

<b>Jalalabad</b> Clear 35°C 23°C	<b>Ghazni</b> Clear 25°C 10°C	<b>Kandahar</b> Clear 33°C 15°C	<b>Mazar</b> Clear 25°C 18°C	<b>Herat</b> Clear 27°C 10°C	<b>Bamayan</b> Clear 22°C 6°C	<b>Kabul</b> Clear 27°C 14°C
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# Brussels Conference Kicks Off

KABUL - The two-day Brussels International Conference on Afghanistan kicked off in the Belgian capital on Tuesday. Today, the European Union and the government of Afghanistan will co-host the Brussels Conference that will gather more than 70 countries and 20 international organisations and agencies. The gathering will provide a platform for the Kabul administration to set out its vision and track record on reform. For the international community, it will be the opportunity to signal sustained political and financial support to Afghan peace, state-building and develop-



Afghan officials are expecting the announcement of \$4 billion annual aid from the international community for the next four years at the conference. President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dr. Abdullah Abdullah will

represent Afghanistan and Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, High Representative Federica Mogherini and Neven Mimica, European Commissioner for Development Cooperation, will represent the European Union. Javed Faisal, the spokesman for CEO, told Pajhwok Afghan News from Brussels over the telephone a high level Afghan delegation arrived in Brussels yesterday. He said on the first day of the conference several meetings between officials of the two sides, including President Ghani and Abdullah, would take place on the event's sidelines. Faisal... (More on P4)...(1)

WASHINGTON - The United States has said 'they never get ahead of sanctions decisions' on Gulbuddin Hekmatyar as a landmark peace agreement was signed between the party the Afghan government last week. In response to a question whether the US will pull out Hekmatyar's name from global terrorist list, the State Department Press Office Director, Elizabeth Trudeau, said "Well, as you know, we never get ahead of sanctions decisions. I won't do that now. I think we spoke about that agreement when it was first announced out of Kabul and we welcome that. But in terms of individual actions on sanctions, I will not get

ahead of that." The draft peace agreement between the Afghan government and Hezb-e-Islami was formally signed during a special ceremony organized in ARG Presidential Palace last Thursday. President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar ratified the draft peace agreement signed by the delegation of Hezb-e-Islami and Afghanistan High Peace Council over two weeks ago. Ahead of the formal signing of the peace agreement by President Ghai, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's son, Habib-ur-Rehman, said the international community has agreed to lift... (More on P4)...(2)

## UN Envoy Calls for 'Real' Commitment by Global Partners

KABUL - UN envoy to Afghanistan Tadamichi Yamamoto said in an interview with UN news center ahead of the Brussels Summit that "one of the important things for the success of our effort is real commitment from the international community" over Afghanistan. Speaking on the eve of the two-day summit, he said: "One of the important things for the success of our effort is real commitment from the international community. The international community has to understand that, and I think they do understand that the country - although they are trying to be more



self-reliant - requires a lot of assistance for years to come." "It is one of the poorest countries in the world and it is probably one of the more dependent upon international assistance in terms of their budget and in terms of their ability to deliver services to people," he said. "They, of course, will become more... (More on P4)...(3)

## Senators Push Govt. to Probe Possible Security Lapses in Kunduz

KABUL - Senators in the Meshrano Jirga (Upper House of Parliament) on Tuesday stressed the need for a full review of security in Kunduz city, urging government to identify officials who might have been negligent in terms of securing the city. They called on government to launch an investigation into the Taliban' siege of the city this week and to punish those guilty of negligence. Amid a dramatic surge in Taliban offensives against major towns, the senators warned that security situations will



further deteriorate in Helmand, Kunduz and Uruzgan provinces unless government takes action. "The fall of Kunduz means the fall of five northeastern and nine northern provinces," said senator Mohammad Alam Ezidyar. "A number of check posts are under siege there and there is a... (More on P4)...(4)

