

<b>Jalalabad</b>	Clear	<b>Ghazni</b>	Clear	<b>Kandahar</b>	Clear	<b>Mazar</b>	Clear	<b>Herat</b>	Clear	<b>Bamayan</b>	Clear	<b>Kabul</b>	Clear
	36°C 19°C		28°C 11°C		36°C 17°C		33°C 29°C		33°C 12°C		22°C 07°C		30°C 13°C



# More Than 1,000 Taliban Fighters Concentrated on Tajik-Afghan Border

KABUL - The buildup of terrorist groups, including Taliban units, in immediate proximity to the Tajik border raised serious concern in the republic, an officer from the Tajik National Security Committee told Tass on Thursday. "Over the recent time, we have been witnessing movement of armed groups, mostly from Taliban, in the Badakhshan /Pamir/ direction of the Tajik-Afghan border," the source said, adding that their numbers exceeded 1,000 gunmen.



Afghan colleagues, Taliban groups control a sizable part of Afghan settlements on the border with Tajikistan and they keep moving closer to the border, which cannot but alarm Dushanbe," the source added. Focusing on the situation in another Afghan province bordering on Tajikistan, Kunduz, he said a trench war and sporadic shootouts between Afghan government troops and Taliban fighters have continued there after Taliban seized the administrative center on September 29. (Agencies)

## Afghanistan and Russia to Sign a Deal for Delivery of Mi-35 Gunships



KABUL - Zamir Kabulov, President Putin's special representative for Afghanistan has said that Afghanistan and Russia will sign an agreement for the delivery of Mi-35 gunship helicopters, it has been reported. Zamir Kabulov said the agreement is expected to be signed by the two countries during the ongoing month. Without

disclosing the exact the agreement would be signed, Kabulov, said the Russian President Vladimir Putin has instructed Moscow to deliver the gunships to Afghanistan in a bid to boost the capabilities of the Afghan army. "Russia is already providing certain assistance in strengthening the capabilities of the Afghan ... (More on P4)...(6)

## Military Begins House-to-House Searches in Kunduz



KABUL - Security forces launched a long-awaited house-to-house search operation of residential homes in Kunduz city in a BID to flush out insurgents, officials reported. TOLONews correspondent Sharif Amiry - who is embedded with the security forces - reported that scores of houses in different areas have been cleared of militants - who seized the city last Monday. Several gov-

ernment facilities that were over run by Taliban assailants have also been retaken, Amiry reported. However he said landmines placed by the Taliban in these facilities are still a big threat. "We have launched our search operation and the enemies are fleeing the area because they cannot confront us," a Kunduz police officer said, noting that about 80 percent of Police District (PD) four of the city has been ... (More on P4)...(8)

## Afghanistan Seeks Full Membership in the SCO

DUSHANBE - Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Secretary-General Dmitry Mezentsev has said that Afghanistan is seeking full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). "The Afghan authorities have recently applied to the president of the country chairing the SCO requesting for its full membership in the Organization," Dmitry Mezentsev said. According to him, the current

situation in Afghanistan has a special place on the SCO's agenda of the day. Issues relating to providing regional stability have assumed more significance. "Cooperation with Afghanistan must be built not only on combating terrorism or drug trafficking but also in the economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres," the SCO official said, noting that the SCO keeps and develops new system of priorities - expansion of ... (More on P4)...(11)

## Sharif to Brief Obama on Pakistan's Efforts to Resume Talks between Kabul, Taliban



ISLAMABAD - Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is likely to brief US President Barack Obama about Pakistan's efforts to resume talks between Afghanistan and the Taliban, a source told The Express Tribune. The disclosure came following a meeting between the premier and army chief General Raheel Sharif on Friday. "PM Nawaz, during his visit to the US will brief US President Barack Obama about Pakistan's efforts on resuming talks between Afghanistan

and Taliban," a source said, adding that the US is interested in seeing concrete steps being taken from Pakistan's side regarding the peace process. The civil and military leadership is likely to meet in the coming week to finalise the agenda of the premier's visit to the US and the country's stance regarding the Afghan peace and reconciliation process. Meanwhile, during the meeting, General Raheel apprised the premier of the security situation of Afghanistan and its ... (More on P4)...(13)

## MSF Officials Meet Ghani over Hospital Attack

KABUL - Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) officials on Friday met with President Ashraf Ghani over the recent deadly air strike on their facility in Kunduz.

