

Quote of the Day

A man must be big enough to admit his mistakes, smart enough to profit from them, and strong enough to correct them.
John C. Maxwell

Join Peace Process or Face Onslaught, US Warns Taliban

WASHINGTON -The United States on Sunday warned the Taliban to either join the peace process or face the onslaught of American and Afghan forces.

"The Taliban have a choice: to join good-faith negotiations for peace, or continue to fight a war in which they are killing their fellow Afghans and destroying their country," a State Department spokesman told Pajhwok Afghan News.

"If they choose the latter course, they will continue to face the combined efforts of the Afghan security forces and their international partners," the spokesman warned. He said the US supported President Ashraf Ghani's efforts to end the conflict in Afghanistan through a peace and reconciliation process with the Taliban.

"As President Obama affirmed



during the January 2013 state visit of President Karzai to Washington, an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process is the surest way to end violence and ensure the lasting stability of Af-

ghanistan and the region," the official added.

He said the US joined President Ghani in calling on Taliban to participate in direct peace talks with the government of Afghanistan.

He said the Americans were working closely with other members of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) to facilitate the resumption of dialogue toward a political settlement. (Pajhwok)

Indonesia, Afghanistan Agree to Continue Diplomatic Training Cooperation



JAKARTA - Indonesia and Afghanistan have agreed to continue diplomatic training cooperation by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) here on Sunday.

"This is not new cooperation as we have trained a lot of Afghan diplomats in Indonesia," Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno LP Marsudi said after signing the MoU with her Afghan counterpart, Salahuddin Rabbani, on the sidelines of the fifth Extraordinary Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Summit at the Jakarta Convention Center. Since 2011, Indonesia

has signed 44 cooperation programs with Afghanistan to train 353 diplomats, Retno said.

Relations between the two countries have also become stronger with the establishment of Indonesian Islamic Center (IIC) in Ahmad Shah Baba Mina area, Kabul, Afghanistan, in 2014, she said.

The presence of the IIC will hopefully contribute to peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan and encourage cooperation between Islamic academics and ulemas in the two countries to promote the understanding of moderate Islam. ... (More on P4)...(1)

UNDP to Blackout Photos on Afghan Website for Women's Day

KABUL - A United Nations agency in Afghanistan plans to stop publishing photographs on its website to highlight the plight of Afghan women ahead of International Women's Day on March 8, a U.N. official said on Sunday.

The move aims to bring attention to the fear many Afghan women have of the potential consequences of appearing in public or having their photographs published, said Rob Few, chief of communications for the U.N. Development Program in Kabul.

Photographs already on the UNDP's Afghanistan website would be blacked out starting Sunday, and replaced with the hashtag #WhereAreTheWomen, Few said.

Original captions would remain, so visitors to the site know what they are missing. ... (More on P4)...(2)

CEO Vows to Resolve Challenges Facing Female Journalists

KABUL - Addressing a gathering of female Afghan journalists in Kabul on Sunday, Afghanistan's Chief Executive Officer Abdullah criticized the ongoing discriminatory approach facing them in the country, and pledged firm support to resolve the issues.

Security threats, negative cultures and discrimination are among the main problems currently facing female journalists. "We can not work



for radio as other journalists work in the center, we prepare our programs at home and send it to the station," Maryam, an Afghan female journalist from Logar province said.

It is not only the reporters in Logar who deal with such challenges, as apparently problems are much higher in remote regions of the country. "Because of the domination of annoying cultures, people ... (More on P4)...(3)

Afghanistan, Taliban Discuss Possible Resumption of Peace Talks: Reports

MOSCOW - Media reported Saturday that Afghan official met with members of the Taliban group to discuss efforts to end the country's long-running war and resume peace talks.

The Afghan authorities have recently met with Taliban members to discuss efforts to end the country's long-running war and a possibility to resume the peace talks, media reported.

"That was the deal, that they [Taliban] would not simply reject that they're going to meet [us] face to face [for official talks]," a senior Afghan official from the government delegation told the Wall Street



Journal on Saturday.

The meeting took place in late February in Qatar, and was reportedly described as "positive" by both sides, but they failed to agree on the Taliban officially entering the

talks. According to the official, the sides also failed to agree in the formal details of the talks.

Formed in the 1990s, the Taliban seeks to enforce sharia law in Afghanistan. ... (More on P4)...(5)

Stronger Global Unity Needed to Help Syrians Restart Talks, End War

CAIRO - Thanks to the determination of the international community, the "cessation of hostilities" in Syria, sponsored by the United Nations, has so far been largely adhered to despite sporadic violations.

However, this is no time to slack off as the task of regaining peace in a shattered Syria requires even stronger global coordination and unity so as to at least ensure a constructive round of talks in Geneva that is scheduled for later this month -- if there is one.