## In Helmand, Education Casualty of Non-Stop Interference

LASHKARGAH - The governor has accused Education Ministry officials of appointing inexperienced and ineligible people to senior posts at the education department in southern Helmand province. In an exclusive interview with Pajhwok Afghan News, Hayatullah Hayat alleged some government officials were meddling and as a result denying students the kind of education they needed. Hayat claimed some individuals had been issued with appointment letters from the Ministry of Education (MoE) in disregard of merit. "The appointment letters have been issued to individuals for high posts; but we have sent back 13 such letters to the ministry in the past 14 months." Such negligence and interference caused problems for the education process, the governor noted, saying: "These letters have stirred arguments within the education department and have negatively impacted the teaching process." The governor said the education process in Helmand was literally stagnant but no one bothered about implementing reforms. However, he did not name the meddlers but said: "1... (More on P4)...(5)

## Tourism Picking up Despite Drop in Number of Foreign Visitors

KABUL - The number of foreign tourist has declined but more locals are visiting different parts of the country, the Ministry of Information and Culture said on Tuesday. Addressing a gathering on World Tourism Day here, Deputy Minister of Information Zardasht Shamsaid tourism contributed 10 percent to the global economy and 1.2 billion people travelled to different parts of the world. He said 200,000 foreign tourists landed in Afghanistan annually but the number had dropped for security reasons. He, however, noted the number of local tourists had risen. Shams said 160,000 people visited Band-i-Ameer in central Bamyan province and 770,000 streamed to the Babar Park in Kabul. Thousands of locals went sightseeing in a number of historic and scenic areas. The ministry has chalked out a tourism development plan, inviting people from neighboring countries to visit the historical... (More on P4)...(12)

## EU Pledges New Aid to Kabul in State-Building Contract



KABUL - The European Commission on Tuesday announced a new financial assistance to the Afghan government in the form of a State-building contract, the commission said. Through State-building contracts, the European Union (EU) provides direct budget support to countries in fragile and transitional situations. The signing ceremony of the State-building contract took place Tuesday on the sidelines of the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan. The agreement was signed

by the Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica, and Afghan Minister of Finance Eklil Ahmad Hakimi in the presence of President Ashraf Ghani, the European Commission said in a statement. At the signing ceremony, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica said: "Today's signature is an important step forward for the EU's development partnership with the Afghan government." He said the EU was... (More on P4)...(7)

## Dostum Takes Charge of Operations in Kunduz

KABUL - The First Vice President General Abdul Rashid Dostum has taken charge of the operations in the northern Kunduz province of Afghanistan hours after the Taliban militants launched a coordinated attack on the strategic Kunduz city. Gen. Dostum organized a meeting in the Command and Control Center of the Ministry of Defense on Monday evening as Taliban intensified attacks on the city, the Office of the First Vice President said in a statement. The meeting also focused

on other provinces under the Taliban threat including the southern Helmand province and Uruzgan province. Officials in ARG Palace have also confirmed that Gen. Dostum is the Command and Control Center of the Ministry of Defense to coordinate operations with deputy chief of staff of Afghan army General Murad Ali Murad who is Kunduz province. In the meantime, the officials in the Ministry of Interior have confirmed that several key districts in Kunduz city have been cleared of the militants... (More on P4)...(8)

## 600 Attempted Suicide Cases Registered in 6 Months in Herat

HERAT CITY - Nearly 600 people attempted suicide in the past six months in western Herat province, with 18 losing lives, an official said on Tuesday. Herat Zonal Hospital spokesman Mohammad Rafiq Sherzai told Pajhwok Afghan News 80 percent of those attempting suicide were women. He said 18 of the people, including a dozen women, ended it all. Most of them killed themselves by hanging or consuming poison or acid, the spokesman added. "Twelve people including men and women lost their lives by hanging themselves while six others killed themselves by using poisonous substances." Sherzai said 582 others, who attempted suicide, recovered after being treated at the hospital. Eighteen-year-old Susan, who twice attempted suicide, told Pajhwok she did so due to her marriage with a man she did not like. "I had to do so because my family forcibly married me. I first took a strip of tramadol pills, but relatives took me to hospital and I recovered. Then I consumed a packet of needles but again I was evacuated to hospital for treatment," she recalled. Anthropologists say undesirable customs, poverty, joblessness and pressures from militants have badly affected the Afghan youngsters in far-flung areas of the province. Basir Ahmad Danishyar, a lecturer at Herat University, ... (More on P4)...(9)

