

More should be done for businesspeople, Leader urges



KANDAHAR: The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Mullah Hebatullah Akhundzada met with customs officials of the Ministry of Finance including Mullah Mohammad Naser Akhund, Deputy Minister of Revenue and Customs of the ministry and Mufti Abdul Mateen Sayed General Director of Custom-houses and other related officials in Kandahar province, BNA reported the other day.

In the meeting, the Deputy Finance Minister presented a detailed report about their work since the takeover of the country by the Islamic Emirate and shared their suggestions for improving the related affairs with the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, according to the agency.

The Islamic Emirate Supreme Leader gave important instructions to the officials to provide better services for the incumbent Islamic system, treat people well and provide facilities for the country's businesspeople and other related sectors. The Kabul Times

Iranian delegation assures further cooperation with Afghanistan

KABUL: A delegation led by Iranian Ambassador Hassan Kazemi Qumi arrived in Kabul the other day and met with acting Foreign Minister of the Islamic Emirate Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi and exchanged views of bilateral interests, a statement from the ministry said Saturday.

Muttaqi spoke about the latest IEA achievements, political developments, trade and economic situation and thanked the Iranian government for releasing scores of Afghan prisoners and handing them over to the Islamic Emirate authorities, the statement quoted.

Meanwhile, the Iranian ambassador assured of his country's



further cooperation with Afghanistan and said the neighboring country would buy Afghan products

and fruits with reasonable prices, according to the statement. The Kabul Times

International flights over Afghanistan airspace increased



KABUL: The Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation said that in 24 hours 100 airplanes crossed over our country's airspace and the country's airports have around 30 flights daily, a statement from the ministry said the other day.

Emamuddin Ahmadi spokesperson of the ministry said that most of the flights are made from the Kabul, Herat, Balkh and Kandahar airports to some neighboring and regional countries, according to the statement.

"Currently we have flights to Uzbekistan, Turkiye, Abu Dhabi, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Iran, China and some other countries," the statement quoted Ahmadi as saying.

He added that in 24 hours 100 airplanes cross over our country's airspace and every flight pays \$700 to Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, the Chamber of Commerce and Investment said that due to lack of air corridors Afghanistan's domestic products cannot reach the world markets.

"After the Islamic Emirate takeover, economic restrictions rose and international airline companies including Fly Emirate and Turkish Airlines stopped their activities," said Khanjan Alokozai, a member of the Chamber of Commerce. According to the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, currently, Afghan traders are using the country's air cargoes for their exports and imports to India, China, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

The Kabul Times

IEA welcomes UNAMA mission's extension in Afghanistan

KABUL: The Islamic Emirate has welcomed the extension of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in the country, spokesperson of the Islamic Emirate Zabihullah Mujahid said in a statement Saturday.

"The extension of the UNAMA mission in Afghanistan was a positive step, as the world countries would strengthen their relations with the IEA through the mission and support the people of Afghanistan," hoped Mujahid.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in a resolution on Thursday, March 17 extended the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for another 12 months.

The resolution to the UNSC was presented by Norway and was ratified with 14 approved votes except for a denial vote from Russia.

With the resolution, the United Nations will officially engage with the Islamic Emirate.

The Security Council in its resolution 2679 tasked the Secretary General to consult with all relevant Afghan political, actors and stakeholders, including relevant authorities, Afghan women, and civil society, as well as the region and the wider international community.

The security council reaffirmed its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan as well as its continued support for the people of Afghanistan.

The Kabul Times

Supreme Leader decree on ban to IEA officials' offspring in government institutions



KABUL: The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Emirate (IEA), Shaikh Mullah Hebatullah Akhundzada, in a decree has issued the sacking of IEA officials' sons that have been appointed within the IEA institutions.

Based on the decree number (30), 6 March 2023, all officials of IEA ministries and departments have been instructed to seriously avoid appoint-

ing individuals based on nepotism and personal relations.

According to the decree, in case the officials of IEA institutions have appointed their offspring one or several within their institutions, their sons are sacked after issuing this decree and they should appoint other individuals as their replacements.

