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“To get rid of the impact of contaminated chemicals, plant a sapling,” Deputy PM

KABUL: First Deputy Prime Minister for Economic of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Mullah Abdul Ghani Beradar, during a tree planting campaign has said: “The only way to get rid of the impact of contaminated chemicals and fatal chemicals is to plant a sapling,” his office at the Presi-

dential Palace said in a statement the other day.

The campaign held by the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock in Badam Bagh area of the capital Kabul, was attended by high-ranking Islamic Emirate authorities including First Deputy Prime Minister of the Is-

lamic Emirate Mullah Abdul Ghani Beradar and second Deputy Prime Minister, Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, according to the statement received by The Kabul Times.

The First Deputy Prime Minister, Mullah Abdul Ghani Beradar said: “We appreciate such

programs [sapling] to make Afghanistan green and believe that the move would help wide areas of arid lands and the nature get greened.”

Afghanistan is an agricultural country and has lots of water and natural resources. Afghanistan’s air might be clearer than other countries, but the use of dangerous bombs and chemical weapons by the occupiers is the main reason behind air pollution in the country, said the deputy PM as quoted by the statement.

He called on the citizens to take part in the greenery of their country and said: “The only way to get rid of a polluted environment and to avoid the effect of chemical weapons is to plant trees, bushes and make Afghanistan green.

Meanwhile, second Deputy Prime Minister Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi said that investment in the agriculture sector will strengthen the country’s economy.

“The Islamic Emirate will spare no effort and use all its capacity to strengthen agriculture and encourage national and international investors and invest in the country,” said Hanafi in the statement.

This is to be noted that the Kabul Municipality is planned to plant 600,000 trees for the forthcoming new year in the Kabul city.

The Kabul Times



Exhibition “Products, Work, Education,” held in Kabul

KABUL: An exhibition titled “Products, Work, Education,” was held in the Kabul Serena Hotel, the other day, a statement from the chamber of commerce and industry said Monday.

Dr. Abdul Latif Nazari Deputy Economy Minister of the country spoke at the exhibition and said after the resumption of power by the Islamic Emirate, significant development has been witnessed in the country’s exports and over the past one year, goods costing 1.7 billion U.S. dollars have been exported.

He added that the Islamic Emirate has made eye-catching achievements in the economic sector.

“Afghanistan has exported commodities worth 1.7 billion U.S. dollars, an unprecedented achievement ensuring the country’s national budget from domestic revenues for nearly two years,” said the statement.

Use of domestic capacities and production and support of investors and businessmen and preventing foreign low-quality imports are the Islamic Emirate’s priority.

Meanwhile, Deputy Publication Minister of Information and Culture Hayatullah Muhajer Farahi who also attended the exhibition, called important support of industry and investment in the economic development of the country and urged industrialists to consider the quality in their products and urged public and private people and institutions to use more domestic production and take part in the development of



the country. The deputy chamber of commerce and industry said in the exhibition there are about 100 booths, with domestic pro-

duction, and 40 % of these booths are dedicated to women and their products. He urged the industry to produce their products with

good quality and in accordance with the world’s standards and sell at a reasonable price.

The Kabul Times

Iran hands over more than 260 Afghan detainees to Afghanistan

KABUL: The Islamic Republic of Iran has recently handed over a total of 268 Afghan detainees to the Islamic Emirate authorities, a statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the other day.

“With the presence of Afghanistan ambassador for Tehran Mawlawi Fazul Mohammad Haqqani, and a number of the Islamic Emirate officials the detainees have been handed over in Islam Qala ground port of the country’s western Herat province, to the Afghan side,” the statement said.

This is to be noted that the agreement on the extradition of Afghan detainees has been made during the visit of the Islamic Emirate Attorney General Mawlawi Shamsuddin Shariati to Iran, the statement added.

The Islamic Emirate Minister of Foreign Affairs appreciated the effort made by the Islamic Republic of Iran and called it a step towards strengthening bilateral relations, according to the statement.

Recently, the Afghanistan embassy and its consulates had officially been handed over to the IEA diplomats in the neighboring Iran.

