

Jalalabad Chance of Rain 26°C 16°C	Ghazni Chance of Rain 16°C 7°C	Kandahar Cloudy 28°C 16°C	Mazar Chance of Rain 15°C 10°C	Herat Chance of Rain 21°C 9°C	Bamayan Chance of Rain 7°C 1°C	Kabul Chance of Rain 17°C 9°C
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120 Paktia Policemen Serving as Bodyguards of Public Reps

GARDEZ - Dozens of police personnel are serving as security guards for parliamentarians and provincial council members instead of maintaining public order in southeastern Paktia province, public representatives said on Wednesday. Abdul Rauf Zadran, the provincial council chairman, told Pajhwok Afghan News that more than a hundred policemen had been assigned to serve as bodyguards of lawmakers. The practice has been ongoing for years, he claimed. As a result, Zadran complained, the security situation had nosedived in several areas, causing the police force multiple problems in perform-



ing its day-to-day duties. He went on to seek an immediate end to the practice, urging parliament and provincial council members to keep as many security guards as permissible under the law and avoid encumbering the police force. Under an Interior Ministry regulation, a public representative is allowed to have only two policemen as bodyguards. But many of them tend to keep larger numbers of security guards. A provincial council member, Behram Zoy, said: "The number of security personnel in remote areas has been inadequate on the one

hand and the policemen deployed there have been assigned public representatives on the other..." While asking how the far-flung areas could be secured in such circumstances, he said the 15-member provincial council had debated the issue several times, but there had been no positive outcome. Asadullah Sherzad, commander of the 303rd Spinghar Zone, confirmed several policemen were serving as bodyguards of provincial council members. "This exercise was initiated long ago. I'm reviewing the issue and will soon call the policemen back to their..." (More on P4)...(8)

Mullah Zakir Ends Rifts with Mullah Akhtar Mansoor



KABUL - A prominent Taliban commander and member of the group's leadership council 'Rahbari Shura' Mullah Abdul Qayoum Zakir has ended rifts with Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansoor. An online statement published by Taliban on Wednesday states that Mullah Zakir pledges allegiance to the new leader.

The statement dated today carries Mullah Abdul Qayoum Zakir's name at the bottom. When the death of Mullah Mohammad Omar was confirmed in late July last year, a group of Taliban commanders announced Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansoor as their next leader but some others including Mullah Zakir opposed the appointment. Mullah Abdul Qayoum Zakir once headed Taliban's military commission but stepped down due to differences with Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansoor. (KP)

Eight-Year-Old Married off to Settle Dispute

KABUL - An eight-year-old Baghlan girl was allegedly married off to a man after her sister, his fiancé, ran off with another man. The child was married off in Baad - a traditional way of settling disputes - after her sister allegedly ditched her fiancé for another man. The decision to give the girl to the man was reportedly taken by tribal elders in Nahrin district of Baghlan province - but neither the girl nor her family are happy about the decision. Documents in TOLONews' possession show that tribal elders in Nahrin district ordered the girl to marry the man in place of her sister. Meanwhile child rights activ-



ists in Baghlan province said the girl's father is calling for her return. "One month ago when an engaged girl escaped with another man, those who call themselves..." (More on P4)...(9)

100 Militants Eliminated in Week-Long Herat Operation

HERAT CITY - A hundred militants have been killed and 110 others wounded during an operation in the Shindand district of western Herat province, local officials claimed on Wednesday. The first phase of the operation -- codenamed 'Azim' -- ended Tuesday night after a week of its launch, the governor's spokesman, Jilani Farhad, told Pajhwok Afghan News. He said the district was currently under the control of security forces. The second phase of the operation would completely clear the district of the insurgents, he hoped. At least 100 militants, includ-



ing several commanders, were killed and 110 others injured during the first phase. Two Taliban commanders were detained, 20 vehicles, 31 motorcycles and some military equipment of rebels were destroyed. Governor Mohammad Asif Rahimi had travelled to the district for assessing the security situation there, his spokesman added. He did not provide information about Afghan forces' casualties, but a number of security personnel are said to have been killed or

wounded during the offensive. The Taliban confirmed clashes in Shindand in a statement on their website, saying they destroyed a military tank on Tuesday. However, the group did not comment on casualties. A resident of the area, Nasir Ahmad, said: "Fighting between the Taliban and security forces has been ongoing since last Saturday. The situation is better today and shopkeepers have opened their shops." Aziz Ahmad, another shopkeeper, said Afghan forces were fighting against Mullah..." (More on P4)...(10)