The Kabul Times

Daesh hideouts destroyed, scores dead in Balkh, Mujahid

KABUL: The Islamic Emirate security forces have destroyed three hideouts belonging to Daesh outfit in the country's northern province of Balkh, Zabihullah Mujahid the IEA spokesman said on his Twitter handle the other day.

"Late on last night, the special security forces launched a se-

ries of suppressing operations in 5th, 6th and 8th districts of Mazar-e-Sharif, the provincial capital of Balkh province, destroying three of the outfit's hideouts and killing scores of its affiliates," said Mujahid. An amount of arms and ammunition have also been seized from the militants, said the spokesman who confirmed the

injury of a security personnel during the overnight operation.

The Islamic Emirate has accelerated anti-illegal armed militants including the so-called Islamic State members all over the country, where the IEA security forces killed hundreds of the militants and arrested dozens of others.

The Kabul Times

No one can interfere in media work: Farahi



KABUL: The Ministry of Information and Culture of the Islamic Emirate is the only organ that can address all issues relating to media, Deputy to the Ministry for Publication Affairs, Hayatullah Muhajir Farahi told a local media.

"No one can interfere in media affairs and the Ministry of Information and Culture is the only authority which can oversee the work of media," the government-run Hiwad daily reported Saturday.

The daily quoted Farahi's interview with a local media as saying that with the efforts of the

ministry, a number of the arrested journalists have been released.

According to the deputy minister, non-interference and ensuring the security of media is a top priority of the ministry.

Problems relating to media, as the deputy minister noted, would be assessed through a specific address which is the Ministry of Information and Culture only. "We have also established the related committees with the aim of addressing problems facing media and not allowing interference in the media affairs."

Meanwhile, Nai-Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan

praised the efforts of the Ministry of Information and Culture in supporting media, but asked the ministry for doing more in this field.

"Still there are some problems facing media, the most important one is economic problems," said Zarif Karimi chief of Nai-Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan. According to the daily, the distribution of ID cards for the journalists, creation of coordination between, issuance of media law and creation of sound rivalry are among the future plans of the Ministry of Information and Culture. The Kabul Times

Kabul mayor meets Iranian deputy ambassador

KABUL: Kabul mayor Mawlawi Abdul Rasheed met with the Iranian deputy ambassador to Kabul Sayed Hasan Murtazavi the other day here in Kabul.

In the meeting, they exchanged views in connection with the modality of the implementation of new development projects, urban management and new beautification projects in Kabul.

In the meeting, Kabul mayor said that spiritual relations be-

tween Kabul and Iran's cities should be strengthened, adding that technical and scientific cooperation should be started between the two countries so that relations between cities were expanded.

Kabul Municipality is planning to make use of the experiences of the neighboring countries in the management of trashes in Kabul city, city transport and others and share its experiences with municipalities of the neighboring

countries, particularly Iran.

The Iranian deputy ambassador to Kabul showed interest in the implementation of Kabul municipality's new plans, promising that they would cooperate in various areas as building the capacity for better waste management, urban beautification, infrastructure design, strengthening of urban culture, development of green areas and other city management issues. The Kabul Times

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Address: Ministry of Information and Culture, opposite
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Food for thought

“Hijab has direct link to morality of individuals in society.”

“IEA committed to all Islamic rights of people”

In a meeting with Ulama delegation from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), acting Minister of Interior Khalifa Serajuddin Haqqani, reaffirmed the Islamic Emirate’s commitment to both men and women education in the country.

Other members of the Islamic Emirate have already acknowledged that education has been sought compulsory (as a religious obligation in one of the holy prophet’s hadith) on men and women and that the incumbent Islamic system was committed to grant the people all their rights within the Islamic sharia law.

Scores of similar meetings have earlier been held at the national, regional and international levels on women’s work and education in Afghanistan, while the Islamic Emirate has repeatedly said the ban was not permanent.

The IEA acting Foreign Minister was quoted in a statement by the ministry to have discussed political, economic and security matters as well as issues relating to the expansion of bilateral relations between Kabul and Doha and women education in Afghanistan.

