

Quote of the Day

Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.
Ronald Reagan

Dr. Abdullah

Measures on to Keep Afghan Forces Apolitical

KABUL - Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah on Tuesday said the national unity government was bringing into use all available resources to strengthen the Afghan security forces and to keep them nonpartisan and apolitical.

Speaking at a conference on public-police liaison in Kabul, Abdullah said the conference was aimed at boosting the trust between the people and the forces.

Arranged by the Ministry of Interior (MoI), the conference was



attended by lawmakers, police commanders, religious scholars, tribal elders, civil

society activists and youth from more than 20 provinces. The CEO said improving se-

curity was not confined to military and technical techniques, but needed good re-

lations between security organs and the people.

The security situation was always good in areas where Afghan forces honestly discharged their duties compared to areas where Afghan forces ignored their responsibilities, Abdullah added.

"People in rural areas are not happy with the government because local officials do not visit people about their problems and this negligence gives the militants an opportunity to increase their influence," the CEO said. ...*(More on P4)...(1)*

Afghan Troops Pull out of More Posts in Volatile South



KABUL - Afghan forces have pulled back from strong-points in the southern province of Uruzgan, continuing a withdrawal which began last month when they abandoned two districts in the neighbouring province of Helmand to the Taliban, officials said on Tuesday. Provincial government spokesman Dost Mohammad Nayab said around 100 troops and police had been

pulled from checkpoints in two areas in Shahidi Hassas district and sent to the neighbouring district of Deh Rawud. The Afghan Taliban, seeking to topple the Western-backed government in Kabul and reimpose Islamic rule 15 years after they were ousted from power, said the move, which came after heavy fighting late on Monday, had left the entire ...*(More on P4)...(2)*

Senior UK Diplomat Welcomes Progress in Quadrilateral Talks



KABUL - Britain's special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Simon Gass, reiterating the UK's support for an Afghan-led peace process, welcomed the progress made in the quadrilateral talks and stressed the importance of maintaining momentum.

A statement from the British Embassy in Kabul said the UK Foreign Office's Political Director, Sir Simon Gass, visited Kabul from Monday to Tuesday to reaffirm the UK's enduring commitment to Afghanistan and support for the national unity Government. ...*(More on P4)...(4)*

Russia Hails Military Action against Daesh in Afghanistan



KABUL - Russia's special envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan Zamir Kabulov says that the Taliban, currently faced with serious divisions, were no longer a capable fighting force.

The government of Afghanistan was the only genuine address for peace negotiations and the insurgent movement had no option but to accept that address, the diplomat said.

At a meeting with President Ashraf Ghani, Kabulov claimed the Taliban were struggling with different internal issues that caused differences within the militant movement. According to Kabulov, Russian President ...*(More on P4)...(6)*

ANSF Make Advance in N. Region, Capture Taliban Bastion



KABUL - Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) under the command of first vice president General Abdul Rashid Dostum have made advances in the northern region and cleaned up vast areas from Taliban insurgents in the northern Faryab and Jawzjan provinces over the past three days. The security forces in their latest achievement against Taliban outfit have killed 70 militants and captured Taliban bastion in Faryab province on Tuesday.

"Finally the security forces were able to overrun Taliban bastion in Khawja Namusi area of Pashtun Kot district on Tuesday and Taliban group after losing 70 fighters reiterated ...*(More on P4)...(7)*

US Troop Levels in Afghanistan Being Reassessed: Gen. Dunford

KABUL - The number of US troops to be kept in Afghanistan in 2017 is being reassessed, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said on Monday.

The review of troop levels would be based on the needs of Afghan security forces, Gen. Joseph Dunford told a Pentagon news conference.

Afghan security forces needed more assistance last year than anticipated, he said. "Many of the assumptions we made in 2013 didn't obtain."

In 2013, Gen. Dunford recalled, the Pentagon had assumed a certain progression by the Afghans, a ministerial capacity,



core capabilities, the intelligence enterprise and special operations.

"The aviation capability is not developing as fast as we would've wanted it to," the top military officer said, recalling many of the Afghan forces were had been focused on supporting two major

elections and a difficult political transition.

A discussion of troop numbers that would be needed was premature at this stage, Dunford remarked, saying recommendations in this regard would be benchmarked on lessons learned in 2015.

"One is, I mean, the Afghan forces at the end of the day, were resilient, but they still do have those capability gaps that have been identified and we are certainly looking at that right now..." he said.

Gen. John Campbell, who is due to turn over the Resolute Support ...*(More on P4)...(3)*

Aziz Spurns Criticism of Pak Policy on Afghan Peace

WASHINGTON - US Secretary of State John Kerry and his Pakistani counterpart Sartaj Aziz discussed the Afghan reconciliation process on Monday.

"The US appreciates Pakistan's support for efforts to promote reconciliation with Afghanistan," Kerry said in his opening address to the US-Pak Strategic Dialogue.

"Cooperation along Pakistan's borders is absolutely essential," the secretary of state added.

