

<b>Jalalabad</b> Clear 38°C 27°C	<b>Ghazni</b> Clear 31°C 17°C	<b>Kandahar</b> Clear 38°C 21°C	<b>Mazar</b> Clear 37°C 28°C	<b>Herat</b> Clear 34°C 20°C	<b>Bamayan</b> Clear 25°C 11°C	<b>Kabul</b> Clear 33°C 19°C
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# Foreign Ministry a Weak, Incapable Institution: CEO's Office

KABUL - The Office of the Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah Saturday said that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) has become a weak and ineffective institution, accusing the presidential palace of monopolizing the authorities of Afghanistan's diplomatic institution.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs is also among the ministers who has not enough authority to do his job, the CEO's office said.

The CEO's office has added that the centralization of power in the presidential palace has undermined the ability of the ministry of foreign affairs and the job of the minister. Meanwhile, a number



of political analysts have also said that MoFA's power for mapping out the nation's foreign policy track has also been confiscated and monopolized by certain elements close to the presidential palace.

In a recent development, Afghan ambassador to Oslo Manizha Bakhtari resigned from her post over what she called monopolization, discriminatory policies and nepotism by the president and his colleagues.

In a letter, Bakhtari wrote that the distribution of government posts among certain tribes and colleagues has been unprecedented in Afghanistan's history. The statement...*(More on P4)...(10)*

## Samangan Almond Yield Shoots up, but Prices Decline



AIBAK - Almond production in northern Samangan province has increased four times over the last year, agriculture and livestock officials say.

Farmers in some parts of the province have harvested the crop in some areas of Samangan while their counterparts in other areas are still busy collecting them.

Noor Mohammad, director of agriculture and livestock, told Pajhwok Afghan News the yield in Aibak, Hazrat Sultan and KhuramSarbagh districts was used as a yardstick.

The overall yield of almond is estimated at 2,000 tonnes in 2016, compared with last year's 500 tonnes. He reckoned the fruit's value at 430 million afghanis.

Currently, per seven kilograms of almond cost 1,200 afghanis to 5,000 afghanis based on their quality in Aibak, the provincial capital, Mohammad said.

However, he added the agriculture and livestock department calculated the cost of per seven kilograms at 1,500 afghanis.

Known types of almond in Samangan are Starbayee, Khairudini, Shakorbayee, Qambari, Maroji, Sandoqi, Kaghazi and Sangak.

Residents of the province call Starbayee almond the best of all varieties. Mohammad recalled growers had earned 114 million afghanis last year.

In 2015, seven kilograms of almond accounted for 1,600 afghanis. Farmers, satisfied with the almond production this year, complain the price has dropped.

Mullah Aziz, one...*(More on P4)...(12)*

## More than 100 Killed in Fresh Wave of Violence: MoD

KABUL - Nearly a dozen Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers and more than 90 insurgents have been killed in a new wave of violence across the country, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) said Saturday.

At least 11 soldiers and 92 fighters were killed in operations, backed by ANA artillery units and the Afghan Air Force, in different provinces over the past 24 hours, a statement from the ministry said.

Forty of the rebels perished in Khushmand Zerokand Khaikot districts of southeastern Paktika province and 30 others, including 9 militants, in Samkanai and Janikhel districts of Paktia.

Seventeen insurgents were eliminated during a separate operation in the Dahna-i-Ghori district of northern Baghlan province. Others 5 militants were killed in Laghman and Faryab provinces.*(Pajhwok)*

## Acting Positions Set to Continue

KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani has indicated that he will move to end the culture of caretakers as he intends to appoint an administrative reform council which will end acting positions in government departments.

"Administrative reforms high council will soon start its work. This council will start employing Afghan talented youth in governmental institutions. National unity government decided to end acting positions soon," Sayed Murtazawi, deputy presidential spokesman said.

Analysts say that this situation has prevented the improvement in most sectors



in the country and if it continues, Afghan people will suffer more and more. According to the national unity government agreement, both leaders need to agree on appointing key persons in governmental institutions.

Leaders' disagreements resulted in the continuation of acting positions and in most governmental institution dozens of posts are filled with acting staff.

Ministry of Urban Development is one of the departments that has the most acting positions. In addition the directorate of Kabul urban planning development, directorate of policy and plan, directorate of finance, directorate of internal audit, directorate of human resources, directorate of procurement, and directorate of information and public relation duties are carried out by acting directors. Along with...*(More on P4)...(11)*

## Asfandyar Against Forcible Return of Afghan Refugees

KABUL - Pashtun nationalist leader Asfandyar Wali Khan has said his party, Awami National Party, would oppose forcible return of Afghan refugees and condemned the harassment of Afghans at the hands of police.

Addressing a party gathering commemorating a 1948 massacre of Pashtuns in his hometown of Charsadda, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on Friday, the ANP leader asked the Pakistan government to review its foreign policy, particularly the Afghan policy.

He said that cordial relations with Afghanistan were in the interest of Pakistan. "Afghans were garlanded when our establishment needed them and after achieving the objectives they were expelled," Asfandyar maintained. The Babbra massacre occurred on August 12, 1948, in Charsadda district...*(More on P4)...(13)*

## Roads to Lashkargah City Blocked As War Rages

LASHKARGAH - After a week of closure, the Kandahar-Lashkargah highway has been reopened for traffic, officials said on Saturday.

Abdul Ghafoor Tokhi, Helmand's transportation director, told Pajhwok Afghan News security forces reopened the highway on Friday night. The road had been blocked by Taliban militants for traffic in Durahi area for the past one week, he said.

