

Quote of the Day

The peace of heaven is theirs that lift their swords, in such a just and charitable war.

William Shakespeare (1564 - 1616)

Senate Stresses Unity Between Govt. Leaders, Ex President

KABUL - Some members of Meshrano Jirga or upper house of parliament on Tuesday urged government leaders and former president Hamid Karzai to shun their differences and work in unity in larger national interest. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah on Monday said the government has inherited majority of problems from previous government. "They were responding to major problems with a smile or a joke. Today they plan, pray, talk and preach for fall of this government," Abdullah remarked at a gathering in Badakhshan province. "Those who dreamt for a fall

of the current government should know that alternative is either Daesh or Taliban," Abdullah noted. Senator Zalmay Zabuli addressing today's session, said: "Instead of leading people, the president, the CEO and Karzai criticize each other and this is not for the benefit of the country."

"Abdullah criticizes Ashraf Ghani and Karzai, Karzai criticizes the government and says it is about to fall," he rued. "Get together and go to these elders to put aside their differences. Because differences between the government's leaders and former president will only strengthen enemy's hands," he added. Mohammad Alam Ezedyar, first deputy chairman, said: "I think last government also had

achievements and short-comings. But this is not the solution to put all the blame on previous government."

"The current government is responsible to deal with the existing problems," he continued. Senate chairman Fazel Hadi Muslimyar, while criticizing the unity government leaders said: "Thirteen years ago, there was nothing in this government. No force, no administration and no assembly, now there is a framework for you that requires proper management."

He also urged all leaders to put aside their differences and work jointly to face challenges boldly. (Pajhwok)



Sartaj Aziz

Murree Talks Had Taliban Leadership's Nod

KABUL - Sartaj Aziz, advisor to Pakistan's prime minister on national security, said on Monday that 'key leaders of the Afghan Taliban' had attended last week's meeting with Afghan officials in Murree with the approval of their Central Leadership Council.

Deputy Foreign Minister Khalil Hekmat Karzai, who led the Afghan delegation, had earlier confirmed his team had met influential Taliban leaders.

"The people we met in Pakistan were representing Akhtar Mansoor (Taliban's acting chief) and their Central Shura (council)," Karzai had told media in Kabul upon his arrival from Pakistan. He was confident of converting the 'Murree Peace Process' into formal dialogue.

While Aziz hoped more Taliban leaders would join the next round of talks and it would give a boost to the process. "The Murree rendezvous has rekindled hopes for durable peace in Afghanistan. Still there are concerns that 'opponents of peace' could try to derail the process." "Yes, there will be some people who could try to sabotage peace process," Aziz said.

He was confident that progress in dialogue would lead to restoration of peace in the strife-torn country. "Everyone hopes that hostilities will cease with the continuation of the process," he told The Express Tribune in a brief chat at the foreign ministry where he briefed media about Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's recent meeting with his Indian counterpart in the Russian city of Ufa.

Aziz is satisfied with the outcome of the Murree meeting. "It was very productive. It was the first time Afghan government officials and the Taliban sat across the table," he added.

The role of the ... (More on P4)... (4)

NSC Praises Forces, Approves Security Policy

KABUL - Praising sacrifices and the performance of security forces, the National Security Council (NSC) on Tuesday approved a national security policy, the Presidential Palace said on Tuesday.

The NSC met at the Presidential Palace with President Ashraf Ghani in the chair, a statement from the palace said.

Defence and interior ministers and officials from other security organs attended the meeting, the statement said.

The meeting noted that security situation had improved across the country as compared to last week and cooperation among security institutes had also increased.

The NSC praised sacrifices of security forces in recent offensives and militants attacks and also approved the national security policy. (Pajhwok)

Afghanistan Welcomes Iran Nuke Deal

KABUL - President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani on Tuesday congratulated the government and people of Iran on a landmark nuclear deal with world major powers.

Afghanistan welcomed every effort or agreement that brought stability to the region, a statement from the Presidential Palace quoted Ghani as saying. Iran and six powers reached a deal on Tuesday, which is widely viewed as a positive diplomatic overture and bring stability to the Middle East.

The deal will grant Tehran sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear programme, Iranian diplomat quoted as saying.

US President Barack Obama hailed a step towards a "more hopeful world", Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said it proved that "constructive engagement works". But Israel said it would do what it could to kill a deal that it called a "historic surrender". The agreement will now be debated in the U.S. Congress, but Obama said he would veto any measure to block it.

