

<b>Jalalabad</b>	Clear	<b>Ghazni</b>	Clear	<b>Kandahar</b>	Clear	<b>Mazar</b>	Clear	<b>Herat</b>	Clear	<b>Bamayan</b>	Clear	<b>Kabul</b>	Clear
	41°C 26°C		29°C 14°C		42°C 25°C		42°C 29°C		38°C 22°C		21°C 9°C		33°C 18°C



# Contractors to be Fined over Missing Project Timescale

KABUL - Presiding over a meeting of the National Procurement Commission, President Ashraf Ghani has said contractors will be fined if they illogically delayed completion of projects. A statement from the Presidential Palace said on Saturday that the NPC met under chairmanship of the president at the palace before noon. After a debate on 10 projects and related issues, the meeting confirmed oversight and designing



of the building for easy service centre, extension in timescale for the Education Ministry's research centre's building and extension in the duration of the Imam Sahib canal's embankment project and Gadaniwal-Chachcharan road construction project. According to the Ministry of Finance, the easy service project is aimed at intensifying and making easy services delivery to people at public sector departments. The project will be introduced in Kabul before being extended to provinces. The NPC approved 66... (More on P4)...(9)

## Residents Urge Govt. to Build Big Dam on Kunar River

ASADABAD - The residents of eastern Kunar province say they are happy over the inauguration of a newly-reconstructed Salma Dam in western Herat province and want the government to establish a hydropower plant on the Kunar River. The Salma Dam, also called Afghan-India friendship dam, was inaugurated jointly by President Ashraf Ghani and Indian prime minister Narendra Modi last week. A resident of Marawara district of Kunar, Mohammad Shoib Gharwal, said Kunar was a water-rich province, but its land lacked irrigation water and residents lived in dark. He said the residents of Kunar suffered huge financial and human losses each year due to devastating... (More on P4)...(10)

## Top UN Diplomat Condemns Attack on Nangarhar Mosque



KABUL - The United Nations' top diplomat in Afghanistan has condemned Friday's attack on the Hisarak Mosque in Rodat district of eastern Nangarhar province. The attack killed at least three civilians and injured more than 70 others, including 31 boys. Two worshippers injured in the incident are said to be in critical condition. An improvised explosive device planted at the mosque detonated, killing a "mullah", one man, and one boy as they prayed on the first Friday of Ramadan. "An attack deliberately targeting civilian members of a community praying together in a mosque can never be justified and highlights the perpetrators' intent to destroy lives, and spread terror among the civilian population," said Nicholas Haysom. On behalf of the United Nations in Afghanistan, Haysom expressed deep condolences to the families of the victims and wished a speedy recovery for the injured. Also the secretary-general's special representative for Afghanistan and head of UNAMA, he said international humanitarian law prohibits the deliberate targeting of civilians, including at their places of worship. The law imposed a specific obligation on combatant parties to allow religious personnel to carry out their work. At face value, this attack a war crime and the perpetrators must be held accountable, he stressed. (Pajhwok)

## 25 Afghan Citizens Detained in Peshawar Search Operation

PESHAWAR - More than two dozen Afghan citizens have been detained during a search operation in Peshawar, the capital of Pakistan's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, police said on Saturday. At least 63 suspects, including 25 Afghans, were arrested and arms and drugs seized from some of them during search operations on Friday, local police official Riaz Khan told Pajhwok Afghan News. The search operations were carried out in Sarband, Hayatabad and Pishtakhara areas of Peshawar, he said, adding policewomen and sniffer dogs also participated in the raids. (Pajhwok)

## Zawahiri Pledges Allegiance to Mullah Haibatullah

KABUL - Taliban's supreme leader Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada has won an allegiance pledge from Al Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri, a news report said on Saturday. In an audio message, Zawahiri was quoted as saying by the Reuters news agency: "As leader of the al Qaeda, I extend my pledge of allegiance once again, the approach of Osama to invite the Muslim nation to support the Islamic Emirate."



