

Quote of the Day

First keep the peace within yourself, then you can also bring peace to others.

Thomas a Kempis (1380 - 1471)

President Ashraf Ghani

Peace Talks with Taliban to Continue

GARDEZ - President Ashraf Ghani on Sunday praised security forces for their stubborn resistance to Taliban attacks in the Janikhel and Chamkani districts of southeastern Paktia province and thanked local residents for their cooperation with the forces.

President Ghani, who arrived in the provincial capital Gardez, visited the 203 Thunder Military Corps base and met with military officers, soldiers and other security officials there. He also held a meeting with civil society activists, provincial council members, tribal elders and others.

Happy over no major incident of violence taking place in the central capital Kabul and provinces during Eid holidays, the president said he supported the continuation of peace talks with the Taliban.

The Afghan government and Taliban representatives for the first time held formal direct talks in Pakistan on July 7, amid increasing insurgent attacks in many parts of Afghanistan. Participants of the meeting in Murree agreed to meet again after Eidul Fitr.

In Paktia, tribal elders urged President Ghani to fulfill promises his government

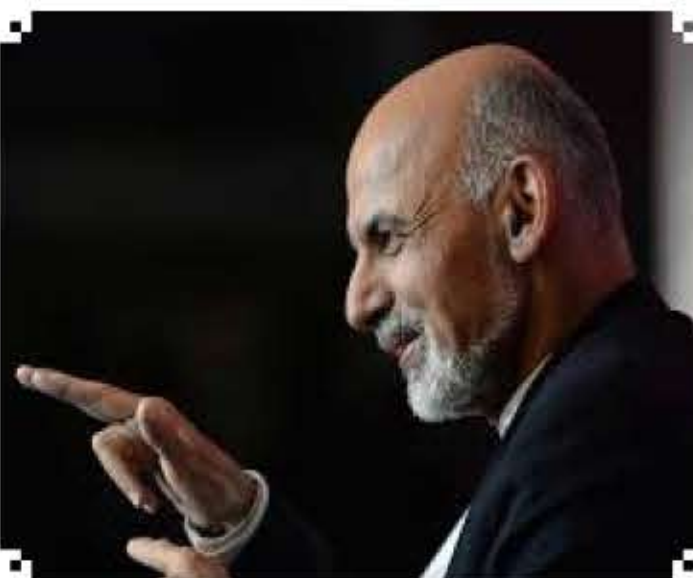
had held out to them regarding development projects and others.

They also called for resumption of work which had been halted on several projects, including a key hydropower and irrigation dam in the Ahmadabad district.

Completion of the Machalgho dam would help produce electricity and irrigate hundreds of acres of land in the province, the elders said.

About five years ago, the Ministry of Water and Energy had signed agreement with a Russian firm on construction of...

(More on P4)...(1)



Shah Sultan Akifi

Electoral Reform Commission Given Marching Orders

KABUL - Implementing amendments to Afghanistan's election laws, redefining the job descriptions of the election management bodies and evaluating the structures and capacities of the electoral commissions are the top priorities of the newly formed electoral reform commission, according to Shah Sultan Akifi, the recently appointed chair of the reform commission.

"The commission will be inaugurated soon by the president or one of his VPs or the chief executive," Akifi said on Monday. "However, I do not support more formalities in this regard; rather, I want the practical work to be started as soon as possible," he added, seemingly looking to the months of

delays that sullied the public image of the reform commission before he was named its chair.

Based on the design for the reform commission agreed upon by President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, the electoral reform commission will offer its recommendations and the outcomes of its assessments to the national unity government. The timeframe of parliamentary elections will not be under the commission's purview.

Despite Abdullah's disagreements with Ghani over the formation of the reform commission initially, the Office of the Chief Executive has released a statement commending the... (More on P4)...(2)

Officials Hope for Decrease in Attacks Ahead of Peace Talks

KABUL - Ministry of Interior (MoI) officials on Monday expressed hope that the planned peace talks will have a positive impact on the Taliban and result in less attacks by insurgents in the run up to the much anticipated event.

On Monday, Sediq Sediqqi, a spokesman for the Afghan Ministry of Interior said that

the security institutions are determined to provide better security to the people.

"We have made the necessary arrangements and are trying to ensure these measures will be continued," Sediqqi said.

In addition, officials from the ministry of defense said that the Afghan National Army...

(More on P4)...(3)

MPs Seek Immediate End to 'Caretaking' Trend

KABUL - Some lawmakers on Monday raised the issue of key posts in the National Unity Government (NUG) still being led by caretakers 10 months after coming into power. They said that should government, in the next week, introduce minister of defense, attorney general and Supreme Court member candidates,

they will postpone their summer break in order to deal with the process.

They have criticized the caretaking trend and said the government could face detrimental consequences because of this.

"We have continued to ask the president Ashraf Ghani..."

(More on P4)...(4)

President Ashraf Ghani Taliban Want to Join the System

KABUL - Congratulating the Afghans on the occasion of Eidul Fitr, President Ashraf Ghani on Friday welcomed Taliban's eagerness to join the peace process and said the group wanted to be part of the system.

Ghani, who offered Eid prayers at the Presidential Palace, congratulated the Afghans and the entire Muslim world over the observance of the religious festival that marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

Former president Hamid Karzai, Second Vice-President Sarwar Danish, Second Deputy Chief Executive Officer Mohammad Muhaqqiq, pres-

ident's special representative for reforms and good governance Ahmad Zia Massoud, cabinet ministers, former jihadi leaders, Ulema Council members, parliamentarians, senior military officials and other prominent figures attended the prayers at the Presidential Palace.

The president prayed for peace and stability in Afghanistan and wished no untoward incident may occur on this holy day.

But a bomb blast ripped through a mosque in northern Balkh province after the Eid prayers, killing at least one person and injuring 11 others.

(More on P4)...(6)

Mujahideen Should Not Be Ignored: Rabbani

BADAKHSHAN - Afghanistan's Foreign Affairs Minister Salahuddin Rabbani said on Sunday that in dealing with the country's security situation, the Mujahideen and religious leaders in Badakhshan must not be ignored.

Rabbani, who visited Badakhshan on Sunday, said: "The absence of the Mujahideen in government and within security forces is an issue that the Afghanistan government needs to address. The presence of the Mujahideen is effective and efficient."

"They have fought for 30 years in the name of religion and honesty in terms of defending the country. They have fought for freedom without a salary. They are again ready to serve..." (More on P4)...(7)

N.Political Parties Unite Against Insurgents: Noor

BALKH - Balkh province's acting governor Atta Mohammad Noor announced on Friday that leaders of the Janiata-Islami, the Junbish-i-Milli Islami and the Islamic Unity parties of Afghanistan have decided to join forces to fight

insurgents plaguing northern parts of the country.

Noor, who spoke during Eidul-Fitr prayers at the mosque of the Holy Shrine of Imam Ali in Mazar-i-Sharif on Friday, said the leaders of the parties have met and decided

to band together to protect civilians from being victimized by militants. The event was attended by hundreds of people, and held under tight security.

"We decided that Mr. Dostum [Gen. Abdul Rashid

Dostum] and the First Vice President Ustad Mohammad Mohaqiq have to be prepared and jointly suppress the insurgents, and stand against them strongly and gracefully to bring peace and unity and prevent..." (More on P4)...(5)

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