

Quote of the Day

A good plan, violently executed now, is better than a perfect plan next

George S. Patton

ERC Meets with Experts, Stakeholders for Guidance on Reform

KABUL - The newly established Electoral Reform Commission (ERC) kicked off its reform agenda this week by engaging members of the international community, women rights advocacy groups and other civil society institutions in hopes of culling feedback on the most pressing issues facing Afghanistan's electoral system. Since its formation last week, the ERC has hit the ground running, seeking to make up for time lost after months of delays caused by disagreements between top national unity governmental leaders over the composition of the commission. The scheduling of Parliamentary elections is largely dependent on how and when the ERC gets reform implemented.



"The commission (ERC) is determined to take advantage of all ideas and perspectives that seem to be in the interests of Afghanistan," ERC chairman Shah Sultan Akifi said of the stakeholder meetings held this week. Referring to the international election experts engaged by the ERC, Akifi said they have been asked to submit written recommendations. "To be honest, we need their ideas, and we do not believe that the ideas offered by foreign experts is interference - we believe that it is for the betterment of Afghanistan," he said. Specifically, the ERC has said it hopes international experts, many of who are associated with organizations and governments that have threatened to cut off ... (More on P4)...(1)

MoD Prevents Collapse of 41 Districts in Past Four Months



KABUL - The Ministry of Defense's Operations Director General Afzal Aman said on Thursday that due to the dedication of the ministry and troops they have prevented the collapse of 41 districts in Afghanistan in the past four months. Aman, who had been speaking at a press conference in Kabul, said that Taliban insurgents had shown themselves in

all parts of the country in the past few months but that they had faced defeat. The director general said that the collapse of many districts to the Taliban was a tactical retreat and that military advancement, clear operations and other issues are what's important. Aman said that only district governor buildings in ... (More on P4)...(2)

Peace Talks a Moment of Opportunity for Taliban: US

WASHINGTON - The peace talks is a moment of opportunity for the Taliban, the US said Thursday.

"Without being able to predict the future, it (peace talks) is clearly a moment of opportunity and we would encourage Taliban to use this time of opportunity to make genuine peace with the Afghan government and to rebuild their lives in peace in Afghanistan," the State Department Spokesperson, Mark Toner, told reporters at his daily news conference.



They could accept the government of Afghanistan's invitation to join a peace process and ultimately become part of the legitimate political system of a sovereign, united Afghanistan

supported by the international community, or they could choose to continue fighting Afghans and destabilizing their own country, he said Responding to a question, Toner ... (More on P4)...(3)

Second Round of Peace Expected Soon: US



KABUL - The second round of talks between Afghan officials and Taliban is expected to be commenced soon, a US official has said on Friday. Daniel F. Feldman, the US special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, told a press conference he could not think the peace process would get further delayed.

He could not tell about the exact date of peace talks but assured that his country after demand by Pakistan and Afghanistan would attend the talks as observer. The special representative who visited Pakistan earlier reached Kabul on Thursday said that he had detailed and ... (More on P4)...(5)

Taliban Say Unaware of 2nd Round of Peace Negotiations

KABUL - A day after their leader's reported death, the Taliban said on Thursday they have not been informed about the second round of peace talks scheduled for Friday in Pakistan.

Zabihullah Mujahid, Taliban spokesperson, said: "Media circulate reports that talks will take place very soon ... either inside the country, in China or Pakistan." The Taliban political office in Qatar had complete authority to be part of the political process but it was unaware of such a development, he said in a statement. Taliban had a political office which dealt with political affairs and the group had reiterated this stance time and again, he said after Pakistan and Afghanistan officials confirmed ... (More on P4)...(6)

Senior Taliban Members Oppose Mansour as New Leader

KABUL - Certain senior members of the Taliban have reportedly opposed appointment of Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour as the successor of Taliban's late Supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar.

Mansour was elected, according to a Taliban statement to the media on Thursday, as the new leader of the Taliban after the Afghan government and as well as the Taliban confirmed the reclusive Mullah Omar died in 2013 in Pakistan's port city of Karachi.

According to the reports, Abdul Qayoum Zakir, Taliban's military head; Mullah



Habibullah, a member of Taliban Quetta Shura; and Sayed Tayib Agha, head of Taliban's political office in Qatar are among the senior Taliban members that disagree the appointment of Mansour - who was Mullah Omar's deputy. Meanwhile, the analysts believe the mysterious death of one-eyed Taliban leader could further

divide the group. Earlier, some Pakistani media reports suggested that Omar's son, Mullah Mohammad Yaquob, was himself hoping to succeed his father - a move that was reportedly opposed by some members of the group.

"The disagreement [between Taliban members] is very dangerous for peace in Afghanistan," an Afghan lawmaker Ahmad Behzad told TOLONews.

But some others believe Pakistan is attempting to divide the Taliban to have its more influence in the group. "Pakistan wanted a coup on the ... (More on P4)...(4)

Dr. Abdullah Another Woman to be Introduced for SC

KABUL - The Chief Executive Officer Dr. Abdullah Abdullah has said another women would be introduced as the member of the Supreme Court (SC) of Afghanistan following Anisa Rasooly's rejection by the Afghan parliament. The commitment CEO Abdullah was made during a meeting with the female lawmakers, women rights advocates and civil society activists on Thursday.

He praised the women role in politics, social and cultural affairs of the country and promised to support the women and their role in the government of national unity. ... (More on P4)...(7)

China to Back Pakistan, Others for Afghan Peace



KABUL - China expressed its backing for Pakistan and other parties for peace and reconciliation in the Afghanistan, days after the second round of peace talks were postponed following news of Taliban leader Mullah Muhammad Omar's death, media reports.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry said while Beijing understands the reasons for postponement of talks, it wants all parties to focus

on national unity and lasting peace in Afghanistan and continue to push forward the peace and reconciliation process.

Talks were scheduled to take place in Xinjiang's provincial capital Urumqi, but shifted to Pakistan, where the first round was held.

Following reports of Taliban supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar's death, the movement's ... (More on P4)...(8)

Gen. Campbell Meets Sayyaf over Afghanistan's Situation



KABUL - The Resolute Support Mission (RSM) commander, General John Campbell, has reportedly met with a former Jihadi commander, Abdul Rab Rassoul Sayyaf, over the security situation of Afghanistan.

Gen. Campbell is seen meeting with Sayyaf in pictures posted on a Facebook page attributed to Sayyaf, the former warlord.

In addition, a source - who attended the meeting - told TOLONews on condition of anonymity that Gen.

Campbell asked Sayyaf at the meeting to increase his cooperation with the National Unity Government (NUG).

According to the source, the foreign troops' commander believes Afghanistan's current situation is unsatisfactory; therefore, he wants influential figures to cooperate with the NUG - which took power last year in September. Sources close to Sayyaf confirmed the meeting.

But RSM has not yet commented in this respect. ... (More on P4)...(9)

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