

Quote of the Day

You do your best work if you do a job that makes you happy.

Bob Ross

Deadly Drone Strike Sends 'Clear Message': Kerry

WASHINGTON - U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said on Sunday the targeting of Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour in a drone strike sends a clear message over the United States' commitment to Afghanistan. Speaking at a news conference with Myanmar's Foreign Minister Aung San Suu Kyi, during his visit to that country, Kerry said: "Yesterday, the United States conducted a precision airstrike that targeted Taliban leader Mullah Mansour in a remote area of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region." He said: "Mansour posed a continuing, imminent threat to U.S. personnel in Afghanistan, to Afghan civilians, Afghan security

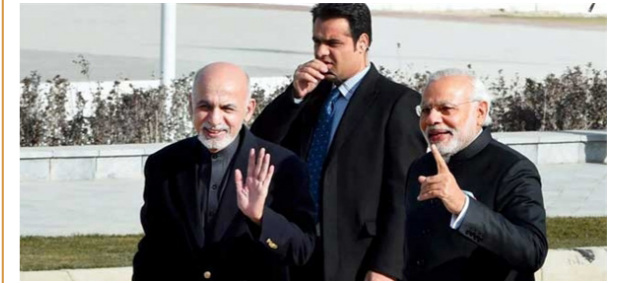


forces and Resolute Support coalition members across the country. And this action sends a clear message to the world that we will continue to

stand with our Afghan partners as they look to build a more stable, united, secure and prosperous Afghanistan."

"The United States has long maintained that an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned reconciliation process is the shortest way to achieve peace and peace is what we want. Mansour was a threat to that effort and to bringing an end to the violence," he said. Kerry earlier on Sunday said he notified Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif by telephone of a U.S. drone strike that 'likely killed' Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Mansour. The Afghan National Directorate of Security (NDS) confirmed early Sunday afternoon that Mansour had been killed in the attack. However, a senior Afghan official, speaking on condition of anonymity, ...*(More on P4)...(1)*

Iran, India, Afghanistan to Ink Trilateral MoU



TEHRAN - Iran, India and Afghanistan are due to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the development of the transit port of Chabahar soon. The MoU will be endorsed during Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's upcoming visits to Iran on Monday. Afghan President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani is

slated to arrive in Tehran on Monday to meet the Iranian officials on bilateral ties and cooperation and attend a trilateral meeting with Modi. Modi is making a first trip to Iran since he took office in 2016, aimed at deepening energy ties. During the visit, India will sign a contract to build and operate the port of Chabahar on the Southern Iranian coast that is aimed at ...*(More on P4)...(2)*

Kabul Investigating Mansour's Death



KABUL - The Afghan government on Sunday confirmed a US drone strike had targeted Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour, but could not confirm his death, saying his death would be a great opportunity for some Taliban leaders who wanted to join the reconciliation process. The Pentagon late on Saturday night announced a US airstrike targeted Mansour in a remote Afghanistan-Pakistan border region and the results of the strike were being assessed. "Today, the Department of Defense conducted an airstrike that targeted Taliban leader Mullah Mansour in a remote area of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region," Pentagon Press Secretary Peter Cook said. He said Mansour had been actively involved in planning attacks against facilities in Kabul and across Afghanistan and that he prevented Taliban leaders from joining the peace process with the Afghan government. The Presidential Palace in a statement said Mansour was an obstacle to peace and reconciliation and his death, if confirmed, would enable Taliban leaders to return to a normal life. "Mullah Akhtar Mansour was the man who pressed continuation of fighting and bloodshed in the country. He often rejected the Afghan government's and international community's call to hold talks with the government. ...*(More on P4)...(5)*

Senate Returns TUTAP Documents to Govt Sans Review



KABUL - Returning TUTAP power project documents to the government without a review, the Meshrano Jirga on Sunday said the government should decide on the project route as per recommendations of the appointed delegation. The Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TUTAP) power project will import 500kv of electricity from the Central Asian states to energy-starved Pakistan through Afghanistan. The Ministry of Energy and Water has recommended the project be implemented through the Salang Pass crossing Baghlan province, but thousands of protesters have stressed the scheme must pass through central Bamyan. Meshrano Jirga chairman Fzal Hadi Muslimyar told Sunday's session that the government had sent TUTAP documents to the upper house, but the Senate had no experts to technically assess the documents. Therefore, he said, they sent back the documents to the government to take decision in accordance with recommendations of the probe team the government had appointed. While insisting on routing the project via Salang Pass, Muslimyar said the people of Bamyan were part of the country and they should also have access to electricity. ...*(More on P4)...(7)*

Govt. Close to Peace Deal with Hekmatyar: Abdullah

KABUL - Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah on Sunday said the government was close to concluding a peace deal with the Hezb-i-Islami Afghanistan (HIA), led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. However, the CEO told a Cabinet meeting here that no privileges against the Constitution and national interests would be offered to the group in return.



Abdullah said the talks between the High Peace Council (HPC) and the HIA delegation had been underway for two months and

the government had reached very close to striking a peace accord.

He assured the people that the unity government was committed to establishing peace and stability in the country. Abdullah welcomed HIA's willingness to accept the offer of peace talks from the Afghan government.

He made it clear that no privileges ...*(More on P4)...(3)*

Corruption is Big Challenge in Afghanistan: Norwegian FM

KABUL - Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Børge Brende, termed corruption as a big challenge in Afghanistan. He said that Norway is going to double its humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and he hoped that the assistance will be spent in a proper way. Norway has pledged to increase its humanitarian assistance to 208 million Norwegian Krone (\$2.3 million USD). Brende during his trip to Kabul on Saturday described Afghanistan as fragile. "There are a lot of needs. Afghanistan is still a fragile country. We have seen some positive development as I said we should not only focus on the negative side. We also have to underline on the basic health services," he said.

