

Quote of the Day

A little knowledge that acts is worth infinitely more than much knowledge that is idle.
Khalil Gibran

Kerry Aims to Ease Crisis over Unity Pact

KABUL - U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry made an unannounced trip to Afghanistan on Saturday to show support for the government and to try to defuse a political crisis fueled in part by a national unity deal he brokered in 2014.

The visit comes at a difficult moment for Afghanistan, with President Ashraf Ghani's government weakened by infighting between political rivals, the economy sinking and the resurgent Taliban stronger than at any time since they were toppled from power in late 2001. State Department spokesman



John Kirby said Kerry would "emphasize U.S. support" for the government and its security forces, which NATO officials say fully control no more than 70 percent of Af-

ghanistan. U.S. forces in Afghanistan are due to be almost halved to 5,500 from the current 9,800 by the start of 2017, and the new commander in Afghanistan, General John Nicholson, is conducting a review of security before making his recommendations to Washington some time in June. In addition to showing support for the government, the visit also appears aimed at prodding Afghanistan's fractious political class into working more productively. "Democracy requires ... a willingness by people from various ... (More on P4)...(1)

WJ Approves Nominees for Interior Minister, AG



KABUL - Afghan lawmakers Saturday approved the government's nominees for interior minister and attorney general. The parliamentary vote confirmed nominations of Interior Minister Taj Muhammad Jahed, a former army general, and Attorney General Mohammad Farid, formerly a member of the Afghan human rights commission.

The two slots play a central role in tackling the growing Taliban insurgency and combating endemic corruption in Afghan institutions. Jahed was appointed as acting interior minister in February after the resignation of his predecessor, Noorul-Haq Otomi, in the face of heavy criticism over worsening national security. President ... (More on P4)...(2)

Afs 3b to be Saved in MoD Procurement Affairs this Year



KABUL - Ministry of Defence (MoD) officials on Saturday said mechanisms adopted in the ministry's procurement affairs would help save three billion afghanis in 2016.

Deputy Defence Minister Maj. Gen. Ghulam Sakhi Ahmadzai told reporters here reforms the MoD brought to the anti-corruption campaign had positive impact on many contracts. "We have made corrections in contracts particularly on supplying ammunition, equipment, uniforms and ration. Our other reform schemes and plans will fortunately save three billions afs in current year." Ahmadzai giving an example said one billion afs would be saved ration, 200 millions in sewing 196,000 military uniforms, 190 millions in air forces flights and 600 millions in electricity and generators. "We have decided to work sincerely with regard to procurement activities and we are ready to offer accountability to the international community for every afghani we spent", he said. Meanwhile, MoD spokesman Brig. Gen. Dawlat Waziri said the movement of enemies in various parts of the country had been blocked by Afghan National Army (ANA).

The ANA soldiers conducted 13 coordinated operations in some provinces, killing 21 insurgents, wounding 16 others and detaining 18 more during the past 21 hours, he said.

Waziri said a large cache of weapons and ammunition was also recovered during the operations, but said nothing about ANA casualties. (Pajhwok)

Youth Launch Pro-Police Campaign in Kabul



KABUL - A public campaign "every citizen is a police" to show solidarity with the force was launched on Saturday by dozens of youth in central capital Kabul.

Dressed in a special outfit that represented police, the youth gathered in the fourth police district and then embarked on vehicles traveling to different parts of the city. They held banners and placards in their hands to demonstrate support for police.

Muhibullah, a 12th class graduate, said the purpose of this movement was to spread awareness among people to extend every kind of assistance to the police. He said they wanted the people to realize they were responsible to be cooperative with police. Former Wolesi Jirga member Farkhunda Zahra Nadari said it was the duty of police to enforce law. She said police should avoid treating the communities they served on ethnic lines.

She told reporters the law and order was a collective responsibility and everyone should play their role in bringing peace and stability to the country.

Ministry of Interior spokesman Sedique Sediqui said police had every Afghan's support in every part of the country. He praised the youth for launching the campaign to increase support for police. (Pajhwok)

Salahuddin Rabbani

Foreign Help Needed to Advance Peace Talks

KABUL - Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani said that Afghan government is making every effort to advance peace and reconciliation, but those efforts will not "bear fruit" unless the Taliban comes to the negotiating table.

He commented on Saturday at the Bilateral Commission meeting with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, who made an unannounced stop in Kabul during a tour of the Middle East and Asia.

