

Quote of the Day

Invention is the mother of necessity.

Thorstein Veblen

US economist & social philosopher
(1857 - 1929)

Utilise Funds to Meet Public Expectations, Ghani Tells Ministries

KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani has said the ministries that could not fully utilise their development budgets should explain reasons for their failure to the parliament.

The president made the remarks at an overnight meeting that assessed projects of Ministries of Public Works, Education, Public Health, Rural Development and Rehabilitation, Water and Energy and Agriculture.

In a statement from the Presidential Palace on Monday, Ghani ordered the ministers concerned to use at least 85 percent of their budgets by the end of the current solar year; otherwise



they would have to face the parliament.

"We had some problems on utilising development funds last year, but the people this year expect the government to do better this time around," the statement quoted the president as saying. Ghani directed government departments to resolve their capacity problems, because people were awaiting a positive change that would come about with the proper spending of development funds. The president directed the ministers to work out a clear plan for the distribution of development budgets to the provinces. (Pajhwok)

ACCI Asks DABS to Review Decision on Power Tariff

KABUL - The Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI) on Monday criticised the 25 percent increase in power tariff as 'unenforceable' and called for the decision to be rolled back.

Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) on Sunday announced increasing by 25 percent per unit charge to be effective from March.

The DABS decision will affect consumers in Kabul and 13 provinces who use electricity imported from central Asian countries. DABS said the decision to increase electricity rate came in response to the depreciation of the afghani against the US dollar.

But ACCI deputy chairman Khan Jan Alokozai told a press conference the new tariff could not be enforced because citizens and entrepreneurs could not afford to pay higher electricity bills. "So I ask DABS to go back on its decision."

He said the semi-government power utility should find other alternative ways for increasing its revenue.

Afghanistan Industrialists Association chairman Sher Baz Kaminzada also asked the government to review its decision on power consumption because ordinary people and industrialists could not pay increased power bills.

Supporting strategy According to Alokozai, a new 13-article draft, prepared by the Ministry of Finance, ACCI and the industrialists association, was ... (More on P4)...(2)

Turkey Trains 89 Afghan Female Police Cadets

KABUL - A total of 89 Afghan female police cadets have started Monday a two-month-long training program in Turkey.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Turkey's deputy interior minister, Sebahattin Ozturk, said that a total of 2,627 Afghan policemen and women had followed a training program in Turkey since the two countries signed a cooperation agreement in 2011.

The training programs take place at the Police Professional High School in the province of Sivas, in the eastern part of the Central Anatolia region. Ozturk said that Turkish police were assisting their Afghan counterpart in all fields, especially through training programs. (Agencies)

President Orders Special Budget for IDPs, Refugees



KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani has directed the authorities concerned to set aside budget for surveying the internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the country and take special care of destitute families.

The president issued the directives during a meeting of the High Commission on Refugees at the Presidential Palace on Sunday, a statement from the palace said.

The meeting discussed anti-corruption policy, regulations of activities of the Ministry of Refugee and Repatriation, law on refugee affairs and the plan to survey IDPs.

After a debate and assessment, the meeting endorsed in principle the Ministry of Refugee and Repatriation's anti-corruption policy.

The president told the refugee ministry's leadership delegation that they should have a clear and practical plan for human resources and anti-corruption. Ghani called the issue of refugees as one of the important national issues and called for allocation of special budget to ... (More on P4)...(3)

MoD Warns Islamabad Against Border Attacks as NATO Urges Diplomacy



KABUL - The Ministry of Defense Monday slammed Pakistan's cross border rocket attacks on the nation's eastern regions and said it was a violation of territorial integrity.

The MoD called on Islamabad to put an immediate end to what it called a provocative act.

The attack will have negative consequences for Pakistan, the MoD said in a statement.

"Army and border forces have been directed to retaliate against anyone who fires toward us - and to defend the nation against threats. The Afghan people have proved that no invader will survive if they pick up arms against those who cast evil toward their country," a Defense Ministry spokesman Dawlat Waziri said.

He added: "The attacks will not be in the interests of Pakistan."

As concerns deepen over Pakistan's cross border shelling, NATO's Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan called for restraint to be demonstrated by the two sides, asking Kabul and Islamabad to deescalate and resolve border disputes through diplomatic channels.

On Monday, Brigadier General Charles Cleveland, spokesman for NATO, said that both sides must solve their issues by giving diplomacy the chance as continued disputes are not serving any purpose.

"In terms of who is conducting the firing you know we have seen in the press, both on the Pakistani side of the border as well as the Afghan side of the border, that it is Pakistan military and it is Afghan military having these engagements back and forth. And so again it continues to be a concern for everybody involved and I think if it is not contained it does have the potential to become negative for everybody," he said.

While the NATO alliance reaffirms its continued military support to Afghan security forces, cross border shelling has ... (More on P4)...(4)

No Option with Warring Sides Except Peace: Haysom

BAMYAN CITY - UN secretary general's special representative for Afghanistan Nicholas Haysom on Monday said the quadrilateral talks had not failed and there was no option with the warring parties except peace in Afghanistan.

Haysom, who visited central Bamyan province, said his visit was aimed at assessing security issues and coordination between international donors and local administration.



