

Quote of the Day

True wisdom comes to each of us when we realize how little we understand about life, ourselves, and the world around us.
Socrates

Abdullah Again Invites Taliban to Peace Talks

KABUL - Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah on Monday said the Taliban should positively respond to the government's legitimate call for peace, stressing that the Afghan forces would defend the country against the rebels if they chose violent means.

Addressing a Cabinet meeting, Abdullah said the Afghan forces had significant achievements during their operations in Nangarhar, Baghlan, Helmand, Faryab, Badakhshan, Takhar and other areas of the country during the past few weeks.

He appreciated the security forces' performance in improving security and said relevant organs should encourage the Afghan youth to join armed force and defend the country. "The Afghan government has a clear message for militants to



come to the negotiating table, but the government's and people's stance at defending the country is unwavering," the CEO said. "We once again invite the Taliban to give a positive

response to our righteous call, they should remove thoughts they could achieve things by violent activities and killing people," Abdullah added. He said the militants would discharge

their important responsibility by positively responding to the peace process. "Militants should know they are responsible for killing people in a war imposed on the Afghans," he added.

Abdullah was speaking two days after the Taliban refused to participate in peace talks with the Afghan government after being invited to the peace talks by the four-nation group in its fourth meeting in Kabul in late February. The quadrilateral group involving Afghanistan, Pakistan, the US and China had asked the Taliban to send their authorized representatives for talks with the Afghan government in Pakistan in the first week of March.

After Taliban's refusal, the Afghan government announced the peace negotiations had been deferred for the next two weeks. (Pajhwok)

Ghani to ANSF You have Responsibility to Serve the Nation



KABUL - A total of 549 army officers graduated from an Afghan national defense university and were commissioned to the national army on Monday.

"We witness another historic day, I congratulate your success and victory, and that all Afghans will be proud of you, they will be proud of your determination," President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani said at a graduation ceremony held here.

"You have the responsibility to serve your nation. You are from different ethnics, from different areas of Afghanistan, but you have a unified

goal to defend the country and serve this nation," the Afghan president said.

Nearly 1,000 cadets have been receiving training at Marshal Fahim National Defense University. The latest graduates brought the number of professional officers to nearly 1,400, who have graduated from the country's top military university since 2012, according to military officials.

Acting Afghan Defense Minister Mohammad Massom Stanikzai, chief Army of Staff Qadam Shah Shahim and deputy to Chief Executive Hajji Mohammad Mohaqiq were ... (More on P4)...(1)

Campaign to Discourage Migration to Europe Begins

KABUL - The National Union of Afghanistan Workers (NUAW) on Sunday launched a campaign aimed at encouraging the youth not to leave the country for Europe.

The week-long campaign under the slogan "Stay in your country and force the government to answer" comes after tens of thousands of Afghans fled the country in the hope of a better life in European countries through danger routes.

NUAW president Maroof Qadri said the ongoing insecurity was not the only factor forcing the youth to leave the country.

He listed other reasons behind the migration as the organized conflict, dwindling economy, backbreaking poverty, unemployment, rampant corruption in government departments and nepotism and others. Expressing his concern over ... (More on P4)...(2)

IDLG Urges Stronger Women Presence in Local Governance

KABUL - The Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) has called for a stronger presence of women in local governance in the country.

IDGL has stepped up efforts to increase the number of women in institutions in the capital and in the provinces, an official of the IDLG said Monday.

The move is aimed to bring improvement to the lives of women and to protect their



fundamental rights in society, he said.

Mohammad Nadir Yama, deputy head of IDLG on policy and professionalism said that the relevant body will be considering the formation of special gender committees in all provinces across the country to institutionalize the process.

"Today, it is the day of struggle and a day to bring justice and the day of bringing about change ... (More on P4)...(3)

US Contributes \$10m to Drive Against Human Trafficking

KABUL - The US on Monday announced a contribution of \$10 million to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to end the exploitation of the Afghans subjected to forced labour and sex-trafficking.

"Although slavery is considered a thing of the past, it continues to exist throughout the world, affecting the lives of millions of people," USAID Mission Director Herbert Smith said in a statement.

Laurence Hart, IOM's chief of mission and special envoy, called human trafficking a serious blight on Afghanistan. "We will use training and information campaigns to strengthen law enforcement regionally, and we will keep victims safe through recovery services, repatriation..."

In recent years, IOM has noted a steady increase in young females trafficked from bordering countries in Afghanistan. Many victims are children who end up in carpet-making and brick factories, domestic servitude, sexual exploitation and drug smuggling. Under the three-year project, IOM will use a "Prevent, Protect and ... (More on P4)...(4)

'Taliban Want to Rename Musa Qala as Helmand'

LASHKARGAH - Public representatives and civil society activists on Monday claimed the Taliban wanted to rename Musa Qala district of southern Helmand province as Helmand.

