

Jalalabad	Clear	Ghazni	Clear	Kandahar	Clear	Mazar	Clear	Herat	Clear	Bamayan	Clear	Kabul	Partly Cloudy
	22°C 11°C		12°C -1°C		22°C 7°C		18°C 9°C		22°C 11°C		4°C -7°C		16°C 3°C

Weather Forecast Brought to You by MTN Afghanistan

Ghani, Saudi King Agree on Enhanced Economic Links

KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani and Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud held wide-ranging talks on a variety of subjects of bilateral importance, including enhanced economic cooperation. Relations between the two brotherly Muslim countries and latest developments of mutual interest in world figured at the meeting, the two sides said after the meeting.

A statement from the Presidential Palace in Kabul said Ghani and his team... (More on P4)...(8)



Displaced Panjsher Families Desperate for Assistance

PARAKH - Avalanches caused by heavy winter snow late last month have displaced about 580 families in the central province of Panjsher, with some families living under tough conditions. Of them, 280 have lost their homes to the avalanches and the rest were forced to flee homes. The avalanches buried homes across four northeastern provinces, killing scores of people. More than 300 people were killed in the disaster including flash floods triggered by heavy rains, with the bulk of the deaths (about 200) coming from Panjsher, where 280 homes were destroyed. Rescuers used their bare hands and shovels to reach survivors after the heavy snowstorms, which began early Feb. 24. Snowfall from the storm was nearly three feet deep in places, and fallen trees blocked roads in the valley. One of the displaced persons from "Tul" area of Paryan district, Qari Mohammad Faqir, is living with his family in Rokha district. He told Pajhwok Afghan News his home was among 45 others destroyed in the disaster that killed 25 people, including his sister and a cousin. He said his family was among 10 others who migrated to Rokha district from Tul area and they all currently lived in a house having eight rooms. He said the displaced families had so far been assisted with some food and non-food items including one blanket and tent each, but the assistance was insufficient. He said most of the families lived in tough conditions in the absence of basic facilities. Mohammad Faqir said: "Giving... (More on P4)...(12)

Nawruz to be Celebrated for 3 Days



KABUL - The Ministry of Information and Culture on Monday announced that the upcoming Nawruz festival would be celebrated for three straight days across the country. The festival, which marks the new Persian year, would be celebrated by arranging agricultural, industrial exhibitions, theatre shows, music concerts across Kabul besides other programmes in Qargha, Badam Bagh, Kart-e-Sakhi, Bagh Babur, Shah Shaheed Shrine, Bibi Mahro and Wazir Akbar Khan areas and the Kabul cricket stadium. Musadiq Khalili, the acting Information and Culture Minister, told Pajhwok Afghan News that a new commission comprised of representatives from his and the Ministry of Agriculture and the Kabul Municipality had been formed to make arrangements for the festivities. "Because of the variety of functions, it has been decided to celebrate Nawruz for three days," he said, adding the festivities would be the same as previous years. Khalili said officials in northern Balkh province, where many people travel from across the country to visit the Hazrat Ali mausoleum, had also been tasked with making arrangements for the celebrations. Games, concerts and other programmes would be held in Mazar-i-Sharif, the provincial capital, where dignitaries from Kabul are expected to attend the functions, he said. Nisar Ahmad Habibi, a senior official at the Kabul Municipality, said in order to better organise Nawruz festivities in Kabul, organizers met twice at the Ministry of Information and Culture and at the Badam Bagh area. He said several departments had been given responsibilities in this regard. Habibi added some 150 stalls would be arranged for exhibitions of agricultural and industrial products. "On the first night, we plan to organise fireworks on the Wazir Akbar Khan hill. We hope people will enjoy." A tree plantation campaign would also be kicked off as part of the festivities, he said. (Pajhwok)

Pak-Afghan Officials Discuss Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process

KABUL - The Pak-Afghan senior officials from Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a meeting in Kabul on how to jointly carry forward the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process during the Co-chairship of Pakistan as Pakistan is going to host the Ministerial Meeting of the Forum in Islamabad later this year. Zaheer Pervez Khan, Pakistan's Director General of Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited Kabul and held a meeting with the Director General of Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Regional Cooperation Directorate (RCD) in this regard. Zaheer Pervez Khan invited the Director General (RCD) to visit Islamabad to hold further discussion on the subject. The last Ministerial Meeting of the Heart of Asia was held in Beijing in October 2014 where Pakistan offered to host the next Ministerial Conference. The Heart of Asia countries, apart from its political components, are working on six Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) such as counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics, disaster management, infrastructure, education and commerce and investment. The Heart of Asia / Istanbul Process is... (More on P4)...(10)

Canada's Afghan Aid Program was Flawed, Audit Concludes

OTTAWA - Canada walked away from a decade-long \$2.2 billion aid program in Afghanistan hoping the U.S. would just carry on with its plan, an internal government audit has found. Instead, Canada's vision was left in the dust, officials told auditors looking into the largest aid program in government history, one of the three pillars of the effort to stabilize the war-torn country after the fall of the Taliban in 2001.



