Senate Suggests Creation of Separate Force to Protect Forests

KABUL - The Medi-tran [no apparent typo] or upper house of the parliament on Sunday demanded the creation of a special unite of security personnel for the protection of forests. Senate Secretary Taryab Atta told the house delegation in eastern Kunar province continued unfa- vourable political settlement in Afghan- stan. The introduction of additional advisers and enablers in 2018 stabil- ized the situation, slowing the momentum of a Taliban march that had capitalized on 3.5 decades between 2011 and 2016," the report said. "Diplomatic, religious, military, media and social pres- sures, enabled by the conditions-based strategy, and by engaged international engage- ment, have forced the Taliban senior leadership to debate whether to enter negotiations with the Afghan government," the report added. In August 2017, US President Donald Trump an- nounced his administration’s strategy on Afghan- stan and put forth a call for steering the course and not allowing. (More on P2-D)

No Discussion on Peace Process Gov’t’s Leadership Authority: Saleh

KABUL - Acting Interior Minister Amrullah Saleh has stepped offi- cials and personnel of his ministry from discussion, analysis regarding peace talks with the militants, an official said on Sunday. Defense Minister Nasrat Rahimi on Sunday warned Taliban leaders of his Facebook page regarding the new order conveyed to the officials of the interior ministry. "As part of the President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani’s clear and transparent policy of nego- tiating and its possible outcomes which may result in the stability of government system in the coun- try, the senior officials of the ministry of interior have been issued the new orders," he said. Saleh said discussion on peace process was the au- thority of the government leadership not armed forces which would have no impact on the policy and goals of the interior ministry. Saleh also ordered halt to the use of interior min- istry’s resources for personal purposes in the form creating cases and accusations, enabled by the conditions-based strategy, and by engaged international engage- ment, have forced the Taliban senior leadership to debate whether to enter negotiations with the Afghan government. (More on P2-D)

Pentagon Report Hints at Political Settlement to Afghan Conflict

KABUL - The Pentagon report has hinted at a fa- vourable political settlement in Afghan- stan despite challenges on multiple fronts, according to a media report on Sunday. The US Defence Department report released this work cited the effects of a recent military escal- ation coupled with diplomatic initiatives. "The current military situation inside of Afghan- stan remains at an impasse. The introduction of additional advisers and enablers in 2018 stabili- zed the situation, slowing the momentum of a Taliban march that had capitalized on 3.5 decades between 2011 and 2016," the report said. "Diplomatic, religious, military, media and social pres- sures, enabled by the conditions-based strategy, and by engaged international engagement, have forced the Taliban senior leadership to debate whether to enter negotiations with the Afghan government," the report added. In August 2017, US President Donald Trump an- nounced his administration’s strategy on Afghan- stan and put forth a call for steering the course and not allowing. (More on P2-D)

455 Kilograms of Hashish Seized by Special Forces in Kabul

KABUL - The Special Forces of the Afghan National Police have confiscated 455 kilograms of Hashish during an operation in Kabul, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) said Sunday. According to a statement released by the Ministry of Interior, the Special Forces Unit of the Afghan National Police confiscated 455 kilograms of Hashish during an operation conducted in Depe- cheray area of the city. The statement further added that the drugs were professionally loaded in a truck. At least two suspects have also been arrested in connection to the smuggling of the drugs, MOI added in the statement. This comes as efforts are under- way to root out the cultivation of opium, production and smuggling of. (More on P2-D)

Taliban Dismisses Afghanistan’s Peace Talk Offer

KABUL - The Taliban has rejected Kabul’s offer of talks next month in Saudi Arabia where the armed group, fighting to restore the Islamic rule in Afghanistan, will meet the United States officials to fur- ther peace efforts, a Taliban leader said. Representatives from the Taliban, the US, Saudi Ara- bia, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Pakistan met this month in the UAE for talks to end the 17-year war in Afghanistan. But the Taliban has refused to hold foral talks with the Western-backed Afghan government. "We will meet the US officials in Saudi Arabia in January next year and we will start out talks that remained incomplete in Abu Dabi,” a member of the Talib- an’s decision-making Leadership Council told Reuters news agency on Sunday. “However, we have made it clear to all the stakeholders that we will not talk to the Afghan gov- ernment,” Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid also said the leaders of the group would not talk to the Afghan government. In a statement released on Satur- day. (More on P1-D)

3 Days to Deadline, No One Registers as Presidential Candidate

KABUL - Just three days are remaining in the deadline to register as a presidential candidate, but so far no one has registered his/her can- didacy, the Independent Election Commission (IEC) said on Sunday. According to the presidential election sched- ule, the candidate registration process began on December 22 and would continue until January 2, 2019. Zabihullah Razi, deputy spokesman of the IEC, says so far 75 people, including a woman, have received the presidential election information packages but none has registered candidacy. Meaning information packages is also pos- sible through the internet and some aspirant candidates have received these packages on- line, she added. "Economic problems and natural calamities in the north and central parts of the country may be reasons that prevent the candidates from re- turning the information bundles they obtained from the IEC," she said, when asked why presidential candidates could not return after obtaining the infor- mation bundles. (More on P4-D)

Access to Information to Help Curb Corruption

Second vice-president Sarwar Danish on Sunday introduced new members of Oversight Commission on Access to Information (OCAI), saying access to information could help reduce corruption.

KABUL - Five new members of the OCAI, including Asmadullah Bala- dure, Zhara Musafir and Ihalalu Arshad, were introduced to the commis- sion for a period of five years and Najiba Mumra and Fazal Bari Baryali for a period of three years in line with a presidential decree. Sarwar Danish, who introduced the new OCAI members, said the new commissioners had a tough job ahead. He said key element of the freedom of expression was access to informa- tion could improve transparency and prevent corruption in government and nongovernmental organizations. (More on P4-D)

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