

## Quote of the Day

Imagination is more important than knowledge.  
Albert Einstein

# EU Launches 7-Week Anti-Graft Drive in Afghanistan

KABUL - The European Union Delegation in Afghanistan on Saturday announced the launch of a seven-week campaign against corruption in the war-torn country.

The campaign, which will culminate in a high-level conference in early May, will help the Afghans combat graft and seek to mobilise support for government action against the scourge.

In a statement, the EU Delegation said Afghanistan's endemic corruption was crippling the economy, undermining the fight against the insurgency and threatening past achievements and investments.

The campaign will focus on four themes: Corruption and Peace; corruption in the judicial sector; natural resources and stability - the threat of illegal mining; and Public action



against graft. EU Special Representative Ambassador Franz-Michael Melbin said: "Every day ordinary Afghans are confronted with corruption's dark shadow that fills the pockets of the rich while the poor suffer. "It undermines the Afghan people's hard-won achievements over the last 14 years, and it is a primary threat to the sustainability and survivability of the Afghan state," he added. The Afghan government could and should do more, the diplomat believed, asking every Afghan to take personal responsibility for eradicating the menace of corruption. Melbin said: "In a year where the international community is considering its future support to Afghanistan, there is an urgent need to show progress on the government's anti-corruption efforts..." (Pajhwok)

## Protestors Want Rebel Commander Freed in Exchange for Captive Soldiers

KABUL - Relatives of kidnapped Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers staged a protest on Saturday, demanding their immediate release in exchange for a key Taliban figure.

Four months ago, the Taliban took 13 soldiers hostage after their helicopter made an emergency landing in the Ghar Tapa locality of the Pashtoonkot district of Faryab province. The pilot and six security officials were killed on the spot.

A dozen soldiers are still in Taliban's captivity and there been no clue so far to the location where they are being held. The soldiers' continued captivity has been fueling concerns among their families. About 100 relatives of the missing soldiers gathered in the Shahr-i-Naw Park, chanting against what they called the government's failure to secure the release of their loved ones.

Alim Muradi, a relative of one of the captive soldiers, said the security officials were taken hostage in the line of duty by the Taliban. But the government had not taken any step for their release, he alleged.

He accused the president and his chief executive of protecting themselves behind blast walls, traveling in armored vehicles and showing no concern for the safety of the security personnel.

Taj Mohammad, a resident of eastern Kunar province, said: "My son Zar Mohammad is among the captive troops. I don't have any information about his fate so far."

Jamshed Habibi, former provincial council head whose relative is also among the captives, blamed the government's unconcern for the soldiers.

The protestors claimed the Taliban ... (More on P4)...(2)

## Zahir Qadir Retains Wolesi Jirga Deputy Speaker Slot



KABUL - Zahir Qadir, former first deputy speaker of Wolesi Jirga (lower house of parliament) was re-elected to the position on Saturday.

Earlier, Abdul Rauf Inami, a lawmaker from Badakhshan, was elected as secretary to Wolesi Jirga and Erfanullah Erfan as deputy secretary.

First deputy speaker

In three rounds of voting, Qadir, Mirwais Yasini, Abdul Hafiz Mansoor and Abdul Qadir Zazai, Humayoon Humayoon and Zakria Zakria raced for the first deputy speaker's slot, but none could achieve the 50+1 threshold to win the position.

On Saturday, Hamidzai Lalai and Saleh Mohammad Saljuqi nominated themselves for the position, but Lalai with 89 votes and Saljuqi with 68 votes from the 193 lawmakers present fell short of the threshold. After consecutive failure of candidates for a position, re-election takes place between the two top vote-getters in accordance with the house internal procedures.

On Saturday, Humayoon, who had obtained 99 votes and Qadir 93 in the previous round, vied for the first deputy speaker's position which went to Qadir who collected 138 votes against his rival's 36 votes.

Second deputy speaker ... (More on P4)...(3)

## Hollande

## 'No Concessions' to Turkey on Rights in Migrant Deal



PARIS - French President Francois Hollande said Saturday that the EU must not grant Turkey any concessions on human rights or visas in exchange for guarantees to stem the flow of migrants to Europe.

"There cannot be any concessions on the matter of human rights or the criteria for visa liberalisation," Hollande told reporters ahead of the resumption next week of tough negotiations between Turkey and the EU in Brussels.

Under a controversial draft deal reached this week, Turkey would take back all migrants landing in Greece in a bid to reduce their incentive to pay people smugglers for dangerous crossings to the Greek islands in rickety boats.

In return for every Syrian sent back from Greece, the EU would resettle one Syrian refugee from camps in Turkey -- which is hosting about 2.7 million people who have fled the conflict across the border.

Turkey is also demanding six billion euros (\$6.6 billion) in aid, visa-free access for its nationals within Europe's passport-free Schengen zone and for swift action to process its bid to join the EU.

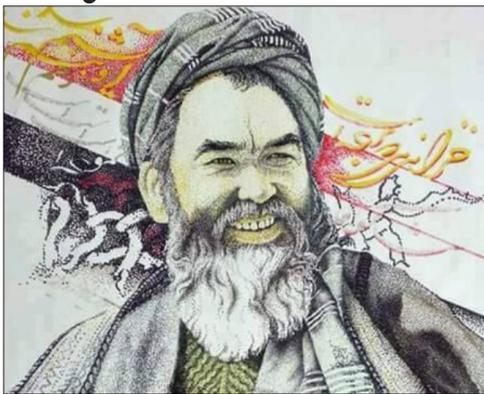
The plan to expel migrants en masse from Greece has sparked international criticism, with the UN's top officials on refugees and human rights questioning whether it would be legal. ... (More on P4)...(6)

## Ghani Grants Title of 'National Unity Martyr' to Abdul Ali Mazari

KABUL - President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani has granted the title of 'National Unity Martyr' to the late Abdul Ali Mazari, a prominent political leader, who was killed by Taliban militants in mid 90s.