The Kabul Times

20 books evaluated, some receive sale license

KABUL: The Book Evaluation Commission meeting, chaired by Deputy Publications Minister of Information and Culture, Hayatullah Muhajer Farahi, assessed a total of 20 books and issued sale license for some with Islamic sharia values and in accordance with the people traditions, a statement from the ministry said the other day.

In the meeting, members of the Book Evaluation Commission evaluated 20 books, recently published and sent to some bookstores in Kabul city, said the statement.

“After evaluation on 20 books published recently, the commission members found books with Islamic sharia values and people’s accepted traditions and issued the required license for their sale in

the bookstores,” the statement added.

Issues on providing a comprehensive procedure with full coordination between the commission and the relevant organs and specifying the exact time and date for holding meetings with the private publishers and printing presses owners, as well as sending up to 19 books recently evaluated, outside the country, have also been discussed in the commission meeting, the statement continued.

Members of the Book Evaluation Commission, before regular meetings, review books in the bookstores, register the titles and then discuss them with the next meetings. The commission has earlier assessed the titles and contents of as many as 108 books in contrary to the values of the Afghan society, according to one of the commission members.

The Kabul Times



EU says does not support any anti-IEA armed resistance

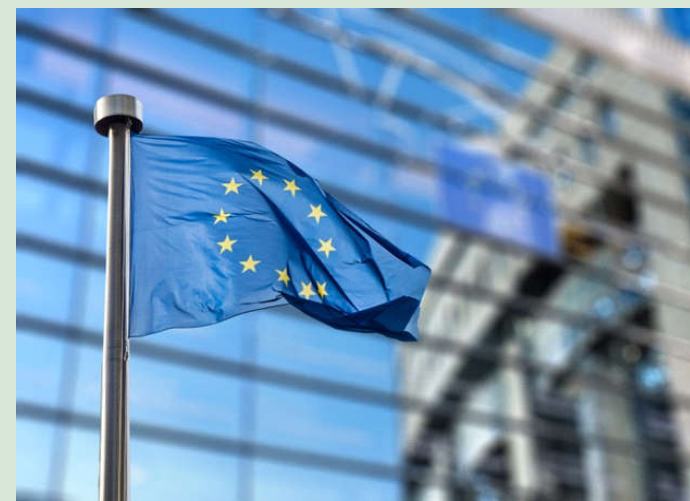
KABUL: EU Special Envoy for Afghanistan Thomas Niklasson, in a press conference here in Kabul said on Sunday that the union will not support any armed resistance in Afghanistan.

The EU special envoy said that the European Union is “not supporting any kinds of armed resistance, neither politically, nor in other ways in Afghanistan.”

Afghanistan has experienced years of violence and now the time has reached to end violence, said Niklasson EU special envoy.

Earlier, many countries, including Iran, Russia, U.S. and Norwegian ... have said that they do not support any resistance in Afghanistan.

The remarks come after the Islamic Emirate has no military



opposition, and those who raise the call abroad have nothing to do with them.

The Kabul Times

Over 5,000 saplings planted in outskirts of PD 10

KABUL: As many as 5,400 various types of saplings provided by cleaning services companies and residents of Aria Township have been planted on the hillside, Qala-e-Mosa road, and either side of the airport road.

Mawlawi Noorul Wahab, head of 10th provincial district, by praising the respective company

and residents of the Aria Township for providing various plant nurseries said various parts of the district would be greened and beautified.

He added that the role of the people in greening and beautification of Kabul city was important, saying that they would soon witness a green and beautiful Kabul

if the people paid particular consideration to the greenery of their areas. Representing the cleaning services company, Najibullah Ale-mi assured of further cooperation in the greening of various parts of the PD10, adding that the planted saplings would be regularly irrigated and protected.

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Food for thought
"Hijab has direct link to morality of individuals in society."

Delay in IEA recognition harmful for both sides

As Afghanistan is now safe and secure for all international institutions including embassies and all diplomatic missions, all world governments have to recognize the Islamic Emirate and ensure firm political engagement with the Islamic Emirate, via diplomatic and economic channels, as any step taken in this field would be in the interest of both sides.

In his recent remarks, the Islamic Emirate's acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, once again called on the world countries to reopen their embassies and diplomatic missions in Afghanistan.

