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Afghanistan Constitution

Article One Hundred Twenty-Six

Supreme Court judges shall receive lifetime pensions at the end of their term of service provided they do not hold state and political offices.

Afghanistan: Health hazard – Analysis

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Pentagon says continually assessing status of Afghanistan retrograde

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Afghan families receive $700m annually from relatives working abroad

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'First' Afghan and Muslim girls football team launched in West London

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Uzbekistan and Tajikistan Talk Dams, Not Rogun

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President Ghani congratulates Iran's Raisi on his presidential election victory

KABUL: President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani congratulated Iran's President-elect Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi on his victory in Iran's presidential elections last week and told Raisi he hoped relations would further be expand under his leadership.

The Presidential Palace said in a statement on Tuesday President Ghani and Raisi had a telephonic conversation. "Afghanistan and Iran are two neighboring and brotherly countries, and I hope that your election as President-elect of the Islamic Republic of Iran will further expand relations and cooperation in various fields between the two countries", the statement cited the president as having told Raisi.

In return, Raisi thanked Afghan president for his call and stressed the need to deepen relations and expand cooperation between the two countries.

Raisi, a hardliner and fierce critic of the West, won Iran's presidential election on Friday. Raisi will take office in early August, replacing pragmatist Hassan Rouhani, under whom Tehran struck a deal agreeing to curb its nuclear program in return for the lifting of international sanctions.

The Kabul Times

UK supports inclusive peace process: Ambassador Bristow

KABUL: British Ambassador to Afghanistan, Sir Laurie Bristow, presented his credentials to President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani at the Presidential palace on Monday, a presidential statement said yesterday.

Welcoming the new British ambassador, the President first said that terrorism is a common threat and should be fought jointing. He added that Taliban violence increases the hatred of the people against them and that they should choose to negotiate in order to solve the current problems, the presidential palace statement added. President Ghani also stressed the importance of Britain's role in the peace process, saying that peace and war in Afghanistan have a greater positive or negative impact on Pakistan than any other country in the region, adding that Pakistan must practically prove its commitments. Ambassador Sir Laurie Bristow spoke to President Ghani and reaffirmed the UK's commitment to Afghanistan. He emphasized that the UK would continue to support the Government of Afghanistan, including its efforts to counter terrorism, through diplomatic and development work and support to the security sector, another statement from the British Embassy in Kabul said.

"I am honored to present my credentials as British Ambassador to Afghanistan to President Ghani. The UK's commitment to Afghanistan remains as strong as ever. We continue to support an inclusive peace process, partner on counter-terrorism activity and provide substantial development and humanitarian support. It is a privilege to arrive at a time when this work is more important than ever," the statement quoted the Ambassador as saying.

This comes as British Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to President Ghani on 17 June. The Prime Minister confirmed the UK's commitment to supporting Afghanistan to achieve a stable and democratic future following the withdrawal of NATO troops.

He said the UK would use the full spectrum of our diplomatic, development and defence work to achieve this. The Prime Minister said the UK would continue to support a negotiated political settlement as the best path to peace in Afghanistan.

The Kabul Times

Gen. Omar Shinwari appointed ANDSF spokesperson

KABUL: Based on decree of President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, Brig. Gen. Ajmal Omar Shinwari has been appointed as spokesperson to Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF).

Speaking to journalists in a news conference held yesterday, senior advisor to President on Public Relations and Strategic Affairs, Waheed Omar introduced Gen. Omar Shinwari as spokesperson to the media.

He said that Gen. Shinwari has been appointed as to update media on issues related to war and security situation in the country.

Omar further said that media sections within the Ministry of Defense (MoD), Ministry of Interior (MoI) and National Directorate of Security (NDS) would cooperate with Gen. Shinwari in this regard.

Previously, Rohullah Ahmadzai and Tariq Arian were the spokespersons of the MoD and MoI accordingly.

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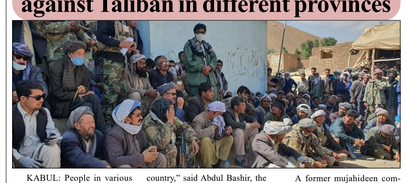
Public uprising forces increasing against Taliban in different provinces



KABUL: People in various provinces including Takhar, Balkh and Baghlan in the north, Badghis in the west, and Parwan in central Afghanistan, have taken up arms to fight the Taliban amid an escalation of violence by the group.