The massive aid program was supposed to bolster the military's work in securing the country and diplomatic efforts to shore up its governance, a whole-of-government approach that in some ways should serve as a model for approaching... (More on P4)...(9)

CSTO Head's Concerns about Afghan Border Security Baseless

DUSHANBE - Afghan border guards consider that concerns of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Secretary-General Nikolay Bordyuzha about the Afghan-Tajik border security are "baseless." Radio Liberty cited Commander of the Afghan Border Police (ABP), Lieutenant-General Mohammad Shafiq Fazli, as saying that a five-



day operation carried out by Afghan security forces Imam Sahib and Dashti Archi districts of Kunduz province had been successful and armed militants had... (More on P4)...(11)

Lawmaker Alleges Police Chief's Hand in Logar Assault



KABUL - Wolesi Jirga member Mohammad Akbar Stanikzai on Monday accused the Logar police chief of having hand in last month's group attack on the provincial police headquarters. At least 20 policemen were killed and nine others wounded after a group of insurgents stormed the police headquarters in Pul-i-Alam -- the provincial capital -- on February 17. One of the attackers detonated his explosives at the entrance to the building and three others forced their way inside the facility. Two of the attackers detonated their explosives inside the police headquarters while the last one blew himself up inside the canteen. But Stanikzai said the police chief happened to be in Kabul... (More on P4)...(14)

Kuchi Tribesmen in Khost Seek Edu Facilities for Children

KHOST CITY - Kuchi tribesmen in southeastern Khost province have demanded the government, donors and aid agencies provide their children with basic education facilities. The nomads complain the central government and aid agencies have not only failed to provide their children with fundamental education facilities, but have also ignored them in other sectors. Ramazan Kuchi, a local elder of the tribe in Khost City, the provincial capital, told Pajhwok Afghan News Kuchi children had no access to formal education and... (More on P4)...(15)

EU Renews Pledge Not to Leave Afghans Alone

KABUL - The European Union (EU) on Monday renewed its commitment to continuously supporting the unity government and not leaving Afghanistan alone. This was stated by Stefan Huber, the acting head of the EU delegation, at a meeting with First Deputy Chief Executive Officer Mohammad Khan in Kabul, a statement from Khan's office said. Huber said the EU would continue to assist Afghanistan in improving the situation of women and children, healthcare services,

education, training, development and good governance. He said though the union had assisted the previous government in Kabul in the same fields, they would continue to support the unity government and would not leave the Afghans alone. Besides political and diplomatic fronts, he said, the EU would assist Afghans on humanitarian ground. Earlier, Milko Van Goold, head of the



Development Cooperation of the EU Delegation, had said the union would provide Afghanistan 200 million euros (\$265 million) each year in... (More on P4)...(13)

Over 16,000 Foreign Troops Still in Afghanistan

KABUL - More than 13,160 foreign troops from 40 countries are currently training Afghan security forces as part of NATO's Resolute Support mission, officials said on Monday. Additionally, another 3,161 American service-members are conducting counter-terrorism operations in different parts of Afghanistan, one US Army official told Pajhwok Afghan News. Under new agreements with Kabul, NATO embarked on the mission this year to train and advise the Afghan security personnel and the US was allowed to use several bases for continued counter-terrorism operations.



A NATO source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the Resolute Support Mission involved 40 nations, which also contributed troops to the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). He put the current strength of the new NATO mission at 13,195, including 6,839 American, 885 Georgian, 850 German, 650 Romanian, 503 Turkish, 500 Italian, 480 British, 400 Australians and 222 Czech service-members. The mission features Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria... (More on P4)...(16)

WHO Helps Launch Polio Vaccination Initiative



KABUL - Officials from the Afghan Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and the World Health Organization (WHO) say a new public health initiative will see up to 7.6 million Afghan kids under the age of five receive polio vaccination and another 6.6 million will receive vitamin E capsules. The polio vaccinations will take place in 28 provinces, with a number of provinces and districts reportedly inaccessible due to weather and security issues. "In order to eliminate polio disease from our country, polio implementation teams have been assigned to the borders of insecure districts, where they will implement the vaccination programs on campaign days... (More on P4)...(17)