Actually, some world countries are playing double policy with Afghanistan led by the Islamic system and they are still doing so, while the IEA wants to honestly interact with all world countries, particularly with its neighbors. According to Minister Haqqani establishment of ties with the Islamic Emirate was in the interest of the neighboring countries and the region and world as a whole.

The world, particularly, the UN should understand that Afghanistan would never be allowed to get isolated and the Islamic Emirate is making efforts to tackle all challenges in the light of Islamic teachings.

Reports suggest that the UN has asked the Secretary-General to conduct an integrated and independent assessment of the situation in Afghanistan.

The Secretary-General was tasked to consult with all relevant political actors and stakeholders, including relevant authorities, women and civil society activists as well as the regional and wider international community and demanded the report to be presented not later than 17 November of the current year.

The IEA respects and welcomes all unbiased and independent assessments of the situation in Afghanistan and asks the UN body to conduct it with no meddling from malicious groups or those who are against the implementation of a real Islamic system which considers the rights of the entire people including women and girls in accordance with the Islamic teachings.

The assessment should be carried out based on realities and discussed with the real Afghans who are in favor of their country’s security, stability, sovereignty and territorial integrity, not those who are working for the aliens and launching propaganda against the Islamic system. However, there is no need of conducting such assessments, since the IEA is committed to the preservation of all human rights and the rights of the entire Afghan citizens, with no exception of women or girls under the holy Islamic law and the nationally accepted traditions.

Any biased and discriminate launch of assessments will tackle no problem, but rather increases doubts, suspicions and mistrust independent right activists and entities.

5000 Afghan refugees returned home in past 2 days



Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation of the Islamic Emirate in a report has said that nearly 5000 Afghan refugees have returned from the Islamic Republic of Iran to the country in the past two days.

Based on the reports, most of the returnees have been registered with the offices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the country’s western provinces of Herat and Farah to receive cash assistance.

“The returnees register with the international organizations, particularly with UNHCR to receive cash assistance, while, after the development of the situation in the country tens of thousands of Afghans has emigrated to neighboring and other countries of the world,” said the report.

On the other hand, Islamic Republic News Agency

(IRNA) has reported that after the resumption of power by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) over one million Afghans have emigrated to Iran and thousands of Afghans to reach European countries try every day to move there.

However, in August 2022, the Amnesty International announced that Iran and Türkiye against international principles prevented the emigration of Afghan refugees to their countries and the refugees have been forced to return to Afghanistan.

“Most of the refugees are poor and war-suffered people, as, they don’t have legal travel documents, so, face serious reactions of the host countries’ border forces and are deported,” the Amnesty International said.

According to Amnesty International, after the collapse of the previous government

and increase in unemployment and the development of economic crisis in the country Afghans have been forced to leave their country and this has increased emigration to the neighboring and world countries.

“Before December 2022, Afghan refugees voluntarily return from Iran and Pakistan to the country have increased comparing to the previous years,” according to the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The report added that in 2022, the number of Afghan refugees who voluntarily returned to the country has been five times that of 2021 and three times that of 2022, adding that the increase in living costs and lack of job opportunities in Pakistan and Iran have been caused in voluntarily return of Afghan refugees.

Rahim Gul one of the re-

turnees who returned with his family from Iran to Herat Province said: “After the collapse of the previous government we went with legal travel documents to Iran, and the Islamic Republic of Iran twice updated our passports and for the third time, the passports were not updated and we had to return to the country and now we registered by the UNCHR and received the assistance.”

Few weeks ago, the ministry has reported that nearly one million Afghan refugees have returned to the country in the past 18 months.

This is to be noted that the ministry of refugees and repatriation and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are making effort to jointly work to solve the problems of Afghan refugees living in Iran and Pakistan.

