

Sanctions to Help Strengthen Peace Efforts in Afghanistan: Mohib



KABUL - National Security Advisor Hamdullah Mohib has said that sanctions could help strengthen efforts for peace in Afghanistan and pressurize the Taliban to decline violence, according to a statement on Friday.

Mohib expressed the view during a video call meeting with members of the UN Sanction Committee in which he provided briefing over UN Security Council 1988 sanctions on the Taliban.

Mohib congratulated India for taking charge of leading the Security Council Sanction Committee and Norway, Kenya, Ireland and Mexico for the membership of the committee.

Mohib said: "The Taliban have increased violence against Afghan government and the Taliban and this urge is unprecedented. They withdraw from the table of talks, conducted trips, broke promises, return to the battle field after release from the prison."

He stressed UN Security Council sanctions are vital curbing Taliban's violence and helping peace process. He pledged that Afghanistan...

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EU-Afghan Group Concerned at High Level of Violence

KABUL - European Union and Afghan officials have discussed human rights and fundamental freedoms in the context of the ongoing peace negotiations between the government and the Taliban in Doha.

The EU-Afghanistan Special Working Group on Human Rights, Good Governance and Migration held its third meeting on Wednesday virtually.

A statement from EU said the parties involved voiced grave concern over the continuing high level of violence, and condemned the increasing number of targeted killings of media workers, civil society activists and law enforcement personnel.

The EU urged the Afghan government to provide for the security of the important actors in society, conduct thorough investigations, bring the culprits to justice and keep the public fully informed about the measures taken.

It also underlined the importance of respecting and promoting International Humanitarian Law. All parties to the conflict were asked to protect civilians.

The bloc stressed: "The protection of civilians, medical and education facilities as well as humanitarian workers, cannot wait for peace. The parties stressed that only an immediate cessation of violence would restore confidence in the sincerity of the Taliban for a political settle-



ment."

Both sides agreed on greater promotion of inclusivity in the peace talks, notably the involvement of women, youth, minorities, internally displaced persons, refugees and victims of war, to ensure the ownership of the process by all Afghans.

They called for the preservation and further strengthening of the democratic and human rights gains

of the last 20 years is indispensable during and after the peace process, and recalled the broad-based consensus on this, as expressed at the Geneva Conference for Afghanistan in November 2020.

"In the areas of women and children's rights, the necessity to enforce legislation against widespread violence and harmful practices was highlighted, as well as the need to..."

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Germany Committed to Afghan Peace Process, German Minister Says



KABUL - The German Defense Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer said Friday that Germany is committed to the Afghan peace process.

The German defense minister arrived in Afghanistan early Friday morning for an unannounced visit to Mazar-i-Sharif, the capital of Balkh province, where the majority of German troops are stationed.

Annegret's visit comes after the German government on Wednesday agreed to extend its military mandate in Afghanistan by at least another 10 months.

Germany's Deutsche Welle reported that the new draft mandate still needs the approval of the Bundestag, the lower house of parliament.

The current mandate is set to expire at the end of March.

Under the draft agreed by Chancellor Angela Merkel's Cabinet, German troops would be able to stay in the country until January 31, 2022, Deutsche Welle reported. During her visit, Kramp-Karrenbauer stated that Afghanistan "urgently needs a settlement between the opposing groups of its society."

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Govt Blamed for Having 'No Control' on Fuel Prices



KABUL - There have been over 13 Afs increase (\$0.17) increase in every liter of gasoline and diesel in Kabul markets over the last three weeks despite hurdles in the way of fuel import have been removed.

Drivers and Kabul residents said the Ministry of Industry and Commerce has "no control" over the prices and is not monitoring the local markets, something that has provided the ground for the price hike.

The prices went up unprecedentedly following a massive fire in the country's western border town of Islam Qala, leaving hundreds of trucks damaged, as well as following the closure of two main routes to the northern borders from where gas and fuel are imported. However, the Islam Qala customs office has resumed its activities and the highways that were closed by protesters have been reopened to traffic over the last week. The price for one liter of gasoline has increased to 48 Afs (0.62) from 35 Afs (\$0.45) earlier this month. Gas prices also went up, but it has reduced a bit.

Drivers said the high price of fuel has created many problems for them as they cannot afford their needs.

"Here, everyone decides on their own. It buys (fuel) at one price but sells it at the price that he chooses. The government is not monitoring them," said Mohammad, a taxi...

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Afghan, Uzbek, Pakistani Officials Discuss Railroad Mapping



KABUL - A trilateral meeting virtually discussed implementation the Mazar-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar railway track, an official said on Thursday. Mirwais Mirzakwal, finance and administration assistance of the Afghanistan Railway Authority (ARA), said Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Pakistan officials on Wednesday exchanged views and held discussion over practical work on the railway track between the three counties through a video conference. Mirzakwal...

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11 New Cases of COVID-19, 1 Death Reported



KABUL - The Ministry of Public Health on Friday reported 11 new positive cases of COVID-19 out of 1,385 samples tested in the last 24 hours.

The ministry also reported 1 death and 4 recoveries from COVID-19 in the same period.

The new cases were reported in Kandahar (3), Kabul (1), Herat

(2), Balkh (1), Kunduz (2), Nimroz (1) and Kapisa (1) provinces. The cumulative total of known COVID-19 cases is 55,707, the total number of reported deaths is 2,443, and the total number of recoveries is 49,285.

So far, 295,155 samples have been tested in government centers and...

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200 Trucks Go to Afghanistan Per Day Via Dogharoun Customs



TEHRAN - Director General of Dogharoun Border Customs Office Mahmood Koohgerd said over 200 trucks export Iranian products every day to neighboring Afghanistan as the border crossing has resumed activity after the huge fire in Herat province. Koohgerd said the export of

goods, especially fruits and vegetables, to Afghanistan from the important border crossing is going after the trade stopped at the border gate due to a big fire in Afghanistan earlier in February.

The Iranian official added that the Iranian side has made every...

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Mckenzie Placed A 'Large Measure of the Blame' on The Taliban for Extreme Violence



General Kenneth F. McKenzie said the US and NATO's withdrawal decision depends on the situation and negotiated settlements between the Taliban and the Afghan government are highly supported.

He said currently the US finds level of the violence in Afghanistan to an extreme level.

While speaking at a virtual Beirut Institute Summit McKenzie said "I place a large measure of the blame on the Taliban who have continued to mount offensive operations and targeted killings of Afghan officials but the excessive violence has led the government to launch their own defensive operations to protect themselves - the violence while too high on both sides."

He indicated that there is no sign that Taliban cut ties with Al-Qaeda.

"In my clear judgment rests largely on the Taliban; we also continue to ... look for signs of a Taliban break with al-Qaeda and I have not at this point seen any definitive signs that would lead to believe they're prepared to or able to honor their obligations," McKenzie added.

This comes as Pakistani Foreign minister, Shah Mahmood Qureshi met with Mohammad Omar Daudzai, the Afghan President's special representative on Thursday.

Qureshi stressed his concerns over the increased level of violence in Afghanistan and added that Pakistan seeks a...

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Kandahar Police Accused of Torture, Sexual Assault

KANDAHAR - A young man from the southern province of Kandahar has accused the police in the province of beating him, forcing him to make a confession, and sexually assaulting him. Others interviewed by TOLONews also claimed they were abused by the Kandahar police department. The young man said that the police forced him to confess to a robbery and then sexually assaulted him. The victim is now in Kabul to demand justice. Meanwhile, another man said he was tortured while in police custody and his teeth were broken and now he cannot hear properly. Police in Kandahar have denied these allegations. Farid Ahmad is one of the young men who claims to have

been tortured by the police. He says that the police called him to the police station and kept him illegally detained for 21 days. Farid Ahmad claims that the police asked him to say that he had gone to the police station to steal, but when he refused to do so, several members of the police in the PD15 police station sexually assaulted him. "They tortured me 17 to 18 times, then they (police members) said that he can't accept this—the head of the police station was also sitting there—one of his guards was named Haji Khan—there was also another commander—at around 2:00pm, these people sexually assaulted me," said Farid Ahmad. Shekib, who had once served in the NDS office in Kandahar, also accused police in PD15 of Kan-



dahar of torture.

"They hit me in the face with a gun ... my head was broken and 8 teeth, they tortured me harshly. Later on they transferred me to the police headquarters—there each one of them slapped me 40 times each—now I can't hear properly," said Shekib.

The victim said that the chief of police in PD15, who is named Hazratullah, forced Farid Ahmad through torture to accuse several other people of robbery. "They tortured me in the police station, they had no right to keep me for 22 days in a room without any...

3 People Killed as Gunmen Attack Slain Journalist's House in Ghor



GHOR - At least three people were killed and five more were wounded in an attack by unidentified armed men in the western province of Ghor on Thursday night, sources said on Friday.

The house that was attacked by gunmen belongs to Bismillah Adil, a journalist, activist and former head of Radio Sada-e-Ghor, who was killed in an at-

tack by armed men on the first day of this year.

Local reporters said that Lala Gul, Adil's brother, has said that Adil's brother, cousin and his 13-year-old nephew have lost their lives in the attack.

Five others who have been wounded are also family members of Bismillah Adil, according to local sources.

Adil's brother, Lala Gul, has claimed that the attack has been conducted by the Taliban. A Taliban spokesman, Qari Ahmad Yusuf, rejected the group's involvement in the incident.

