

Jalalabad	Clear	Ghazni	Clear	Kandahar	Clear	Mazar	Clear	Herat	Partly Cloudy	Bamayan	Clear	Kabul	Clear
	35°C 22°C		26°C 12°C		36°C 21°C		31°C 21°C		29°C 17°C		18°C 7°C		28°C 15°C

Weather Forecast Brought to You by MTN Afghanistan

President Briefed on Nationwide Security Situation

KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani on Thursday discussed the country's security situation with top security officials through a video conference, the Presidential Palace said. The palace said in a statement that the president talked to Chief of Army Staff Gen. Sher Mohammad Karimi, Interior Minister Noorul Haq Ulumi, acting Defence Minister Inayatullah Nazari, National Security ...*(More on P4)...(7)*



UNAMA Arranges Freedom of Expression Seminar

MAZAR-I-SHARIF - The United Nations assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) organized a gathering titled freedom of expression in Mazar-i-Sharif, the capital of northern Balkh province, a journalist said on Thursday. Zabihullah Ihsas, deputy head of journalists union in north, said civil and security organs did not share information with journalists. Besides, journalists faced with seven violence related cases, four incidents in Sur-i-Pul, two in Faryab and one in Jawzjan. Arif Mosavi, a reporter for Tolo television channel, told Pajhwok Afghan News that a journalist could make a detailed report on building mosque but no one would share information if he/she would focus on corruption in building the mosque. Latif Sahak, representative of journalist safety association, said during the round table meeting that mostly journalists faced with problems from government officials and the issue should be addressed immediately. Munir Farhad, provincial media head, said media organizations used all efforts to organize meeting between government officials and journalists to reduce the gap. Sher Jan Durani, police spokesperson, blamed "journalists call us during the fight and want information which we can't share at that critical time since the fight is ongoing." Hamid Safwat, in charge of civil society coordination, stressed journalists should demonstrate professionalism. *(Pajhwok)*

Crop Yields on the Decline in Nuristan

JALALABAD - Agricultural productivity has declined in eastern Nuristan province due to the absence of quality seeds and plantation of substandard seeds. Other issues the agriculture sector of Nuristan faces include lack of modern farming tools, nutritional supplements for plants, medicines and non-implementation of projects. Agriculture and Livestock Director Abdul Rauf Nuristani told Pajhwok Afghan News that nothing had been done to develop the agriculture sector of the province. He said no project had been executed in the agriculture sector so far in Nuristan, where gardening equaled to nothing. He said crop yields continued to decline each year due to the absence of improved seeds, but did not give figures. "Farmers use uncertified seeds and that is why the yield is declining each year. I hope the government and donor agencies will assist us in this area," he said. He feared farmers would switch to poppy crop if they did not receive improved quality seeds and other such assistance from the government. "We don't have a single tractor in the whole of Nuristan. Farmers plow their fields using pairs of oxen. That's the situation of our agriculture." The agriculture director said the security situation in Nuristan had improved and all roads were secure, urging the government and aid-giving organisations to pay attention to the agriculture sector of the province. Nuristani said 75 percent population of the province was associated with farming. He said if dairy, poultry and fish farms were established in Nuristan, the move would also help increase government's revenue. About 100,000 square metres of land is used to grow crops in Nuristan, where large swaths of rain-fed land can easily be brought under irrigation. Farmers said they had never been assisted to increase their agricultural production. One of them, Shafiqullah in Norgram district, said the lack of improved quality seeds was behind unsatisfactory yield. "We know improved quality seeds are given to farmers in other provinces, but don't know why we are deprived of that." He said the Nuristan land was fertile and if the government paid attention, farmers would be able to present good quality products to the market. A resident of the Kamdesh district, Amir ...*(More on P4)...(12)*

Female Afghan Students Win Gold Medals in a Biology Competition

KABUL - Three female Afghan students brought home gold medals after participating in a scientific competition in Kenya. The competition was hosted in Kenya which was attended by around 300 students from 27 countries around the world. The winners of the competition who returned to Afghanistan said they had participated in the event to compete in biology. They urged the Afghan families to allow their children, specifically their daughters to continue to their studies so that they can earn more honor for Afghanistan. Girls' education was almost non-existent during the years of Taliban rule but saw a rapid growth after U.S. troops entered the country resulting ...*(More on P4)...(9)*

