**Donors Agree to Fund 90pc of Voter Registration Process**

UNAMA announces that donors have pledged $28.4 million USD to further help with the Afghan elections.

During a meeting of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) with the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) on Wednesday, donors pledged to fund up to 90 per cent of the US$24.6 million voter registration budget, in addition to pledging ongoing assistance to the Independent Election Commission (IEC) and the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC).

"This is an important step forward," said Mr. Hakimi.

**Asfandyar Calls for Restoration of Peace in Afghanistan**

PECHINAR - A senior Pakistani parliamentarian leader has urged China to help defuse tensions between Pakistan and Kabul.

Asif Qaisi, National Assembly's (NA) member from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said China should play its role in preventing hostilities between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

"The latest tension between the two countries is in fact a threat to the region and the world," Qaisi said.

He called upon the Afghan administration to play its role in defusing the tension between the two countries.

"It is the responsibility of the Afghan administration to play its role in defusing the tension between the two countries and to ensure peace and stability in the region," Qaisi said.

"It is not in the interest of any country to see the conflict between Pakistan and Afghanistan," he added.

**Finance Minister Defends Next Fiscal Year’s Budget**

KABUL - The Finance Minister Eklil Hakimi who briefed lawmakers on the next fiscal year's draft budget said the reason why they reduced the development budget was the lack of capacity of the parliament.

Hakimi said that the parliament had not been deliberately handed the cases of these terrorists.

"None have been referred to the parliament in order to cover up the courts system as the reaction of the parliament," he added.

Hakimi also claimed that Hekmatyar, Chief of Afghanistan's Hezb-i-Islami, was maintaining ties with the ISIS suspects.

"I have obtained a video of the meeting between Hekmatyar and the ISIS suspects and others in Abu Dhabi," Hakimi said.

"I have also obtained a video of a meeting between Hekmatyar and the ISIS suspects and others in the United Arab Emirates," he added.

"We are working to refer these cases to the courts for further action," Hakimi said.

**Hekmatyar Assures Full Support to Taliban in Case of Full Support to Spy**

KABUL - Hekmatyar has been lobbying and bargaining for the release of twenty plus Islamic State suspects who are in the custody of Afghan government, said Amriullah Saleh, a former Spy Chief of Afghanistan.

He also claimed that Hekmatyar, the leader of Hezb-i-Islami, has maintained ties with the ISIS suspects and after his reconciliation with the National Unity Government (NUG).

According to Mr. Saleh who had been in charge of heading Afghan intelligence agency or the National Directorate of Security (NDS), the release of those terrorists has not been deliberately handled over the courts system as the result of Hekmatyar’s interference.

"None have been referred to the parliament in order to cover up their affiliation with Hekmatyar & save the deal," Saleh noted in a tweet on Monday, December 30.

The remarks by former Afghan Spy Chief of Intelligence Saleh appear to reflect a growing anxiety among Afghan politicians about the influence of Hekmatyar on the Afghan government and its ability to maintain order in the country.

**MPs Insist on Removing Ethnicity Information from E-NIC**

KABUL - Over 50 members of parliament on Saturday signed a petition against the decision taken to include nationality and ethnicity in the new electronic National Identity Cards (E-NIC).

The MPs said the inclusion of such information was not necessary and urged government to reverse the decision.

Following the establishment of the National Unity Government (NUG), President Ashraf Ghani approved the law of population registration in which the inclusion.

"An electronic E-NIC will be a tool for all Afghans and we should not be forced to register our ethnicities," said the MPs in their joint statement.

"We will continue to work on this issue and demand the removal of ethnicity information from E-NIC," they added.

**Study Finds Toxic Substances in Kabul Water**

KABUL - A new study has found that many serious health problems among the people in Kabul are due to a dramatic increase in air pollution and to toxic substances in the water in the capital.

The study entitled Psycho-physical Effects of Air Pollution on the Health of Kabul City citizens, shows that over 30 per cent of the residents suffer from respiratory and cardiovascular diseases due to the high levels of pollution.

"Our study has shown that the people in Kabul are suffering from many serious health problems due to the high levels of pollution in the city," said the study's lead author.

"The air pollution in Kabul is among the highest in the world," he added.

"The water in Kabul is also contaminated with many toxic substances," the author said.

"The people in Kabul are drinking water that is contaminated with many toxic substances," he added.

**Ghazi Got 10mw of Imported Power**

KABUL - The supply of imported electricity has been extended to southern Ghazi province that will help reduce power prices there, an official said on Saturday.

Governor Abdul Karim Marni said that 10 Megawatts electricity would be supplied to Ghazi which was not enough.

He hoped the power supply would increase in the future.

"This power transforming lines had been earlier cut off in Maidan Wardak province but the wires were reconnected on Friday," he said.

"We want the people of Ghazi to be happy from the power," he added.

The prices of Afghan goods at Indian markets have increased by up to 30 per cent following the opening of the air corridor to India and other parts of the world.

The opportunity has helped Afghan businessmen.

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"I have also obtained a video of a meeting between Hekmatyar and the ISIS suspects and others in the United Arab Emirates," he added.