

President Ashraf Ghani

Corruption a Major Cause of Instability

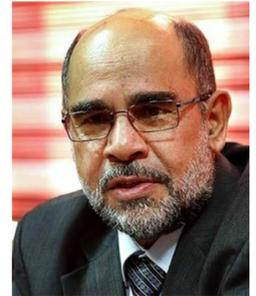
KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani, calling corruption a major cause of instability in Afghanistan, has said his government has initiated reforms in the Ministry of Defence and the campaign would be extended to other departments. A statement from the Presidential Palace said President Ghani met Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) John Sopko and his delegation on Tuesday. Ghani said: "The Afghans want a servant, effective and clean government and our entire efforts are confused on that demand."



He said initial efforts at combating corruption had been launched and implemented and his government had a strong will to overcome the menace. He said corruption was one of the major factors contributing to instability in the country. John Sopko praised the Afghan government's anti-corruption efforts and congratulated the president on the launch of work by the newly created Justice and Judicial Centre. He said measures the Afghan government had taken in fighting against corruption ... (More on P4)...(7)

Envoy Stresses Importance of Iran's Chabahar Port for Afghanistan

TEHRAN - Afghan Ambassador to Tehran Nasir Ahmad Nour underlined that Iran's Chabahar port is of paramount importance for his country's economy. "The port which is situated in Southeastern Iran is of very vital significance for Afghanistan and regional trade," Ahmad Nour said. The Afghan ambassador reiterated that since Afghanistan is a landlocked territory, the country is determined to use the railway networks to gain access to international waters. "That is why Iran's Chabahar port is strategically very important for Afghanistan because the tri-lateral contract signed by Iran, Afghanistan and India will help boost trade exchanges," he added.



Nour said that Afghan products can easily get exported to other countries via Iran's soil without facing any problem. In May, Tehran, New Delhi and Afghanistan signed an epoch-making agreement in Tehran to establish a transit and transportation corridor. The ... (More on P4)...(8)

Batash to Discuss Issues of Mutual Interest in Iran



ZAHEDAN - Minister of Transport, