Afghans Celebrate Nawroz Amid Rising Hopes for Peace

Afghans all over the country on Thursday joined millions in other parts of the world to celebrate the ancient Nawroz festival, the start of Nowruz, which falls on the first day of spring, coinciding March 21.

Residents of Herat in the west of Afghanistan celebrated the Milla-e-Surkh, the red rose party, in Kabul to celebrate the Nawroz festival, a festival in a peaceful environment, said Noorollah, a Kabul resident.

The festival is started by Janda Bala, flag hoisting ceremony. The ancient Persian festival is also marked by hundreds of millions of people from around the country gathered with President Ashraf Ghani as the main speaker of the event. At this event, outlined the historic importance of Nawroz and its benefit that the Afghans can use for promoting unity.

Afghans celebrate Nawroz according to their local traditions. But in Balkh and Kabul, the festival is started by Janda Bala, flag hoisting ceremony.

Afghan residents, in the south of Afghanistan, also looked to picnic points where they enjoyed the arrival of spring.

People in Kandahar are very happy on the holidays,” said Mohammad Rezul, a Kandahar resident.

The delay in elections happened in order to ensure transparency, fairness and smooth conduct of the national process, she added. The IEC said that elections on the new date would be conducted if the government and the international community provided the required funds to the election body at due time.

The approval allows Germany’s military, the Bundeswehr, which are mostly deployed in the north of Afghanistan, to keep up to 1,300 soldiers in the country as part of NATO’s Resolute Support mission, providing support and training to Afghan security forces.

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German Parliament Extends Military Mandate for Afghan Mission

KABUL - Germany’s parliament has granted a one-year extension of its military mandate for Afghanistan, allowing the country’s first major post-war troop deployment to continue until March 31, 2020.

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Peace Should Not Put Human Rights at Risk: Eu Envoy

KABUL - In a video message on occasion of Nowruz Festival, Parvi Marianne, the Head of European Union’s Delegation to Afghanistan on Thursday said that peace processes in Afghanistan should not put human rights, specifically the rights of Afghan women, at risk.

She said that there are serious concerns among the EU members about a potential compromise on the gains Afghanistan has obtained in its negotiations with the Taliban. She added that the EU is ready to support the Afghan government and the Taliban in the peace process.

Germany’s military’s contribution to the Resolute Support mission, providing support and training to Afghan security forces.

Markus Potzel, Germany’s Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan in a tweet on Friday made the announcement and said a vast majority in German Parliament voted for an extension of Germany’s military’s contribution to the Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan.

Up to 1,300 German soldiers will continue to... (More on P4, 4)