

## Quote of the Day

The foundation of every state is the education of its youth.

Diogenes Laertius

Rula Ghani

# Unity Govt. Takes Concrete Steps to Establish Rule of Law

WASHINGTON - First Lady Rula Ghani has said the Unity Government led by President Ashraf Ghani has taken concrete steps in the last 18 months to establish rule of law in the country and ensured protection and empowerment of women.

Giving a snap shot of the series of steps that the Unity Government has taken after coming to power in the field of rule of law, justice and legal system, the First Lady said a lot has been achieved in this regard, but the country has a long way to go.

"Hopefully gone are the days when women languished in jails and were hopeless," the First Lady said in her address on Friday here "From the Reign of Violence to the Rule of Law: The Role of Reform in Rebuilding



Afghan Society" at the US Institute of Peace, a top American think-tank.

The present unity government was hard at work to establish rule of law in the country,

she said adding this government was busy to establish the foundation for a strong and peaceful Afghanistan which was annoyed by a segment in the country.

Born and raised in Lebanon, Rula Ghani in her speech discussed Afghanistan's history of violent conflict and recent progress and challenges in reforming the justice sector, including for women.

"We used to have a justice system, which was a joke," she said, asserting that this is not the case now because of the steps being taken by the Unity Government. The measures taken have reduced the possibility of corruption in the judiciary system.

"Today it seems war is everywhere. War and conflict tear apart a society," she said. One of the major priorities of the unity government is to establish the rule of law, she said. These steps have been taken with the objective ...*(More on P4)...(1)*

## President Ghani is Home from Key UK Visit



KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani Saturday returned from a two-day visit to the United Kingdom where he attended the world's anti-corruption summit.

The president initially departed for a two-day trip to Tajikistan and then headed to Britain where he met some world leaders on the sidelines of the anti-corruption summit.

A statement from the Presidential Palace said the president in his meeting with UK Defense Secretary Michael Fallon discussed peace and stability in Afghanistan, military cooperation, capacity building of Afghan security forces and increase in military facilities.

Ghani demanded the Britain defense secretary provide military training opportunities to more Afghan cadets at British military academies.

The president also met Afghan cadets undergoing training at the UK Sandhurst military academy yesterday afternoon.

The trainees vowed they would try their best in conveying knowledge and experience to fellow Afghan security personnel after completing their training.

President Ghani also asked the academy's leadership to increase their cooperation with Afghan military academies ...*(More on P4)...(2)*

## Standard Tax System for Phone Users in Doldrums



KABUL - The Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology (MCIT) on Saturday said it could not activate a standard tax collection system since the law imposing 10 percent tax on phone users was passed about nine months ago.

Based on a presidential decree, endorsed by the Cabinet, a 10 percent tax was imposed on cell phone subscribers from September 23, 2015.

The MCIT created a tax collecting system without following the procurement process, an issue that sparked criticism about ...*(More on P4)...(3)*

## IMF Mulls New Loan for Afghanistan

MOSCOW - The International Monetary Fund will hold talks with Kabul on a new loan later in May.

The International Monetary Fund welcomes Afghanistan's request for financial support and will discuss it later this month amid instability in the country, the fund said in a statement.

"The Afghan authorities recently requested a Fund financial arrangement (Extended Credit Facility - ECF)... IMF management welcomes this request, and discussions on the new arrangement are slated to begin in May 2016," the organization said in a statement Friday.

On Friday, the IMF completed its review of the situation in Af-



ghanistan. The fund said that its Staff-Monitored Program (SMP), tasked with addressing the country's financial vulnerabilities and preserving its stability, was completed successfully.

"Notwithstanding this progress,

Afghanistan's economic situation remains very difficult. Security and political uncertainties and the drawdown of international troops, together with weak governance and institutions, have held back ...*(More on P4)...(4)*

## CEO to Sign Agreement, MoUs During China Visit

KABUL - Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah is expected to sign an agreement and two Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) during his trip to China, an official said on Saturday.

Javid Faisal, deputy spokesman of the CEO, said Abdullah, at the head of a high-level delegation, would leave Kabul for Beijing on Sunday.

He said Abdullah was visiting China at the invitation of the country's prime minister. The CEO will be accompanied by the ministers of foreign affairs, commerce and industry, urban devel-



opment, higher education, telecommunications and information technology, mines and petroleum and a number of traders, he said.