The provincial council members and civil society activists told a joint press conference in Lashkargah, the provincial capital, that local officials weren't able to ensure security in the province.

"If necessary measures are not taken, the people would protest," warned Bashir Ahmad Shakir, head of the PC security committee. He said if the situation continued, Lashkargah would become insecure soon and it would produce bad consequences.

He said the Taliban had accelerated their recruitment process and intended to rename Musa Qala district as second Helmand province. The government had cut a deal with Taliban over some districts including Musa Qala, he suspected. He asked the government to sack officials not performing their duty properly.

Civil societies coordination office head Naveed Ahmad Watanwal said clashes ... (More on P4)...(9)

China Hopes for Resumption of Afghan Peace Talks

BEIJING - China said on Monday that it hoped the Afghan government and the Taliban as well as concerned parties will work together for the resumption of Afghan peace talks at an early date.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei made the remarks at a routine press conference, when asked about a statement made by the Taliban on Saturday, which stated that its leader has not authorized anyone to participate in the direct talks announced by the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG).

The QCG, comprising Afghanistan,



Pakistan, China and the United States, met on Feb. 23 for its fourth session in Kabul and announced that direct talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government might take place in the first week

of March. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said on Sunday he held that there was still hope in the resumption of direct talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. "China ... (More on P4)...(5)

Saffron Cultivation, Yield on the Increase in Afghanistan: MAIL



KABUL - Saffron production in Afghanistan has increased by 17 percent this year, the Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) said on Monday. A statement from the ministry said that during the current solar year, saffron yield was 4,657 kilograms. The production surge was linked to MAIL's efforts to promote the crop's cultivation.

According to the statement, the distribution of 236 metric tonnes of saffron seeds and necessary

equipment for its cultivation to 335 farmers helped boost the yield.

The best quality of saffron was produced in western Herat province, said the ministry, which has devised a strategy for extending the crop's cultivation to 23 more provinces this year.

The climate of Afghanistan is suitable for the cultivation of saffron as the plant has a high-yield rate and could be an alternative to opium poppies. ... (More on P4)...(6)

ANSF Launch Military Operation in Balkh Ahead of Nowruz Celebrations



MAZAR - The Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) launched clearance operations in northern Balkh province to suppress the activities of the anti-government armed militants ahead of Nowruz celebrations.

The provincial government media office said the counter-terrorism operations are led by the acting provincial governor Ata Mohammad Noor.

The operations were launched late on Sunday afternoon in a number of districts of Balkh province, the provincial government media office said, adding that numerous militants were killed or injured during the operations.

The Afghan security forces also arrested a number of militants during the operations which are still being conducted.

The anti-government armed militant groups have not commented regarding the launch of the operation so far. ... (More on P4)...(7)

Shaheen Military Corps Take Delivery of Two A-29 Planes



KABUL - 209th Shaheen Military Corps in northern Afghanistan took delivery of two A-29 Supper Tucano planes on Monday, said local officials. They expect the aircraft to enhance capabilities of Afghan forces in their fight against militants in northern Afghanistan.

Commander of the 209th Shaheen Military Corps, Abdul Hamid Hamid said that the United States will provide 12 fighter planes to Afghan security forces by the end of this year.

"We received two A-29 Supper Tucano aircraft from the Ministry of Defense (MoD)," he said, adding that they will use the planes to eliminate militants.

Security forces in northern Afghanistan received these aircraft at a time that fighting between Afghan forces and the Taliban is underway in Faryab, Baghlan and Badakhshan provinces.

"We want to thank NATO and the MoD for delivering us the aircraft," said General Mohammad Ashraf Kar, a commander of the air ... (More on P4)...(8)

Attorney General's Office Finalizes Farkhunda Case



KABUL - The Office of the Attorney General of Afghanistan said Monday that it has finalized the cases of at least thirteen suspects involved in the murder of Farkhunda.

"Three of the defendants were convicted to 20 years imprisonment, one person to ten years jail and thirteen others to 16 years jail," Basir Azizi, a spokesman to AGO said. "Farkhunda's case was quite sensitive, unfortunately the punishments which needed to be considered were not considered," said

Ahmad Wahid Barzayee, head of Afghanistan Lawyers Association. Azizi also underlined the other achievements of the AGO and said, "Special tribunals set by the AGO for addressing violence against women so far have completed 9,572 cases in the provinces." "Amongst the cases processed so far are 828 cases of murder, 2,453 cases of sexual abuse, 75 cases of kidnapping of women, 253 cases of forced marriages, 1,912 case related to beating and some other eighteen cases," he added. (Tolonews)