this nation and must be dealt with. The Anti-Corruption Justice Center has the potential to play a vital role in deterring corruption by attacking impunity. "Sustained political commitment in the fight against corruption will be essential for success in this great struggle," the ambassador said, promising continued US support for Afghanistan's efforts to combat graft. (Pajhwok)

Afghanistan is Open to Talks with Taliban: Zakhilwal

ISLAMABAD - Afghanistan's top envoy to Pakistan Omar Zakhilwal said his government is open to unconditional peace negotiations with the Taliban insurgents. "We are in contact with the Qatar office and also a number of influential individual Taliban leaders and commanders but there are no formal negotiations," the Afghan ambassador told Xinhua in Islamabad on Monday. The remarks came after foreign and Afghan media reported senior Afghan officials had met the Taliban political representatives in Qatar. The Afghan government and the Taliban had not officially commented the reports. "Taliban could bring any proposal to the negotiating table but we have



ruled out preconditions for talks," Zakhilwal said when asked about the Taliban's certain conditions ahead of the talks. Taliban negotiators have publicly called for reopening of their political office in Qatar, lifting of UN sanctions on their ... (More on P4)...(4)

25 Terror, Crime Suspects Detained in Kunduz

KUNDUZ - Twenty-five suspected criminals and terrorists have been arrested in northern Kunduz province, the spy service said on Monday. A statement from the National Directorate of Security (NDS) to Pajhwok Afghan News said the NDS personnel arrested the suspects in different parts of the province.

The detainees included eight persons who were involved in terrorist activities, roadside bombings and attracting youth to the insurgency, the statement said. It said the remaining detainees were involved in murders, an attack on the governor's house, kidnappings and delivering weapons to militants. (Pajhwok)

Iran Supports UN Efforts for Stabilising Afghanistan



KABUL - Iran has reaffirmed its support for the national unity government, signaling its willingness to back United Nations' efforts for bringing peace and stability to Afghanistan. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif held out the promise of supporting Afghanistan during a meeting with UN Secretary General's Special Envoy Tadamichi Yamamoto in Tehran on Sunday. IRNA quoted Zarif as saying Iran was ready for close cooperation with the UN in

Afghanistan. He said Iran's policy of backing the unity government was in line with stabilisation efforts. For his part, Yamamoto hailed Iran's measures in Afghanistan as constructive. He said security in Afghanistan had worsened after the pullout of foreign forces. He urged Iran to continue backing peace efforts in Afghanistan. Also on Sunday, the UN diplomat met the head of Strategic Research Centre of Expediency Council, Ali Akbar Velayati, who said Iran was

averse to extremism, violence and terrorism in the region. Velayati said Afghanistan needed concrete global support for its campaign to eradicate the menace of terror. He called Afghanistan an important country, which had been facing serious problems in the past decades. Yamamoto agreed Afghanistan required greater security for economic growth and development. He, however, regretted terrorists were conducting devastating operations in the country. (Pajhwok)

IS Group Attempts to Consolidate Foothold in Eastern Region

KABUL - The hardliner Islamic State (IS) group has been attempting to expand and consolidate its gripe in the eastern region of the war-battered Afghanistan, locals said. A branch of the Iraq-Syria based extremist group, the militants loyal to IS who surfaced in Achin district of eastern Nangarhar province along the border with Pakistan's tribal areas nearly two years ago, have gained grounds in parts of Kot, Pachiragam, Dehala, Haskamina and Ghani khil districts. IS militants which are notorious for their brutality, attacked security checkpoints in Ghani Khil district last week but fled away after suffering casualties and leaving three dead bodies behind. "Attack on security checkpoint in Ghani Khil district demonstrate that Daesh (IS) attempt to expand activities in the eastern region," a local analyst Tahir Zaland told local media recently. He also warned that negligence by government would enable the "terrorist group" to enlarge its clutch and create more law and order problems in the area. Emerged in 2015, militants loyal to the IS have enlarged its foothold along the border areas with Pakistan's tribal areas with committing barbaric acts ranging from beheading people and burning residential houses to intimidating the people living around. The hardliner group, ... (More on P4)...(5)



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