

Jalalabad Clear 19°C 6°C	Ghazni Chance of Rain 6°C -3°C	Kandahar Clear 17°C 0°C	Mazar Partly Cloudy 13°C 2°C	Herat Chance of Rain 14°C 0°C	Bamayan Chance of Rain 0°C -6°C	Kabul Partly Cloudy 8°C -4°C
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Daily Outlook Weather Forecast

Study Uncovers \$10m Bribery Bid in Mines

KABUL - A recent investigation shows high-ranking Ministry of Mines and Petroleum (MoMP) officials have been trying to give contracts for 217 extraction projects in exchange for \$10 million in bribe. The study by the Afghan Anti-Corruption Network (AACN) named "Looting of mines and apparent scandal at the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum (MoMP)" was released at a press conference here. The study has been conducted by interviewing people, experts and MoMP officials in four provinces in a period of four months. The findings claim MoMP authorities were recently tending to give 217 mines



extraction contracts to powerful men, public representatives' affiliates, ministers and politicians against 100,000 dollars in average for each project in bribe, amounting to a total of \$10 million.

The report finds the government has not taken any step to recover \$11 million payable by 14 companies for years. Currently 500 truckloads of minerals are daily smuggled

abroad from Afghanistan through border areas, with Transport Ministry officials, local authorities and security forces getting their palms greased. The investigative report

further says most of the country's mines are under Taliban's control. The rebels extract the riches and earn hundreds of millions of dollars, using the money for buying weapons and ammunition. Khan Zaman Amarkhel, AACN head, expressed his concern over the unprofessional extraction of mines by unauthorized individuals, asking the government to prevent such projects from going into wrong hands. He said Afghanistan's natural resources should not be part of political deals and serious steps should be taken towards preventing corruption in the sector. However, MoMP officials denied ...*(More on P4)...(7)*

US Lawmaker Moves Bill to Name Pakistan a Terrorist Sponsor State



KABUL - An influential U.S. Congressman on Friday introduced a strongly worded bill in the United States Congress to declare Pakistan a state sponsor of terrorism, media reports said. "Not only is Pakistan an untrustworthy ally, Islamabad has also aided and abetted enemies of the United States for years," said Congressman Ted Poe, who is Chair of the House Subcommittee on Terrorism. "From harboring Osama bin Laden to its cozy relationship with the Haqqani network, there is more than enough evidence to determine whose side Pakistan is on in the War on Terror, and it's not America's. It is time we stop paying Pakistan for its betrayal and designate it for what it is: A state sponsor of terrorism," Poe said while introducing the bill, the Pakistan State Sponsor of Terrorism Act of 2015, in Congress yesterday. The bill requires the US Presi-

dent to issue a report within 90 days, answering whether Pakistan has provided support for international terrorism. Thirty days after that, the Secretary of State is required to submit a follow-up report, which says that Pakistan is a state sponsor of terrorism, or a detailed justification as to why it does not meet the legal criteria for such a designation. It's time for a "radical reset" with Pakistan, said Congressman Poe and James Clad, a former U.S. deputy assistant secretary of defense for Asia, in an article in Nationalinterest.org dated March 8. They say the US is in "a toxic relationship" with Pakistan and needs to "to finally set limits on its indulgence" towards Islamabad. The authors of the article are scathing about the US-Pakistan relationship. They describe it as a "weird psychology" at play. 'Weird psychology' between US, Pak ...*(More on P4)...(8)*

Ghazni: 5 District Chiefs Stay Absent for Years



GHAZNI CITY - Administrative chiefs for five districts of southern Ghazni have been absent from their offices due to growing insecurity, leaving public problems unsolved. The five districts are Ajristan, Rashidan, Giro, Waghaz and Zankhan. A resident of the Godalo area of Waghaz district, Mohammadullah, told Pajhwok Afghan News over the past two years, the district chief had come to office only two times. He said the administrative head of the district spent much of his time Ghazni City and Kabul. "People are obliged to come to Ghazni City to meet the district chief for the resolution of their problems. However, the district chief at times is not available in the provin-

cial capital either and people wait for him for days." Meanwhile, a resident of Giro district accused the district chief of staying absent from his office for years. Niamatullah said about six months back, a mopping-up operation was conducted in the province. After that, the district chief came to work for five days. "We haven't seen him since then. People need to obtain tazkiras (identity cards) and there are other issues, such as land disputes. But the district chief stays absent, leaving our problems unresolved." He said the locals had shared the hardship with local authorities many times. However, he complained, no heed was paid to the problem. A resident ...*(More on P4)...(10)*

No Military Solution in Afghanistan: UN Envoy

KABUL - There could be no military solution in Afghanistan as a prolonged conflict would only lead to worsen misery for the people and undermine the foundation for economic growth, says the UN. Neighbors were more willing to work toward bringing peace to Afghanistan, acknowledging the importance of establishing an environment conducive to regional stability, Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan Tadamichi Yamamoto told the United Nations Security Council. He stressed the need for



strong international backing, both political and financial, for Afghan government efforts to tackle the challenges. "I am deeply troubled by the heightened tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and call for the reduction of tension

through dialogue." He said the future of Afghanistan had to be built through an Afghan-owned and Afghan-led process for all Afghans. The path of peace must be pursued through negotiations, and not ...*(More on P4)...(9)*

