**Afghanistan Concerns over Soviet-Iran Diplomatic Tensions**

KARUL - The Afghan government has expressed concern over the recent diplomatic tension between Saudi Arabia and Iran, said President Palace.

"Afghanistan believes that the differences between countries not the region or the world are solved through the existing situation. Thus Afghanistan expresses its will to seek ways to resolve any differences with talks and prevent further escalation of tensions," it said in a statement.

The Taliban welcomed the diplomatic relations with Iran after angry protesters stormed its embassy in Tehran over the weekend, to protest at the execution of a prominent Shiite cleric Nimr al-Nimr. (Reuters) later held an emergency meeting on diplomatic relations as well as other customary international practices regarding protection and immunity of diplomatic missions. The meeting was aimed at preventing attack on diplomatic missions and parliament's legal and political commission said there are no political or legal obstacles against the formation of new election commission.

Reform is an important demand of the people of Afghanistan and we are determined to address this demand," Abdullah said.

He said the UN General Assembly is determined to implement necessary reforms in the election system. As electoral reforms gather momentum, members of parliament are determined to address this demand.

As hopes for electoral reform increase, members of parliament's legal and judicial commission rebuked the move taken by the law makers, arguing that it came against the will of the nation and would likely harm the initiatives to reform the law. (More on Pa.2)

**Civilian Casualties Increase in December Against Previous Month**

JALALABAD - A number of Nangarhar residents raised concerns on Friday over Daesh activities in Nangarhar province and said the militants are now active in 10 districts of the province - with fighting between Taliban and Daesh having also spread to Balkh and Kapisa districts.

Alleging that their city is under siege, thousands of residents have fled their homes and that they are in desperate need of aid.

"Among 21 districts of Nangarhar province Daesh are active in 10 districts," (More on Pa.3)

**Ghani Requests US Congress Help in Equipping AAF**

KARUL - Governor Mohammad Asif Ghani has called on US Congress to help Afghanistan in equipping its Air Force (AAF) as the Afghan national security forces are critical need of air support. During a meeting with the US Congress delegation led by Senator Bob Corker, President Ghani said Afghanistan needs complete capacity of its Air Force by acquiring advanced US technology and equipment to help fight them, but so too are government forces.

Corker said that he had visited Afghanistan and described the situation there as critical. He reaffirmed the commitment of the United States and in particular the US Congress to support the Afghan national security forces in equipping and maintaining peace and stability in the country.

The remarks as the Afghan national security forces expect to start 2016 with more capacity and control of the previous years in suppressing the anti-government armed militants with recent major steps taken by the international allies of Afghanistan, particularly United States and India, in boosting the capabilities of the Afghan Air Force.

Afghanistan received three of the four A-29 Super Tucano light attack aircrafts from the United States late last year. President Ghani announced on December 9, 2015, during the first batch of a A-29 Super Tucano light attack aircrafts that the US Congress was supporting Afghanistan in maintaining peace and stability in the country.

The remarks that came as the commander of the US and NATO forces in Afghanistan General John Campbell said last year that the loyalists of the Taliban group are attempting to establish a regional base in Jalalabad; the capital city of eastern Nangarhar province.

Campbell further added that foreign militants... (More on Pa.3)

**MPs Renew Calls for Reforms Ahead of Parliament’s Winter Recess**

KARUL - Afghan Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah on Thursday reaffirmed his promise to bring about necessary reforms in the nation’s electoral system - days after the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of Parliament) rejected a presidential focus on the amendment of electoral laws.

Speaking at a press conference in Kabul after returning from a two-day tour to Iran, Abdullah voiced that parliamentary and district council elections will be organized under the leadership of the new election commissioners who are expected to be appointed soon.

He said the independent Election Commission of Afghanistan (IEC) and the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) will be organized under the supervision of a new independent election commission. There is no way the people of Afghanistan must once again experience the bitter events of [elections in 2014]. Reform is an important demand of the people of Afghanistan and we are determined to address this demand," Abdullah said.

He said the UN General Assembly is determined to implement necessary reforms in the election system. As electoral reforms gather momentum, members of parliament are determined to address this demand.

As hopes for electoral reform increase, members of parliament's legal and political commission rebuked the move taken by the law makers, arguing that it came against the will of the nation and would likely harm the initiatives to reform the law. (More on Pa.2)

**Daesh Presence ‘Widespread’ in Nangarhar Province**

JALALABAD - A number of Nangarhar residents raised concerns on Friday over Daesh activities in Nangarhar province and said the militants are now active in 10 districts of the province – with fighting between Taliban and Daesh having also spread to Balkh and Kapisa districts.

Alleging that their city is under siege, thousands of residents have fled their homes and that they are in desperate need of aid.

Among 21 districts of Nangarhar province Daesh are active in 10 districts... (More on Pa.3)

**ANSF to Receive over 100 M1151 Humvees for 2016 Fighting Season**

KARUL - The Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) will receive over one hundred M1151 Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (MMWVs) as part of efforts by the NATO-led Resolute Support mission to equip the Afghan forces for 2016 fighting season.

According to the alliance, the first batch of over 100 MMWVs has already arrived to Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan’s Security Assistance Office.

The vehicles will be delivered to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces, in total, more than 100 will be arriving in the next few weeks, the alliance said in a press statement.

The vehicles are part of the Resolute Support mission’s effort to equip Afghan National Army and Security Forces with modern equipment.

The acting Afghan Defense Minister, Masoom Stanikzai, said the expanding of terrorist activities by the loyalists of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in southern parts of the country and is strategically key for the Taliban to continue their operations in the province.

He reaffirmed the commitment of the United States and in particular the US Congress to support the Afghan national security forces in equipping and maintaining peace and stability in the country.

The remarks as the Afghan national security forces expect to start 2016 with more capacity and control of the previous years in suppressing the anti-government armed militants with recent major steps taken by the international allies of Afghanistan, particularly United States and India, in boosting the capabilities of the Afghan Air Force.

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