Afghan President Launches Controversial National ID Card

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani launched long-delayed electronic citizen ID cards Thursday, but his governing partner, Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, boycotted the ceremony and questioned the legitimacy and timing of the process.

KABUL - The president and first lady Rula Ghani, along with several top officials, received their ID cards, locally known as “e-tazkiras,” marking the formal rollout at a special ceremony in Kabul.

The existing national ID cards are made of paper and, officials say, are highly prone to tampering and fraud. President Ghani reiterated those concerns at Thursday’s ceremony.

"An important reason for launching this card is that terrorists have taken advantage of the paper ID card, endangering security of all our countrymen," Ghani said.

KABUL - The CEO of the National Unity Government (NUG) Abdullah Abdullah on Thursday held a press conference and said the electronic ID card system was not legitimate and did not have the support of the Afghan people.

"The reason I have not participated in distribution of electronic Tazkiras is that I know this process has not received the needed legitimacy and support from the Afghan people. A one sided decision that has been approved by all sides can only lead to crisis and more problems," Abdullah said.

His comments came just hours after the electronic national ID card was launched Thursday.

KABUL - Afghan security forces arrested seven suspected militants who were planning to attack a government-run hospital and an interior ministry office in the capital Kabul on Thursday, officials said.

The arrests come two days after twin blasts near government buildings in Kabul.

KABUL - A mother of two in Afghanistan sold her five-month-old daughter to raise money for medical treatment for a relative.

The case sparked deep concern in the country, and officials and others have raised money for both medical costs and to get the child back to her mom.

The mom, Obaidah, lives in Maimana, in Afghanistan’s Faryab province, and has been married for five years. Her husband’s 20-year-old brother Jalaluddin is suffering from blood cancer, which is expensive to treat.

To help pay for the treatment, baby Mehraban was sold to a childless couple.

“I sold my daughter to treat my husband’s young brother. I cried two nights and I did not sleep. I had to do that to save a person’s life from death,” said Obaidah in a phone interview with VOA.

The story, first reported by the Pajhwok news agency, circulated widely on social media, attracting the attention of a local governor.

A Pajhwok reporter says the governor of Faryab paid $420 to get the baby back and returned it to her mother.

Najibullah, a man who runs a restaurant in city of Maimana, bought the baby girl because he and his wife have not been able to have children.

Five other people donated money for Jalaluddin’s treatment. Mehraban is safe in the latest of several cases in which property, debt, or social difficulties prompted... (More on P4:2)

CEO Slams ID Card Process, Says it is Not ‘Legitimate’

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