Aziz, who co-chaired the dialogue, noted growing consensus that an Afghan-led peace and reconciliation process was the best way to achieve lasting stability in Afghanistan. "After the intense delib-



eration among relevant stakeholders, the Quadrilateral Coordination Group - consisting of Pakistan, the US, China, and Afghanistan - has unanimously agreed on a roadmap to take the reconciliation process forward," he said. "It has elements that would address US and Afghan concerns re-

lated to groups involved in violence against American troops and against Afghanistan, besides that wanting the reconciliation process," Aziz said.

In coming days, he added, all members of the quadrilateral process would intensify ...*(More on P4)...(5)*

Turkey Stops Afghan Migrants on Route to Greece

ANKARA - Turkish coast-guard stopped around 60 Afghan migrants on Sunday on the way to Greek island of Chios after they set sail from Turkey's coastal town of Cesme.

Greece, a primary gateway to Europe for tens of thousands of people fleeing war in the Middle East and beyond, has been inundated with refugees and migrants after border shutdowns through the Balkans, stranding thousands in the country in the past ten days.

Reuters reported that after spotting the overloaded dinghy that took off from Cesme, coastguard boats were dispatched to the area to stop the migrants.

Coastguard Captain Murat Yilmazarslan said the migrants' lives were at risk when they spotted the dinghy which had been organised by smugglers.

"They were stopped as they



tried to sail to the Greek island of Chios from Cesme with a dinghy arranged by these organizers. We could see they were in a very difficult situation. 63 people were on board of the boat. These boats can take up to 40 people but they packed it over capacity and placed 63 people on it. If we didn't reach out we could have experienced another tragic incident," Yilmazarslan told Reuters.

Turkey has been the front lines of the migrants crisis for more

than four years, as it shares a 900km border with Syria and has welcomed those fleeing the civil war.

Turkey is host to 2.5 million Syrians and has spent around \$8.5 billion USD on feeding and housing them since the start of the civil war nearly five years ago. Another 200,000 Iraqi refugees also shelter there, and migrants from Iran, Afghanistan and Africa all use Turkey as a transit point to Europe. "Because our country is facing ...*(More on P4)...(8)*

Karzai Off to New Delhi for Raisina Dialogue 2016

KABUL - The former president Hamid Karzai left Kabul for New Delhi on Tuesday to attend the Raisina Dialogue 2016. Karzai is accompanied by Dr. Rangin Dadfar Spanta who has served as the National Security Advisor and Minister of Foreign Affairs during his government.

The former president was invited to the conference by Observer Research Foundation (ORF), an Indian think tank, which is the organizing partner of the Raisina Dialogue 2016 with India's Ministry of External Affairs. Besides Afghan delegation over 400 personalities from 40 countries and organizations have been invited to the March 1-3 event.

The Raisina Dialogue 2016 Envisioned as India's flagship conference of geopolitics and geo-economics, the Raisina Dialogue 2016 is designed to explore prospects and opportunities for Asian integration as well as Asia's integration with the larger world.

It is predicated on India's vital role in the Indian Ocean Region and how India along with its partners can build a stable regional and world order. The 2016 conclave will focus on Asia's physical, economic, digital connectivity and fostering common global spaces with an emphasis on Asia.

The two-day annual conference is a multi stake holder, cross-sectoral meeting involving policy and decision-makers, including but not limited to Foreign, Defence and Finance Ministers of different countries, high-level government officials and policy practitioners, leading personalities from business and industry, and members of the strategic community, media and academia. (KP)

More Kabul Roads to be Blacktopped Next Solar Year

KABUL - Various roads measuring 160 kilometers would be asphalted in capital Kabul next solar year and another 800km rehabilitated, an official said on Tuesday.

Acting Mayor Mohammad Aslam Akarmi said the coming solar year would be exceptional in term of infrastructure development, adding that more roads such as Khair Khana, Khisht Okhtif Lab-i-Jar, Tanzif and Tamian roads would be asphalted.

Akarmi did not reveal the cost of the projects. He, however, said so far 1,500 kilometres of roads in Kabul had been asphalted and 800km rehabilitated during the past 10 years.

Kabul residents always complain against the municipality when it comes to reconstruction projects. They say the process of roads' construction and other similar projects has been slow going since the municipality administration has been without mayor.

Meanwhile, Nasrin Sabri, greenery department head at the municipality, launched a five-day tree plantation campaign in capital Kabul targeting all 22 municipal districts of the city.

She said as many as 300,000 saplings would be planted on roadsides, in front of shops, schools and mosques as part of the drive that would help improve the natural environment. (Pajhwok)

1,200 More Families Provided Electricity in Surkh Rod District

KABUL - 1,200 more families have been provided electricity in Surkh Rod district of eastern Nangarhar province.

During a ceremony on Tuesday, local residents praised director and employees of the provincial directorate of electricity for the hard work and requested them to extend power cables to other areas of the district as well.

Eng. Muhib-ur-Rahman Mohmand, Nangarhar's director of electricity said that some 1,200 families living between Dusraka and Moy Mobarak areas are provided electricity this time and 2,000 more families would be taken care of in the next round. He further said that they would continue to reach out to as many families as they can. (KP)