"We believe the international community can



help encourage key actors in the region to have the Taliban group engage in direct talks with the Afghan government," said the foreign minister. US support Support of efforts that could lead to the resump-

tion of peace talks between the Afghan government and Taliban is one of the focal points for Kerry, who is also meeting with President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah during his one-day visit to Kabul. The so-called Quadrilateral Coordination Group, consisting of the U.S., Afghanistan, Pakistan and China, has been trying to get peace talks moving. However, Taliban representatives refused to take part in a meeting that was planned for March. "When you have terrorists who are attempting to stop that work, stand in the way of that work, limit its success or even turn the clock backwards, obviously there is no time to relax," he added. Peace talks on hold Some ... (More on P4)...(3)

Chinese, Afghan Investment Delegations in Chabahar



KABUL - Foreign investment delegations from China and Afghanistan arrived in Chabahar, in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan separately on Saturday to study investment prospects in the zone's industrial and trade sectors, announced the managing director of Chabahar Free Trade Zone. Hamed Ali Mobaraki told IRNA that the Chinese delegation plans to create Chinese industrial town and building a shipyard. He said that Chinese delegation will meet the governor general of Sistan-Baluchestan Province, transportation managers and deputy head of Chabahar Free Trade Zone for economic affairs. Referring to the visit by an Afghan delegation, he said that in addition to meetings and joint visits, they will become acquainted with the region's potentials. He said the launching a transit line from Chabahar to Afghanistan is among the objectives of the Afghan delegation's visit. (Agencies)

Abdullah Meets U.S. Special Envoy



KABUL - Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah on Saturday met with United States Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Olson and discussed ways on how to further boost bilateral cooperation between the two allied nations with the main focus on the recent political and military developments in the country. At the meeting, the CEO and U.S. envoy expressed hope that the bilateral cooperation will further develop in the days to come. U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan Michael McKinley also attended the meeting. (Tolonews)

NATO-Russia Council to Meet on Ukraine Crisis, Afghanistan



MOSCOW - The NATO-Russia Council will meet in the next two weeks for the first time since 2014 to discuss the Ukraine crisis. "Following consultations with Russia, we have agreed to hold a meeting of the NATO-Russia Council at Ambassadorial level," NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, said in a statement on Friday. The meeting at the NATQ headquarters in Brussels will discuss the crisis in and around Ukraine and the need to fully implement the Minsk Agreements. "We will discuss military activities, with particular focus on transparency and risk reduction. We will also address the security situation in Afghanistan, including regional terrorist threats," Stoltenberg added. NATO ... (More on P4)...(4)

Dozens Rally Against Corruption in Passport Department

HERAT CITY - Dozens of people on Saturday staged a protest rally against what they called corruption in the passport department of western Herat province. Nearly 100 people gathered in front of the governor's house, asking officials to resolve problems people faced in getting passports. "I applied for passport about six or seven months ago, but I did not get it," one of the protesters, Haji Kamidan, told Pajhwok Afghan News. Another participant of the rally, Farid Ahmad, accused the passport officials of negligence and corruption. "If those who pay bribes, get their passports the same day. I can't get it because I hardly earn 200 afghanis a day to support my family." Ghulam Sarwar, a resident of Shindand district, said he spent 1000 afs each time travelling to Herat City to get his passport, but he just wasted his time and money. The passport department officials and police did not respond to the protest, but the governor's spokesman, Gilani Farhad, ... (More on P4)...(5)

Islamabad to Push for Refugees' Return at Istanbul Summit



KABUL - Islamabad will renew its demand for an early return of Afghan refugees to their country at the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit in Turkey next month, a media report said.

A Pakistan-based newspaper, The Express Tribune, quoted an unnamed official as saying: "Islamabad is also invited to the first global meeting due in Istanbul on May 23."

Being arranged at the initiative of the UN secretary-general, the two-day meeting could take important decision on the repatriation of the Afghan refugees, the daily said.

Representatives of governments, humanitarian organisations and victims of crises will put their heads together on how to meet the challenges posed by new waves of refugees.

In the wake of a string of deadly attacks in recent months, the Pakistan government has repeatedly pushed for the repatriation of Afghan refugees because of security concerns. (Pajhwok)

Procurement, Employment in Afghan Telecom Being Assessed



KABUL - The procurement and employment processes in the Afghan Telecom and the Afghanistan Telecom Regulatory Authority (ATRA) are being assessed by a professional delegation assigned by President Ashraf Ghani, the Presidential Palace said on Saturday.

The decision came at a meeting chaired by President Ghani on evaluation of the Afghan Telecom and ATRA's performance at the palace.

A statement from the presidential palace to Pajhwok Afghan News said the meeting was attended by telecommunications and information technology minister, anti-corruption department head, deputy finance minister, administrative office's procurement head and the Afghan Telecom director.

The president stressed that procurement and employment processes in the Afghan Telecom company and ATRA should be comprehensively assessed by a professional delegation.

Transparency should be observed in all the processes and problems in contracts and employments in the mentioned organs should be resolved, the statement quoted Ghani as saying. (Pajhwok)