

Jalalabad Chance of Rain 15°C 11°C	Ghazni Partly Cloudy 7°C -3°C	Kandahar Chance of Rain 12°C 3°C	Mazar Chance of Snow -1°C -4°C	Herat Partly Cloudy 7°C -4°C	Bamayan Partly Cloudy 4°C -11°C	Kabul Chance of Rain 5°C 2°C
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Daily Outlook Weather Forecast

Asia the Least Connected Region in World: Zakhilwal

KABUL - Despite its vast natural resources, Central and South Asia remains the least connected region in the world in terms of trade, the Afghan ambassador to Pakistan has said. Speaking at a conference in Islamabad on Wednesday, Dr. Omar Zakhilwal said less than five percent of trade in Central and South Asia was within the region, compared to 70% in Europe. He noted there was no shortage of forums whose mandate was regional economic integration. He specifically referred to ECO, RECA, Heart of Asia, CAREC, SARRC, etc. "There is also no shortage of ideas and potential projects: TAPI, CASA, energy,



railways, highways, motorways, CPEC, etc. There is no lack of understanding the benefits from connectivity..." He said there was also a consensus on regional eco-

economic interdependence offering hope for a durable peace and stability in the region. He called for separating economics from politics and giving economics a chance

to help politics. "We must make regional connectivity and economic integration a priority of our domestic development agendas." Zakhilwal urged international partners to invest

in connectivity as part of their security and stability agenda for this region. We should embark on embedding our security objectives in our economic agenda..." (Pajhwok)

Envoy

Russia Encouraging Taliban for Peace

KABUL - Russia contacted Taliban to encourage them to join the peace process in Afghanistan, the country's envoy to Kabul said on Thursday. Alexander Mantvitskiy told a press conference in Kabul the US and NATO had failed to ensure security in Afghanistan. He said Russia's contact with Taliban was aimed at encouraging them to join to peace and protect Russian citizens. Mantvitskiy said despite US and NATO presence in Afghanistan for 15 years, they failed to achieve their basic goals particularly eliminating terrorism in Afghanistan. He said the number of terrorist groups had increased in Afghanistan compared to the past. Two new terrorist groups, including Jandullah and Daesh or Islamic (IS), had recently appeared and production and smuggling



of drugs increased than ever before, he said. "We are concerned about Daesh but we don't know who sponsor them, we want the Afghan intelligence to clear the issue," Mantvitskiy said. The ambassador said in the past also they were concerned about increasing insecurity in northern provinces near borders with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. (Pajhwok)

Young, Bright Minds Promoting Literacy in Afghanistan

BAMYAN - Running a classroom for illiterate teens and housewives in Nawjoi, a far-flung mountainous village some 3,500 meter above sea level, the young teacher of the class Laeqa, said that she believed education guarantees a bright future for everyone. "My sole objective from teaching the villagers is to help both men, women and teenagers to learn how to write and read," Laeqa, 19, who like many Afghans goes by one name, told Xinhua in her classroom recently. In her simple classroom with just a whiteboard, the students sitting on the floor without chairs or desks, followed their teacher's explanations and repeated what she said. Laeqa, a second year student in the Tourism department of Bamyan University, explained that many parents in the past had deprived their children of getting an education due to traditional cultural barriers and that even today some parents remain against education. "I have two shift classes every day in two villages; one in Nawjoi, the other in Siakhar Balaq, a 40-minute walk from here," Laeqa said, adding that her students are usually aged anywhere between 14 to 40 years old. She has 31 students in Nawjoi and 20 others in Siakhar Balaq. Teaching Dari, the mother tongue of her students and primary arithmetic, Laeqa said that her students after completion of a nine-month course are free to go home or enroll in school. However, she added that there is no admission restriction here, saying "anyone at any age who wants to learn can attend the class free of charge."

Wearing traditional clothes with her head covered by a scarf, the ambitious young teacher asserted that many more young male and female intellectuals like her have also been serving the people in many areas in the province to help illiterate people learn to read and write. "After completion of this course I want to join a public ... (More on P4)...(14)

Taliban would Never Succeed: Gen. Nicholson

RUSSELS - US and NATO forces' top commander in Afghanistan Gen. John Nicholson on Thursday said the western military alliance's commitments sent a clear message to the enemies that they would never succeed in the war-torn country. Speaking at a press conference after a two-day foreign ministerial meeting of NATO countries in Brussels, the Belgian capital, Gen. Nicholson said the Taliban were destroying Afghanistan while the Afghan forces and government were rebuilding the country. Foreign ministers from NATO member states and



allies and Afghan Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani attended the conference on Tuesday and Wednesday and reviewed the security situation in Afghanistan and solidified pledges made at the Warsaw Summit in

Poland in July. The US general NATO and its allies pledged long-term military, political and financial support to Afghanistan in the Brussels Conference. "Our commitments send a ... (More on P4)...(10)

Kabul Saddened by Deadly Plane Crash in Abbottabad

KABUL - Afghanistan has expressed deep shock over a plane crash in Pakistan's northwestern city of Abbottabad, calling it a tragic incident. All 47 people aboard the ill-fated aircraft of the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) -- flying from Chitral to Islamabad -- were killed in Wednesday's crash. In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs extended condolences to the victims' families. "The people of Afghanistan fully share the grief of the families who have lost their relatives..." (Pajhwok)

Afghanistan's Top Exports on Display in Dubai

KABUL - A five-day event called "Exhibition Afghanistan" has been ongoing in Dubai to drive exports of Afghan products ranging from carpets and cashmere to almonds and apparel. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), in partnership with Afghanistan's Ministry of Commerce and Industries, is holding the two-part program. The event is consisted of a business-to-business matchmaking event on December 6-7, and continued with a business-to-consumer event in which Afghan products were sold to the public on December 8-10.