Local officials in Ghor said that a team has been assigned to probe the incident. Reports indicate that protests have been launched in Ghor over the incident. (TOLO NEWS)

Faryab Residents Fear Clashes Will Intensify as Spring Nears

FARYAB - Faryab residents on Friday said they are concerned about increasing insecurity in the northern province as many districts have witnessed clashes over the last week and that the fighting will intensify on the arrival of the spring season. Faryab police said seven out of 14 districts of the province have witnessed deadly clashes between the security forces and the Taliban over the last week. "People are concerned because the spring season is near and they fear that the clashes will intensify, more people will be displaced and more people are killed," said Asadullah Jamali, a resident of Faryab. "Many residents have shifted to the center of the province from other districts, and they are in a bad situation," Faryab resident Rauf Andar said. A member of the provincial council in Faryab, Mohammad Saeedi, said that hundreds of families have been displaced in the province following the clashes. "The big problem is that the government takes action after an incident happens," Saeedi said. "Sometimes they have in-



formation about the Taliban's intention to launch an attack, but they wait and watch so that something happens and then they will take." Qaisar, Almar, Khwaja Sabz Posh, Shirin Tagab, Dawlat Abad, Pashtun Kot and Gerziwan districts have witnessed attacks by the Taliban on security forces over the last week. Police said casualties were inflicted on both sides. "At least 17 armed Taliban have been killed in the last week and 24 others were wounded. Many of their group leaders are among those killed and wounded," Faryab police spokesman Abdul Karim Yurish said. He said that five security force members were killed and seven more were wounded in the clashes. (TOLO NEWS)

Father Who Lost 3 Sons in War Calls for Peace

KUNAR - Ghulam Akbar, a native of Kunar, on Tuesday said that his three sons who were serving in the Afghan security forces have been killed, and he called for peace. The 65-year-old father said that all three sons were married and they left six children behind. "I sacrificed my three sons. I am also prepared to sacrifice myself if peace comes—but a peace that could safeguard the future of our children," said Ghulam Akbar. He said that the widows of his

sons then returned to their fathers' homes and married others due to poverty.

"We were playing in our childhood—one was becoming a thief and another one a minister and another the king, this government is the same today," said Ghulam Akbar referring to the weak economic situation. "The fathers of my classmates give them money at school and they buy something, but we can't buy anything because we do not have money to buy good dresses,...

Rashid Khan May Miss 1st Zimbabwe Test Match Due to Injury

Afghanistan's national cricket star Rashid Khan is likely to miss the first Test match against Zimbabwe "due to a finger injury on his bowling arm," the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) announced on Thursday. "Khan was injured during his stint in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) where he played for Lahore Qalandars franchise," ACB said in a statement.

This was the first time that Khan played in the PSL. Khan left the Lahore Qalandars after playing in just two matches in order to join the Afghanistan national team. In these two games he delivered a stunning performance, impressing with both bat and ball. Khan is under-treatment by the relevant health officials in UAE and...

100 Graves Shifted Based on Road Expansion Rumor

KABUL - Deceived by a propaganda about expansion of a road in Sarai Shumali area, the heirs of deceased buried in the area's cemetery have started shifting their graves elsewhere. So far 100 graves have been shifted and the process goes on despite Kabul Municipality's announcement that no such road is being expanded which could hit the graveyard. The heirs started shifting graves of their relatives from the Sara-e-Shamali Cemetery in the limits of 17th Police District of Kabul City four days back.

Abdul Latif, a resident of Sara-e-Shamali locality, told Pajhwok Afghan News: "Five days back police exhumed the body of a girl two days after her burial for investigation purpose. Later coffin sellers and grave diggers spread propaganda that government plans to expand the road and encourage people to excavate their bodies to another place." Today (Thursday) some grave diggers with their equipment and coffin sellers with their materials were present in the cemetery.



A 60-year old woman was crying on the grave of her son. She said: "This is my son's grave, he was engaged, another son of mine is imprisoned and my husband is paralyzed. I don't have no one to open the grave. We don't have bread to eat then where shall we take his body for burial."

The bereaved mother said that wealthy individuals opened the graves of their relatives and transferred them to another place.

Meanwhile, Sumaira Rasa, spokesperson of the Kabul Municipality, said they had no plan to expand the Sara-e-Shamali road.

"Some people for their personal gains are spreading such propaganda to confuse public minds and get personal benefit..."

Outlook Horoscope

Aries (Mar. 22-Apr.20)



Feb 27, 2021 - Are you satisfied with your current career, Aries? If not, start by making a plan. There are specific steps that you can follow to take the greatest advantage of the available opportunities. Consider visiting career-related websites or ask a career counselor for advice. Don't settle for less than you deserve. See what you can find, and move toward a more fulfilling future.

Taurus (Apr.21-May 20)



Feb 27, 2021 - Don't fear any changes that lie ahead, Taurus. Even if you think you don't adjust well, you have more adaptability than you realize. Without change, life would become stagnant. It wouldn't be long before you became dissatisfied and bored with the same old thing. Try to see change as an adventure and a gateway to greater happiness and fulfillment. Trust your versatility.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)



Feb 27, 2021 - Make your dreams a tool for gaining insight, Gemini. In the past, some rulers believed that their dreams held great insights and they employed people to interpret them. Whether you think dreams are mystical insights or random brain waves, there is much to be gained. Recurring dreams hold significance. They can point to something that you need to take care of. Consider exploring this area.

Cancer (June 21-July 20)



Feb 27, 2021 - Follow your instincts, Cancer. Even if you have a tendency to listen more to reason, put it aside today. While your ears hear words, your intuition can hear what's between the words and un-said, providing you with a bigger picture than what is presented. If everything sounds right but feels wrong, you'd be better off trusting your feelings. Act with careful consideration and caution.

Leo (July 21-Aug. 21)



Feb 27, 2021 - Feed your mind new knowledge, Leo. Visit a bookstore or read some interesting information on the web. If you have more time, visit the library or find out about some courses that might be perfect for you. There's knowledge to be had everywhere you look, provided you're open to receiving it. People are often the best resource. Ask someone to explain something, if that's what you need.

Virgo (Aug. 22-Sep 22)



Feb 27, 2021 - Try to see nightmares as safe ways to understand feelings, Virgo. No one likes to experience them, and we'd sooner forget them once awake, but the best way to ensure they don't return is to understand them. What's frightening you? Why do you feel insecure? Consider these questions and look for answers. Fear, pain, and anxiety are the most common ingredients of a real cold-sweat nightmare.

Libra (Sep 23-Oct. 22)



Feb 27, 2021 - Are you living your dreams, Libra? Are you still in touch with them? The energy from today's planetary aspects can lend strength and encouragement to this part of your life. Seize the opportunity to take hold of the things that you want most of all. Ask yourself what you want people to say about you after you're gone. Get back on track to a fulfilled life by taking steps toward your desires.

Scorpio (Oct.23-Nov.22)



Feb 27, 2021 - Check out advancing your career or education today, Scorpio. The energy can favor expansion and growth. When was the last time you learned a new skill? It doesn't have to be work related. If flower arranging, skydiving, or massage therapy is something that appeals to you, go for it. Never stop looking for ways to expand your knowledge.

Sagittarius (Nov.23-Dec.20)



Feb 27, 2021 - Do you recognize your intuition as a valuable asset, Sagittarius? Some people do and some don't. Which group are you in? It's easier to trust in concrete, factual reality than in things you can't see or touch. But your intuition can serve you more than you may realize. That gut feeling you experience can guide you with caution and alert you to danger. Put more trust in it and see.

Capricorn (Dec.21-Jan.19)



Feb 27, 2021 - Use your creativity to make things happen today, Capricorn. Remember that creativity doesn't always take the form of a finished product. Use it to come up with innovative ways to approach a task, project, or problem. Trust in your ability to discover such possibilities. You're an intelligent and creative person. Combine the two to make an unbeatable tool for finding solutions to almost anything.

Aquarius (Jan 20-Feb.18)

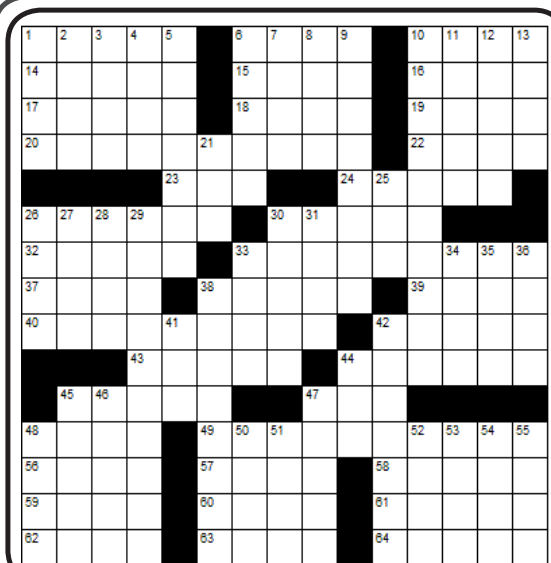


Feb 27, 2021 - Find some new ways to expand your horizons, Aquarius. The web has an infinite amount of information to explore, and your community and local colleges offer many courses from which to choose. Think about what you'd enjoy learning. Perhaps a new skill for your job or a crafts class that shows you how to make things. Whether self-defense or Italian strikes your fancy, it's out there. Find it.

