**WON'T STAY IN AFGHANISTAN LONGER THAN NECESSARY**

The alliance will not stay in Afghanistan longer than necessary, says NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in Washington.

KARUL - The visa section of the Pakistani Consulate in Afghanistan’s Mazar-e-Shariif city reopened recently.

Two days ago, the section was closed down owing to security threats.

A woman tried to use her bag to sneak a hand grenade into the building, a security check had revealed.

The woman was arrested and investigations concerning the incident are underway.

Pakistan had requested the country to ensure security arrangements in order to prevent such incidents from occurring again.

**300 Women Complete USAID’s Civil Service Internship Programme**

Promote’s internship programs equip qualified Afghan women with the knowledge and experience to join the Afghan civil service, the USAID statement said.

In 2018, the Afghan government released the “Policy on Increasing Women’s Participation in the Civil Service.”

This policy, developed in collaboration with USAID, established a two percent target to increase the number of women working in government by the end of 2020.

Through the internship program, USAID is helping the government to meet the goal by providing targeted civil service and leadership trainings for female interns.

USAID also facilitated on-the-job trainings in government offices for the interns.

Between April 2015 and November 2018, over 1,900 women have completed the year-long programme.

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**Record Number of Disabled Afghans Seek Assistance from ICRC**

KARUL - A record number of disabled Afghans – more than 12,000 people – sought assistance for the first time in 2018 at physical rehabilitation centres run by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) across Afghanistan. Despite the record level of assistance provided, many more people remain in need.

Last year was the ICRC’s 30th year of running rehabilitation programmes in the country. More than 22,000 artificial limbs and other orthopaedic devices – and 411 wheelchair users – were treated in 2018, together with 2,200 wheelchairs, 18,000 crutches and counterfeit physiotherapy equipment.

“The number of Afghan and Pakistani emergency rehabilitation assistance is a reflection of the huge levels of need,” said Alberto Cairo, ICRC’s physical rehabilitation program manager in Afghanistan.

“Even with all of the resources being helped, we aren’t coming close to being able to assist everyone in need.”

Since ICRC opened its first rehabilitation centre in Kabul in 1985, (More on P3)

**Atta Noor Urges President Ghani Not to Victimize Peace**

KABUL - A record number of disabled Afghans – more than 12,000 people – sought assistance for the first time in 2018 at physical rehabilitation centres run by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) across Afghanistan. Despite the record level of assistance provided, many more people remain in need.

Atta Mohammad Noor urged President Ashraf Ghani to avoid victimizing peace for his personal purposes.

In a statement released on Tuesday, Atta Mohammad Noor said that the National Security Council leaders particularly the president should avoid taking emotional actions which are not in favor of the country.

“We shouldn’t allow some people to play with the fate of the people for the sake of their personal and political interests,” Noor said.

He stressed the opportunity being provided for bringing peace in the country should not be victimized for the interest of president and his team.

This comes a day after the US Special Envoy for Afghanistan Reconciliation, Zalmay Khalidz told local media on Monday in Kabul, that his recent meeting with Taliban in Doha was much better than previous meetings.

“We made progress on vital issues in our discussions and agreed to agreements in principle on a couple of very important points,” (More on P4)

“Even with all of the resources being helped, we aren’t coming close to being able to assist everyone in need.”

Since ICRC opened its first rehabilitation centre in Kabul in 1985, (More on P4)

**US, Taliban Reached ‘Agreements in Principle’: Dobbbins**

Former US special envoy James Dobbin says the deal is ‘a hopeful sign that negotiations’ can begin.

WASHINGTON - The US envoy to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad announced that the US and the Taliban insurgents have reached “agreements in principle” on key issues for a peace deal that would end 17 years of war in Afghanistan, the US envoy said Monday.

The statement by US envoy Zalmay Khalilzad followed six days of talks last week, with the Taliban in Qatar, where he urged the Islamic militants to enter into direct negotiations with the government of President Ashraf Ghani.

Khalilzad said in an interview with The New Times that an agreement in principle was reached with the Taliban on the framework of a peace deal which still has to be fleshed out that will see the insurgents commit to guaranteeing that Afghanistan is not used as a “platform for international terrorist groups or individuals.”

Former US special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistani James Dobbins says the deal, he said in a hopeful sign that negotiations can begin, but warned the process has “a number of chasms to cross.

“First is the Taliban willing to talk to the Afghan government and stop fighting while they do it,” said Dobbins.

“Secondly, will the negotiations proceed with the Afghan government succeed” (More on P3).

**2.3m School Age Children Engage in Hard Labor: Zaki**

KARUL - The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD) says 2.3 million children are engaged in hard labor instead of going school.

Minister Fazlullah Zaki expressed these views at a press conference regarding the launch of national policy on child labor, in the Government Media and Information Centre (GMIC) here.

He said subjecting children to work was a crime in line with Afghanistan’s Constitution, labor law, social support law and international conventions.

He said according to the national strategy and commitments at the Geneva Conference, the issue of child labor should end by 2025 and overall child work should end by 2030 nationwide.

The national child labor policy was being worked out since 2016 with a No. 4 million

support from USAID and the British government, he said, adding the policy would be implemented until 2030. Zaki said the conflict, poverty, lack of awareness among families about their children’s rights and drawbacks of not sending them to school were among factors which force children to discharge hard work.

He said peace, legal action against individuals misusing children, assistance with less drawings of child labor instead of going school and improving economic conditions were part of the national policy to end the child labor in the country.

Moammar Khalid, a representative of the International Labour Organisation, said national labor policies started in 15 countries were being supported by the British government.

He said the policy in Afghanistan start in April and continue till 2030.

Maref Querdi, a member of the Afghanistans Labour Union, welcomed the national policy on child labour, which he said affected economy and caused poverty. (Pajhwok)