The Kabul Times DAILY
Founded in 1962
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Jawza 19-1400 Wednesday 09 June 2021 INo: 65- Vol: LIX

Afghanistan Constitution

Article One Hundred Fourteen

Sessions of the Loya Jirga shall be open unless one fourth of its membership demand secrecy, and the Loya Jirga accept this demand.

Khalilzad warns of regional interferences if war continued in Afghanistan

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Afghanistan swamped by COVID-19's third wave

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Digital currencies pose threat to economy, warns Bank of England

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How to create a new normal for basketball, youth sports, after Covid-19

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India's central government will take over vaccinations amid criticism over its handling of the outbreak.

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US, NATO withdrawal halfway finished, alliance look for new ways to advise Afghan forces

KABUL: U.S. forces are about halfway done with the planned withdrawal from Afghanistan as the U.S. and NATO pledge to continue their support for the country in new ways.

U.S. Central Command boss Gen. Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr. said June 7 that with so much progress already, "we will make the September deadline to complete the full withdrawal from Afghanistan."

McKenzie also noted the U.S. will maintain an embassy in Afghanistan and will continue to support the Afghan forces, saying CENTCOM is "working now with friends in the region to establish" the capability to "go after al-Qaeda and ISIS from over the horizon from other locations in the theater." This would be in addition to existing capabilities, such as the B-52s that are deployed to Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, and aircraft carriers currently operating in the region.

The withdrawal is being conducted "in concert with our NATO allies and partners," McKenzie said. Also on June 7, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg visited Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III to prepare for the upcoming NATO summit later this month, which will focus largely on the future in Afghanistan.

During a brief appearance at the Pentagon, Stoltenberg said that even though the military mission in the country is ending, "we will continue to provide support to Afghanistan" with a continued civilian presence, continued funding for Afghan forces, and NATO is "also looking into the possibility of providing out-of-country training for Afghan forces," Stoltenberg said.

Austin said the withdrawal process is "proceeding well" and that the U.S. "remains committed to assisting our Resolute Support partners as they, too, retrograde."

Protecting key infrastructure in the country, such as the international airport in Kabul, to enable a sustained diplomatic presence is now a top priority. McKenzie said there are advanced plans for this but did not provide specifics. Stoltenberg also said NATO is looking at ways to help Afghan forces maintain the airport and other key locations.

The Kabul Times

US confirms intel, military talks with Pakistan

KABUL: US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan confirmed on Monday that the United States had discussions with Pakistan in the military, intelligence and diplomatic channels to make sure that Afghanistan never again becomes a base from which terrorist groups would not attack the US – but he did not go into details about it.

Sullivan made the remarks at a press briefing on Monday in response to a question on US's willingness to have a drone base in Pakistan.

"We have had constructive discussions in the military, intelligence, and diplomatic channels with Pakistan about the future of America's capabilities to ensure that Afghanistan never again becomes a base from which al Qaeda or Daesh or any other terrorist group can attack the United States," Sullivan said. "But in terms of the specifics of what that will look like, that will have to remain in those private channels as we work through them."

The New York Times reported this week that the CIA is seeking ways to maintain its intelligence-gathering, war-fighting and counterterrorism operations in the country," The New York Times reported, citing CIA analysts warning of the "ever-growing risks" of a Taliban takeover.

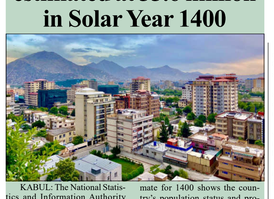
The report focused on Pakistan, saying "the CIA used a base there for years to launch drone strikes against militants in the country's western mountains, but was kicked out of the facility in 2011, when US relations with Pakistan unraveled.

Any deal now would have to work around the uncomfortable reality that Pakistan's government has long supported the Taliban."

Pakistani officials have rejected reports on Pakistan's willingness to allow US bases on its soil to maintain counterterrorism capabilities in Afghanistan.

Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on May 25 dismissed the possibility of allowing the United States to operate a military base on Pakistani territory or conduct "kinetic drone" operations against Afghanistan. "Let this house and the Pakistani nation be a witness to my testimony that under [Prime Minister] Imran Khan there will be no American base built on Pakistani soil. Forget about the past," he told the upper house of the parliament as quoted in a report by VOA. **The Kabul Times**

Afghanistan population estimated at 33.6 million in Solar Year 1400



KABUL: The National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA) announced Tuesday that it estimates the country's population for this solar year (1400) to be 33.6 million, of which 17.1 million (51%) are male and 16.5 million (49%) female.

NSIA stated that of the 33.6 million, 23.8 million (70.8%) live in rural areas and 8.3 million (24.7%) in urban areas. NSIA also said that 1.5 million (4.5%) are nomads. This is an increase from 32.9 million last year.

The population of the country is estimated by administrative, urban, rural and gender units, which includes 34 provinces; including 364 main districts, 24 temporary districts and 34 provincial capitals, NSIA stated.

The authority says that the publication of the population estimate for 1400 shows the country's population status and provides easy access to population information to national and international institutions to build policies and programs and for decision-making purposes.

In March, the NSIA said Afghanistan's population has grown by 57 percent in the last two decades, from 13.8 million.

According to NSIA, in 1399 (2020), Afghanistan's population was around 32.9 million while in 1380 (2001), Afghanistan had only 19.9 million people.

Statistics by international organizations show that if Afghanistan's population growth rate increases at the same pace, by 2050 the country will have a population of 64 million.

The Kabul Times

Ministry reports 1,724 new COVID-19 cases, 54 deaths in Afghanistan

KABUL: The Ministry of Public Health on Tuesday reported 1,724 new positive cases of COVID-19 in the last 24 hours and 54 deaths.

These high numbers come amid continued reports of a lack of medical oxygen in hospitals to treat infected patients.

The ministry said that 4,959 samples were tested in the country's laboratories in the last 24 hours.

In the same period, the ministry said, 54 COVID-19 patients died and 571 more recovered.

The total number of cases has reached 84,050 and the total death toll stands at 3,305.

The rise of COVID-19 cases in the third wave in Afghanistan comes as the vaccination campaign against the virus has stopped due to a shortage of vaccines. Afghanistan is awaiting the arrival of 700,000 vaccine doses from China.

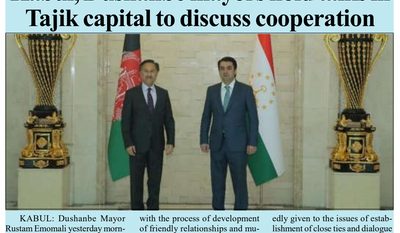
Doctors said that children, teenagers and adults are among their patients, but COVID-19 is most damaging to adults.

On Monday, the ministry reported 56 deaths due to COVID-19, which was the highest number in 24 hours since the coronavirus was reported in Afghanistan in February 2020.

According to Johns Hopkins University, the number of deaths from COVID-19 globally is more than 3,737,523 and the number of known global coronavirus cases is 173,643,616.

The Kabul Times

Kabul, Dushanbe mayors hold talks in Tajik capital to discuss cooperation



KABUL: Dushanbe Mayor Rustam Emomali yesterday morning held talks with the visiting Kabul Mayor Mohammad Daoud Sultanzoy, according to Tajik media.

According to the Dushanbe mayor's office, the two noted that Tajikistan and Afghanistan are expanding a multifaceted cooperation and expressed satisfaction with the process of development of friendly relationships and mutually beneficial cooperation, Asia Plus of Tajikistan reported.

Emomali and Daoud Sultanzoy also discussed specific issues related to expansion of the mutually beneficial cooperation between the capitals of the two countries.

A special focus was reportedly given to the issues of establishment of close ties and dialogue on the exchange of experience in the field of urban management and infrastructure development, implementation of joint cultural and humanitarian programs and implementation of educational health, tourism and trade development projects.

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