Pisces (Feb.19-Mar.20)



Feb 27, 2021 - Step out of your routine, Pisces. Do this every so often to increase your knowledge and expand your horizons. The planetary aspects favor this. Walking to a different beat can give you far more than you imagine. Try something you've never considered before. Go to a new place. Change your desk around to gain a new perspective. See what you can discover about yourself and the world.



Across

1. A type of coffee, 6. River of Spain, 10. Conspiracy, 14. Sheeplike, 15. Boyfriend, 16. Sister of Zeus, 17. Homes for birds, 18. Not straight, 19. Arab chieftain, 20. Exact opposite, 22. Central points, 23. Not in, 24. New Zealand native, 26. French for "Boy", 30. Sacred hymn, 32. Scallion, 33. Fetches, 37. Thunder, 38. Propose, 39. Agreeable, 40. Merge, 42. Wavelike design, 43. Considers, 44. Brilliance, 45. Nonrigid airship, 47. Deity, 48. Chimney channel, 49. Familiar, 56. Acquire deservedly, 57. Defeat decisively, 58. Freight, 59. Not now, 60. Modify, 61. "Bye", 62. Anagram of "Sees", 63. Bristle, 64. Expire

Down

1. Spanish lady, 2. Not odd, 3. A box or chest, 4. Against, 5. Decorate, 6. A common green newt, 7. Honey insects, 8. Hindu princess, 9. Outmaneuver, 10. A remarkable development, 11. Bushbaby, 12. Small African antelope, 13. Sailors, 21. Barbarian, 25. Former boxing champ, 26. Mongolian desert, 27. Nameless, 28. Violent disturbance, 29. Funny woman, 30. Vermin, 31. Anagram of "Ties", 33. Wander, 34. 8 in Roman numerals, 35. Beige, 36. Views, 38. Makes ready, 41. Precious stone, 42. Physical examination, 44. A state of SW India, 45. Feelings of boredom, 46. Entices, 47. Minim, 48. Celebration, 50. Cypher, 51. Resign, 52. Nil, 53. Journey, 54. Prima donna problems, 55. An amount of medicine

Yesterday's Solution



account alarm angry
civil cling coast concern
cookies corruption
disguise electricity
factory human imagine
intense judge leeway
lucky nature proof quite
rape river royal sedition
sour spots still tails tourist



*In the Name of God, the Most Merciful,
the Most Kind*



The Ups and Downs of Afghan Constitution

Protection of Afghanistan's Constitution, which, after passing historical ups and downs was approved based on democratic values and international principles in the post-Taliban administration, is a red-line for the people of Afghanistan and for the government at the negotiating table. To view shortly the past regimes in Afghanistan, tribal code of conduct and patriarchal system held strong sway. During the regime of Emir Abdul Rahman Khan, Pashtunwali, a non-written code of conduct and traditional life-style which was followed by indigenous Pashtun people, ruled Afghanistan. Women were discriminated on the grounds of their gender based on Pashtunwali. Their rights and freedoms were restricted on a large scale. Nonetheless, Habibullah Khan (1901 – 1919), who succeeded his father Emir Abdul Rahman, adopted somehow moderate approach and restricted the number of wives to four based on Islamic Sharia. His son, King Amanullah Khan (1919 – 1929), however, sought to modernize Afghanistan. The first Constitution of Afghanistan was endorsed during Amanullah's monarchy. In this constitution, men and women were considered as equals and sexual discrimination had no room in it. That is, all Afghans, regardless of their gender and beliefs, were called citizens. The constitution was, however, in conflict with tribal code of conduct, cultural values of a traditional society like Afghanistan, and religious comprehension of some reactionaries. Therefore, it triggered an uprising and his successor, Habibullah Kalakani, outlawed the constitution with the support of tribal leaders and some reactionaries. Worst, Amanullah was excommunicated by a declaration signed by a number of tribal elders and clerics. Nadir Shah (1929 – 1934), who ousted Kalakani, adopted more traditional approach towards women's rights and freedoms. Similar to Kalakani, he stood against Amanullah's modern movement and outlawed Amanullah's Constitution. Wearing burqa, a head-to-toe covering, was imperative for women during Nadir's regime. After Nadir's death, his 19-year-old son Zahir Shah succeeded him and ruled Afghanistan from 1933 to 1973. However, his uncles Hashim Khan and Shah Mahmood and his cousin Daud Khan were the main players and ran his monarchy as prime ministers for three decades. Hashim Khan continued the same restrictive, repressive and traditional system. However, Shah Mahmood was a moderate prime minister (1946-1953) and sanctioned free elections and a relatively free press, and the so-called "liberal parliament" functioned from 1949 to 1952. Therefore, he was dubbed as "the father of democracy". Prime Minister Daud Khan (1953-1963) introduced several far-reaching educational and social reforms, such as allowing women to wear the veil voluntarily and abolished purdah (the practice of secluding women from public view). The regime still remained politically repressive and tolerated no direct opposition. The last decade of Zahir Shah's monarchy was dubbed as "the decade of democracy" or "the decade of constitution" for the approval of Constitution based on more democratic principles. Zahir Shah also sanctioned free parliamentary election – in which four women were elected as MPs for the first time and two women were selected as Senators by the King. The greatest achievement of the 1963-73 decade was the promulgation of the 1964 Constitution. It was stated in this Constitution that every Afghan had equal rights and duties before the law. The Constitution also barred the royal family, other than the king, from participating in politics and government – a provision that was perceived as keeping Daud Khan out of politics. This Constitution put great impact on Afghanistan's current Constitution. The Soviet-backed communist regimes also endorsed and supported democratic but secular Constitution and advocated the rights and freedoms of women and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Nevertheless, women's rights and freedoms were restricted during Mujahideen's government, which was a serious political backtrack in Afghanistan's history. Worst of all, a combination of Pashtunwali and Sharia Law in conjunction with the Taliban's extreme interpretation of Deobandi, Salafi and Wahabi Islam were put to practice during the Taliban's regime. The Taliban deprived women of their basic human rights and freedoms. Women were restricted within the four walls and in case of going out, they had to wear burqa and accompanied with their male chaperones – this dealt a strong blow to all democratic achievements and the progress made regarding the rights and freedoms of women. Following the downfall of the Taliban's regime, it was agreed in the Bonn Conference, held on 5 December 2001, that a constitutional Loya Jirga (Grand National Assembly) had to be convened within 18 months to adopt a new Constitution which is being practiced now. The Constitution is based on democratic principles, UN Charter and the UDHR. With the approval of this Constitution, which entitles men and women equally, Afghan women participated in all social, economic and political segments of the government and made great strides. It should be noted that the current democratic constitution was not endorsed overnight and is not necessarily the product of a conference in Bonn. It is the fruit of Afghans' decades of sacrifices. Hence, it will not be acceptable to Afghan people to gamble this Constitution at the negotiating table. The democratic principles, human rights and freedoms, mainly women's rights, are not to be bargained for. It is said the Taliban again seek to impose their radical mindset on Constitution, which will mostly likely restrict women's participation in social and political activities. In short, the constitution should not be compromised at the negotiating table.



Why the Free Market Of Afghanistan Needs Anti-monopoly Law?

By: Mohammad Zahir Akbari

Unfortunately, the pleasure of the free-market on already poor and unemployed people has remained an endless problem in Afghanistan. Instead of enhancing economic growth and helping people in hard days, it intensifies the pleasure on the lower class of the society. Even, if someone coughs in this country, the prices are sharply increased justifying on the basis of free-market but never entirely deflate even after weeks and months. In recent days with the protest of drivers, which is a normal issue in democratic countries, the prices of basic goods have sharply increased in the country. When the issue combined with the conflagration in Herat custom, it further intensified throughout the country. For example, the price of one Kg gas suddenly increased from 50 to 100. The price of 50 kg flour increased from 1700 to nearly 2000 Af. Now that both issues have ended the prices of the goods have not returned or partially returned to their previous range. Even food prices such as wheat flour which had increased during Coro-virus have not returned to their normal price range yet. Unfortunately, the chaos of the free market is not something new in Afghanistan. Nearly 12 years ago, it inflicted its first blow with a sharp increase in the price of basic goods in the country but at that time, it was justified as the tide of world economic crisis, while after the world economic crisis the issue has not solved in the country. The upward trend of prices has unstopably continued while no enough monetary changes have happened in the income of fixed salary takers. For example, one decade ago, the price of one kg liquid gas was around 35Afs in the Kabul market but now it is around 60 Af, nearly a 100% increase. The price of 50kg flour was about 900Af but now it is around 1800 Af, a 100% increase. The price of 16 cooking oil was about 900 but now it is about 1700 Af, almost a 100% increase. The price of 30 eggs was about 120 Af but now it is around 200 Af, almost a 100% increase. As aforementioned, the other blow of the free-market was inflicted during corona-virus on Afghan people. After identification of the first positive case of corona-virus in the country, the prices of the hygienic and foodstuffs have sharply increased in the free-market of Afghanistan. Some food items which were considered as the main resource of vitamin C such as orange, lemon, and vegetables were unprecedentedly increased in the country. For example, the price of one kg of lemon which was about 40 Afs in the Kabul market had reached 200 or 300 and even in some places, it was reported to 500 Af. The price of a medical mask which was about 3 Afs had reached 40 or 50 Afs. In fact, Corona-virus had changed to a nightmare for the poor but a golden opportunity for economic opportunists in the free market of the country. One of the Kabul citizens told me that he had collected eight hundred thousand Afs as interests through selling masks during the pandemic. Despite these many anarchies and market disorders, no legal mechanism has created to ensure the stability of the free-market

