The Kabul Times DAILY

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Afghanistan Constitution

Article One Hundred Thirty-Eight

There shall be a provincial council in every province. Members of the provincial councils according to law, shall be elected for four years by the residents of the province, proportionate to the population, through free, general, secret as well as direct elections. The provincial council shall elect one of its members as President.

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Pakistan should stop looking to leverage the Taliban

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IDPs receiving assistances

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Oil price surge triggers new inflation fears as Opec talks break down

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Afghanistan appoints Rashid Khan T20 international skipper

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India closely watching Xi's 'intriguing move' on LAC

Former president says 'Afghan Forces better prepared' to protect the country

KABUL: Former President Hamid Karzai said on Tuesday that the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces are "better prepared" to protect Afghanistan on their own as international troops are leaving the country, but he reiterated that Afghans should deal with the ongoing foreign interference.

"The Afghan forces are better prepared to shoulder the responsibilities of protecting the country on their own," Karzai said in an interview with the BBC, but added that "the environment, the overall regional environment and the continuation of interference and undermining of the Afghan state is continuing" and that "that is something that we the Afghan people need to handle and handle sooner."

He said that at some point, the US and its allies "did very good" for a number of years in reconstruction of Afghanistan, "but subsequently, they began to rather than going and drying the sanctuaries outside of Afghanistan, in Pakistan, which is what they themselves reported about, they began bombing and hurting Afghan people and creating prisons in our own country."

"That led to where we are today," he said. Karzai said that Afghanistan is not a failed state, adding that "as far as the Afghan people are concerned, they created a constitution, they went to the elections, they embraced democracy whole heartedly, they went to school, they educated themselves, we have millions of Afghan boys and girls educated today."

"We did all that we could to lead Afghanistan on the right track and to represent it well on the international scene," he said. The former President said that the failure of the state that one would describe, especially in the western press, is exactly where the authority and the responsibility was more with the United States and its NATO allies.

"That's where things have failed and that's where we the Afghan people are also being a price, a very heavy price," Karzai added.

Karzai's remarks come as the National Security Adviser Hamdullah Mohib on Tuesday assured that all districts will be retaken by Afghan forces.

The Kabul Times

FM Atmar meets Special Envoy of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar

KABUL: Foreign Minister Mohammad Haneef Atmar met Tuesday evening with Special Envoy of the Foreign Minister of Qatar for Counterterrorism and Mediation of Conflict Resolution Dr. Mutlaq bin Majed Al Qahtani and his accompanying delegation.

Discussing the agenda of his visit to Kabul, Mr. Qahtani reaffirmed the Qatari government's commitment to supporting the Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace process.

FM Atmar thanked the Qatari government for hosting and facilitating the Afghan peace talks and stressed the importance of the role of Islamic scholars in persuading the Taliban to stop violence and return to the negotiating table. The Foreign Minister shed light on recent political and security developments in the country and the escalation of violence by the Taliban and the latter's continued cooperation with foreign fighters and international terrorist outfits in violation of the provisions of the Doha Peace Agreement.

Minister Atmar spoke of the goodwill and commitment of the Afghan government to find a political solution and fulfill its responsibilities for the success of peace talks, including the release of more than 5,000 Taliban prisoners, although it was not a party to the Doha Agreement.

The Afghan Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Special Envoy of the Foreign Minister of Qatar, while discussing the joint fight against terrorism, emphasized the importance of cessation of violence and finding a political solution to the longstanding war in Afghanistan. **The Kabul Times**

US to keep ongoing presence in Kabul: White House

KABUL: White House press secretary Jen Psaki on Tuesday said that the US intentions are to maintain a continued presence in Kabul despite the US troop withdrawal from Afghanistan.

"Well, first, I would say that we have every intention of continuing an ongoing presence in Kabul, which is continuing even after we bring our military, who are serving, home by the end of August," Psaki said.

"But we will also continue to be partners to the Afghan government. That's something that the President reiterated when he met with leaders just a week and a half ago. That we — that includes security assistance, that includes humanitarian assistance, and that includes over-the-horizon capacity to ensure that we are working to address any threats that we face."

"That will continue, and we intend to have a presence on the ground in our embassy there in Kabul," she further said.

On the American troops withdrawal announcement by Joe Biden in April, she said: "if you take us back to when the President made this decision and announcement: We — he asked his team to do a clear-eyed assessment, not to sugarcoat it, of what the impact could be, of moving — withdrawing our troops from Afghanistan after a 20-year war — a war that the President continues to feel does not have a military solution."

"What the President is continuing to press on is a political solution and political negotiations and discussions, which we hope will reconvene soon, to move toward a political solution on the ground to bring greater peace and stability to the people of Afghanistan. That's his hope," he added.