He said efforts at reviving the stalled peace by the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) of Afghanistan, China, Pakistan and the

United States had not failed.

Responding to a question, Haysom said he could not predict what decision the UN Security Council would take if the Afghan government complained to it regarding rocket attacks from Pakistan.

The UN top diplomat said the people of Afghanistan were expecting electoral reform which would enable many people to participate in elections.

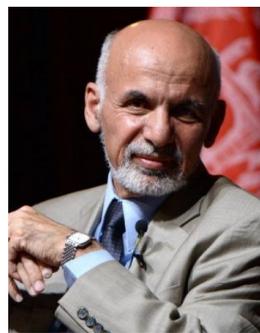
Bamyan ... (More on P4)...(1)

Ghani Expedites Executions

KABUL - Afghanistan's president is expected to soon sign the execution orders for prisoners who have been convicted on terrorism-related charges.

Ashraf Ghani promised to expedite the execution process for insurgents sentenced to death, following the April 19 explosion in Kabul that killed 64 people and wounded an additional 300. The president's vow came one day before the Taliban asked human rights organizations and the International Committee of the Red Cross to intervene on their behalf with the Afghan government.

A spokesman for the president's office told VOA Ashna Dari Radio that Ghani has the list of prisoners sentenced to death and is making the deci-



sion about when the executions will take place. The Kabul attack, claimed by the Taliban, sparked strong domestic reactions, with some Afghan politicians calling for the execution of imprisoned Taliban members. (VoA)

Hold Regular Press Briefings, Provincial Spokesmen Told

KABUL - While insisting on providing the media access to information, the Presidential Palace on Monday asked provincial government spokespersons to regularly conduct weekly and monthly press conferences.

Deputy presidential spokesman Dawa Khan Menapal told a meeting involving provincial government spokespersons from all the 34 provinces to urgently improve their efficiency. He advised the spokespersons to chalk out organized programmes, saying provincial administrations were responsible to hold weekly and monthly press conferences and present government's regular progress reports.

The spokesman for Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mujibur Rahman Rahimi also spoke on the occasion.

He said provincial spokespersons were the only hope for the government to deliver information to people on terrorism, extremism and drugs.

"Spokesmen can play a vital role ... (More on P4)...(5)

Poppy Eradication Drive Kicks off in Surkhrod District

JALALABAD - The outlawed poppy crop on 75 acres of land was destroyed as an eradication campaign was launched in the Surkhrod district of eastern Nangarhar province, an official said on Monday.

Counter-Narcotics Director Idrees Sapi told Pajhwok Afghan News the banned plants were destroyed in the first day of the campaign, which would also be extended to other areas of the province.

Last year, opium poppies were cultivated on 1,017 hectares of land but the government eradicated 250 acres. But the area of land sown with poppies this year is not known.

However, authorities believe the poppy cultivation level has risen this year. Provincial Council Secretary Zabihullah Zmarai warned farmers would be able to harvest opium if the government delayed the eradication effort.

He blamed the government for failing to conduct an effective eradication campaign. The authorities had not provided growers with alternative livelihoods or financial support in ... (More on P4)...(6)

Taliban Willing to Resume Peace Talks with Kabul: Report



PESHAWAR - During their recent visit to Pakistan, the Taliban signaled their willingness to return to peace talks with the Afghan government, a media report said on Monday.

However, the three-member delegation from Taliban's political office in Doha sought the release of some prisoners held in Pakistan and Afghanistan before direct negotiations resume.

The Express Tribune quoted unnamed Pakistani officials as saying the main faction of the Afghan Taliban led by Mullah Akhtar Mansoor could come back to the negotiating table.

Officials familiar with the discussions told the newspaper Pakistan and China had conveyed a clear message to the Taliban that a positive environment was the key to any negotiations.

"For this purpose, we told the

Taliban delegation that they have to agree on a cessation of violence inside Afghanistan," one Pakistani official was quoted as saying by the daily.

Although the Taliban insisted the delegation's visit was aimed to discuss issues of Afghan refugees and border security, insider said the main objective was to explore the possibility of direct parleys. But the Ashraf Ghani administration, worried by the latest uptick in violence, insists the insurgent movement has no right to discuss border security with Pakistan.

Ghani has said Afghanistan will no longer seek Pakistan's help for resuming peace talks with the Taliban, asking the neighbour to honour its commitment to action against the militants, including the Haqqani network. (Pajhwok)

Atmar Asks Pakistan to Fulfill Commitments, Act Against Taliban Pursuing Violence

KABUL - The National Security Adviser of Afghanistan Mohammad Hanif Atmar has asked Pakistan to fulfill commitments and act against the Taliban groups pursuing violence.

According to Atmar, Islamabad is supposed to start crackdown against the Taliban groups in accordance with the commitments made as part of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group, involving Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and United States.

The remarks by Atmar followed during a meeting with



the Ambassador of Sweden to Afghanistan.

Atmar further added that the government's top priority is to defend from the lives and properties of the Afghan people and not the peace process. According to a statement

by the Office of National Security Adviser, the Swedish Ambassador to Afghanistan has reaffirmed support to Afghanistan's policies in maintaining peace and stability and peace talks with the anti- ... (More on P4)...(7)