Saida Ahmadi



Afghan Advertisements

AA 4649

Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan

Urban Water Supply & Sewage Stat-Owned Corporation

Procurement Directorate

Procurement Manager

Announcement for Request for Expression of Interest

(for Consulting Services - Consulting Firm)

Procuring Entity	Urban Water Supply & Sewage Stat-Owned Corporation (UWASS.soc)
Funded By	UWASS.soc
Project Description	Hiring of Firm for the Audit of AUWSSC Financial Statements for the Financial Years 2014 to 2020
Procurement Ref No.	REoI Ref. No. UWASS.soc/1402/QCBS/CS/001
Deadline for Submission EOI	April, 12, 2023 10:00 (Kabul Local Time)
Address for Submission EOI	Request for Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below: Saree Tapai Kartai Now District 8, Kabul, Afghanistan Procurement Directorate, Afghanistan Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Corporation
Availability of Complete REoI	Soft Copy of Complete REoI (Request for Expression of Interest) can be obtained by the interested Consultants from the below address Saree Tapai Kartai Now District 8, Kabul, Afghanistan Procurement Directorate, Afghanistan Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Corporation Phone: (93) 0777533476 Email: s.osman@uwass.gov

AA 4657

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

ICB

Procurement	Afghan Telecom (AFTEL), Ministry of Communication and IT (MCIT), Islamic				
Entities	Emirate of Afghanistan				
Funded By	Afghan Telecom Corporation Budget				
Project Description	PROCUREMENT OF LIVE TEST CALL SERVICES				
Ref. No	REBID/MCIT-AFTEL/1401/ NCS -0020/ICB				
Bid Security Declaration	<div>The Bids must be accompanied with Bid Security Declaration in the form of a Bid Security Declaration provided in the Bidding Documents.<table><tr><td>Bid Security Declaration</td><td>Valid as per below</td></tr><tr><td>A Bid-securing Declaration is required.</td><td>28 Days Beyond Bid Validity Period</td></tr></table></div> <div>Valid for 148 (120+28) days from bid submission deadline date or extended bid submission deadline date.</div>	Bid Security Declaration	Valid as per below	A Bid-securing Declaration is required.	28 Days Beyond Bid Validity Period
Bid Security Declaration	Valid as per below				
A Bid-securing Declaration is required.	28 Days Beyond Bid Validity Period				
Deadline for Bid Submission	April 18, 2023, 10:00 (AM) hrs. (Local Kabul Time)				
Address for Bid Submission	Procurement Department, Afghan Telecom Corporation, Post Parcel Building, 4 th Floor, Ministry Communication and IT, Mohammad Jan Khan Watt, Kabul – Afghanistan Telephone No: +93 (0) 20-210-9184 Email Add: s.akramy@afghantelecom.af CC: b.haidari@afghantelecom.af				
Website	A complete set of Bidding Documents in English may be obtained by interested bidders free of cost by downloading from the MCIT website www.mcit.gov.af . In case of any difficulty in downloading from website, interested bidders may contact at e-mail address: s.akramy@afghantelecom.af CC: b.haidari@afghantelecom.af				

IEA wants equal development in country

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) wants equal development in the country and it has plan to implement the semi-constructed projects countrywide.

The Islamic Emirate will start the practical construction work of the semi-constructed projects that had been stopped in the previous government.

Currently, Kabul Municipality has started practical work on a number of development projects in different districts of the capital of Kabul including road and sidewalks projects, intersections, bridges projects and culverts projects, and the practical construction work of the projects are underway.

Meanwhile, work on a num-

ber of the construction projects is underway in the provinces of the country, such as construction work on Qush Tapa canal, which covers Kaldar and Dawlatabd districts of Balkh province, Aqcha and Qarqin districts of Jawzjan and four districts in Faryab Province.

With the completion of its work Afghanistan will become self-sufficient in terms of wheat production.

Some members of the private sector who have invested in the production of construction materials in the country call on the Kabul Municipality to increase the use of domestic products in construction projects so that domestic products and manufacturers to find

a market.

One of the Kaldar district residents said: “With the construction of the Qush Tapa lots our rain-fed lands will become agricultural and will be prevented from the destruction of Amu Darya River, where wide areas of agricultural lands, gardens, mosques and schools sustained heavy damage in this province.”

