

We could never learn to be brave and patient, if there were only joy in the world.
Helen Keller

Pakistan, Afghanistan Agree to End Blame Game: Aziz

KABUL - Pakistan and Afghanistan have agreed to end a blame game over a spate of attacks and said they will instead work to restore trust, Pakistan's foreign policy chief said. Sartaj Aziz, foreign affairs adviser to Pakistan's prime minister, visited the Afghan capital Kabul on Friday for a regional economic conference and also held meetings with the president, foreign minister and national security adviser. President Ashraf Ghani had however made closer ties with Pakistan a priority when he took office last year, hoping Islamabad could push Afghan Taliban leaders to the bargaining table to end Afghanistan's long war.



The relationship appeared to yield fruit in July with groundbreaking official peace talks with the militants. But after confirmation of the death of group's founder Mullah Mohammad Omar, the process was suspended and the Taliban launched a wave of attacks in Kabul, killing more than 50 people. Speaking on state television on Saturday after meeting Ghani, Reuters reported that Aziz said: "The main thing that we both agreed upon was to restore trust, end the blame game against each other and create a positive atmosphere." "We will work on establishing memorandum of trust building to avoid such a situation in the future." Afghanistan ... (More on P4)...(1)

Eliminate Terrorist Sanctuaries, Pakistan Reminded



KABUL - Afghanistan once again asked Pakistan on Sunday to take concrete action against insurgents who had declared war on the Afghan people from its territory. "We reiterate our position and state facts, asking Pakistan to take action against terrorist groups inside its territory that declare war against our people," a statement from the president's office said. It added Pakistan should eliminate terror camps on its soil, from where attacks were planned against the people of Afghanistan. President Ashraf Ghani, during a meeting with Pakistani National Security Advisor Sartaj Aziz, reiterated Kabul's stance and asked Islamabad to move against terrorist ... (More on P4)...(2)

SOM a Bridge Between Past & Future Pledges: Haysom

KABUL - The UN's top diplomat in Kabul on Saturday described a high-level meeting in Kabul to review Afghanistan's reform vision and progress towards realising self-reliance as a "vital part of the bridge between past commitments and future pledges. In his address to the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), Nicholas Haysom, the head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), said "renewing those commitments to demonstrate not



only Afghanistan's needs on-going support, but to inspire confidence in those that have promised to walk with Afghanistan as it takes on its difficult challenges." Delegates from key donor states ... (More on P4)...(3)

Afghan Government Accused of Inaction on Mining Safeguards

KABUL - Two anti-corruption organizations on Sunday accused Afghanistan's government of failing to take action to protect its vital mining sector from graft and conflict.

Global Witness and Integrity Watch Afghanistan said President Ashraf Ghani's administration didn't present any concrete measures for protecting and developing its \$1 trillion worth of mineral assets during a meeting of donors in Kabul. Mining is one of the few avenues for developing a self-sustaining economy in Afghanistan and ending the country's reliance on international aid. Despite its potential, international investors are reluctant to enter Afghanistan because of conflict, corruption, poor infrastructure and lack of a mining law that meets international norms.

The Taliban, which has waged a 14-year insurgency in Afghanistan, has seized mineral assets across the country, profiting from illegal mining of gold, talc, marble, chromite and gemstones. A new United Nations report said the Taliban's income from illegal mining operations and extortion activities was "very significant," worth perhaps tens of millions of dollars each year and second only to revenue from narcotics. Opium produced in Afghanistan accounts for most of the world's heroin and is estimated to be worth \$3 billion annually, about one-third of it going to the insurgents. Delegations from 41 countries and 11 international non-government organizations, which support Afghanistan's economic, security and social reconstruction, met in ... (More on P4)...(6)

World Bank Predicts Slow Recovery for Afghanistan

KABUL - Annette Dixon, Vice President for South Asia Region, The World Bank, summed up Afghanistan's present economic climate in a speech to delegates at the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) in Kabul and said that although they expected the transition period to be difficult, they now see it has "affected Afghanistan much more severely than many of us anticipated." In her speech she said Afghanistan faces tremendous challenges surrounding growth, employment creation and poverty reduction

and the role of peace and reconciliation in enabling the government's vision for greater self-reliance. She said: "We expected the governance and security situation to dip momentarily, economic growth to decline and fiscal management to be difficult. The Chicago and Tokyo commitments prepared us for this. But what we did not predict was how long-lasting the impact of the political transition would be and how deeply it would affect the recovery process." "The National Unity Government inherited weak governance institutions and serious fiscal situation as a result of the transition. Increased violence and conflict, pervasive corruption and political uncertainty have taken a toll



on private investment and employment generation. Over one third of the ... (More on P4)...(4)

Kabul Asks Tehran to Legalise Afghan Refugees' Stay



KABUL - As Kabul and Tehran on Sunday discussed the refugees' problems living in Iran, Afghanistan asked the neighbor country to issue cards to unregistered Afghans and provide them

visas and education facilities. Refugees and Repatriation Minister Sayed Hussain Alami Balkhi and an Iranian delegation led by Iran's Deputy Interior Minister Zulfiqari ... (More on P4)...(5)

President Ashraf Ghani Iraq, Afghanistan Share Many Commonalities

KABUL - President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani in meeting with deputy to foreign ministry of Iraq, Omar Ahmad Karim Al-Barzanji in Kabul said that Iraq and Afghanistan have many commonalities as both countries are facing terrorist threats and can understand each other's feeling in happiness and sadness.

Stressing for further enhancing relations and sharing experiences, the president said that Afghanistan has been trying to boost its relations with countries in the region especially Iraq's two neighboring states - Iran and Turkey.

Thanking the president, the Iraqi diplomat stressed for boosting relations between Iraq and Afghanistan, adding that because of good relations he attended the RECCA conference here in Kabul. (BNA)

Afghan, Tajik Foreign Ministers Discuss on Expansion of Cooperation



KABUL - Salahuddin Rabbani, Minister of Foreign Affairs in a meeting with Tajik foreign affairs minister Sarajuddin Aselov discussed on expansion of cooperation between the two countries.

In the meeting held in sideline of 6th Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA VI), both sides discussed related to cooperation between Afghanistan and Tajikistan in bilateral and multilateral levels in political, security, cultural, trade and transit, railway, energy issues and exchanging prisoners. According to another report, Afghanistan minister of foreign affairs in a separate meeting with Qatari minister of foreign affairs asked for investment of Qatari traders in various fields in Afghanistan.

Afterwards, Qatari minister of foreign affairs has shown his country's interest in ... (More on P4)...(7)

NATO Commander Suggests Taliban is Losing War in Afghanistan

KABUL - Gen. Philip Breedlove, NATO's Allied Commander for Europe, reportedly indicated that the Taliban is no longer capable of inflicting harm on the people of Afghanistan.



His comments come amid a record number of casualties among Afghan civilians and security forces meted out by the terrorist group, which continues to seize territory in the country.

Gen. Breedlove, echoing the Pentagon, appeared to downplay concerted attacks carried by a resurgent Taliban against Afghan forces, which are supposed to have taken over the lead of security operations since President Obama ended the U.S.-led combat mission in the country at the end of last year.

"NATO assessments show that Taliban attacks have decreased by up to 20 per cent in the past few months," Breedlove told reporters on Thursday at the headquarters of the NATO-led Resolute Support mission in Kabul, TOLO News reports.

The NATO commander "believes that the Taliban is no longer able to continue the ... (More on P4)...(8)

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