"This deal offers an opportunity to move in a new direction," Obama said. "We should seize it." (Pajhwok)

Govt., UN, Donors Start Examining UN's Afghan Role



KABUL - In the first of a series of three meetings to examine the role of United Nations entities in Afghanistan, senior government and UN officials, along with representatives from the international donor community, met in Kabul on Tuesday.

This exercise was requested in Security Council Resolution 2210 of 16 March 2015, which renewed the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), a statement

from the UNAMA said.

Participants at today's meeting, co-chaired by Salahuddin Rabbani, Afghanistan's Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Nicholas Hayson, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, agreed the procedures to conduct the inquiry in line with the principles of Afghan national sovereignty, national leadership and national ownership. The three parties committed to a productive... (More on P4)... (1)

Japan's Green Earth Program Transforms Nangarhar Deserts

JALALABAD - A large-scale Japanese irrigation project in eastern Nangarhar province has successfully transformed 16,500 hectares of land from barren desert into lush forests and fertile farmland over the past decade, according to reports from Afghan and Japanese officials.

The Japanese Ambassador to Afghanistan, the Afghan Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and a number of international development experts visited Nangarhar province on Monday to inspect the progress made by the Green Earth program, which is... (More on P4)... (2)

EU Pledges 41m Euros for Afghan Health Sector

KABUL - The European Union (EU) has made available EUR 41 million (\$45,066,380) to support basic health and nutrition services for the Afghan population through the health programme managed by the Ministry of Public Health known as SEHAT (System Enhancement for Health Action in Transition).

A statement from the EU said on Tuesday main objective of SEHAT is to strengthen the overall capacity of the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) to deliver a comprehensive package of health services to the Afghan population, with a focus on increasing the access of mothers and children to reproductive... (More on P4)... (3)

ANSF Going Through Difficult Time: Pentagon

WASHINGTON - Considering the Taliban insurgents as no longer an existential threat to the government, a top Pentagon official has said that this year the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) are struggling with a very difficult environment as fighting intensified in the country. Speaking at a Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, the US Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, Christine E. Wormuth, said as the Afghan National Security Forces responsible to maintain peace and security at the country, the Spring Offensive of the Taliban insurgents is a test of security forces' strength.

"Afghan forces are absorbing the blows this fighting season, because the Taliban insurgents have resorted to the hit and run attack tactics," Wormuth said.

The Taliban insurgent has been making efforts to undermine the writ of the government through launching high-profile attacks, she said. "However, the victims are mostly innocent civilians," she added.

"A few of the commander I talked told me the whole concept of a fighting season may not really have the same meaning it used to. The periods of fighting are not constrained to a point on the calendar as they once were," she said.

She further said that Afghan forces were going through difficult times and experiencing high casualty rates. And most of the casualties were taking place in remote areas of the country, she added.

She said that when Afghan forces are going after Taliban to clear area from their presence, they have much lower casualty rates and it's the Taliban insurgents that sustained heavy casualties. (AFP)

Faryab Security Deteriorates, Villages Fall

MAYMANA - The Taliban insurgents are reportedly making advances in northwestern Faryab province as the insurgents have seized control of about 100 villages, local officials said on Tuesday.

Khairullah Qarayee, a resident of Faryab and the commander of uprising group against Taliban, told TOLONews that two important strategic military areas have been collapsed in the last two days.

"Nine people who were fighting the Taliban have been wounded in the clashes while six others have been taken hostage," Qarayee said.

About 10 other civilians were still missing, he added. His comments came after a lawmaker from Faryab, Naqibullah Faiq... (More on P4)... (5)

Afghan Fruit Industry Suffers \$4M in Losses

KABUL - A recent hike in Pakistan's customs tariffs on Afghan fruit imports has reportedly contributed to 4million USD in losses suffered by farmers and businesses in Afghanistan over the past 20 days.

Officials at the Afghan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) have said the losses are also tied to the fact that a large amount of fresh vegetables and fruits on the way their way to Pakistan have spoiled because of increasing obstacles in Pakistani customs and corruption along the border.

"If the issue is not solved in the coming week, and if the situation continues, we will suffer losses of about 200 million USD through the end of the year and those losses will affect our farmers and our businessmen, and it will ... (More on P4)... (6)

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