The neighboring countries of Iran and Turkiye have earlier handed over their diplomatic mission (embassy and consulate) to the Islamic Emirate diplomats, while Qatar and some other countries have been reportedly keen to welcome the IEA diplomats.

On the other hand, Afghanistan, under the Islamic system has met all conditions, lodged in the Doha peace agreement, including preventing any threats felt from the country towards any other nations including, neighbors, region and the world as a whole.

There is no evidence to show that the country's soil has been used against any other countries, or a strong terrorist activity has been witnessed in any parts of the country.

The Islamic Emirate wants good relations with all world countries, particularly its neighbors and the Islamic Emirate never allows terrorist elements to use Afghanistan's soil against other countries and disturb security of other nations.

While, U.S. drones are violating the airspace of Afghanistan, under the pretext of targeting terrorist hideouts, the Islamic Emirate strongly rejects any militancy inside the country and condemns any similar activities by other countries to violate the airspace of an independent country.

Afghanistan is not and will never be a haven for terrorists and the Islamic Emirate's forces are the frontliner of war on any kind of anti-security activities.

So, times has now reached for the world countries and international organizations, including the European countries, to reopen their embassies and diplomatic missions and resume their activities in Afghanistan. This is in the interest of both sides, as Afghanistan is the center of trade not only for the central Asian nations, but also for the whole region and the world. The regional countries can benefit from large volumes of trade with Afghanistan after becoming a sure economic crossroad.

So, the U.S. should not seek excuse in the way towards recognition of the Islamic Emirate nor create obstacles before other nations to recognize it.

This is to be noted that any failure to continue with the closure of embassies or delay political engagement with Afghanistan, would help the ongoing economic crisis worsen further than ever in the poverty-affected nation, with the negative consequences would eventually felt by other nations, particularly the neighbors and the region.

Despite the fact that Russia, China, Turkiye, Qatar as well as the neighboring Pakistan, Iran and Uzbekistan have their embassies and diplomatic missions open in Kabul, but this is not enough, they should step up towards official recognition of the IEA, as the move would encourage other countries to resume bilateral political engagement with the Islamic system.

International companies interested in investment in Afghanistan



The Islamic Emirate leadership has informed that foreign companies have shown interest in investing up to \$10 billion in Afghanistan. The Deputy Prime Minister Office for Economic Affairs has informed that foreign big companies are interested in investing up to \$10 billion in Afghanistan.

In a statement released recently by the office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs said that with the end of the invasion in Afghanistan and the re-establishment of the Islamic Emirate (IEA), a number of top foreign companies have shown interest in investment in the country. Meanwhile, since the re-establishment of the Islamic Emirate in mid-August 2021, the ground has been provided for major international companies to invest in Afghanistan as some companies have stepped to invest in the country. According to reports, some top foreign companies are ready to invest up to \$10 billion in Afghanistan, the statement stressed. Some five big international companies have already announced their readiness to invest in various fields as mines, agriculture, electricity, transportation, enterprise, building customs, providing services in airports, transit, building industrial towns, and the railway. According to the statement, these companies have also experienced investing in neighboring countries, particularly in the Arab world.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Younis Momand, head of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment (ACCI), by confirming the news about new investment in Afghanistan considered the country's mines sector as the key sector for foreign companies' investment.

He added that Afghanistan was still facing with some problems in banking and transferring money to other countries, saying that security has improved in the past 19 months across the country; therefore, regional countries particularly the Arab world can invest in Afghanistan's various sectors.

Since the Islamic Emirate (IEA) takeover in mid-August

2021, Chinese companies have invested in Afghanistan as one of the Chinese top companies has signed a contract with the IEA for the extraction of oil and gas in the country's northern provinces.

Meanwhile, the people of Afghanistan by welcoming the investment of foreign companies in Afghanistan said that the only hope for a better future in Afghanistan is the investment in the country's mines sector. They say with the investment of foreign companies in the country's mines, more people will be employed and get the opportunity to work and make money. There are hopes that foreign companies increase their investment in the country. The investment process will be accelerated when the world recognizes the Islamic Emirate.