Public uprising forces commanders in the provinces said they will stand beside the security forces to retake the lost districts. Some politicians said that it is necessary that people have taken up arms to defend the country under the current circumstances.

In Takhar, the Taliban has attacked at least 10 districts. Now some residents have taken up arms to support the fight against the Taliban in preparation for potential attacks in Namak Ab, Rustaq and Kalafgan districts in the province.

"The former mujahideen commanders, security forces, the police chief, the security chief, the governor, all were here and deployed people to various areas," said Gen. Najibullah Najib, a former mujahideen commander.

"We will never allow the Punjabis, the puppets, to threaten this country," said Abdul Bashir, the deputy commander of a special forces unit in Takhar.

Officials in Takhar said that government institutions in Rustaq, Kalafgan, Worsaj, Farkhar and the city of Taluqan have fallen to the Taliban. "You see that we are on the frontlines. Mr. Saadat and the commander of the highway is also here," said Abdul Khalil Zahid, a commander of public uprising forces.

"We are now in the Chashma-e-Shir frontline (in Takhar). It is not concerning. All Takhar people have been mobilized and are standing with security forces" said Habibullah Mahboob, a Takhar resident.

Meanwhile, Balkh governor Farhad Azimi said that former mujahideen commanders have been mobilized to fight the Taliban militants following the fall of the centers of five districts of provinces.

"Thousands of forces have been prepared to defend the city and the outskirts of Mazar-e-Sharif and the districts that have been lost," Azimi said.

A former mujahideen commander said that handing over districts to the Taliban is not acceptable and that they are fully ready to support the Afghan forces.

"The move by Badghis residents is a self-motivated action and the main goal is to defend the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the security forces," said Abdul Basir Salangi, an MP from Badghis.

"We fought against the Taliban for years. I assure you that we will prevent the Taliban from recent disturbances in a few days," said Mohammad Amin Dara-e-Soofi, a former mujahideen commander in Balkh.

"We have enough special forces members in Jamshidi and Chai Khan area (in Balkh)," the Afghan Army's recruitment officer Sayed Yasin Sadad said.

The back-to-back fall of districts to the Taliban in the last two months has been unprecedented. Most of the districts that have fallen to the Taliban have been in the north.

The Kabul Times

US could slow down Afghanistan withdrawal: Pentagon

KABUL: The US military could slow down its withdrawal from Afghanistan due to the gains made by the Taliban insurgents, Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said the other day.

Kirby stressed that President Joe Biden's deadline of a full withdrawal by September remains in place, but added that the pace could be adjusted based on conditions.

"The situation in Afghanistan changes as the Taliban continue to conduct these attacks and to raid district centers as well as the violence, which is still too high," he told reporters on Monday.

"If there needs to be changes made to the pace, or to the scope and scale of the retrograde, on any given day or in any given week, we want to maintain the flexibility to do that," he said.

"We're constantly taking a look at this, every single day: what's the situation on the ground, what capabilities do we have, what additional resources do we need to move out of Afghanistan and at what pace." "All of these decisions are literally being made in real time," he added.

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UN human rights chief voices concern over sharp increase in violence

KABUL: UN Human Rights chief Michelle Bachelet has voiced her concern over the sharp increase in violence and harm to civilians in Afghanistan.

In a statement issued after the 47th session of the UN Human Rights Council, Bachelet said the recent attack on "a school in a Hazara area of Kabul – which killed 85 children, most of them girls – was especially shocking."

She stated that in the six months since talks began between the Afghan government and the Taliban, civilian casualties increased by 41 percent compared to the same period one year previously.

"The withdrawal of international forces, which is expected to be completed by September, is creating fear for the future – particularly among women, minority communities, human rights defenders and journalists – with deep concern about the risks of losing gains hard-won over the last twenty years," she said.

"I urge all parties to resume the stalled peace talks and to urgently implement a ceasefire to protect civilians. The independent role of the courageous Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission must be protected.

"Given the rapid deterioration of this situation, I encourage the Council to increase its monitoring and to consider mechanisms for an effective prevention response," she said. **The Kabul Times**