

Quote of the Day

The truest wisdom is a resolute determination
Napoleon Bonaparte

NPC Approves 15 More Contracts worth 5.5 Billion Afghanis

KABUL - The National Procurement Commission (NPC) has approved another 15 contracts worth nearly 5.5 billion Afghanis, the Presidential Palace said on Thursday.

The NPC approved the contracts during a meeting chaired by President Ashraf Ghani on Wednesday evening at the Presidential Palace, a statement from the president's office said.

The contracts included procurement of food items for the ministries of defence and interior,



logistics supply for the Afghan National Army by air and extension of

technical studies on railway projects in the north and commence-

ment of technical studies on Torgondi-Kashk, Robat Peryan-Herat International Airport, the statement said.

Up to 800 million Afs were saved in the MoD's food contract and the contract of logistics supply for the ANA by air was declined by 270 million Afghanis for 2016, the statement said, adding the president tasked the MoI with taking steps for reforms and legitimacy of contracts in provinces.

Six contracts for ration and fuel supplies to ...*(More on P4)...(1)*

Visiting President ICRC to Expand Activities in Afghanistan



KABUL - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) will step up its relief operations in Afghanistan to address the needs of war-affected communities in the Asian country, visiting ICRC President said on Friday.

"There are more displaced people, more war-wounded and more disabled people. Humanitarian concerns are

growing, yet international attention is dwindling. It seems that the more the Afghan people suffer, the less attention there is on them," Peter Maurer told reporters at a press briefing on the last day of his five-day visit Friday.

The international humanitarian organization will increase its budget for Afghanistan by 10 ...*(More on P4)...(2)*

India-Afghanistan Friendship Dam Irrigation Sluice Gate Successfully Tested



KABUL - The irrigation sluice gate of the major Salma Dam, Afghanistan-India Friendship Dam, was successfully tested as the construction work of the dam is close to completion.

The Indian authorities called the successful test of the irrigation sluice gate as 'another milestone' achieved in India-Afghanistan Friendship Dam. The project is scheduled to be completed by June, 2016, by M/s. WAPCOS, a central public sector unit under the Ministry of Water Resources, which is executing the construction work. ...*(More on P4)...(3)*

US Congress Admits US Lost Drug War in Afghanistan

KABUL - During recent Congressional hearings in Washington Pentagon officials faced tough questions about progress made in America's so-called war on drugs in Afghanistan. It appeared that opium production there had spiked since the Taliban left, after billions of dollars spent on counter-narcotics, Reason magazine wrote.

"The war on drugs in Afghanistan, to the extent there is a war on drugs, has been a failure," Republican Congressman Thomas Massie concluded after pressing witnesses from the Department of Defense on what kind of metrics they use to gauge success in their counter-



narcotic efforts in Afghanistan. According to General John Sopko, the special inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction, the United States has spent \$113 billion in Afghanistan since 2002, to train and arm Afghan National Security

Forces seen by many US military experts as highly inefficient and to promote good governance.

Sopko said that despite 8.4 billion of those dollars spent on counternarcotics efforts specifically, Afghan farmers were

producing more opium "now than they did during the Taliban years."

"It has been a successful export for the last 15 years that we have been there," Sopko said.

Opium production in Afghanistan has tripled since the Taliban was ousted by the 2001 US-led invasion.

According to UN figures, Afghanistan now accounts for 90 percent of the global heroin production.

Despite billions spent to eradicate opium crops in Afghanistan, the crop is more popular than ever there, leading many to wonder whether some US forces may ...*(More on P4)...(4)*

HRW Slams EU Border Restrictions

KABUL - Human Rights Watch has criticized the European Union member nations for imposing border restrictions in their attempt to deal with the unprecedented influx of refugees from conflict zones in the Middle East and Afghanistan.

HRW statistics revealed that currently up to 40,000 migrants, amongst them women and children, are stranded on the Greece-Macedonia border and are living out in the open. Outraged by the EU's border restrictions, HRW has called on EU countries to reopen their borders to migrants including thousands of Afghans. "My friends, some people, some friends told me don't go to the (processing) camp because maybe (Greek authorities will) deport us back to Afghanistan. But (in) Afghanistan ...*(More on P4)...(5)*

AJC Outgoing Solar Year Was Most Challenging for Journalists

KABUL - The Afghanistan Journalists Centre (AJC) on Thursday said the outgoing solar year was the most challenging one for journalists and media, asking the government to remain committed to honoring its promises about the freedom of speech.

Celebrating the International Journalists Day, the AJC expressed its deep concern over the growing militant activities, insecurity and poor economy of the media community.

A number of journalists and media workers have left their jobs or traveled abroad due to the ongoing insecurity and threats to their lives in the country. AJC executive director, Ahmad Quraishi, told a news conference in Kabul that the centre ...*(More on P4)...(7)*

MoD Assures of Tight Security During Nawroz

KABUL - The Ministry of Defense (MoD) on Friday assured the public of tight security measures during Nawroz - the start of the new solar year. While hoisting the biggest national flag of Afghanistan, a gift from India, over Wazir Akbar Khan hill, the deputy Chief of Army Staff, Murad Ali Murad, said that Afghan security forces will not allow militants to carry out attacks during Nawroz.