Shukria Kohistani



Reopening of embassies in the interest of both IEA and the world



Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttuqi in his recent meeting with the European Union's Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Tomas Niklasson and head of the EU Delegation to Afghanistan, Raffaella Iodice has asked for the reopening of EU member countries' embassies in Kabul.

The Islamic Emirate leadership had also asked the world countries to reopen their embassies in Kabul as the security has improved unprecedentedly across the country.

The IEA has repeatedly assured the world countries of better security and asked for positive engagement with the Islamic Emirate.

Currently, foreign embassies of regional countries particularly China, Russia, Turkey, Qatar, Pakistan, Iran and Uzbekistan are open in Kabul. Besides, offices of international organizations including UN agencies are in Kabul and other provinces of the country providing humanitarian assistance to the poverty-stricken people. Previously, the UN Secretary General's deputy special representative for Afghanistan, Markus Potzel, had called on Germany and other EU and western countries to reopen their embassies in Kabul. Potzel, who was German

ambassador to Afghanistan between 2014 and 2016, believed that a diplomatic presence in Kabul would allow for a better assessment of the situation rather than from a distance.

Potzel had considered that Germany and other Western countries have interests in Afghanistan, adding that it would be a good idea for more Western countries to have representation again in Kabul, the capital.

With the improvement of security across the country, it is necessary that the EU and western countries should reopen their embassies and diplomatic missions in Kabul. In recent days,

Afghanistan embassy to Tehran has been handed over to the Islamic Emirate. Besides, Afghanistan consulate in Istanbul and some other regional countries have been handed over to the Islamic Emirate.

It is worth mentioning that soon after the fall of the republic and re-establishment of the Islamic Emirate (IEA) in mid-August 2021, most of the foreign countries closed their embassies in Kabul, but some countries as Russia, China, Iran, Turkey and Pakistan were the only countries that kept their diplomatic missions open in the country.

Mohammad Daud

Thousands of children to join accelerated learning program in Nuristan

Local officials in Nuristan province say that thousands of children that have been deprived of education in recent years due to insecurities will be provided with opportunities to join village schools where they can receive education through accelerated learning programs in the province.

Saifuddin Latoon, a spokesperson to Nuristan governor, in

their primary education at new created village schools in Nuristan," Latoon said.

He added that as part of continued efforts of the local government towards the absorption of donations for the province's education sector, the United Nations International's Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has shown readiness to launch 300 accelerated

have recently taken part in written test for 300 vacant posts of teachers who will teach 10,500 students in eight districts of the province.

Meanwhile, provincial director of education for Nuristan province says there are currently 214 schools in the province where 43,000 students are receiving primary and secondary education



an interview with The Kabul Times correspondent, said that those children that have been deprived from going to schools due to insecurities would be given chance to study in the province.

"With the establishment of accelerated learning program offering a community-based 'fast track' route for those who have been deprived from going to schools due to various reasons and want to complete their education, 10,000 children will be provided with opportunities to complete

ed learning classes in the province so that those who have been deprived from education during the past years complete their primary education.

UNICEF has recently assured Nuristan governor Hafiz Mohammad Agha Hakim of supporting the province's education sector and establishing the accelerated learning program is part of the organization's program to be launched soon in the province.

According to Nuristan local officials, almost 700 candidates

taught by 1,600 teachers.

"The new accelerated learning classes will be created for 10,500 students in areas where they did not have access to schools in past years," said Taj Mohammad Muttamacen, Nuristan provincial director of education.

Local education officials have assured of providing better education opportunities for children in the province, saying that the education process is improving by passing each day.

Samiullah Momand

IEA to speed up counter-narcotics efforts countrywide

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has made continued efforts towards rooting out drugs since it took control in mid-August 2021. Afghanistan Ministry of Interior (MoI) has informed of rounding up nearly 80,000 drug addicts across the country.

According to the ministry, more than 20,000 drug addicts have been rounded up from only Kabul, the capital. All the drug addicts that have been rounded up from various parts of Kabul in recent months are under treatment at rehabilitation centers.