and also revive justice in the market. Unfortunately, we have incompletely copied the version of free-market system from western countries. If we look at Pioneers of free-market system in the world such as United States, United Kingdom, and Australia and including China and Russia have anti-monopoly law which called antitrust law in the United States, anti-monopoly law in China and Russia, and trade practices law in the United Kingdom and Australia. Because of the lack of such a legal mechanism the oppressive trend of the free-market system has deprived many people of basic needs making the poor poorer and rich richer. Unlike other countries, the richer and the capital of richer did not have any positive impact on society. Instead of playing a productive role or creating jobs, they built some skyscraper buildings promoting the rent economy or made their utmost attempt in exporting low-quality goods from foreign countries. With passing every moment the number of the population are increasing but the number of jobs and economic productivities are not. A few traders grew rich in the country, but 90% of Afghan people fell under the poverty line. As pointed out, the economic growths of our monopolist companies and traders not led to unemployment reduction and a culture of entrepreneurship in the country. Thousands of domestic factories have collapsed in recent years either due to damping policies or unequal competition. Instead of showing economic creativities, the traders changed to the damping tool of those who wanted to paralyze the economy of Afghanistan. By exporting the lowest quality goods, they collapsed thousands of local businesses. For example, it is said that nearly 2500 shoes making factories have been collapsed in recent years and so, the level of joblessness and also the level of social crimes unprecedentedly increased in the country. Despite this, there seems no one to learn from these mistakes. If this condition continues, Afghanistan will never be able to stand on its own feet economically. The current destitute condition would further worsen in the future. On one hand, the jobless population is increasing and on the other hand, the international donation is declining. The solution is that we urgently enact anti-monopolistic law and putting an end to the justification of this oppressive behavior under name of the free market. In fact, no justifications can breach natural human rights depriving millions of basic human rights such as food, health, and shelter. We must stop providing wrong interpretation from the free-market system justifying hoarding, monopoly, inflation, injustice, and even the collapse of domestic factories in the country. We need to note there are some general principles such as human rights or social justice superposing any enacted laws to legalize the free market disorder and oppressions. If we fail to change the current condition, then there would be no need for terrorists to attack people; they themselves will be compelled to tear one and another to feed themselves and their families.

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How India Could Win Its COVID Vaccination Race

By: Sema Sgaier and Prashant Yadav

As the world enters the second year of the coronavirus pandemic, vaccination has moved front and center in policymakers' responses. But while vaccines offer the surest way out of the crisis, countries are approaching them in different ways. Some are racing to vaccinate their populations, while others await longer-term efficacy data before beginning. Still other countries find themselves in a long line to receive or purchase desperately needed doses. Many have noted the rapid rate of Israel's vaccination drive, the ambition of the United Kingdom, which was the first country to approve a COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use, and the stumbles to get supplies distributed in the United States and the European Union. But for those seeking lessons on how to protect a population through vaccination, there's another country to watch: India. With 1.3 billion people, and an estimated 11 million cases of COVID-19 to date, India faces a seemingly mammoth vaccination challenge. But the government recently announced a plan to vaccinate around 300 million people by early August. And, judging by the country's preparations and actions so far, it may be well equipped to handle the task. That's because India can meet the challenges of scale with massive manufacturing capacity, a strong public-health infrastructure with experience in vaccine delivery, an army of frontline workers, and meticulous planning. Add to that some innovative digital tracking, and the results could put the country in an enviable position by later this year. Frontline health workers are central players in India's vaccination rollout, and the first in line to receive the shots. The drive to vaccinate around 30 million frontline and other health workers began on January 16, and in the first 34 days, India achieved ten million vaccinations. The US took 31 days to vaccinate the same number after it authorized vaccines (the rate of China's vaccine rollout is unclear). After India's health workers are vaccinated, frontline workers and people aged over 50 – and younger people with serious health conditions – will be next in line. That's a further 260 million people that the government plans to vaccinate in under seven months. India has the capacity to manufacture all its COVID-19 vaccines domestically. The Serum Institute of India, the world's largest vaccine producer, has boosted its capacity in order to manufacture one billion doses of the AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine (known locally as Covishield), while Bharat Biotech will produce the government-backed Covaxin shot. This should be enough to vaccinate the country's priority groups this year. And, because the vaccines produced domestically are priced to be the cheapest in the world, India has already supplied vaccines worth \$47 million to 13 countries. India will rely heavily on its public-health infrastructure to scale up its vaccination drive. Three thousand COVID-19 vaccination centers have been established across the country, along with 27,000 cold chain points to keep supplies cool en route to and at their destinations. About 150,000 staff people in 700 districts have been specially trained to administer the vaccines. India already runs the world's largest public-health immunization programs, targeting 27 million infants and 29 million pregnant women each year. Since a national campaign to vaccinate children against measles and rubella began four years ago, several states have achieved coverage rates of over 90%. The COVID-19 vaccination push is certainly

ambitious, but its scale is not fundamentally different. As some countries – including the US – have found, multi-level government systems can hamper speedy vaccine rollout if there is inadequate information flow, lack of clarity on decision-making authority between the various levels, and diffuse accountability. India proactively addressed this issue when planning the deployment of COVID-19 vaccines by establishing a well-defined governance structure between the central government, state government, district government, and local administrative blocks. Roles and responsibilities for each level are clearly defined, allowing a nationally coordinated response. In addition, India is using technology to streamline tracking and accountability. In record time, the authorities have created the dedicated Co-WIN system to track procurement and distribution of vaccine supplies, and allow people to pre-register for vaccinations. Co-WIN builds on Aadhaar, the country's nationwide digital ID system. On the supply side, it uses e-VIN, the national vaccine information system. Bringing them together has been the key to making the system work, and initial glitches have been quickly fixed. Citizens can receive a text message informing them when and where to get the vaccine, and will receive a unique QR code certificate after they've received the second dose. Although the prospects look good, India must still overcome significant hurdles. Building a comprehensive and accurate database of individuals with comorbidities, in order to prioritize them for vaccination, remains a huge challenge. And, as in other countries, there are worrying levels of vaccine hesitancy. India's impressive COVID-19 immunization figures in the first weeks could have been even higher, but some medical staff have been reluctant to get the shot, especially because the locally developed Covaxin received emergency authorization before all the trial data on its efficacy had been reviewed. The government will need good communication campaigns to persuade older people and those with medical conditions that the vaccines are safe. India's experience holds at least three lessons for other countries. First, they should make the most of their strengths. Not every country can develop or manufacture its own vaccines. But almost all can draw upon committed frontline workers, public-health infrastructure, or prior experience confronting epidemics or holding immunization drives. Second, prioritizing vaccine access and tracking rollout should be built into the vaccination drive from the start. Digging deep into the data to allocate vaccines most effectively may require building upon existing data systems, or using new tools, such as the COVID-19 Vaccine Allocation Planner for the US, and the Vaccine Coverage Index, which highlights which geographies are likely to have problems achieving high levels of COVID-19 vaccine coverage and why. Finally, vaccine hesitancy will require a tailored response in each country. Policymakers and public-health experts must devise effective strategies to reassure people that vaccination is safe – and the only road out of the pandemic and toward recovery.

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(1) EU-Afghan Group...

address discrimination against religious minorities.” With regard to governance, the EU and Afghanistan called for free, fair, credible, transparent and inclusive electoral processes, facilitating a legitimate transfer of power. The experiences of their electoral cooperation and the prospects of continuing electoral reform were also discussed. The statement said “Anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) issues were also addressed, in view of the EU’s ongoing assessment of Afghanistan’s AML/CFT regime.” The parties conferred on the measures taken by the Afghan Government and commended their coordination in the area of anti-corruption policy and institutional reforms. (Pajhwok)

(2) Sanctions to Help...

will work with all partners to make sure that sanctions helped strengthened peace efforts in Afghanistan and stopped the Taliban from increasing violence. (Pajhwok)

(3) Germany Committed...

She added that the German soldiers cannot replace these reconciliation processes, but they were “making an important contribution together with allies, especially in the north of the country,” she said. “We stand ready to continue to support the peace process. The protection of our soldiers has a very high priority in view of the security situation, and all necessary measures are taken together with our partners,” Kramp-Karrenbauer added. Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer stated that Berlin’s goal remained an orderly withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan. The NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said last week that no final decision had been made on the future of foreign troops in Afghanistan – despite the May 1 troop withdrawal deadline. Stoltenberg acknowledged that the military alliance is facing “many dilemmas” over its continued engagement in the country. With over 1,100 troops, Germany has the second-largest contingent after the United States in the NATO’s Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan. (ATN)

(4) Govt Blamed...

driver in Kabul. “The prices are different between 3 to 5 Afs from one fuel pump,” said Mohammad Afzal, a Kabul resident. Kabul residents said that the import of low-quality fuel has also increased following the rise in prices. “We don’t know what the government is doing. The problems are too many,” said Hashmatullah, a Kabul resident. The Ministry of Industry and Commerce said that they have warned against increasing fuel prices a week ago. “Mobile teams of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce are monitoring the market to control the prices,” a spokesman for the ministry, Fawad Ahmadi, said. (TOLO NEWS)

(5) Afghan, Uzbek, Pakistani...

