

## Afghanistan asks for continued support & assistance of international community

Afghan citizens are asking for continued support and assistance of the international community, saying that their assistance and support provided in the past 20 years have been effective for the development of the country.

Ali Akbar Shakeri and Ghulam, two residents of Kabul, in their interviews with The Kabul Times correspondent say the international community has provided less of assistance to Afghanistan in the past 20 years and it is good that the world should continue their

support to Afghanistan. "We saw witness foreign troops withdrawal from Afghanistan, but our people need their support and financial assistance; therefore, they should continue their financial assistance to Afghanistan," Shakeri and Ghulam said, stressing there is still war ongoing in the country where infrastructures are destroyed due to violence and attacks of the Taliban group.

Meanwhile, a number of Afghan economists by pointing that

how the assistance provided by the international community has been directly to governments have been able to make a balance in income and expenditure in the past of four decades.

They say that Afghanistan has been always dependent to foreign financial assistance although most of the assistance provided to Afghanistan in the past has failed with some political impediments. According to Afghan economists, Afghanistan has changed to

one of the most significant political and economic priority for the international community after Taliban the fall of 2021 and so far the country has been one of the countries that has received less of financial assistance from the world community.

If we see the past, Afghanistan has received lots of financial assistance provided by the international community since 2001, but despite of unprecedented achievements in political, social and economic sectors, the country still need continued support and financial assistance from the international community as there is still fighting and the country is facing with serious threats from terrorism.

Following US and NATO more withdrawal process from Afghanistan, the international community has provided to provide continued assistance and support to Afghanistan government as some donor countries have provided assistance to the country's health, education and reconstruction programs in the past one year.

Recently, Sweden has announced it will provide 184 million Euro to Afghanistan for projects to promote the rule of law, agriculture, and education until 2024.

Shahzai Kohistani

## Greek finance chief says ready for any pandemic cost fallout



ATHENS - Greece's new Democratic government, after passing more than 44 billion euros (\$48.98 billion) into subsidies for small and business during COVID-19 lockdowns, says it has a study reserve of 16 billion euros.

Finance Minister Christos Stikouras said that some 4.5 billion euros (\$5.9 billion) has been set aside as part of a contingency plan if there is a resurgence of the coronavirus in the second half of 2021.

"We are prepared, also for the most extreme scenario," he told state broadcaster ERT.

While nearly one-third of Greece's population of some 11.7 million people has been vaccinated, "70 percent is needed to keep back the pandemic," he said the government is ready if there's another wave of COVID-19 in the autumn.

He said the money wouldn't be distributed across the board as earlier, but targeted to the most affected sector if needed.

"We have the fiscal leeway and this will be extended into 2022 as well. We will start cutting into fiscal balance in 2022 and 2023," Stikouras added. Greece added by 12 billion euros (\$16.2 billion) in European Union loans and grants.

## China slams US curbs on solar materials as economic attack



BEIJING - China's government on Friday criticized U.S. curbs on imports of solar panel materials that might be made with forced labor as an attack on its development and that hurting will protect Chinese companies, but gave no details of possible retaliation.

The U.S. customs agency said Thursday it will block imports of polycrystalline from Heilong Silicon Industry Co., which might use forced labor in capital of Beijing, against other Chinese companies in the Xinjiang region in the northwest.

Import from six other Chinese suppliers of raw materials and components for solar panels also are to be restricted.

Washington is using "human rights as a disguise" to "suppress the industrial development of Xinjiang," said a Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Zhao Lijian.

"The United States doesn't care at all about the Xinjiang people," Zhao said. "Their real plots and sinister intentions are to keep up Xinjiang to contain China."

Chinese officials meet accusations of forced labor and other abuses against predominantly

## Japan ratifies world's biggest free trade agreement

Japan on Friday ratified the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a free trade agreement between China, Australia, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said the agreement will give rise to the surge to change on services and experience as they felt approval of during the ratification procedure.

It depended its ratification instrument with the ASEAN Secretariat, Kyodo News reported.

The cabinet approved the second Friday, completing the second RCEP domestic process for the ratification.

It will be Japan's first trade treaty signed both China and South Korea - its largest and second-largest trade partners.

The U.S. move is a potential hurdle for President Joe Biden's efforts to promote solar panel suppliers of polycrystalline, a material used to make solar panels.

Zhao said Beijing will "take all necessary measures" to protect its companies but gave no details. Chinese spokespeople have made similar comments in response to earlier U.S. trade sanctions, usually followed by no official retaliation.

The U.S. customs agency said an investigation found evidence that workers from Xinjiang, polycrystalline industry were intimidated and threatened and their movement restricted. Direct imports from Heilong into the United States over the past 2 1/2 years could have been well over \$1 billion, according to the U.S. government.

## US economy grows 6.4% in Q1, and it's likely just the start



WASHINGTON - The U.S. economy grew at a solid 6.4% pace in the first three months of the year, setting the stage for what economists believe may be the strongest year for the economy in about seven decades.

Growth in the gross domestic product, the country's total output of goods and services, was much faster than the previous year's expansion, the Commerce Department said Thursday, an acceleration from the 4.7% pace of the fourth quarter.

Economists believe that economic growth has continued to accelerate in the current quarter, which ends this month, as vaccinations become widespread and Americans eager to get outside are being welcomed by newly reopened businesses. Surging activity from consumers is being led in part by nearly \$1 trillion in financial support that the government has approved since December.

Annual economic data that emerged Thursday also points to a nation that has begun to fast-track recovery after being derailed by a global pandemic, though jobless claims remain stubbornly above 400,000.

"This summer will be hot for the U.S. economy," said Lydia Rosewater, head U.S. economist for Oxford Economics. "As the health situation continues to improve, consumers eating up piles of savings will give into the urge to change on services and experience as they felt approval of during the ratification procedure."

Businesses expect that GDP growth in the current April-June quarter will surge to an annual rate of 12% and growth for the entire year will be the best since a 7.2% gain in 1984, when the U.S. was emerging from an extended and painful recession.

Even economists whose forecasts for 2021 growth range from 6% to 7% believe growth this year will be the best since a 7.2% gain in 1984, when the U.S. was emerging from an extended and painful recession.

Economists believe growth this quarter will be enough to push GDP output above the previous peak reached at the end of 2019 before the pandemic shock and set off the largest economic expansion in U.S. history.

The data released Thursday was government's first and final growth estimate, produced by the world's third-largest economy by GDP, except above the previous peak reached at the end of 2019 before the pandemic shock and set off the largest economic expansion in U.S. history.

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The past, signed by 15 countries last November, will cut into effect 60 days after it is ratified by all 15 member states. The RCEP groups the 10 ASEAN states - Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam - as well as Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea. It is described as the "largest of regional trading agreements" thus far.

The RCEP was originally being negotiated between 14 countries including India,

Commerce Department said Thursday. It's likely that some of that spending is being justified by a round of \$1,400 individual payments that were included in the \$1.9 trillion support package Congress passed in March.

The first-quarter spending gains reflected increases in goods purchases, led by auto sales, and more slowly than many economists expected in the prior two months. The Commerce Department said Thursday, an acceleration from the 4.7% pace of the fourth quarter.

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