"Since the IEA takeover in mid-August in 2021, 82,000 drug addicts including women and children have been rounded up across the country," said Abdul Nafi Takoor, a spokesperson of the Ministry of Interior.

He added that in a series of operations that have been launched as part of counter-narcotics efforts, 5,000 individuals that have been involved in drug-trafficking have been arrested and nearly 200 firms where drugs were produced have been destroyed.

Meanwhile, the Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) says 60 rehabilitation centers are operating in the country. According to the ministry's data, more than 28,000 drug addicts have been treated so far.

"All rehabilitation centers where drug addicts are under treatment in the country's 24 provinces have remained open for the past 18 months," said Sharafat Zaman Amarkhil, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Public Health.

Amarkhil added that 10 rehabilitation centers have been allotted for the treatment of those women and children who were drug addicts. In recent weeks, the Islamic Emirate has opened a 3,000-bed hospital for the treatment of drug addicts in Kabul, the capital.

Meanwhile, more than 1,500 drug addicts have been recently rounded up from Pul-e-Sokhta area and have been transferred to the rehabilitation center for treatment. With rounding up all the drug addicts from Pul-e-Sokhta, the area has been completely

cleaned by Kabul Municipality. The Kabul municipality's recent initiative has been widely welcomed in the national and international levels.

The initiative of rounding up the country's drug addicts have been also welcomed and praised by even drug addicts who called the move as unprecedented.

The Islamic Emirate leadership has stressed that the Islamic Emirate is committed to a serious fight against drugs and that efforts are being made to treat drug addicts and speed up counter-narcotics in the country. The IEA has also called on international charities and organizations to cooperate with the Islamic Emirate in counter-narcotics efforts.

Counter-narcotics efforts have been accelerated after a decree which has been issued by the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in connection with the prohibition of the cultivation, trafficking, sale and use of drugs across the country.

Saida Ahmadi

People play key role in greenery of country

The Islamic Emirate (IEA) has informed of the national plantation drive on the threshold of arriving of the spring season in the country.

The drive has been already started in the country as thousands of saplings have been planted in Kabul and other provinces of the country so far. Plantation of various types of saplings is underway in big cities including Kabul, the capital.

With starting the plantation drive, the Islamic Emirate leaders have asked the people to take part in tree plantation campaigns in order to remove the negative effects of weapons used during the past two decades of war and enhance greenery in the country.

A tree plantation campaign was launched on Sunday by the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock under the slogan "a sapling for the independence and development" for 1402 year in Badam Bagh area of Kabul city in the presence of senior officials of the IEA.

Mullah Abdul Ghani Beradar, the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, in his speech in the program pointed about the negative impacts of bombs and other weapons used by foreign troops in the country and the environment, saying the only way to remove such impacts was to plant trees and enhance greenery.

Meanwhile, Mawlawi Ataullah Omari, the acting Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, also on the occasion said planting a tree was Sadaqah Jariyah (voluntary charity), which



benefits all living creatures for generations.

"The ministry of agriculture will provide 40 million tree saplings from its nurseries free of cost to the people to plant them this spring," Omari said.

Omari also pointed to poppy cultivation in the country and said the illicit plant created problems for both Afghanistan and the world, therefore the Islamic Emirate leadership banned its cultivation

and the ministry of agriculture distributed some alternative seeds of other crops to farmers.

"The ministry of agriculture is 70 percent successful in its fight against the poppy and this plan will be completed 100 percent during the next year", he said, adding that the environment of Afghanistan was the most suitable for agriculture and urged the private sector to invest in this sector. The national plantation drive

has been launched just days before the arrival of new solar year '1402'.

It is determined that 600,000 various types of saplings will be planted in various parts of Kabul, the capital.

Kabul Municipality has asked the people for cooperation in the protection and irrigation of the saplings being planted as part of the national plantation drive.

Monitoring Desk



	USD	01		GBP	01		INR	1000		PKR	1000		EUR	01		IRR	1000		AED	01
	AFN	88.65		AFN	107.50		AFN	1080		AFN	302		AFN	95.20		AFN	1.86		AFN	24.40

Pakistan bans airing of Imran Khan speeches, suspends TV channel



Islamabad, Pakistan – Pakistan’s media regulator has banned television channels from broadcasting speeches and news conferences by Imran Khan, accusing the former prime minister of attacking the state’s institutions and promoting hatred.