The northern neighboring countries have constructed retaining walls across the river which has caused that the Amu River to enter more than 25 kilometers into Afghanistan territory and has destroyed lots of agricultural lands and peoples’ houses.

It is to be noted, the cabinet of the Islamic Emirate of Af-

ghanistan has sent a delegation headed by the Acting Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and livestock consisting of a number of representatives from the Ministries of Water and Energy, Mines and Petroleum and Border and Tribal Affairs and the Ministry of Finance to inspect the vulnerable and eroded areas of the river.

After the close inspection of the delegation from the river, the decision has been made to start the construction work of retaining walls across the river.

The development projects will be transparently implemented by the IEA country-wide

Mohammad Daud

With plantation of new samplings Nuristan to keep its astonishing beatify

As part of a nationwide plantation campaign, local officials of Nuristan are planning to plant thousands of saplings in the province.

The governor spokesman of Nuristan in an interview with The Kabul Times correspondent said that based on the decree of the Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate and instruction of Nuristan governor Hafiz Mohammad Agha Hakim, a plantation campaign has been officially started by the relevant provincial committee in the province.

“It is determined that 160,000 various saplings are going to be planted in Nuristan province,” said Saifuddin Latoon, Nuristan governor’s spokesperson.

Latoon said that the provincial governor of Nuristan has tasked the provincial relevant committee to plant saplings in Paroon, the provincial capital, and all districts of the province to further green the province, adding that the committee has assured of efforts towards protection and irrigation of the newly planted saplings.

In the opening ceremony of

the plantation campaign, provincial director of environment protection Mawlawi Sartajuddin Sapai asked the people to take part in the plantation campaign and each person should plant a sapling for a green Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, Paroon mayor Mawlawi Sayed Ahmad Muslih said that the tasked provincial committee would protect and irrigate thousands of samplings that have been planted in the past few days.

Nuristan residents by welcoming the IEA’s steps towards the plantation of thousands of samplings across the country say the plantation of more samplings will further green the province.

“We’re praising the efforts that have been made by the local government of Nuristan for further greening the province,” said Mawlawi Mohammad Zaman, a local Nuristan elder. He added that plantation and protection of new saplings would keep Nuristan as a national park.

Nuristan has lots of recreational parks, sightseeing and green places to visit.

According to local officials, thousands of people visit various parts of the province particularly Paroon, the provincial capital. Nuristan’s Mandol district is famous for its natural lake with beautiful and green sites. There are green and beautiful places in the province’s Kamdish, Wama and Pargmata districts. Wama is famous for its historic garden and lots of green hillsides.

With the Islamic Emirate (IEA) takeover in mid-August, cutting woods has been prohibited not only in Nuristan but also in other parts of the country. Local officials in Nuristan say that hundreds of thousands of domestic and foreign tourists visit Nuristan each year.

Nuristan is one of the 34 provinces of Afghanistan. The province is renowned as a province with astonishing beauty and forests. The province spills down the rocky southern heights of the Hindu Kush Mountains into valleys holding the watersheds of four major rivers.

Samiullah Momand



Increasing exports of Afghanistan to Pakistan



Officials of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) have informed that the country’s exports to neighboring countries, particularly to Pakistan, despite of some challenges in the two countries’ ports have significantly increased comparing to the previous years.

Spokesperson of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Abdul Salam Jawad Akhundzada said: “The exports in the previous years were only 850 mln U.S. dollars and it was a major achievement for the Islamic Emirate, but at the beginning of the current solar year some necessary decisions were made to provide more facilities in the country’s commodities exports and fortunately the exports have increased to 900 mln U.S. dollars before the end of the solar year.”

Meanwhile, the Member of Nangarhar Chamber of Commerce and Investment Zulmai Azimi in an interview with the media said: “Recently, Pakistan has permitted the imports of 250 thousand tons of sugar and Afghan traders have imported the sugar which has caused to increase the exports of Pakistan.”

According to Azimi, despite some challenges in the ports, Afghanistan has exported goods worth over one bln U.S dollars to Pakistan and if the challenges in the ports are solved, the level of exports will be increased.