The title was granted during a ceremony held in ARG Presidential Palace to commemorate the 21st death anniversary of Mazari.

Offering his condolences on 21st death anniversary of Mazari, President Ghani said the government remains committed to ensuring equality among the Afghans.



He said personalities like Mazari have been history makers who figures out the historic and national values of the country.

President Ghani emphasized on equality among the Afghans and said further efforts should be put in place for the recognition of the national figures.

He said Mazari had clear message for the country and spent his life for national unity with equality being one of his demands which has been incorporated in the national ... (More on P4)...(1)

## Decree on Electoral Reform, Tri-Pillar Meeting on Women Soon



KABUL - The presidential decree on electoral reform would be published soon in the Ministry of Justice's website and the government gazette and a tree-pillar meeting would be conducted to resolve women's problems, a presidential spokesman said on Saturday.

Addressing a press conference here, deputy presidential spokesman Syed Zafar Hashimi said President Ashraf Ghani had promised representatives of women's organizations solution to women issues.

Hashimi quoted Ghani saying that a trilateral meeting of the three pillars of the government would be called in near future to assess the overall situation of women and find permanent solutions to their problems.

Meanwhile, Hashimi said the legislative presidential decree on electoral reform would be published in the website of the Ministry of Justice and the national gazette by Sunday evening. The decree has been prepared and processed carefully and has been signed by the president, he added. The Electoral Reform Commission (ERC) was formed on July 21 in compliance with a presidential decree. The commission collected public views regarding electoral reforms after a month-long hard work and compiled the suggestions in ten articles before submitting them to the government.

President Ashraf Ghani had decreed seven suggestions of the ERC and called for urgent measures to ... (More on P4)...(7)

## Based on New Ruling, UK May Deport Afghan Interpreters

KABUL - In compliance with a new court ruling, Britain may send Afghan translators back to their conflict-devastated country, a media report said on Saturday.

The Court of Appeal overturned a ban on the deportation of the Afghans seeking asylum in the United Kingdom, Daily Mail said.

At least two interpreters, whose cases are still being processed, could be deported to their country. Three more translators, whose asylum requests have been rejected, are facing a similar fate.

The newspaper said the interpreters, who made it to the UK on boats and trucks, could be deported within weeks as flights to Kabul resume.

Ahmed, who may be sent back to Afghanistan after the rejection of his asylum claim, told the daily Afghanistan is more dangerous than it had ... (More on P4)...(4)

## AAF to Reach Required Strength Levels By 2020



KABUL - General John Campbell, former commander of U.S-led NATO coalition forces in Afghanistan said that the Afghan air force will not reach its required strength levels until 2020 - despite embattled Afghan security forces locked in military operations against insurgents across the country.

Campbell, who ended his tenure as commander of U.S and NATO troops in the country recently, told reporters on Friday that some planes procured for

the Afghan air force will not reach the country until 2018.

He added "2020 is probably a good guess." Meanwhile, Afghanistan's Ministry of Defense (MoD) has reiterated calls for a well-equipped Afghan air force.

"Our military needs are much higher. For instance we have to build a strong artillery unit, tank units and other units which can perform within the rank of the army firmly," deputy MoD spokesman Moham-

rad Radmanesh said.

Campbell meanwhile spoke of the increase of U.S deployments in Afghanistan. But the Afghan Ministry of Interior (MoI) has said that the U.S will only conduct deployments in line with the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) signed between Kabul and Washington. Campbell also underlined the increase in activities of U.S forces in Afghanistan, something the Afghan Ministry of Interior has said will happen only in line with the ... (More on P4)...(5)

## Afghanistan Thump Zimbabwe to Make World T20 Main Draw



NEW DELHI - Afghanistan roared into the main draw of the World Twenty20 with an emphatic 59-run victory over Zimbabwe in a first round Group B match on Saturday.

Mohammad Shahzad (40) gave Afghanistan a flying start before Mohammad Nabi (52) and Samiullah Shenwari (43) added 98 runs off 64 balls to power them

to 186-6, their highest total in this format.

The associate nation then returned to bowl out Zimbabwe for 127 to register a memorable victory over a full-member nation and join England, South Africa, West Indies and Sri Lanka in Group One of the Super 10 stage of the tournament. "This was a very important ... (More on P4)...(8)

## Quality of Anti-Polio Drive in Border Areas to be Improved

PESHAWAR - Afghanistan and Pakistan have agreed on stepping up their campaign to eradicate polio by enhancing their focus on border areas.

At a meeting in Kabul on March 9, the two decided on extending the target age group for border crossing population from five to 10 years at all vaccination posts.

Details of the meeting were submitted in a report to the Prime Minister's National Health Complex on Friday by the Pakistani delegation.

The vaccinators will concentrate on those crossing the Friendship Gate in Kandahar and the Torkham border in Nangarhar province.

Pakistan's delegation was led by the National Coordinator of Polio Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) Dr. Rana Muhammad Safdar.

The Afghan team was headed by the director-general of Ministry of Public Health. The current situation of polio eradication programmes in both countries was reviewed.

The meeting vowed to improve the quality of eradication campaigns in border areas and among people on the move, who are most vulnerable to catching and transmitting poliovirus. (Pajhwok)