This comes as the US has completed "more than 90 percent" of

its withdrawal from Afghanistan, the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) confirmed in a statement on Tuesday.

US and coalition forces left Bagram Airfield last week, which for nearly 20 years was the largest US base in Afghanistan. About 650 troops are expected to remain to protect the US Embassy in Kabul, while others may be deployed to protect the capital's airport alongside Turkish troops, according to reports.

The Kabul Times

Taliban pushed back from Qala-e-Naw, governor

KABUL: Badghis governor Hassamuddin Shams has confirmed that at the height of clashes between the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) and the Taliban, insurgents broke through the prison gate in the provincial capital of Qala-e-Naw and freed the prisoners.

However, according to Shams, the security forces were quick to intervene and have since recaptured about 80% of the inmates.

Shams also said most of the Taliban fighters have retreated from the city but clashes are still ongoing in some parts of Qala-e-Naw.

Earlier Wednesday, Shams said that all six districts in Badghis had completely fallen to the Taliban and that the group had entered Qala-e-Naw. He said Qadis district was the last to fall and was seized Wednesday morning by the Taliban.

Acting defense minister General Bismillah Mohammadi meanwhile said on Wednesday afternoon that the intensity of the war is understandable and that this is not the first time that the people of Afghanistan are passing through a difficult military phase. "We are now at a critical and crucial military stage," Mohammadi said.

He also assured the people that Afghan security forces, along with the people's uprising forces that have mobilized are defending their country.

The Kabul Times

Indian Embassy rejects reports on mission closure in Afghanistan

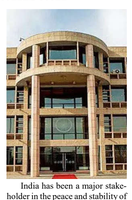
KABUL: The Indian Embassy in Afghanistan on Tuesday described as "incorrect" reports saying India is shutting down its diplomatic missions in the country in view of escalating violence.

In a Twitter post, the embassy said it is closely monitoring the evolving security situation, particularly around the cities of Kandahar and Mazar.

"Media reports on India closing its Embassy & Consulates in AF are incorrect. Indian Emb Kabul, Consulates in Kandahar & Mazar are open, functioning. We DO HOWEVER continue to closely monitor the evolving security situation particularly around Kandahar & Mazar cities," it said.

The embassy last week asked all Indians visiting, staying and working in Afghanistan to exercise utmost caution with regard to their security and avoid all types of non-essential travel in view of a rising number of incidents of violence in various parts of the country.

In an advisory, the embassy said the security situation in Afghanistan remains "dangerous" and that terror groups have carried out a series of complex attacks, including targeting civilians, adding that Indian nationals additionally face a "serious threat" of abduction.



India has been a major stakeholder in the peace and stability of Afghanistan. It has already invested nearly USD 3 billion in aid and reconstruction activities in the country. India has been supporting a national peace and reconciliation process that is Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled.

In March, Afghan Foreign Minister Mohammad Haneef Atmar visited India during which External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar conveyed to him the country's long-term commitment towards a peaceful, sovereign and stable Afghanistan.

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Hakimi, Turkmen Ambassador discuss enhancing tourism cooperation

KABUL: The Deputy Minister of Tourism, Admin and Finance of the Ministry of Information and Culture, Abdul Bashir Hakimi, met Khoja Ovezov, Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Kabul on Tuesday, and both sides discussed development of bilateral relations, particularly in tourism sector.

During the meeting, Deputy Minister of Tourism provided detailed information on the activities of the Ministry of Information and Culture in tourism sector and called for more cooperation between the two countries, mainly in areas of tourism and holding of joint cultural programs.

Hinting at Turkmenistan's vital projects for Afghanistan, the Deputy Minister said that the neighboring country has always extended political, cultural and economic supports for Afghanistan in difficult situations.

Hakimi also emphasized on strengthening cultural programs and celebrating cultural and national days in the two countries, saying that after the oil and gas industry, tourism is one of the most lucrative sectors in the world.

Hinting at shared cultural and historical values, the Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Kabul called bilateral relations at a high level, adding that his country was ready to do more for development of cultural and tourism cooperation between the two countries.

Recalling his recent meeting with the leadership of the Ministry of Information and Culture and the country's readiness to repair the Tomb of Sultan Hussein Bayeqra in Herat province, Khoja Ovezov stressed the importance of signing a Memorandum of Understanding on bilateral cooperation in the cultural and tourism sectors.

The Turkmen ambassador pointed at his country's tourist attractions and assured Turkmenistan's cooperation in the cultural and tourism sectors with Afghanistan.

During the meeting, the Turkmen ambassador also said that his country would celebrate its 30th Independence Anniversary and that Afghan artists would also be invited to participate in the celebration.

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