said that Afghanistan was ready to provide necessary supplies and accomplish its responsibility in this regard as far as the mapping of the track is concerned. He hoped that as a result of the efforts by the three nations, practical work on the project would be kicked off soon and financial support was ensured. At the end of the meeting, the three sides reiterated their commitment to the landmark regional and economic project and agreed on future talks and contacts to ensure more coordination and cooperation regarding the implementation of the project. It is worth mentioning that the mapping of the trilateral railway track was agreed between the three nations last month during a meeting in Uzbekistan. (Pajhwok)

(6) 11 New Cases of ...

there are 3,979 known active COVID-19 cases in the country, data by the ministry indicates. The number of deaths from COVID-19 globally is more than 2,509,448 and the number of known global coronavirus cases is 113,076,275, according to Johns Hopkins University. (TOLO NEWS)

(7) 200 Trucks Go...

preparation to resume full operation at the border gate. “Dogharoun customs was not damaged during the incident at the border facility of the neighboring country, but due to the critical situation in the area, its activities were stopped for a short period this month to prevent any damages,” he went on to say. In relevant remarks on February 18, an official in Khorassan Razavi province said that a number of trucks have resumed commutation through the Dogharoun border of Iran to Islam Qala customs in Afghanistan. Mohsen Nejat said on Thursday that the road was opened for trucks to transit products to Afghanistan via Dogharoun border crossing. He added that Iran is prepared to dispatch heavy vehicles to clear the incident area of last week’s tanker explosion in Herat province. A fuel tanker exploded at the Islam Qala crossing causing a massive fire that consumed more than 500 trucks carrying natural gas and fuel. (FNA)

(8) Mckenzie Placed...

political solution to the Afghan war. He added that peace talks are a shared responsibility and Pakistan will continue playing its conciliatory role. (Khaama Press)

(9) Pakistan Won’t...

about a troop presence in Afghanistan. “At this stage, we have made no final decision on the future of our presence, but, as the May 1 deadline is approaching, NATO Allies will continue to closely consult and coordinate in the coming weeks,” said Stoltenberg at a press conference in Brussels. “We remain committed to our Resolute Support mission, with training and funding for the brave Afghan security forces,” he said. “Defence Ministers had a thorough discussion on the situation in Afghanistan. We are faced with many dilemmas and there are no easy options,” he said. On Wednesday, also the Afghan Foreign Minister Mohammad Hanif Atmar has traveled to Moscow to discuss the peace talks.

“The purpose of this trip is to enhance bilateral relations and to strengthen regional consensus on the Afghan peace,” said Gran Hewad, a spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. His trip comes five days after the MoFA reacted to recent remarks by Russian envoy for Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov, who said he favors an inclusive and transitional coalition government in Afghanistan and that the Taliban has not violated their deal with the United States.

MoFA said that some remarks by Mr. Kabulov were “not based on realities in Afghanistan” and in some ways were contrary to official statements by the Russian Federation, which Kabul sees as a “friend.” The ministry said that the unjustifiable exaggerations of “a forbidden group in Russia” is in contravention of Russia’s willingness to fight against the threat of terrorism and extremism in the region and to achieve lasting peace based on the demand of Afghans. The ministry added that such remarks do not match the two countries’ mutual interests. (TOLO NEWS)

(10) Japan Wants...

provinces and conferred on implementation of similar projects in other areas of the country, according to a statement from AWMA. AWMA head Eng. Khan Mohammad Takal said that late Nakamura constructed a 25.51 kilometer canal from Kunar River to irrigate barren land in the Gamberi Desert. He added Dr. Nakamura was a hero and he loved Afghanistan. He spent most of his life in Afghanistan to serve the agriculture sector and eradicate poverty thus he was known as Kaka Murad among the people of Afghanistan. Takal hailed the strategy of JICA and pledged to create a team under the name of Dr. Nakamura in his administration to ensure the implementation of late Nakamura’s designed water management schemes in other parts of Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(11) Republic Tea...

Taliban, reiterating that they only aim for enduring peace in Afghanistan. “Afghanistan now is not what it was in the 90s and the state infrastructure cannot be trounced easily, and Pakistan also has changed,” the director general of Pakistan’s Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Major General Babar Iftikhar said as quoted by The News International. “It’s impossible for the Taliban to recapture Kabul and that Pakistan would support them. It isn’t going to happen,” he said over talks about foreign troops withdrawal from Afghanistan. On Wednesday, Afghanistan’s President Ashraf Ghani said that the way had been paved for more serious peace talks with the Taliban. The statement comes two days after a meeting was held between heads and some members of the negotiating teams in Doha and the meeting reportedly focused on the continuation of the negotiations. (TOLO NEWS)

(12) Taliban Acting...

government. According to a latest Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) report, Al-Qaeda insurgents have dissolved into Taliban ranks. The UN sanctions monitoring team on February 3, 2021 reported that Al-Qaeda had strong ties with the Taliban after two Al-Qaeda commanders Hisamuddin AbdulMaroof aka AbuMohsinAlmisri and Mohammad Hanif aka Abdullah were killed along with some other insurgents in southern Ghazni province. The United Nations in the report estimated the number of Al Qaeda members from 200 to 500 in Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

(13) Samangan Hospital...

protesting doctors. Meanwhile, Dr. Abdul Khalil Musdiq, Samangan public health director, said the project under which workers and doctors of the hospital received salaries had ended but their salaries based on their ranks were still payable. He said that the positions of the doctors would not be announced and the hospital workers had been misinformed about the issue. (Pajhwok)

(14) 42nd Bulgarian...

at Military Unit 34840 in Karlovo (Central Bulgaria) and at Marino Pole. The guard company is commanded by Major Milen Prodanov and consists of service persons from the 61st Mechanized Brigade of the Land Forces. In Afghanistan, the company’s tasks include patrolling part of the outer perimeter of the Bagram Airfield and serving on duty at the Base Operation Center. (Bulgarian News Agency)

(15) Kandahar Police...

resources,” said Mohammad Qasim, a resident of Kandahar who is now in Kabul for justice. “They kept us inside the container for hours, they did not give us a piece of bread, the weather was very warm and there was no drinking water,” said Hazrat, a resident in Kandahar who is now in Kabul seeking justice. “If the president and Amrullah Saleh do not hear my voice, then I do not have an option except to join the Taliban or commit suicide,” said Farid Ahmad. “Saleh and Ashraf Ghani need to hear our voice,” said Shekib. “Recently seven people were arrested by the police in PD15 on charges of smuggling—they were introduced to the legal and judicial institutions,” said Jamal Barakzai, a spokesman for the Kandahar police. (TOLO NEWS)

(16) Father Who Lost...

my grandfather can’t afford it,” said Nazawali, the daughter of one of the slain soldiers. Ghulam Akbar says his sons, who were members of the army and the ANP, all died within the span of seven years in battles with insurgents in Nuristan, Sar-e-Pul and Helmand provinces.

This Kunar man hopes that one day he will hear a message about the end of the war and violence so that he will no longer worry about the future of his children. (TOLO NEWS)

(17) Rashid Khan May...

the final call on his inclusion in the first Test match will be made after a reassessment of his injury on February 28, the ACB said. The Test series between Afghanistan and Zimbabwe starts on March 2nd, with the first match of the series to be played on March 6 at the Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). (TOLO NEWS)

(18) 100 Graves Shifted...

She said the municipality had issued orders to police to stop people from opening more graves and transferring the bodies to other cemeteries. Police Spokesperson Ferdos Faramarz said police had been directed to arrest people who disseminated this propaganda and stop people from digging more graves. (Pajhwok)

(19) Hundreds Missing...

midnight and operated for hours in this all-girls school in Zamfar state,” Al Jazeera’s Ahmed Idris reporting from Minna in Niger state said. “This is one of the states that is continuously being attacked by these gun-men, abductions for ransom and raiding for villages ... this is practically one of the major things that people in the north of the country are facing on a daily bases,” he added. This is the second such kidnapping in a little more than a week in Nigeria’s north, which has seen a surge in activity by armed groups leading to a widespread and worsening breakdown of security. Last week, unidentified attackers killed a student in an overnight attack on a boarding school in the north-central Nigerian state of Niger and kidnapped 42 people, including 27 students. The hostages are yet to be released. More than 300 boys were kidnapped from a school in December in Kankara, in President Muhammadu Buhari’s home state of Katsina, while he was visiting the region. (Aljazeera)

(20) U.S. Air Strikes...

confirmed. Biden’s decision to strike only in Syria and not in Iraq, at least for now, gives Iraq’s government some breathing room as it investigates a Feb. 15 attack that wounded Americans. “At President (Joe) Biden’s direction, U.S. military forces earlier this evening conducted air strikes against infrastructure utilized by Iranian-backed militant groups in eastern Syria,” Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said in a statement. “President Biden will act to protect American and Coalition personnel. At the same time, we have acted in a deliberate manner that aims to de-escalate the overall situation in both eastern Syria and Iraq.” He said the strikes destroyed multiple facilities at a border control point used by Iranian-backed militant groups, including Kata’ib Hezbollah and Kata’ib Sayyid al-Shuhada. After the strikes, the Iranian and Syrian foreign ministers spoke and underlined “the need of the West to adhere to U.N. Security Council resolutions regarding Syria,” Iranian government website Dolat.ir said. A U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the decision to carry out the strikes was meant as a signal that Washington wanted to punish the militias but did

not want the situation to spiral into a bigger conflict. The official said Biden was presented with a range of options and one of the more limited responses was chosen. (Reuters)

(21)South Korea...

recommended the government approve that vaccine. Authorities will wait, however, for a final review committee before deciding whether to grant approval, which would allow the country to start using doses beyond those supplied by COVAX. Despite complaints over a slow start, and debate over the efficacy of AstraZeneca’s vaccine for older people, surveys show wide interest among South Koreans in being vaccinated. Some health experts have raised doubts about the country’s ability to stick to its ambitious goal of protecting 10 million high-risk people by July, on its way to reaching herd immunity, defined as at least a 70% vaccine take-up, by November. On Friday, shots will be administered to 5,266 nursing home staffers and patients in 213 facilities, and those in 292 nursing hospitals, within five days, the KDCA said, at least 272,000 of the nursing home staffers and patients under 65 by March, and both doses by May. Although in-house doctors will administer the shots to those in nursing hospitals, doctors will be dispatched to care homes to give the vaccines. After completing registration this month, more than 350,000 high-risk healthcare workers and around 78,000 first responders will in March begin to get the AstraZeneca shots, co-developed by Oxford University.