Abdullah would meet the Chinese prime minister, pres-

ident and a number of other officials during his trip, Faisal added. He said the CEO would sign one agreement and two MoUs on improving business relations with China. *(Pajhwok)*

## Adela Raz Assumes Charge as Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs

KABUL - The newly appointed deputy foreign minister for economic affairs Adela Raz officially assumed office after she was introduced on Saturday.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) said Saturday that Ms Raz was introduced during a ceremony attended by Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani, Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Hekmat Khalil Karzai, Deputy Administrative and Finance Dr. Nasir Ahmad Andisha, Deputy director for Administrative Office of the Presidency Ms Kamila Sediqi, and other directors and officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ms Sediqi initially read the presidential decree regarding the appointment of Ms Raz



as Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs, MoFA said.

In his turn, Foreign Minister Rabbani congratulated Ms Raz for assuming charge as Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs and said the Ministry of Affairs plays a key role being a diplomatic platform of the country, insisting that Foreign Affairs Ministry's key objectives are to defend from national in-

terests of the country while pursuing the foreign policy and attracting foreign investments in the country is one of the key objectives of the Ministry.

Rabbani further added that diplomacy is not limited only to expansion of ties in bilateral and multi lateral ways among the nations but economic diplomacy also has become prominent with the ...*(More on P4)...(6)*

## Peace Deal Expected with HIA



KABUL - The Afghan government is expected to finalize a peace deal with Hizb-e-Islami Afghanistan (HIA) group within days, an official and a representative of the group said on Saturday.

The deal is partially symbolic as the group in question, Hezb-i-Islami, has been essentially inactive for years. However it provides a much-needed success for the beleaguered administration of President Ashraf Ghani and potential template for ending Kabul's 15-year war with the still active and far more dangerous Taliban.

Under the terms of the 25-point agreement, a draft of which has been seen by the AP, the group would end its war against Kabul, commit to respecting the Afghan constitution, and cease all contact with other armed, anti-government groups. In return its members would receive amnesty and its prisoners in Afghan jails would be released.

Ataul Rahman Saleem, deputy head of Kabul's High Peace Council, told The Associated Press that the deal with the armed wing of Hezb-i-Islami could be completed on Sunday, after two years of negotiations. A senior representative of Hezb-i-Islami, Amin Karim, also said he expected President Ashraf Ghani to approve the final version of the agreement on Sun-

day. Hezb-i-Islami is led by warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, best known for killing thousands of people in Kabul during the 1992-1996 civil war. He is believed to be in Pakistan, though Karim has said he is in an unspecified location in Afghanistan. He could soon return to Kabul to sign a formal peace deal and take up residence.

Hekmatyar, in his late 60s, is designated a "global terrorist" by the United States and black-listed by the United Nations along with Osama bin Laden. The agreement obliges the Afghan government to work to have the restrictions lifted.

Hezb-i-Islami has only intermittently been active on the battlefield for some time; its last known major attack was in 2013, when at least 15 people, including six American soldiers, were killed in Kabul.

Ghani's administration is still trying to strike a peace deal with the country's primary insurgent group, the Taliban. Those efforts to open a dialogue, using the Pakistani government as an intermediary, have largely failed. Ghani is due to return to Kabul Sunday from an official visit to London. Karim said he expected the president to give his final approval to the content of the truce agreement with Hezb-i-Islami soon ...*(More on P4)...(7)*

## Experts Stress Need for Protection of Cleared Areas



KABUL - A number of security experts believe that areas cleared of militants are still vulnerable and need to be protected so as to ensure insurgents are not able to return.

"It's negligence, that when they push back the enemy and they sit calmly and they don't think about future plans [what should they do], if the enemy returns. Management is weak. Duties have not been properly distributed among army, police and National Directorate of Security (NDS)," said Atequallah Amarkhel, a security analyst.

Security troops in Helmand and security experts termed a shortage of security forces as a great challenge.

This comes at a time that officials are discussing the possibility of launching a large-scale operation in vulnerable areas, particularly Helmand.

"If we receive backup, we have the capability [to fight]. We cannot launch an operation with four people. The government should send us equipment and should support us so we can launch an operation," said Hafizullah ...*(More on P4)...(5)*

## North Being Connected Via Fiber Optic from Bamyan



BAMYAN CITY - Extension work on the fiber optic network from Yakawlang district of central Bamyan province to the northern region of the country was launched Saturday, an official said.

Bamyan Governor Mohammad Tahir Zuhair said the fiber optic network would be extended to the north over 180 kilometers areas at a cost of \$1.46 million.

The World Bank funded extension project would begin from Bamyan and Samangan provinces and would take six months to complete, he said.

Bamyan telecommunication and information technology director, Haji Azizullah Hamidi, said Bamyan was connected through fiber optic with Kabul and Parwan provinces and the network to northern region would be extended from Bamyan. He said a survey to extend the network to Daikundi and Ghor provinces was also underway.

The fiber optic network provides facilities of internet, television and radio services of higher quality and with low prices in the country. *(Pajhwok)*