He also stressed for the need to fight against corruption. "We are very clear, if there is corruption we will have to pull out," he added. The United Nations ...*(More on P4)...(4)*



Senate Throws Weight Behind HIA-Govt. Agreement



KABUL - Welcoming the draft peace agreement between the Hezb-i-Islami Afghanistan and the government, the Meshrano Jirga on Sunday asked the government not to allow anyone to sabotage the peace talks. After two months of dialogue between an HIA delegation and Afghan government representatives, both sides reached a draft peace agreement.

Under the agreement, the government would try to get lifted international sanctions on HIA and remove names of HIA members on UN and US blacklists. HIA prisoners would be released and political activities of HIA would be allowed. The agreement would be enforced after being signed by HIA leader Hekmatyar and President Ghani.

Reacting to the agreement, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) on Saturday asked the government not to compromise over national unity and human rights especially of war victims in peace talks and in deals with insurgent groups.

The rights body asked the government to take decisions in accordance with the national Constitution and protect the freedom of speech, women's and children rights, tribes and minorities, democracy and socio-political and cultural pluralism. However, a Meshrano Jirga or upper ...*(More on P4)...(8)*

UN Chief Backs Peace Talks with HIA



KABUL - The United Nations on Sunday said it supported the Afghan government's recent peace talks with the Hekmatyar-led Hezb-i-Islami Afghanistan (HIA).

UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon and Afghan president Ashraf Ghani met in Doha on the sidelines of the 16th Doha Forum entitled "Stability and Prosperity for All".

A statement from the Presidential Palace in Kabul said the UN chief voiced his support for recent steps taken by the Afghan government in different spheres, especially in peace talks with HIA.

Ban said they would evaluate the draft peace agreement between the Afghan government and the HIA and would then take necessary measures.

The UN has put the name of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and other HIA members on its blacklist.

After two months of talks between an HIA delegation and Afghan government, both sides reached a draft peace agreement.

Under the agreement, the Afghan government would try to get remove names of HIA members the UN and US blacklists and would release HIA prisoners and allow the party to carry out political activities.

The Afghan government has asked the UN to drop the name of HIA members from its blacklist.

Ghani said told the UN chief that the agreement with ...*(More on P4)...(9)*

ACCI Concerned Over Increase in Kidnappings

KABUL - Around 40 cases of kidnapping, murders and armed attacks against businessmen and investors have been registered over the past month in Afghanistan, said the Afghan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) on Sunday.

The ACCI said that the spike in kidnappings of businessmen is a huge hurdle for getting people to invest in Afghanistan.

The Deputy Chairman of the ACCI, Khan Jan Alokozai, expressed his deep concerns over the increase in kidnappings and assaults on traders, especially in Nangarhar, Herat and Kabul province.

"Based on research that we have conducted over the past month, nearly 40 incidents of kidnapping, murder and other security incidents have taken place [against investors]," he said.

He said that traders and investors also face scores of minor security incidents on a daily basis. Alokozai alleged that these cases are not being seriously followed up by security and judicial organizations. He accused these bodies of negligence in this regard and said that those who are being arrested in connection with these cases are being freed.

"Another matter of concern is that these incidents are being investigated by nearby check posts and sometimes it seems that the check posts are also somehow involved in the incidents. Kidnapping incidents take place at a time that security check posts are busy with other things," he added.

Security sources meanwhile told TOLONews that a group recently kidnapped a money exchanger, Qand Agha, in 15th district of Kabul city and the fate of the victim is still unknown.

"We confirm that traders and businessmen are facing security problems. The Ministry of Interior has done its investigations and we are still trying to resolve the problem. But traders' cooperation in this regard is also important to us," said Sediq Sediqqi, spokesman for the Ministry of Interior (MoI). ...*(More on P4)...(10)*

Expanded Trade Ties Tops Agenda as Ghani Meets Emir and PM of Qatar

KABUL - President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani met with the Emir and Prime Minister of Qatar during his official visit to Doha, the Office of the President said Sunday.

President Ghani met with the Emir of Qatar Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and the two sides discussed boosting bilateral ties and cooperation between the two nations, specifically expanding trading ties.

The two sides also emphasized on expediting efforts to attract more investments besides expanding cooperation among the governments of the two nations.

Meanwhile, the leaders of Qatar emphasized on the importance of peace and its impact on the region and beyond the region, reaffirming the country's support for a peaceful and developed Afghanistan.

President Ghani arrived to Doha at the official invitation of Emir of Qatar on Saturday to meet with the country's officials during his two-day state visit.

The National Security Adviser Mohammad Hanif Atmar, Minister of Urban Development Affairs Syed Sadat Mansoor Naderi, Minister of Agriculture Asadullah Zamir, Senior Presidential Adviser ...*(More on P4)...(6)*

Ministry of Public Health Celebrates International Nurses Day

KABUL - The Ministry of Public Health celebrated International Nurses Day 2016 with the theme "Nurses: A Force for Change: Improving Health Systems' Resilience." This day marks the birthday of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing, and is celebrated around the world.

The ceremony was attended by nearly 350 participants from the Ministry of Public Health; the Ministry of Women's Affairs; the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs, and the Disabled; Kabul Medical University School of Nursing, French Medical Institute for Children; Aga Khan University Programs-Afghanistan; Ghaznafar Institute of Health Sciences; community health nurses from various provinces; professional associations; donors; international and local NGOs; UN agencies, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) HE ...*(More on P4)...(11)*