The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) imposed the ban late on Sunday after Khan gave a speech in the eastern city of Lahore, where he alleged that former army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa was behind his removal from power in

April last year.

The cricketer-turned-politician made the speech after police from the capital Islamabad made an attempt to arrest him in a corruption case. Khan, who denies the charges, evaded the arrest.

In its notification, the PEMRA said Khan was “levelling baseless allegations and spreading hate speech through his provocative statements against state institutions and officers which is prejudicial to the maintenance of law and order and is likely to disturb public peace and tranquillity”.

This was the third time the PEMRA has banned TV channels from airing Khan’s statements since he lost the premiership and started holding mass rallies to demand immediate national elections.

Nearly two hours after the ban, the media regulator also suspended the licence of ARY News, a private news channel, for broadcasting Khan’s Lahore speech.

The PEMRA said the news channel – considered sympathetic to Khan – violated its order. But an ARY official rejected the alle-

gation.

“The PEMRA statement came after 8pm and almost all the channels ran clippings of Imran Khan’s speech in their 9pm bulletins. However, the regulatory authority suspended only our licence,” the ARY official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Al Jazeera.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan condemned the regulator’s decision to ban the airing of Khan’s speeches on electronic media.

“We have always opposed measures to curb voices in the past – whether under the previous government or earlier – and we continue to stand by our commitment to freedom of speech, irrespective of the person’s political opinion,” it said in a statement, demanding that the ban be “lifted immediately”.

Hammad Azhar, a politician belonging to Khan’s Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, said the country was “fast descending into darkness” and there were “concerted efforts” by the government to put its democracy under threat.

“This [ban on Khan’s speeches] is not only unconstitutional as it goes against freedom of expression ... There cannot be a blanket ban on speeches of politicians. Other than questions of legality, it is also extremely anti-democratic in nature,” he told Al Jazeera.

“This regime is petrified of Imran Khan and his ever-soaring popularity, he is now seen as a prime minister-in-waiting. We are seeing police action against Khan and the party workers. There is a media crackdown. We are fast becoming a fascist state.”

Former PEMRA chief Absar Alam said the implementation of law in Pakistan is flawed and the media regulator needs to improve itself.

“PEMRA has become a tool; whoever can use it often does it for their interest,” he told Al Jazeera.

Alam, however, added that the TV channels should take responsibility for what they broadcast.

“There is so much polarisation in Pakistan that one person’s virtue is another person’s sin. Unfortunately, media has amplified this a lot and they are not following media ethics or showing professionalism,” he said.

Paris-based media watchdog Reporters Without Borders (RSF) last year ranked Pakistan 157 among 180 countries in its World Press Freedom Index list.

aljazeera

Iran Supreme Leader says poisoning of schoolgirls is an ‘unforgivable’ crime

Iran’s supreme leader said on Monday that poisoning of Iranian schoolgirls in recent months is an “unforgivable” crime amid spread of suspected poisoning across the country with hundreds of girls hospitalized.

“Authorities should seriously pursue the issue of students’ poisoning. This is an unforgivable crime... the perpetrators of this crime should be severely punished,” Ali Khamenei was quoted as saying by state media.

Over a thousand Iranian girls in different schools have suffered “mild poison” attacks since November, according to state media and officials, with some politicians suggesting they could have been targeted by religious groups opposed to girls’ education.

The spreading attacks that started in November in the holy Shia Muslim city of Qom in central Iran have spread to at least 25 of Iran’s 31 provinces, prompting some parents to take their children out of school and hold protests against the establishment.

alarabiya



S Korea announces plan to resolve row over Japan forced labour

South Korea’s government has announced a plan to resolve a long-running dispute on compensating people who were forced to work in Japanese factories and mines during World War II.

Monday’s plan, which was met with immediate protests in South Korea but hailed as “historic” by the United States, comes as South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol seeks to mend ties with Japan as North Korea accelerates its nuclear and missiles programmes.