On the other hand, Pakistani media have informed that the level of exports and imports to Afghanistan has increased to 650 mln U.S dollars comparing to the previous year.

Head of the Afghanistan-Pakistan joint Chamber of Commerce and Investment Naqibullah Safi said: “Solving some of the technical challenges in the ports has caused the level of exports and imports to increase significantly, and efforts are underway to strengthen the business capacities between Afghanistan and Pakistan.”

“Rice, medicines, electrical tools and tractors are the most imported items which are imported from Pakistan to the country, while, precious and semi-precious stones, dry fruits, manufactured commodities, coal and agricultural products are the most exported items which are exported to Paki-

stan” according to the reports.

Amir Mohammad one of the Afghan businessmen said: “If the Islamic Emirate in complete coordination with the Pakistani side provides necessary facilities for Afghan and Pakistani businessmen the volume of trade between the two countries will be increased even more.”

Unfortunately, Pakistan against all business commitments during the export season of fresh fruits has always created lots of problems for Afghan businessmen.

Amir Mohammad has also expressed hope that the Islamic Emirate has solved some of the challenges in the ports and if the Afghan businessmen are provided with the better business facilities the necessary ground for investment and exports will be provided in the country.

Some economic experts said that if the necessary attention is paid to the country’s domestic products, with the increasing of domestic products exports will be increased in the near future.

“In order to Afghan people get rid of poverty and miseries the Islamic Emirate must do its best to pave the ground for the country’s businessmen, because Afghanistan depends on international assistance and imported goods from foreign countries,” according to economic experts.

This is to be noted that this is hopeful news for people that the Islamic Emirate has announced the country’s exports to the neighboring countries has significantly increased comparing to the previous years.

Shukria Kohistani



USD	01	GBP	01	INR	1000	PKR	1000	EUR	01	IRR	1000	AED	01
AFN	88.25	AFN	107.50	AFN	1080	AFN	305	AFN	94.00	AFN	2.08	AFN	24.40



We are hiring! Translator

The Kabul Times, the state-run English newspaper, is looking for a translator in Kabul.

Duties & Responsibilities:

- Translate news reports & articles from Dari & Pashto into English.
- Translate exclusive interviews from Dari & Pashto into English.
- Other translation-related tasks instructed by The Kabul Times Editor in Chief

Job Requirements:

Education

- High school diploma (12th class) essential
- University degree (faculty of English literature) desirable
- Proficient use of MS Office (Word, Excel, Outlook) essential

Experience

- Three-year experience in related field
- Other experience in similar position desirable

Language

Dari/Pashto: oral and written essential

English: oral and written essential

The interested candidates should submit their applications before Thursday March 23rd at 4 pm with the CV, motivation letter, including references details and with supporting documents (certificates, diplomas etc.) to The Kabul Times via:

- E-mail: timesthekabul@gmail.com

- In a sealed envelope at The Kabul Times, Ministry of Information and Culture, opposite to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs building.

The Kabul Times office, Kabul, Afghanistan

Russia gives awards to fighter pilots involved in US drone crash



Russia has conferred state awards on the two fighter pilots involved in the downing of a US surveillance drone that crashed into the Black Sea, the Russian Defence Ministry said, while United States officials announced that its spy flights in the region have resumed.

Presenting the awards on Friday to the Su-27 jet fighter pilots, Russia's Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu lauded their achievement in preventing the drone from flying into an area near Crimea to which Moscow has banned access.

"The drone flew with its transponders off, violating the boundaries of the area of the temporary airspace usage regime established for the special military operation [and] communicated to all users of international airspace," Russia's defence ministry said in a statement, according to The Moscow Times.

Pro-Kremlin political analyst Sergei Markov said the awards for the pilots were "a clear sign that Russia will keep downing" US drones.

"This decision will receive a strong support from the Russian society that wants the government to toughen its policy," Markov wrote in a commentary.

Russia's presentation of the awards comes a day after the US military released a declassified 42-second video clip showing the Russian Su-27 fighter jets intercepting the drone and making close passes while dumping fuel in an apparent bid to damage the drone's optical and other hi-tech instruments.