## Thousands of Acres of Land Grabbed, But Govt Stays Blasé

GHAZNI CITY - Local officials on Tuesday said 100,000 acres of land has been usurped by powerful individuals in southern Ghazni province, efforts for retaking the land are underway. Provincial police chief, Brig. Gen. Aminullah Amarkhel, confirmed to Pajhwok Afghan News that markets and residential buildings were being constructed on grabbed lands. "The land-grab process is still ongoing and the government would not have even one metre of land if the practice is not stopped on a priority basis," he remarked, without naming the grabbers. No land was left even for the construction of a new building for the police headquarters in Ghazni City, he lamented, saying the HQ was currently house in a market. Provincial council head, Hamidullah Nawroz, revealed more than 100,000 acres of land had been usurped... (More on P4)...(6)

## Germany to Help Build 10 Schools in Badakhshan

FAIZABAD - The German government pledged construction of buildings for 10 schools and embankment of Kukcha River in northeastern Badakhshan province under an agreement signed on Tuesday. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the projects was signed between Badakhshan Governor Ahmad Faisal Bikzad, contracted companies and Regional Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) here on Tuesday. The school buildings would be constructed in Argo, Draitim, Kasham, Tashkan, Tagab, Yaftal Payan and Shar-i-Buzurg districts and Faizabad, the provincial capital. The retaining walls having a length of 1.8 kilometers would be built along the Kukcha River. Implementation of the projects would take up to one year and would benefit around 50,000 people. Governor Ahmad Faisal Bikzad at the MoU signing ceremony thanked Germany for its support to Afghanistan and said the two countries enjoyed close relations for a century... (More on P4)...(10)

## Taliban Press Attack on Kunduz City; 12 Police Die in Helmand

KABUL - Fierce gunbattles raged for a second day on Tuesday in northern city of Kunduz while in the south, insurgents killed 12 policemen at checkpoints around the Helmand provincial capital and seized another district they had attacked a day earlier. The timing of the coordinated assaults was particularly poignant, coming a year after the Taliban captured and held parts of Kunduz before the city was fully liberated weeks later with the help of U.S. airstrikes. In the latest attack in Helmand, Taliban fighters besieged police checkpoints around the provincial capital of Lashkar Gah late on Monday night, killing 12 policemen and wounding another 11, according to Haji Gran, chief of the city's police district 2. Lashkar Gah has been under threat of Taliban takeover for months as insurgents have been slowly taking control of Helmand since the beginning of the year, with some officials saying that 85 percent of the province is now under Taliban control - or 12 of its 14 districts. That includes Khanashin district in the south of the province, which the provincial spokesman, Omar Zwak, said had fallen to the Taliban after coming under attack Monday. In recent days, he said, around 45 members of Afghan security forces have been killed in fighting there and more than 15 have been taken captive. Zwak said a suicide car bomb attack in district 2 earlier on Tuesday killed six policemen and wounded four others. No group has yet claimed responsibility for the attacks in Lashkar Gah. In Kunduz, the Taliban began their attack from all directions early on Monday. They briefly raised a flag over a main intersection before being repelled from the city center. On Tuesday, fierce fighting was still underway with Taliban gunmen using residential homes as hideouts in a number of areas, slowing down the efforts of Afghan security forces to repel them from the city, said the Interior Ministry's spokesman, Sediq Sediqqi. The Afghan forces were "trying to secure the city," but progress was slow and difficult. At least 30 insurgents had been killed in the two days of fighting, he said. It was unclear how many Taliban... (More on P4)...(11)