President Moon Jae-in visited one of the vaccination centres in Seoul and oversaw the inoculation process. (Reuters)

(22)50% of Israel’s...

The country recently launched a Covid-19 Green Pass, which allows people who have recovered from coronavirus or been vaccinated against it to enter places or facilities, as life returns to normal. On Wednesday, Israel held one of the first publicly-attended cultural events since the pandemic began, with an open-air concert taking place in Tel Aviv. Attendance was limited to only those who had the Green Pass, which is valid for six months from the point of vaccination, and gave an insight into post-pandemic life in Israel. (RT)

(23)Lukashenko’s son...

the leadership of the Belarusian Olympic Committee had “not appropriately protected the Belarusian athletes from political discrimination.” It banned Lukashenko and his son Viktor, first vice president of the national Olympic body at the time, from attending the Games and excluded them from all other IOC activities. The IOC did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Friday about the appointment of Viktor Lukashenko. Alexander Lukashenko is an avid sports fan, and regularly plays ice hockey with senior Belarus officials and occasionally with Russian President Vladimir Putin. (Reuters)

(24)India, China...

Pangong Tso lake area in the western Himalayan region of Ladakh, where thousands of soldiers backed by tanks and artillery have been facing off since April. Wang said the situation on the ground in the lake area had “significantly eased”, according to a report from China’s official Xinhua news agency. “The two sides must cherish the hard-won progress, jointly consolidate the achievements and maintain the momentum of consultation, so as to further ease the situation,” he was quoted as saying. Xinhua reported that Wang said the border issue “is not the whole story of China-India relations, and should be placed in a proper position in their relationship”. But he added that India “has vacillated and even moved backwards over its policy on China, which has affected and disrupted bilateral pragmatic cooperation”. (Aljazeera)

(25)Myanmar Police...

drawing hundreds of thousands of people across the diverse country. In Yangon, hundreds of mostly young people congregated again on Friday but they largely melted away when police prepared to move in. Small groups gathered in other places to chant slogans and confront lines of riot police who later fired stun grenades and guns into the air to send people scattering. “One house let me in to hide,” journalist Thu Zar told Reuters from the scene. “I can’t leave yet as the police are very near and firing into the air.” A short time earlier, several people were detained, witnesses said, among them a Japanese journalist, a colleague said. (Reuters)

(26)Asian Shares Sink...

Shares fell in all other regional markets apart from Malaysia. Bond yields have been rising this month, reflecting growing confidence among investors that the economy is on the path to recovery, but also expectations that inflation is headed higher, which might

prompt central banks eventually to raise interest rates to cool price hikes. Rising yields can make stocks look less attractive relative to bonds to some investors, which is why every tick up in yields has corresponded with a tick down in stock prices.

In the past, such situations have triggered sell-offs in what has been called a “taper tantrum,” referring to a possible tapering off of monetary stimulus. (AP)

(27)Pakistan Vaccinatesover...

instances of people getting COVID-19 for a second and third time, Dr Sultan said. He was replying to the claim made by University of Health Sciences Vice Chancellor Dr Javed Akram about treating dozens of people who got COVID-19 thrice. The number wasn’t alarming, he said. He gave an estimate of close to a hundred cases of reinfection in the tens of thousands affected.

“The reason behind this is that the first time the person developed the infection they did not develop sufficient immunity.”

Information about COVID-19 and its vaccines is still evolving so we cannot make any predictions about vaccine efficacy, he said.

But as more people get vaccinated, immunity will develop at the community level, paving the way for the virus to die down. (Samaa)

(28)Pandemic Leaves...

Romania’s government is acknowledging the problem and has announced plans to reorganize the country’s hospitals so more non-COVID-19 patients can get access to health care. The attempts to reform the health care system come as a third virus surge looms and as a vaccine rollout is proceeding slowly across the 27-member European Union, to which Romania belongs. “Patients who didn’t have COVID-19 didn’t seek medical care because they were afraid of becoming infected,” Dr. Andreea Moldovan, a state secretary in the Health Ministry, told the AP. (AP)

(29)Nissan Says Makes...

thermal efficiency (of conventional engines) from 30% to 40%,” Hirai said. “But with e-POWER, we can increase it to 50% in several years. That has been the target for the engineering community,” he said, describing that level as the “ultimate, challenging goal”. To achieve this, Nissan said it strengthened in-cylinder gas flow and ignition, which burns a more diluted air-fuel mixture at a high compression ratio. “Without building up these fundamental technologies, we are unable to attain carbon neutrality,” said Hirai. (Reuters)

(30)Shell in Germany...

called Refthyne II, from 2022, scaling up from a 10 megawatt plant. “The product portfolio of the location clearly must change,” said Fabian Ziegler, head of Shell Deutschland. To further the shift to clean transport in Germany, Shell also plans to equip petrol filling stations with electric car charging points.

Shell is already the owner of German solar battery maker sonnen. On Thursday, it said it has agreed to buy Cologne-based virtual power plant (VPP) operator Next Kraftwerke, Germany’s biggest VPP.

Next aggregates wind and biogas power production and markets it in balancing markets, which can help offset the unpredictable flows associated with renewable output. (Reuters)

(31)Olympics Gymnastics...

others. We had been in contact with his attorney and were assured of his cooperation,” Nessel spokeswoman Kelly Rossman-McKinney said. Calls seeking comment from attorney Chris Bergstrom weren’t immediately returned. Geddert was head coach of the 2012 U.S. women’s Olympic gymnastics team, which won a gold medal. He was long associated with Nassar, who was the Olympic team’s doctor and also treated injured gymnasts at Twistars, Geddert’s Lansing-area gym. Among the charges, Geddert was accused of lying to investigators in 2016 when he denied ever hearing complaints about Nassar. But the bulk of the case against him involved his gym in Dimondale and how he treated the young athletes whose families paid to have them train under him. The charges against Geddert had “very little to do” with Nassar, said Assistant Attorney General Danielle Hagaman-Clark. Geddert was charged with using his strong reputation in gymnastics to commit a form of human trafficking by making money through the forced labor of young athletes. (AP)

India, China FMs to Set up Hotline as Bordercrisis Eases

India and China have agreed to set up a hotline between their foreign ministers as the two nuclear-armed neighbours look to reduce tensions along a disputed Himalayan border where their troops have been locked in confrontation since last year. The decision was reached in a lengthy call between the two foreign ministers on Thursday, India's foreign ministry said in a statement on Friday, adding that New Delhi was pushing for a quick resolution to the border crisis.

"A prolongation of the

existing situation was not in the interest of either side," India's foreign ministry said in a statement, citing the conversation between foreign minister S Jaishankar and China's Wang Yi.

"[Jaishankar] said that once disengagement is completed at all friction points, then the two sides could also look at broader de-escalation of troops in the area and work towards restoration of peace and tranquillity," the statement added.

On Sunday, both countries said their troops had pulled out from the ...*(More on P4)...(24)*

Myanmar Police Fire into Air to Disperse Protests as Lawyer to Suu Kyi Says Access Denied

Police dispersed protesters in Myanmar's two biggest cities on Friday, firing stun grenades, rubber bullets and guns into the air, witnesses said, as the challenge to the army's bid to re-impose its rule showed no sign of slackening.

At least one person was injured in the protests in the main city of Yangon, a witness said, and a photograph posted by a media outlet from the second city of Mandalay appeared to show a wounded protester in the back of an ambulance.

Police were not immediately available for comment.

The Southeast Asian

nation has been in crisis since the army seized power on Feb. 1 and detained civilian government leader Aung San Suu Kyi and much of her party leadership after the military complained of fraud in a November election that her party won.

A lawyer for Suu Kyi, who is being held under house arrest, complained that he had not been granted access to her, three days before she is due to return to court, adding that it would undermine her right to a fair hearing. There have been daily protests and strikes by democracy supporters for about three weeks, often ...*(More on P4)...(25)*

Asian Shares Sink fter Tech Rout Pulls Nasdaq 3.5% Lower

BANGKOK- Asian shares skidded Friday after rising bond yields triggered a broad sell-off on Wall Street that erased the markets gain for the week and handed the Nasdaq composite index its steepest loss since October.

Tokyo, Hong Kong and Sydney all fell 2% or more in early trading Friday.

The tech-heavy Nasdaq shed 3.5% on Thursday while the S&P 500 dropped 2.4%, led lower by heavy selling in technology and communications companies.

The sell-off gained momentum when the yield on the 10-year U.S. Treasury note moved above 1.5%, a level not

seen in more than a year and far above the 0.92% it was trading at only two months ago. That move raised the alarm on Wall Street that yields, and the interest rates they influence, will move higher from here.