Held at the presidential palace, the meeting was attended by Christopher Stokes, the MSF General Director; Guilhem Molinie, MSF Country Representative for Afghanistan; Mohammad Hanif Atmar, Ghani's national security advisor; and Abdul Salam Rahimi, head of president's administrative affairs office. Ghani urged however at the meeting that it was premature to judge the strike unless the



investigations are completed, Ghani's office said in a statement. He stressed that the Afghan forces did not get into the hospital and no security force member violated human's rights, it added. The airstrike was conducted

in the early hours of the Saturday morning, killing 22 people, including 12 staff members of MSF, also called doctors without Borders." MSF officials have however blamed the United States, demanding an independent investigation into the incident.

This comes after the United States' commander of international forces in Afghanistan Gen. John Campbell said on Tuesday that the airstrike on the hospital had been a mistake. Campbell said U.S. forces had responded to requests from Afghan forces and provided close air support as they engaged in a fight with Taliban militants in Kunduz city - which fell to the Taliban last Monday. Ghani meanwhile assigned a fact-finding team to review the Kunduz situation. Members of the new task team ... (More on P4)...(7)

## MSF Rejects Taliban Claims Hospital as Base to Launch Attacks

KABUL - Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) on Thursday rejected claims that the Taliban had used their Kunduz hospital as a base to fire on security forces. addressing a press conference in Kabul, MSF General Director Christopher Stokes and Afghanistan Country Representative Guilhem Molinie also made it clear that the attack was a violation of international laws. Molinie said: "Statements alleging that the hospital had been used as a base to launch armed attacks are baseless and entirely without merit."

"No armed insurgents were hiding out in the hospital at the time of the attack," he said. He went on to say MSF had regularly shared the Kunduz hospital's location with officials. "They had shared GPS coordinates with Afghan and US forces," he said. Molinie and Stokes both emphasized the organization's impartiality in treating patients and emphasized that their hospitals are a weapons free zone. "The presence of any armed people ... (More on P4)...(10)

## Withdrawal of Int'l Forces from Afghanistan Worsens Situation

MOSCOW - The hasty withdrawal of the international stabilization force has led to the landslide deterioration of the situation in Afghanistan, Russia's Ambassador to NATO Alexander Grushko told a news conference on Friday.

"What has happened was what we had warned of for a long time. The hasty withdrawal of the international stabilization force has led to the landslide deterioration of the security situation," he



said. "We see not only the strengthening of the Taliban movement, but what is especially worrisome, the penetration of Islamic State into Afghanistan," the diplomat

added. "By all odds, about 4,000 Islamic State gunmen are already in Afghanistan, and their ranks grow." "Kunduz became a cold shower ... (More on P4)...(9)

## Spanish, German FMs ask for World Collaboration to End Syrian War

MADRID - Spanish foreign Minister Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo met here on Friday his German counterpart Frank-Walter Steinmeier, where both asked for collaboration between countries in order to end the Syrian war.

The German minister expressed his concern about the situation in Syria and the difficult path to reach a solution.

"What it was not easy to solve before, it has become even more difficult to solve," he said, highlighting that "we should not stop looking for solutions, the Arab partners as well as Russia and the United States should be at the negotiating table and of course, a solution will not be possible without Iran and Turkey." Margallo said that a ceasefire was needed and asked for the collaboration of all parties who have interest in the area in order to promote a transition towards a secular government that respects all different ethnic and religious groups.

"It is important the collaboration of Turkey, it is important the collaboration of Saudi Arabia, and also Iran, it is important to look for cooperation between Russia and the United States to fight the common enemy," he insisted.

"The important part is to fight terrorist groups, but without forgetting a political process," Steinmeier said.

At the meeting both ministers considered the relationship between Germany and Spain was at an excellent moment ... (More on P4)...(15)

## Fifth FMIC Int'l Conference Focuses on Maternal and Child Health



KABUL - Participants reaffirmed their commitment to reducing preventable deaths among women and children in Afghanistan - the Kabul Declaration for Maternal and Child Health - on Thursday on the first day of the French Medical Institute for Children's (FMIC) fifth international conference.

This year's conference is on Emerging Trends in Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (RMNCH) in Developing Countries in response to the global Call to Action to mobilize countries to promote maternal and child health.

Afghanistan has made remarkable progress over the last decade. There has been a 10-fold increase in community health workers, over 3,300 midwives are now

available at government healthcare facilities (up from 489 midwives in 2002), vaccination has increased significantly and stunting has decreased by 1/3 in the last decade. But several challenges remain including unequal health coverage between provinces and between urban and rural areas. In her opening remarks, Dr Farida Mohmand, Minister of Higher Education spoke about the importance of "knowledge exchange and research in identifying health interventions that can produce tangible results." Innovative partnerships between higher education institutions, the private sector and healthcare units are essential to discovering the evidence base towards change she added. "Capacity building and monitoring performance on a number of indicators are part ... (More on P4)...(16)