MoD 15 Militants Killed, 16 Wounded in Latest Clearance Operations



KABUL - At least 15 anti-government armed militants were killed and 16 others were wounded in the latest clearance operations conducted by the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) in the past 24 hours. The Ministry of Defense (MoD) said the militants were killed in the western Herat province and southeastern Ghazni province. At least 12 of the militants were killed in Shindand district of Herat, according to an operational update by the Ministry of Defense (MoD). The source further added that 16 militants were also wounded during the same operation and 3 vehicles and 2 motorcycles were destroyed. At least 3 militants were killed in a separate operation in Geru district of Ghazni province, MoD said, adding that the artillery units were supporting the Afghan security forces during the clearance operations. The anti-government armed militant groups including the Taliban group have not commented regarding the reports so far. The Afghan forces have stepped up counter-terrorism operations as the Taliban-led insurgency has been rampant amid concerns that the group will pursue violence during the summer which would follow despite ongoing efforts to revive reconciliation talks. (KP)

Awareness Drive on Illegal Immigration Risks Kicks off in Bamyan

BAMYAN CITY - An awareness campaign informing people about the dangers of illegal immigration was launched in central Bamyan province on Wednesday. Ten percent of the Afghan migrants travelling to Europe are residents of Bamyan province. Around 250,000 Afghans have left for Europe in search of asylum during the past year. Major reasons for Afghans leaving their country include insecurity, widespread poverty, joblessness, political instability



and the government's failure to address people's problems. Refugee and Repatriation Director Azizullah Aminyar voiced grave concern over large numbers of Bamyan residents opting

for illegal immigration. He said 10 percent of the immigrants were residents of the province. Poverty and joblessness were the main reasons for illegal immigration,..." (More on P4)...(11)

Conditions Deteriorate for Trapped Migrants



KABUL - Conditions for migrants, including Afghans, stuck at the Greece border with Macedonia are rapidly deteriorating and where there was once hope, there is now despair. According to TOLONews journalist, Parwiz Shamal, who is reporting from the area, thousands of migrants are stranded at the border and conditions worsen by the day. Living in tents in a cold, windy and inhospitable environment, these..." (More on P4)...(12)

Nangarhar Plans to Establish Diplomatic Enclave

JALALABAD - Efforts have been intensified to establish a diplomatic enclave near the governor's house in Jalalabad, the capital of eastern Nangarhar province, to house foreign missions, an official said on Wednesday.

Nangarhar foreign affairs director Hifzullah Ishaqzai told a gathering celebrating hundred years of Afghanistan-Germany friendship here that the diplomatic enclave would result into many facilities. A photo exhibition showcasing pictures of projects jointly executed by Afghanistan and Germany and in cooperation with each other was also opened at the gathering. "We want to establish the diplomatic area near the governor's house. In this area, the consulates of Iran, Pakistan and India will be housed besides other foreigners," Ishaqzai said. He said it was possible Germany, France, Turkey and China and other countries open their consulates in Jalalabad. He said the foreign missions would enhance their countries' relations with the people of Nangarhar in areas of trade, education and others. Nangarhar governor's spokesman, Attaullah Khogyani, told Pajhwok Afghan News the diplomatic enclave project would be launched this solar year. "The current foreign missions in Nangarhar are housed in crowded areas and the establishment of the diplomatic area would facilitate local residents," he said. Speaking at the gathering..." (More on P4)...(16)

Nangarhar Marks 100 Years of Afghan-German Relations



KABUL - Local officials in eastern Nangarhar province on Wednesday marked 100 years of Afghan-German relations and said that both countries have continued their friendship over the years with relations improving along the way. At a ceremony to mark the event, officials displayed old photographs of Afghanistan and Germany's friendship. Local officials, civil society activists and..." (More on P4)...(13)

Alawuddin Girls Orphanage Gets Techno Boost

KABUL - Alawuddin Girls Orphanage in Kabul has been able to move into the era of modern technology - all thanks to Roshan. On Wednesday, representatives of Roshan officially handed over and inaugurated a new computer room at the orphanage which will enable the girls access technology. Roshan, a leading communications provider in Afghanistan, furnished and equipped a classroom at the orphanage and donated 16 computers for the girls to use. Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Roshan's CEO Karim Khoja said: "Roshan's mission is to be more than..." (More on P4)...(14)

1,000 Rally for New Ghazni Mayor, Closing Busy Highway



GHAZNI CITY - A large number of residents rallied in southern Ghazni City on Wednesday in support of the new mayor, closing the busy Kandahar-Kabul highway. Nasir Ahmad Lalizai was appointed as Ghazni mayor some two weeks back, but his appointment has drawn instant opposition from some residents. There have been calls for his removal. Over the past six days, agitators have been on hunger strike, setting up a protest camp in front of the municipality office in Ghazni City - the provincial capital. On Wednesday morning, nearly 1,000 people took to the streets in a show of support for the mayor. "Lalizai is a victim of ethnic prejudice," one demonstrator alleged. Mir Ahrar told Pajhwok Afghan News they were supportive of the new mayor. The highway linking Kandahar with Kabul has been blocked for several hours now in Pakhtunabad area. Another protestor, Mohammad Kabir, explained they did not want to inconvenience the people. The only objective behind the road closure was to defend the mayor, he added. On the other hand, passenger Noor Rahman said: "I wanted to travel to Kandahar and reached here at 8am, but they have..." (More on P4)...(15)