Early Friday, the yield on the 10-year U.S. Treasury note was 1.47%.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 lost 2.4% to 29,446.17, while the Hang Seng in Hong Kong lost 2.2% to 29,412.50. The Shanghai Composite index lost 1.5% to 3,530.08. South Korea's Kospi declined 2.8% to 3,012.11. The S&P/ASX 200 slipped 2% to 6,695.60. Shares fell in all other ...*(More on P4)...(26)*

Pakistan Vaccinates over 140,000 Health Workers Without Severe Reactions

There are close to 400,000 health professionals in the country and I would urge them to get the vaccine, said Dr Sultan on SAMAA TV's show Naya Din. Only minimal side effects have been reported, he said, adding that any serious reactions will be investigated immediately.

On the issue of vaccine refusals the PM's aide said he agreed with Sindh Health Minister Dr Azra Pechuho about taking disciplinary action against health workers who refuse to get the vaccine.

They put not only themselves, but also their patients at risk.

However, no one from the general public will be forced to get the vaccine, he said, agreeing with what Punjab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid had mentioned earlier.

"We will try our best to make sure 40,000 to 50,000 people are immunised by the end of this year," said Dr Sultan, promising that there will not be a deficit of COVID-19 vaccines in the country. Pakistan has sufficient vaccine doses and won't be buying any for the next four to six weeks, he stated.

COVID-19 reinfections There have been a few ...*(More on P4)...(27)*

Hundreds Missing After Gunmen Raid Nigeria School: Reports

Several hundred girls are missing after unidentified gunmen raided a school hostel in the northwest Nigerian state of Zamfara, a teacher and parent told the AFP news agency, in the second mass kidnapping in the troubled region in little more than a week.

Sulaiman Tanau Anka, information commissioner for Zamfara state, however, told Reuters that it was not immediately clear how many children had been seized.

"Unknown gunmen came shooting sporadically and took the girls away," Anka said. "Information available to me said they came with vehicles and moved the students, they also moved some on foot," Anka said. Security forces were hunting through the area, he added. Earlier, a teacher at the Government Girls Secondary School Jangebe, who asked



to remain anonymous, told AFP news agency that "more than 300 girls are unaccounted for" after the raid. A parent said two of his daughters were among the missing girls. "Two of my daughters aged 10 and 13 are among the about 300 girls the school authori-

ties told us are missing," parent Nasiru Abdullahi told DPA via telephone. A police spokesman for the state did not immediately respond to calls and messages seeking comment. "[According to local people] the gunmen arrived shortly ...*(More on P4)...(19)*

U.S. Air Strikes in Syria Target Iranian-Backed Militia: Pentagon

WASHINGTON- The United States carried out air strikes authorised by President Joe Biden against facilities belonging to Iranian-backed militia in eastern Syria on Thursday, in response to rocket attacks against U.S. targets in Iraq, the Pentagon said.

The strikes appeared limited in scope, potentially lowering the risk of escalation. It was not immediately clear what damage was caused.

Syria did not immediately comment, but state-owned Ekhbariya TV said the strikes were conducted at dawn against several targets near the Syrian-Iraqi border.

An Iraqi militia official, speaking



on condition of anonymity, said at least one fighter had been killed and four others were wounded. A medical source at a hospital in

the area and several local sources told Reuters 17 people had been killed. That toll could not be independently ...*(More on P4)...(20)*

South Korea Kicks Off COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign



SEOUL- South Korea launched its COVID-19 inoculation campaign on Friday, with shots to be administered in some 200 nursing

homes, in an effort that officials call the first step in returning the country to more normal life. The first doses of AstraZeneca's

vaccine began to be given at 9 a.m. (0000 GMT) to nursing home workers and some patients at facilities across the country of about 52 million. By 6 p.m. local time (0900 GMT), 16,813 people had received their first doses, the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA) said.

On Saturday, authorities plan to start giving the first of 117,000 doses of the vaccine developed by Pfizer Inc and BioNTech SE supplied through COVAX, an international COVID-19 vaccine-sharing programme, to about 55,000 healthcare workers in coronavirus treatment facilities.

The national pharmaceutical panel on Friday ...*(More on P4)...(21)*

50% of Israel's Population has had at Least One Covid-19 shot – health minister

Israel's health minister, Yuli Edelstein, has announced that the country has now inoculated 50 percent of the country's population of 9.3 million with at least one dose of a Covid-19 vaccine.

The Israeli government also announced that 35 percent have received both doses of the Pfizer jab, which the nation is using for its vaccine rollout, allowing officials to begin reopening some parts of the economy to people who have been given at least one dose.

The vaccine figures follow the release of a study of the Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine in Israel, looking at 1.2 million people who were vaccinated in the last two months and finding that symptomatic cases among individuals who had re-



ceived both doses fell by 94 percent. However, there is still some uncertainty about how effective the Pfizer vaccine, and others, are at protecting against new variants

of the virus, such as the South African or Kent strains, which have proved to be more infectious than the early stage of the virus. The country ...*(More on P4)...(22)*

Lukashenko's son replaces father at helm of Belarusian Olympic Committee after ban

MOSCOW- Belarus on Friday appointed Viktor Lukashenko, son of President Alexander Lukashenko, to replace his father at the helm of their country's National Olympic Committee after both were banned from attending the Olympic Games.

Alexander Lukashenko, who had served as the head of the Belarusian Olympic Committee since 1997, claimed his sixth presidential term in August last year in a vote the opposition says was rigged and marred with violations.



The 66-year-old, who denies electoral fraud, has been accused of orchestrating a massive crackdown on protesters who took to the streets in the wake of last year's contested election, as well as

targeting elite athletes who openly backed the opposition. Speaking at a meeting of Belarus' Olympic body, Alexander Lukashenko said he had not planned to remain at the committee's helm for another term and suggested his son Viktor, who also serves as his aide on national security, take over. "I still won't be very far away for issues related to sport," Belta news agency quoted Alexander Lukashenko as saying. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) said in December last year ...*(More on P4)...(23)*

Pandemic Leaves Many Romanian Patients without Critical Care

BUCHAREST- Andrei, a 32-year-old Romanian man who has been HIV positive since he was a baby, began missing his regular medical check-ups when the coronavirus pandemic hit a year ago.

"That was the first thing that led me to a general state of frustration and fear," said Andrei. "After that, I got used to the idea of taking the antiretroviral treatment blindly without knowing if the parameters are OK or if the therapy works."

A year ago this week, Romania reported its first case of COVID-19, prompting the coun-

try's strapped medical system to turn its focus to treating COVID-19 patients. As a result, many patients with other conditions — including cancer — have either been denied critical care or have stopped going to their regular appointments, fearful of becoming infected.

"Many of my close associates lost their battle against their diseases due to the loss of access to treatment, hospitals and specialists," Andrei, who didn't want his full name used due to the stigma surrounding his condition, told The Associated Press. ...*(More on P4)...(28)*

Nissan Says Makes Breakthrough with Engine in Reducing CO2 Emissions

TOKYO- Nissan Motor Co said on Friday it has reached a breakthrough in achieving a 50% thermal efficiency with its in-development e-POWER hybrid technology, which could lead to a further reduction of car CO2 emissions.

This new thermal efficiency level would improve fuel consumption by 25% over the 40% thermal efficiency level in the upcoming e-POWER engine, the company said.

"Nissan's latest approach to engine development has raised the bar to world-leading levels, accelerating past the current auto industry average range of 40% thermal efficiency, making it possible to

even further reduce vehicle CO2 emissions," the company said in a statement.

Nissan did not disclose when the e-POWER technology with 50% thermal efficiency would be launched.

Toshihiro Hirai, senior vice president of the powertrain and EV engineering division at Nissan, told reporters on Friday that the automaker is maximising the thermal efficiency of e-POWER in order to reduce CO2 emissions while driving.

The e-POWER, first introduced in Japan in 2016, uses a gasoline engine to charge a battery that powers the vehicle. "It took 50 years to increase ...*(More on P4)...(29)*

Shell in Germany Seeks to Speed up Drive to Go Green

FRANKFURT- Royal Dutch Shell in Germany aims to produce aviation fuel and naphtha made from crops and to increase to commercial scale an electrolysis plant that makes fossil-free hydrogen, as it seeks to move away from crude oil.

The energy major told an online conference on Friday it had applied for subsidies to carry out the work from the European Union and from German funds earmarked for decarbonisation. It did not give detail on the expected cost.

The global Shell group has set itself a goal of net zero emissions by 2050.

At Wesseling, part of

the Rheinland refinery complex, it plans to use green electricity to produce synthetic, carbon-free, power-to-liquids (ptl) to replace its conventional jet fuel and naphtha output, building a ptl plant from 2023 and starting production in 2025.

The ptl plant can also use wood as biomass input.

Hydrogen is also considered a green fuel when electricity from renewable energy is used in its production. Shell said last September it will set up offshore wind farms to provide power and on Friday it said it could also start building a 100 MW electrolysis plant, to be ...*(More on P4)...(30)*

Olympics Gymnastics Coach Kills himself after Being Charged

LANSING- A former U.S. Olympics gymnastics coach with ties to disgraced sports doctor Larry Nassar killed himself Thursday, hours after being charged with turning his Michigan gym into a hub of human trafficking by coercing girls to train and then abusing them.