Gov't Officials Should Be Neutral: CEO

KABUL - Government officials should be neutral, free and independent, said CEO, Abdullah Abdullah on Saturday. He was speaking at a ceremony in which Nadir Nadiri, senior adviser of the president on public relations and strategic affairs was confirmed as the new director of the Independent Administrative Reform Commission. Five months ago President Ashraf Ghani introduced Nadiri as director of the commission, but after the CEO objected, Nadiri's confirmation was



postponed until Saturday. Abdullah said the independent administrative reform commission must have good cooperation with other government departments. "Government should properly invest in staff. Civil service staff should feel safe and should not fear political changes will affect them," he said. ...*(More on P4)...(11)*

Help Defuse AF-Pak Tension, JUI-F Chief Urged



PESHAWAR - Afghanistan has urged Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman to help defuse tensions between Kabul and Islamabad. Ambassador Dr Omar Zakhilwal issued the call at a meeting with the JUI-F head on Friday, Pakistani newspaper The Express Tribune reported Saturday. Following a spat of deadly attacks last month, Pakistan blamed the neighbour for sheltering terrorists and handed a list of 76 militants to Afghan embassy officials. Later, Pakistan closed the

border and shelled insurgent hideouts in Kunar, Nangarhar and Kandahar provinces, prompting howls of protest from Afghanistan. Zakhilwal told the newspaper: "I had substantive discussions with him on a range of issues, including the ongoing war of Muslims killing Muslims in Afghanistan, the role of prominent ulema in renouncing violence and support for peace." The ambassador added: "We also discussed the highly tense Pak-Afghan relations and how escalation in tension will not serve the two countries." (Pajhwok)

Afghan-Pak Border Tension: Edibles Prices up in Kabul



KABUL - The prices of liquefied gas, firewood and Russian gold dipped while that of sugar, ghee and flour increased last week in capital Kabul, market sources said Saturday. Sayed Islam, a firewood seller in Charahi-i-Shahid area of Kabul city, told Pajhwok Afghan News the price of 560 kilograms of peeled oak decreased from 6,700 afghanis to 6,500 afghanis and the same quantity of cedar from 6,500af to 6,300af. He linked the reduction in firewood prices to its decreased demand and warming weather. The price of liquefied gas also decreased. Ahmad Javid, a gas seller in the Sixth Tamiani

Road area, sold a kilogram of the commodity for 53af against last week's 55af. Fuel prices remained unchanged. Abdul Hadi, a worker at Wazir Abad Fuel Station, said a liter of petrol cost 45af and the same quantity of diesel 41af, registering no change. In food items, the prices of only flour and sugar increased. Food Traders Union head, Fazal Rahman, said the price of 49 kilograms of Kazakh flour increased from 1,145af to 1,160af, the same quantity of Pakistani sugar from 2,230af to 2,600 and 16 liters of Khurshid ghee from 1,100af to 1,150af. He said ...*(More on P4)...(12)*

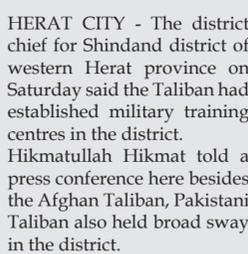
Bamyan Heritage Facing More Ruin



KABUL - Sixteen years after the Taliban destroyed two Buddha sculptures in Bamyan in March 2001, historical sites are facing even more ruin in the area. At least eight cultural and archaeological sites are registered at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. However, the required care has not been given to the sites in the province, local officials said. In mountainous areas around the two Buddha sculptures some families are living in

caves. "We are living here because we don't have any other alternatives. The government is not paying attention to us and has not attempted to give us another place to live," Husain Ali, a cave resident said. Some families were moved to another place in recent years but others are still are at least 130 caves at the area. "Another family was living here before us. They made different things here and they did all their work here," Mirwais another cave resident said. ...*(More on P4)...(13)*

Taliban Training Foreign Fighters in Shindand: Official



HERAT CITY - The district chief for Shindand district of western Herat province on Saturday said the Taliban had established military training centres in the district. Hikmatullah Hikmat told a press conference here besides the Afghan Taliban, Pakistani Taliban also held broad sway in the district. He said the Taliban had set up makeshift military camps imparting training to foreign fighters especially Pakistanis for 10 to 15 days. The district chief, however, said the situation had improved over the past few months. A few months back, the Taliban had been closing in on the Shindand bazaar battling security forces in 500 metres from the bazaar. However, back-to-back op-



erations by security forces for six months helped improve the security situation in Shindand, Hikmat said. "The Taliban have a strong presence in Zirkoh and Zawal areas of the district. Their three military bases exist in Zirkoh and most of the fighters are loyal to Mullah Haibatullah, Taliban's supreme commander." Besides Pakistani Taliban, the official

said he would not rule out the presence of fighters from Iran. "I confirm the presence of Iranians because we share border with them and I say they are directly meddling." Hikmat said 400 to 450 Taliban insurgents were operating in the district. Some days earlier, a former jihadi commander Ismail Khan accused the government of escorting and protecting ...*(More on P4)...(14)*