Asif Ali Zardari PPP Fully Backs Afghan Reconciliation

KABUL - Asif Ali Zardari, former president and co-chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP), on Thursday discussed a range of issues and specifically the Afghan peace process with Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah. Both the leaders discussed regional and bilateral issues, Afghan reconciliation process and regional stability, CEO spokesman Mujib Rahimi said. Earlier today, Asif Ali Zardari arrived in Kabul for talks with high-ranking Afghan officials. The official wishing to go unnamed told Pajhwok Afghan News a delegation accompanied the former president. The spokesman said both the leaders ...*(More on P4)...(8)*

Provincial Council Baghlan Facing Looming Insurgents' Threat

PUL-I-KHUMRI - Provincial Council (PC) members of northern Baghlan province on Thursday warned the province would fall to Taliban if urgent security measures were not adopted to ward-off looming threats. But security officials said clearing operations were underway to purge several areas of militants. Last week fighting in Dand-i-Ghori locality and Baghlan-i-Markazi district. ...*(More on P4)...(10)*

184 Graduate from Afghanistan's Air Force University

KABUL - Afghanistan's Air Force University has produced its first batch of graduates - 184 in total - under its new dispensation. Speaking at the graduation ceremony on Thursday, Muhammad Dawran, deputy air force chief of staff, urged all graduates to refrain from falling into the trap of corruption, saying that the issue was one that was severely affecting the country. "You should never think of ways to take advantage of your position. The national capital must not be taken advantage of," he said. Many of these graduates - who took part in a year's intensive training - will go on to specialize in various fields. Some will be chosen to ...*(More on P4)...(13)*

ANSF Control Nawa District for First Time in Nine Years

GHAZNI CITY - The Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) have reportedly taken full control of Nawa district in southern Ghazni province after a 13-day military operation that culminated on Friday, local officials said. The seizure marks the first time in nine years the Afghan government has cleared the district of insurgents. The operation was launched under the name of "Fatha." Despite facing some 200 roadside mines planted by militants, the Afghan forces were able to take control of the district without any casualties, Ghazni's acting governor Musa Khan Akbarzada said. "With great cooperation and with the ...*(More on P4)...(11)*

AI, Human Rights Activists Criticize Farkhunda Trial Verdict

KABUL - Amnesty International (AI), along with other domestic and international human rights organizations, have criticized Wednesday's court verdict in the Farkhunda murder trial, arguing that the case was handled politically and without due process. The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) and Transitional Justice Group have called the decision issued by the Third District Primary Court in Kabul - sentencing four to death and 16 to 18-year prison terms - hasty and premature. "Unfortunately this decision was more of a political decision, and justice is less served," amnesty international researcher Hoorya Mosadeq said. "Our demand was that the cases be investigated fairly and police official's names should have been included as well," he added. Other human rights activists pointed out that the case was adjudicated before adequate effort could be made to apprehend the three main suspects identified by police who are still at large. "The court has announced its decision when three of the perpetrators are still on the run," Transitional Justice group Abdullah Ahmadi said. "We demand that security forces arrest them as soon as possible, and then maybe other facts will become apparent; the decision of the court must change." ...*(More on P4)...(15)*

35 Taliban Militants Killed in Zabol Passenger Rescue Operation

QALAT - At least 35 Taliban and Pakistani militants were killed and 25 wounded in a security force operation in Zabol in a search for the 31 bus passengers, local officials said Thursday. Zabol provincial acting-governor Ashraf Nasiri said that the operation was conducted in the Khak Afghan district to rescue the passengers who were kidnapped more than two months ago. The operation started two days ago in Qalat center of Farah province and is still ongoing. 18 Pakistani militants and six Taliban local commanders are among the dead, Nasiri added. So far however the passengers have still not been found. This comes three days after Zabol local officials said 26 insurgents had been killed in ...*(More on P4)...(16)*

Afghan Polytechnic Graduate Builds Solar-Powered Vehicle

KABUL - A polytechnical university graduate completed a project for the construction of a solar-powered vehicle after one and half year of efforts - joining a number of Afghan talents to have achievements in technological innovations. The vehicle was made by Waheedullah Sabawoon Gardizi and was put in display in Kabul's Intercontinental Hotel during an inauguration ceremony. According to Gardizi the vehicle has been assembled to operate with the power of solar and electricity. Gardizi follows another young and talented Afghan man who built a solar-powered motorbike last year which ...*(More on P4)...(14)*