John Geddert faced 24 charges that could have carried years in prison had he been convicted. He was supposed to appear in an Eaton County court, near Lansing, but his body was found at a rest area along Interstate 96, according to state police. "This is a tragic end to a tragic story for every-

one involved," Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel said.

Nessel earlier announced that Geddert was charged with a bushel of crimes, including sexual assault, human trafficking and running a criminal enterprise. The charges were the latest fallout from the sexual abuse scandal involving Nassar, a former Michigan State University sports doctor now in prison. Geddert, 63, wasn't arrested and transported to court. Rather, Nessel's office allowed him to show up on his own. "We had no indication that Geddert intended to flee or hurt himself or ...*(More on P4)...(31)*

Daily Outlook Weather Forecast



Kabul	Sunny	Bamiyan	Mostly sunny	Herat	Sunny	Mazar	Sunny	Kandahar	Sunny	Ghazni	Partly cloudy	Jalalabad	Sunny
13°C -2°C		2°C -11°C		13°C -3°C		8°C 0°C		16°C 1°C		11°C -4°C		24°C 7°C	



Pakistan Won't Support Taliban: Pakistani General

ISLAMABAD - A senior member of Pakistan's army has said that his country will not support the Taliban, reiterating that they only aim for enduring peace in Afghanistan.

"Afghanistan now is not what it was in 90s and the state infrastructure cannot be trounced easily, and Pakistan also has changed," the director general of Pakistan's Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Major General Babar Iftikhar said as quoted by International The News.

"It's impossible for the Taliban to recapture Kabul and that Pakistan would support them. It isn't going to happen," he said over talks about foreign troops withdrawal from Afghanistan.

"Even Afghan leaders are admit-



ting that Pakistan has done utmost for peace in Afghanistan," he said.

Gen. Iftikhar said that it is for the citizens and the government of Afghanistan to determine the future of their country, how the

dialogue process would further, and who they back to take it on. "We only aim for a long-lasting peace in Afghanistan," he said. He added that the policy of the Pakistan government to extend a hand of peace to the neighbours was very clear, according to The News report.

'Opportunity Exists' Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani has on Wednesday that the way had been paved for more serious peace talks with the Taliban.

The statement comes two days after a meeting was held between heads and some members of the negotiating teams in Doha and the meeting reportedly fo-

cused on the continuation of the negotiations.

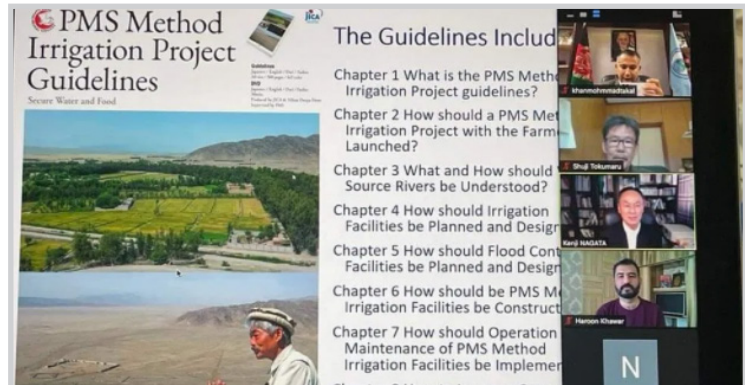
In a meeting with members of Afghanistan's parliament on Wednesday, Ghani said that the move by the NATO alliance to hold off on a decision about the troop pullout will help the Afghan peace process.

"The decision by NATO sends a big message," said Ghani.

Last week, the NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said at end of the two NATO defense ministers' meetings in Brussels that the military alliance will only leave Afghanistan when security conditions on the ground allow it.

Stoltenberg said that at this stage, the alliance has not made a final decision...

Japan Wants to Implement Nakamura-Designed Plans



KABUL - The Afghanistan Water Management Authority (AWMA) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) held a meeting on implementation of Nakamura designed water management

schemes in other provinces of Afghanistan.

The meeting hailed Dr. Nakamura's efforts in the area of irrigation and water management in Nangarhar, Kunar and Nuristan...

MoCIT Generates 6.1 Billion Afs Revenue Last Year



KABUL - The Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology (MoCIT) collected 6.1 billion afghanis revenue during the last fiscal year, with the Afghan Telecom connecting hundreds of state and private institutions with fiber optic, an official said on Thursday.

Technology Minister Masouma Khawari told reporters here that in the last fiscal year, the Afghan Telecom generated

over 10 billion afs revenue and transferred 1.5 billion afs to the state revenue. Khawari said that over 450 schools, 21 Post Offices and 56 other institutions had been connected with the fiber optic. She said that Salaam Telecommunication Network in the outgoing solar year expanded its network to 1,340 sites in 34 provinces.

According to the technology minister, the ministry was allocated over 1.2 bil-

lion afs development budget and it spent nearly 48 percent of the fund.

She said security issues on highways made it hard to transfer technology related equipment to provinces.

Slow-paced procurement, recruitment and contract inking process and the lack of interest by foreign firms to ink contracts were other challenges the ministry faced and urged concerned authorities for help in this regard. (Pajhwok)

Republic Team Hopes Taliban Engagement in Doha Continues

KABUL - Attention has turned back to Doha and hopes have been renewed that the talks between both sides of the Afghan peace negotiations will resume, especially as--according to members of the Republic side--the Taliban in a recent meeting showed a "good spirit."

This comes after a meeting was held between heads and some members of the negotiating teams in Doha on Monday evening that was focused on the continuation of the negotiations.

No new meeting has been held between the two sides since Monday.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Omar Daudzai, President Ashraf Ghani's special envoy for Pakistan, met senior Pakistani officials in Islamabad about the Afghan peace process.

"The Taliban came with a good spirit--we hope that this spirit remains the same--because they expressed a commitment for the talks to continue on a daily basis," said Ghulam Farooq Majroh, a member of the negotiating team representing the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

"The emphasis of the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan--as its working agenda-- has been focused on ending the war and agreeing on a ceasefire in order to help the Afghan people obtain a benefit from this process and feel its impacts on their lives," said Fawzia Koofi, a member of the negotiating team



representing the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in the talks with the Taliban.

The republic's negotiators expressed hope that an agreement is reached with the Taliban soon about the agenda of the talks.

The Taliban continue to insist on the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan, but a democratic senator has warned about a hasty pullout. "The perspective about the Taliban has changed in Washington, and Pakistan also realizes this," said Sami Yousufzai, a journalist.

"Previously, Pakistan was using the term 'reduction in violence,' but as a result of last night's meeting, it was decided to use the term 'end of the violence,'" said Mohammad Omar Daudzai, president Ghani's envoy for Pakistan.

A senior member of Pakistan's army has said that his country will not support the...

Taliban Acting Against Doha Peace Agreement: Andar

KABUL - The National Security Council on Thursday accused Taliban militants of violating the Doha peace agreement by not reducing and maintaining ties with Al-Qaeda network.

NSC spokesman Rahmatullah Andar in a video clip said clashes in Afghanistan intensified during this winter compared to previous years.

He claimed that foreign insurgents especially Al-Qaeda affiliates were still present in Taliban ranks.

Andar said there was no evidence to prove the Taliban were willing to cut ties with international terror groups because the Taliban and Al-Qaeda had shared-ideologies which do not recognize any geographical boundaries. His statement comes two days



after the Taliban supreme leader ordered the rebel fighters not to allow foreign militants in their ranks without permission.

According to the US-Taliban peace agreement signed around a year ago in Doha, Taliban had pledged to cut ties with international terror groups including Al-Qaeda, reduce violence and begin peace talks with the Afghan...

Samangan Hospital Doctors on Strike Over Salary Cut

AIBAK - Doctors and paramedical staff of the provincial civil hospital in northern Samangan province on Thursday went on strike against what they said being replaced and their salaries reduced.

However, Samangan public health officials say the project related salaries of the doctors had ended and their positions are yet to be announced for new employments.

Dr. Atta Mohammad, one of the protestors and a surgeon in Samangan Civil Hospital, said that the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) had reduced their salaries and had decided to announce their positions for open competition despite they were employed through the same process.

The doctors would continue their strike until the ministry



changed its mind, he said. The strike has left a number of patients at the hospital untreated.

Gul Mohammad, one of patient attendants, said, "My brother is ill and in bed, today was his turn to be operated upon, but the doctors went on strike, the doctors are playing with the life of my brother." He asked public health officials to respond to the problems of the...

42nd Bulgarian Military Contingent Ready to Join NATO-Led Mission Resolute Support in Afghanistan

Bulgaria's 42nd military contingent has been found to be "combat-ready" for participation in the NATO-led train, advise and assist Mission Resolute Support in Afghanistan, the Bulgarian Defence Ministry said in a press release on Thursday.

The degree of preparedness, the skills and abilities of the command and the personnel of the contingent designated to carry out assignments during the forthcoming mission were evaluated by a Joint Forces Command (JFC) board chaired by Colonel Yulian Petrov, Chief of the JFC Joint Training Department.

That was the first certification of a Bulgarian Armed Forces element to be conducted according to NATO's new Allied Command Operations Forces Standards (AFS) Vol. VII - Combat Readiness Evaluation (CREVAL).



The national element, the guard company and the staff officers of the 42nd contingent were found to be combat-ready.

The certification was carried out during a two-day specialist tactical exercise in which a company-size element drilled guarding a base, held at the Marino Pole Training Centre (near Plovdiv, South Central Bulgaria). The immediate preparation of the contingent began in December 2020 and was carried out...