The US military said it was forced to ditch the MQ-9 Reaper drone in the Black Sea after one of the Russian jets struck the drone's propeller while it was flying in international airspace. Russia has denied that its jets caused

any physical harm to the US drone, alleging it crashed while making a sharp manoeuvre.

US officials have said the recovery of what remained of the drone would be difficult due to deep water in the Black Sea. But Russian state media reported that Russian navy forces have detected the drone's wreckage some 60km (37 miles) from the Crimean port city of Sevastopol at a depth of 850-900 meters (2,788-2,952 feet), according to The Moscow Times.

Though Moscow and Washington initially traded strong words over the drone incident, the US appeared intent on easing tension by declaring it was unknown whether the Russian pilot had intentionally struck the uncrewed aircraft.

Russian officials also emphasised the need to maintain lines of communication with Washington after the incident, while at the same time harshly denouncing the US for operating surveillance flights on its borders as well as sharing military intelligence with Ukraine that would be used to attack Russian forces.

An RQ-4 Global Hawk flew a mission to the region on Friday, two officials told the Reuters news agency, with one adding that it was the first such drone flight since the downing of the drone on Tuesday.

Aljazeera

On the advent of **National Journalist's Day:**

Media problems will be addressed soon, spokesman



KABUL: Spokesperson of the Ministry of Information and Culture Mufti Abdul Mateen Nafi

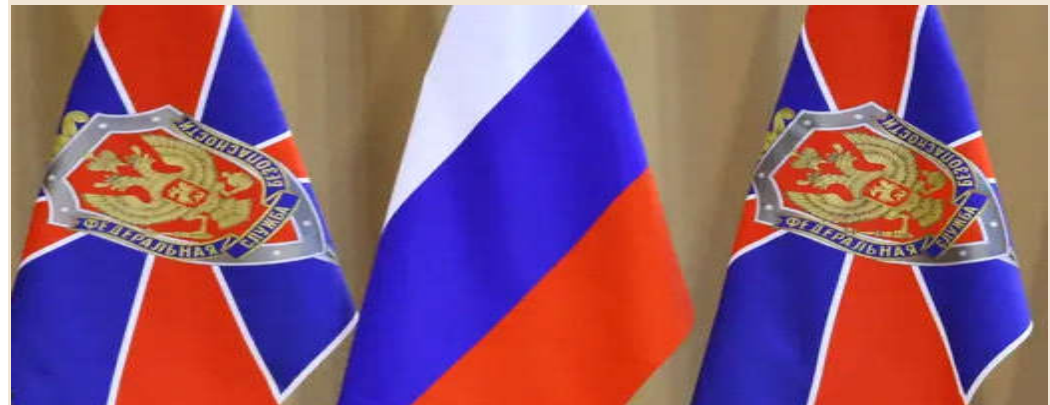
said Saturday that a comprehensive procedure has been prepared to address all problems faced by media and journalists in Afghanistan.

On the occasion of the National Journalist's Day, the spokesman said that the MoIC was supporting and making efforts to help the country's media stand on their feet.

According to Nafi, security problems of the media and journalists have also been shared and discussed with the security organs and the results will be soon shared with media.

March 17 coincided National Journalist's Day and the occasion is marked every year in the country. **The Kabul Times**

ICC judges issue arrest warrant against Russia's Putin over alleged war crimes



The International Criminal Court said Friday it has issued an arrest warrant for Russian President Putin for war crimes because of his alleged involvement in abductions of children from Ukraine.

The court said in a statement that Putin "is allegedly responsible for the war crime of unlawful deportation of population (children) and that of unlawful transfer of population (children) from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation."

It also issued a warrant Friday for the arrest of Maria Alekseyevna Lvova-Belova, the Commissioner for Children's Rights in the Office of the President of the Russian Federation, on similar allegations.

A possible trial of any Russians at the ICC remains a long way off, as Moscow does recognize the court's jurisdiction and does not extradite its nationals.