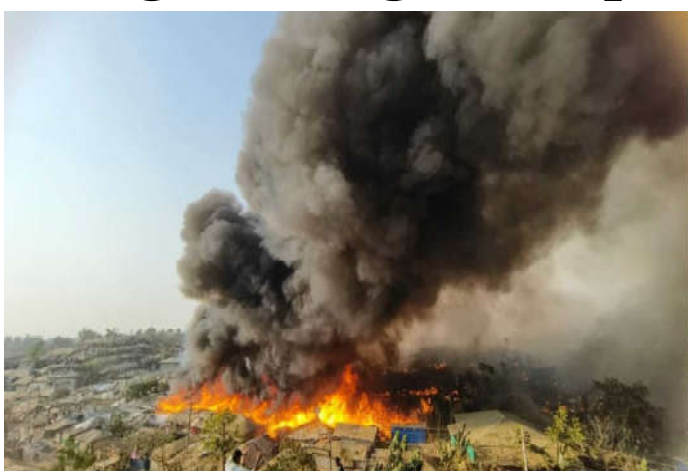
Unveiling the plan, South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin said the former workers, the surviving of whom are now in their 90s, will be compensated through a public foundation funded by private-sector companies rather than by the Japanese firms involved in the forced labour.

The South Korean government had first raised the proposal in January, sparking a backlash from victims and their families because it did not include contributions from Japanese companies, including those ordered by South Korean courts to pay reparations, such as Nippon Steel and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries.

About a dozen protesters demonstrated as Park made the announcement.

“It’s a complete victory by Japan, which has said it cannot pay a single yen on the forced labour issue,” Lim Jae-sung, a lawyer for several victims, said in a Facebook post on Sunday, citing initial media reports of the deal.

Bangladesh investigates huge fire at world's largest refugee camp



Bangladesh authorities are investigating the cause of a massive fire in a Rohingya refugee camp which has left 12,000 people without shelter.

No casualties have been reported, but the fire on Sunday razed 2,000 shelters after spreading quickly through gas cylinders in kitchens, officials said.

Police are investigating if the fire was an act of sabotage. One man has been detained, local media reported.

The camp in the south-east is believed to be the world’s largest refugee camp.

Most of its more than one million residents, Rohingya refugees, had fled persecution in neighbouring Myanmar.

On Monday, hundreds had returned to the Cox’s Bazar area to see what they could salvage from the ruins.

The blaze had started at about 14:45 local time Sunday (08:45 GMT) and quickly tore through the bamboo-and-tarpaulin shelters, an official said.

“Some 2,000 shelters have been burnt, leaving about 12,000 forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals shelterless,” Mijanur Rahman, Bangladesh’s refugee commissioner, told AFP news agen-

cy.

The blaze was brought under control within three hours but at least 35 mosques and 21 learning centres for the refugees were also destroyed, he added.

Photos are now emerging that show the extent of the devastation.

Many of those who lived there can be seen picking through the charred area, where only metal struts and singed corrugated roofing remains.

Rohingya refugees search for their belongings after a fire broke out in Balukhali refugee camp in Ukhiya, Cox’s bazar, Bangladesh, 05 March 2023.

Hrusikesh Harichandan, from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, told the BBC there had been “massive damage” to the camp.

He said basic services such as water centres and testing facilities had also been affected.

“My shelter was gutted. [My shop] was also burnt,” Mamun Johar, a 30-year-old Rohingya man, told AFP. “The fire took everything from me, everything.”

Thick black clouds were seen rising above Camp 11, one of many in the border district. **bbc**

NPC approves projects worth nearly 2.5 mln Afghanis

KABUL: The National Procurement Commission (NPC) has approved many projects worth 2, 480 bln Afghanis to be kicked off next year, the Deputy PM office for Economic Affairs said in a statement the other day.

The projects funded by the government budget, would be launched in Kabul, Herat, Farah, Nangarhar, Kandahar and Laghman provinces, the statement said.

According to the statement, the projects included the construction and maintenance of roads, construction of retaining walls and water dams in Kabul, to produce electricity and potable water and create a safe environment and green areas in the country. **The Kabul Times**

During the last meeting of the National Procurement Commission, projects worth 2 billion and 480 million Afghanis were approved.