"Security forces should ensure security across the country, so that people can celebrate Nawroz in a peaceful environment," he added. Murad said that security forces will spare no effort to prevent the killing ...*(More on P4)...(8)*

Atmar Stresses on Russian Cooperation with Afghanistan

KABUL - The Afghanistan National Security Council on Friday said Russian cooperation and military assistance could play a crucial role in the ongoing anti-terrorism efforts.

During a meeting between Russian ambassador Alexander Mantyskiy and National Security Advisor Mohammad Hanif Atmar, both sides talked on Russian cooperation with Afghanistan and agenda of Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) conference, a statement from the council, said.

In addition to the assistances of neighbouring countries, Afghanistan needed the cooperation of Russia for anti-



terrorism efforts, Atmar said adding the continued aids of Russian for equipping Afghan security personnel were vital for the fight. Afghanistan would participate in the conference of the OIC with a clear message, Atmar said without further details.

On his turn, Mantyskiy said his country would

help Afghanistan in counter-terrorism fight, maintaining peace and stability and would support the policies of Afghan government. He reaffirmed that Russia was ready to continue its assistances with Afghanistan in the sphere of equipping Afghan security and defence forces. (Pajhwok)

Afghan High Peace Council Peace Talks with Hizb-E-Islami Party is a Key Step Forward

KABUL - Afghan High Peace Council (HPC) on Friday said that the start of peace talks with Hizb-e-Islami party is a key step forward towards peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Ayoub Rafiqi, the HPC's Head of Secretariat, said that it is not yet clear what issues will come up ahead of peace talks and what will be the result of the negotiations.

"Today was the first day of negotiations and we hope to lead the talks to peace and what will come out during negotiations later, we will share with you," said Rafiqi. However, the Taliban has so far not responded positively to the call by government to join the peace talks but Hizb-e-Islami, led by Gulbudin Hekmatyar, has apparently taken a step forward



and on Thursday met with the High Peace Council's new leadership.

Analysts believe that Hizb-e-Islami has for years been involved in Afghanistan's war but say currently the party has lost some of its power and that key members of the party are either active in government or have established new parties.

"In the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG)

meeting in Pakistan, Hekmatyar, many times, asked Pakistan to give them a chance to participate in the negotiations but Pakistan said they are not at that stage to play a role in the negotiations," said Ahmad Sayedi, a political analyst. "Unfortunately there is not a good relation between Taliban and Hizb-e-Islami and there is a kind of mistrust and the proposal of ...*(More on P4)...(9)*

US Military Personnel Punished for Kunduz Hospital Attack



KABUL - Officials say U.S. personnel who were involved in the devastating, half-hour aerial attack on a Doctors without Borders hospital in Afghanistan have been or will be punished.

Colonel Patrick Ryder, a spokesman for U.S.-Central Command said "those individuals most closely associated with the incident have been suspended from their duties and were referred for administrative action."

The punishments have not been publicly announced, but are reported to include letters of reprimand, which can block promotions. The Defense Department is set to soon publish a redacted version of its investigation of the attack.

The attack on the hospital in Kunduz in October killed 42 people, including medical staff and patients.

Army General John Campbell, ...*(More on P4)...(6)*

HRW Slams US Decision Regarding Kunduz Airstrikes



KABUL - Human Rights Watch strongly criticised US administrative punishments for 11 military personnel involved in airstrikes on Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) hospital in northern Kunduz province and called it "injustice and insult" to victim families.

On October 3, 2015, up to 42 people including a dozen MSF staff and patients were killed in a US airstrike, which left another 37 people wounded and

building of the trauma centre was completely burnt in fire. "That means letters of reprimand and other noncriminal penalties for those who ordered and carried out the attack. For good reason the victims' family members will see this as both an injustice and an insult", a statement from HRW said adding the US military investigated itself and decided no crimes had been committed. The ...*(More on P4)...(10)*

Afghan Rights Activist, Entrepreneurs Included in Young Global Leaders List

KABUL - A prominent women's rights activist and ex-member of the parliament Farkhunda Zahra Naderi has been included along with two prominent entrepreneurs among the 2016 class of the Young Global Leaders by World Economic Forum.

World Economic Forum is a Geneva-based non-profit foundation which selects the most enterprising, innovative, socially minded, and exceptional leaders under the age of 40, each year.

Miss Naderi has been selected among the 2016 class of Young Global Leaders for her role as one of the youngest elected members of the Afghan parliament and well regarded social activist.

The foundation recognized her for advancing women's rights in Afghanistan and participation in politics.

The two other young Afghan entrepreneurs included in the list are Fahim Hashimy, the Chief Executive Officer of Hashimy Group, and Hasina Syed, the owner of Syed Group.

Hashimy has been recognized as a successful businessman despite challenges he faced in an extremely volatile environment in Afghanistan where has risen from a boy who was beaten by the Taliban. He is running a powerful conglomerate of Afghan businesses, ...*(More on P4)...(11)*