"Exhibition Afghanistan" helped Afghan traders increase sales and connect with Gulf and other international buyers, enabling about 70 of Afghanistan's best companies to display products and negotiate deals with more than 100 international buyers, USAID said in a statement. "The world is just beginning to ... (More on P4)...(11)

Security Incidents Drop by 20 Percent in November: Survey

KABUL - The November findings of the TOLONews' survey on the security situation in Afghanistan found that the security incidents sharply dropped by 20 percent in November compared to the month of October. In November, military operations by the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) reduced by 21 percent while attacks by the armed opponents also dropped three times. According to the report, casualties between the armed opponents also dropped by 93 percent in November while civilian fatalities also reduced by 15 percent as compared to October. In November, 934 security incidents

were recorded across Afghanistan. The figure shows a 25 percent decrease compare to the month of November in 2015. With the start of Shafaq 2 Military Operation in November, the military operation by the ANSF dropped by 21 percent, however ANSF's intelligence and reconnaissance activities remained record high. "586 military operations carried out in November including 162 intelligence and arrests. 43 insurgent attacks, 36 incidents of mine explosions, 49 air strikes and 4 suicide attacks also recorded in November," the report reads. "With the ... (More on P4)...(12)

Sindh CM Calls for Speedy Repatriation of Afghans



PESHAWAR - The chief minister of Pakistan's Sindh province has stressed the need for the speedy repatriation of Afghan refugees to their homeland. Syed Murad Ali Shah said Sindh had been hosting registered and undocumented refugees for the last 37 years. Mostly of them are living in the port city of Karachi and adjoining areas. Despite spending a lot of resources on taking care of the refugees, Sindh

had been facing security problems for decades. As a result, a targeted operation had to be launched. At a meeting with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Indrika Ratwattee on Thursday, Shah said the apex committee, implementing the National Action Plan (NAP), had decided to repatriate all illegal immigrants. He added the provincial administration had asked the federal government ... (More on P4)...(15)

Kabul, Islamabad Asked to Remove Trade Barriers



KANDAHAR CITY - Businessmen have urged Afghan and Pakistani governments to remove hurdles to cross-border trade, which should not be sacrificed at the altar of politics. The call came at a meeting on business matchmaking, attended by traders from Afghan and Pakistani traders in the capital of southern Kandahar province on Thursday. Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) deputy

head Khan Jan Alokozay, Kandahar police chief Gen. Abdul Raziq, Pakistan Consul-General Arif Bitani and industrialists attended the event. Haji Mohammad Sadiq Momand, SAARC Chamber of Commerce deputy chief, businessmen from Pakistan and Afghanistan had come together in Kandahar for the first time to promote bilateral trade and find solutions to their problems. SAARC planned to establish a large industrial ... (More on P4)...(13)

100 Greenhouses Being Established in Khost

KHOST CITY - Construction work on 100 greenhouses in has been launched for better agriculture growth and development in south-eastern Khost province, an official said on Thursday. The greenhouses are being constructed in Ismailkhel, Tanai, Gurbaz and Zazai Maidan districts in the framework of the Comprehensive Agriculture and Rural Development Facility (CARD-F). Governor Hukam Khan Habibi told Pajhwok Afghan News the 100 greenhouses were being built at a cost of \$700,000 -- about 40 million afghani. He said with the completion of the greenhouses, 650 tonnes of fresh

vegetables would be supplied to the market annually and residents would have vegetables in every season. Meanwhile, Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Director Eng. Samiullah Nasratsaid in addition to that 100 greenhouse, 50 additional such facilities had also been approved for the provinces under the CARD-F. Haji Mohammad Khan, a resident of Ismailkhel district who has set up a greenhouse on half an acre, said: "Its production is five times higher than ordinary land. "I produce wheat, corn and other crops in the 0.5 acre greenhouse and my harvest is equal to five acres of land. I ... (More on P4)...(16)

Disabled Soldiers Claim they have not been Paid

KABUL - A number of soldiers and officers of the Afghan National Army (ANA) who have been left disabled said their monthly salaries have not been paid for three months.

The former soldiers say the Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD) should pay their salaries. "In such cold weather the sons and daughters of a martyred or disabled soldier need fuel to warm their homes. They (NUG leaders) have 100 advisors. Aren't we human, aren't we from this country," said Mohammad Qasim, a disabled colonel of the ANA. "Why have we lost our hands and legs? Aren't we from this soil?" said Mohammad Naem, a disabled officer of ANA. "It is about three months they have not paid our salaries. They should not let us wait more than this," said Suhail, a disabled soldier. MoD meanwhile said the budget of Martyred and Disabled persons is transferred to the MoLSAMD and they should pay the disabled soldiers. "Their salaries and budget is transferred. I don't think there is any problem, however we will investigate and will take action if there was any problem," said Dawlat Waziri, spokesman for the MoD. The MoLSAMD however said they faced a lack of budget and soon the problem will be solved. "We faced a lack of budget and have ... (More on P4)...(17)