Ukraine also is not a member of the court, but it has granted the ICC jurisdiction over its territory and ICC prosecutor Karim Khan

has visited four times since opening an investigation a year ago.

The ICC said that its pre-trial chamber found there were "reasonable grounds to believe that each suspect bears responsibility for the war crime of unlawful deportation of population and that of unlawful transfer of population from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation, in prejudice of Ukrainian children."

The court statement said that "there are reasonable grounds to believe that Mr Putin bears indi-

vidual criminal responsibility" for the child abductions "for having committed the acts directly, jointly with others and/or through others (and) for his failure to exercise control properly over civilian and military subordinates who committed the acts."

On Thursday, a UN-backed inquiry cited Russian attacks against civilians in Ukraine, including systematic torture and killing in occupied regions, among potential issues that amount to war crimes and possibly crimes against humanity.

The sweeping investigation also found crimes committed against Ukrainians on Russian territory, including deported Ukrainian children who were prevented from reuniting with their families, a "filtration" system aimed at singling out Ukrainians for detention, and torture and inhumane detention conditions.

But on Friday, the ICC put the face of Putin on the child abduction allegations.

Alarabiya

Turkey's parliament will begin ratifying Finland's NATO bid, but not that of Sweden



President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Friday that Turkey's parliament will begin ratifying Finland's NATO bid, but not that of Sweden, removing the biggest remaining hurdle to enlarging the Western defense alliance as war continues to rage in Ukraine.

Speaking in Ankara alongside Finnish counterpart Sauli Niinisto, Erdogan said Helsinki won Turkey's blessing after taking concrete steps to keep its promises to crack down on what it sees as terrorists and to free up defense exports.

Ankara will continue discussions with Stockholm on terrorism-related issues and Sweden's NATO membership bid would depend directly on measures taken, he added.

The parliaments of all 30 NATO members must ratify newcomers. "We have decided to ini-

tiate the ratification of Finland's accession process to NATO in our parliament," Erdogan told reporters after meeting with Niinisto, adding he hoped parliament would endorse the bid before May 14 elections.

Niinisto said he welcomed the decision and called it "very important" for Finland, which shares a long border with Russia.

In response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Sweden and Finland applied last year to join the trans-Atlantic pact but faced unexpected objections from Turkey. Ankara says Stockholm harbors members of the terrorist groups, a charge Sweden denies.

Apart from Hungary, whose ruling party has said it backs the two Nordic bids but has delayed steps, Turkey is the only NATO member not yet to have given Finland and Sweden its green light.

Alarabiya

Israeli forces shoot dead Palestinian man in latest bloodshed

Israeli forces have shot dead a Palestinian man who they claim was approaching them with a knife drawn, the latest killing of a Palestinian in the occupied West Bank.

The Palestinian health ministry announced the death of Yazan Omar Jamil Khasib, 23, who died "after the occupation [Israeli forces] opened fire on him at the northern entrance of el-Bireh" city near Ramallah, in the occupied West Bank, on Friday.

The Israeli army later said its forces "spotted a suspect and asked him to identify himself". They claimed the man then drew a knife and Israeli troops opened fire and "neutralised" him, the army said in a statement, adding the killing took place close to Beitin, a Palestinian village near el-Bireh.

Since the start of this year, at least 84 Palestinians, including children, have been killed by Israeli forces.

On Thursday, at least four Palestinians, including a teenager,

er, were killed by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin. A week earlier, Israeli forces killed three Palestinians in a Jenin raid and, less than 48 hours later, six others were killed in another raid in the same city.

In January, Israeli soldiers killed nine Palestinians, including an elderly woman, during a large-scale operation carried out in the Jenin refugee camp.

Palestinian attacks against Israelis led to the death of 14 people in 2023.

Friday's killing of the 23-year-old adds to the current round of bloodshed and puts 2023 on track to be one of the worst years for violence in the Palestinian territories for years.

More than 170 Palestinians were killed in Israeli raids in the occupied West Bank and east Jerusalem in all of 2022, making last year one of the deadliest in the occupied territories since 2004, according to the human rights group B'Tselem.

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