Driver Shahabuddin confirmed the road had been reopened, but people fearing clashes were reluctant to travel the highway. "People don't travel this highway, concerned about possible Taliban attacks."

Another driver, Baghi, said: "Taliban had planted bombs on the highway but the security forces have defused them. "The government should ensure highway security if it wants people to feel...*(More on P4)...(15)*

## KP Assembly Slams Crackdown on Afghan Refugees

PESHAWAR - The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Assembly, slamming an ongoing police crackdown on refugees, has demanded Afghans in Pakistan be given ample time to wind up their business.

In a rare unity, lawmakers on Friday stressed an immediate halt to the harassment of Afghan refugees. They denounced raid on refugees' homes in Peshawar as unlawful and inhuman.

Qurban Khan, a member of the ruling Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaf party, said Afghan refugees had set up businesses worth billions of rupees during their stay in Pakistan over the past three decades and a half. "After the crackdown, they are confused what to do. They can't wind up their businesses in such a short time," he remarked, calling for treating the Afghan traders in a decent way. Under the agree-



ment among Pakistan, Afghanistan and UHCR, the legislators said, the legal stay of registered Afghans was to last until the end of December 2016 but the police had made their lives miserable. Launching the debate on the issues, Awami National Party parliamentary leader Sardar Hussain Babak wanted to know who had ordered police to hound Afghan refugees. "Being Muslims and Pakhtuns, we have strong relations with Afghans, so the provincial government should honour them," Babak said, regretting the characterization of all Afghans as terrorists. Opposition leader Maulana Lutfur Rehman said no one could damage relations of Pakhtuns with Afghans. "We have the same religion, same language, same culture and same history."*(Pajhwok)*

## Protestors Again Block Kabul-North Highway

PUL-I-KHUMRI - The Kabul-North Highway was again blocked by hundreds of protestors on Saturday while rallying against the government inaction to rescue besieged security forces in Janikhel district of southwestern Paktia province.

The highway was blocked on Friday but later it was briefly reopened on Saturday morning. The protestors numbering around 300 blocked the Kabul-Pul-i-Khumri Highway on Friday against what they said government's negligence to rescue the trapped security forces.

Ali Ahmad, a former jihadi commander, who attended the rally, told Pajhwok Afghan News his sons serving in the



Afghan National Army (ANA) had been besieged by Taliban insurgents over the past few days in Janikhel district, but the government was paying no attention to get them free.

He said there was no positive response from the government and they had to again close the highway for traffic since 10am on Saturday morning.

Ahmad had earlier said the route was temporarily opened at about 1am on Friday night and if the government failed to act and rescue the security personnel in Janikhel, they would again close...*(More on P4)...(14)*

## Kabul Eagles Cruise into Shpageeza Semifinals

KABUL - Kabul Eagles registered a third victory in the ongoing Alokozai National Shpageeza T20 tournament in Kabul by defeating Mes Aynak Heroes on Saturday. The tournament featuring cricket teams from Kabul and the five zones was launched four days ago at the Alokozai International Cricket Stadium in Kabul. The first match of the day on Saturday was played between Kabul Eagles and Mes Aynak Heroes. The Eagles won the toss and opted to bat first, setting the rivals 166 runs target in the

20 overs game for the loss of seven wickets. Eagles captain Asghar Stanikzai played an excellent innings with the bat and contributed 70 valuable runs to his side. He was declared the man of the match. The Mes Aynak batsmen could not stay on the crease due to fiery bowling by the Kabul Eagles and the entire batting line collapsed at 98, with Nawroz Mangal and Noor Ali Zadrar scoring 31 and 23 runs respectively. For Kabul Eagles, Rashid Arman and Hamza Hotak shared...*(More on P4)...(16)*

## WTO's Membership Opportunity for Afghanistan to Revive Economy

KABUL - After years of negotiations, Afghanistan which applied for the membership of World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2004 finally entered the world trade body and become the 164th member of the entity in late July.

Welcoming the step as a good omen and a unique opportunity towards economic reviving of the war-torn country, Afghan experts believe that being a WTO member, Afghanistan can expand its trade and economic relations with all

the other member states. "Accession into the WTO will be a good opportunity for Afghanistan to increase its competitiveness. It will be an opportunity for the country to get the potentials to become one of the competent members of the organization," economist and university professor Hussain Mahrammi told Xinhua recently.

Getting WTO membership is a milestone for Afghanistan towards expanding its trade relations, the analyst said...*(More on P4)...(17)*

## Russian Pilot Among Crashed Copter Crew Released

KABUL - Moscow on Saturday confirmed Russian pilot Sergei Sevastyanov, seized by Taliban in Afghanistan on August 14, will be transferred soon to the Russian embassy in Islamabad.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said on Saturday among the crewmembers released on Friday and handed over to Pakistani authority was the helicopter's pilot S.K. Sevastyanov.

"We expect that now the Russian citizen will be transferred to the Russian embassy in Islamabad, which will organize for

him to return to the Fatherland," the ministry added. The Russian Foreign Ministry expressed deep gratitude to the Pakistani and Afghan authorities for energetic efforts in release of the Russian citizen.

The Pakistan-owned Mi-17 helicopter made an emergency landing in Azra district of Logar province on August 4 when it was heading for maintenance and repairs to an enterprise belonging to the Russian Helicopters Company. Pakistan's Foreign Ministry on Saturday the crew of Mi-17...*(More on P4)...(18)*