Al Qaeda flourished under the Taliban regime, which defied international warn-

ings to expel Osama bin Laden from Afghanistan. The subsequent US invasion ousted the

Taliban from power in 2001 and forced Al-Qaeda into hiding. (Pajhwok)

## Probe Finds Taliban Outnumber Security Forces in Kunduz



KUNDUZ CITY - An in-depth investigation by TOLONews has found that security forces are far outnumbered by Taliban fighters in the northern province of Kunduz and that troops continue to be in a defensive mode rather than on the offensive. According to TOLONews' Tamim Hamid, the Taliban has control over three districts in Kunduz, including dozens of villages in other districts in the province. The report

reveals that the Taliban has hundreds of armored and other military vehicles and equipment in their control. The vehicles total more than the vehicles owned by security forces in the province. This information has emerged nine months after Taliban took control of Kunduz city for a short time in September last year. According to Hamid, a number of Kunduz residents have still not returned to their

houses as they are concerned about insecurity in their areas. Kunduz residents said they still clearly remember the days during last year's battle in Kunduz city and that they are concerned about the Taliban's activities on the outskirts of the city. Recently the insurgent group abducted a large number of bus passengers and killed at least 12 of them. This happened... (More on P4)...(11)

## Helmand's Pula Bagh Power Project to Kick Off Soon

LASHKARGAH - Officials from the Ministry of Energy and Water said work on designing the Pula Bagh power project in Helmand will kick off in the near future as they have finalized the budget for it. The deputy minister of energy and water, Amanullah Ghalib, told TOLONews that the dam will be built on Helmand River and will generate 90 megawatts (MW) of electricity. "The Pula Bagh project is located near Kajaki Dam [in Helmand province], for which the budget has been



finalized and its design will start in the near future. This project will generate 90MW power," he added. According to the ministry, the Pula Bagh project is located 70 kilometers from Kajaki Dam. Meanwhile,

a number of analysts said that primary findings reveal that Helmand River has the capacity of nearly 10 hydropower projects and that government should consider this in its future plans. They... (More on P4)...(13)

## Pakistan's Military Official State Sponsor of Taliban Insurgency: Ex-Envoy

KABUL - Former Canadian ambassador to Afghanistan, Chris Alexander, has said the Pakistani military is the official backer of the Taliban and Haqqani network. Alexander, who has also served as deputy head of UNAMA, said that Pakistan clearly supports the Taliban and Haqqani terror network and that the world must not underestimate Pakistan's backing of the insurgent groups in Afghanistan. In a Skype interview with TOLONews, he said that Pakistan has been creating barriers in the way of the peace and national recon-



struction process in Afghanistan and Islamabad has warned the Taliban against endorsing a peace process with the government in Kabul. The Canadian envoy termed Pakistan's backing of the Taliban and

Haqqani network as a clear violation of international law and interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs. "Pakistan's military and Pakistan's ISI are official state sponsors of the... (More on P4)...(12)

## Family of Hit-And-Run Victim Calls for Justice

KABUL - Farzad, 18, was on his way to the shops when a car, allegedly part of a convoy of President Ashraf Ghani's delegation, collided with his bicycle, killing him instantly. His distraught family have called for justice. The Herat governor has confirmed that an employee from the presidential guard was in the car when it hit Farzad. Some sources have said a government minister was also in the car. But instead of stopping and taking the boy to hospital, the culprits allegedly continued on to the airport. "They were the delegation who came here for Salma Dam ceremony; they were on their way, those weren't with the presi-



dent, but they were from different ministries who were on their way to the airport to take their seats before the president arrived; the driver belongs to the guards of the presidential palace," Herat Governor Mohammad Asif Rahimi said. "I don't know how I lost my son, I still wait for him to return from shopping," said the vic-

tim's mother. "They are very brutal and don't care about lives," Barzad's father Bismillah said. Farzad's family are now seeking justice and the prosecution of those who killed their son. Meanwhile the presidential palace has rejected claims it was one of their drivers or vehicle but has vowed to find those re... (More on P4)...(14)