After their military intervention that toppled and eventually killed Libya's top leader Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, the Western powers were blindly confident

that they could easily maneuver a regime change with similar tactics in Damascus.

Yet their arrogance has boomeranged.

As a result of their meddling, hundreds of thousands of displaced Syrians have paddled across turbulent oceans and flocked into Europe -- with many more still on the way -- to mention millions of those taking shelter in Turkey and Lebanon. The Europeans have now been literally deluged with this unprecedented refugee crisis.

Another symptom of the Syrian syndrome is the rampant surge of terrorism. The Islamic State (IS) militants ... (More on P4)...(6)

Survey Shows Youth Disappointed with Unity Govt

KABUL - A survey shows most youth not happy with the unity government's performance allege that young men linked to warlords get jobs.

The survey was conducted by the Afghanistan Election Watch Network (AEWN), interviewing more than 2,000 youth in 14 districts of Nangarhar, Kandahar, Herat, Balkh and Baghlan provinces in eight months.

In the survey, the youth have expressed their disappointment and have said the government did not provide jobs to youth despite their active participation in the presidential election.

They also complained about the low quality of education, insecurity and unemployment and alleged that only those having links to warlords were able to get jobs.

Habibullah Shinwari, a AEWN member, said the government's hiring process had been incorrect. He said blue-eyed individuals were hired before their appearance in related test and interview.

Ahmadzia Masoud, the president's special envoy for reforms and good governance, called youth's political participation as vital for a strong government.

He said the Afghan society was a complex one and it was the government's responsibility to maintain discipline and harmony among different ethnicities. (Pajhwok)

ACCI Calls for Cancellation of APTTA

KABUL - Officials at the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI) have called for the cancellation of Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit and Trade Agreement (APTTA).

They said that since Afghanistan, Pakistan and India got membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO), there is no need for other bilateral and trilateral agreements.

To resolve its trade and transit problems with Pakistan, ACCI officials said that the government should pave the way for activities of Afghanistan under the framework of WTO.

"We have lots of problems and Pakistan has always pledged to resolve the problems and implement APTTA; however, it has never delivered on its promises," said Atiqullah Nasrat, the Chief Executive Officer of ACCI.

He urged government to cancel this agreement, because it is not needed any longer. "One of the reasons that we got membership of the WTO was to put an end to these problems," he added.

Meanwhile, officials at the Ministry of Commerce and Industries said that Afghanistan will start its activities under the framework of WTO within three months. As a short term solution, they said that necessary changes should be brought to the APTTA.

"We are trying to bring about necessary changes to the APTTA soon." ... (More on P4)...(7)

ERC Welcomes President's Decree on Electoral Reforms



KABUL - The Electoral Reforms Commission (ERC) welcomed President Ashraf Ghani's constitutional decree as the first step towards bringing electoral reforms.

"We welcome the signing of this constitutional decree and we hope that it will be the first step towards reforms," said Mohammad Saleh Reqistani, a member of the ERC.

The decree will allow the election commissions' selection committee to resume its activities, with some changes in its structure. Members

of the committee were urged to remain impartial in their work.

Naeem Ayubzada, head of the Transparent Election Foundation of Afghanistan (TEFA), who is also a member of the selection committee, said impartiality of the committee in its activities should be ensured.

Ghani said parliamentary and district council elections must be held next year, after electoral reforms are brought.

"We ... (More on P4)...(8)

Women's Gains Raise Hopes for Their Future: Rula Ghani



JALALABAD - First lady Rula Ghani on Sunday said recent achievements by women had raised hopes for their bright future.

The first lady was addressing a gathering marking the International Women's Day in Jalalabad, the capital of eastern Nangarhar province.

Voicing her support for the Afghan women, she said women's gains in provinces had increased hopes for their betterment.

Rula Ghani said spouses should respect each other so their children have a good future.

Nangarhar Governor Salim Khan Kunduzi said an exclusive meeting ... (More on P4)...(4)

Rehab Center Using New Technique to Treat Addicts

KABUL - A drug rehabilitation center in Afghanistan is using new in-house techniques to treat drug addicts.

Officials at the center said that one of the new ways for rehabilitation of drug addicts is 'in-house medication'.

They added that they are using new effective drug rehabilitation techniques in order to prevent them from relapsing.

Self-treatment, in-house medication, treatment in rehabilitation centers and treatment in cooperation with people are the techniques that Nejat Center is utilizing to rehabilitate drug addicts.

"We have new methods to treat drug addicts in here, and then they reunite with their families. Their families cooperate with us and we show them some methods to help them quit drugs," said Mohammad Qasem Zamani, executive director of the center.

As many as three million people are believed to be using drugs in Afghanistan.

"I told myself that I will use drugs just today and will quit them tomorrow. Tomorrow, when I come back I ... (More on P4)...(9)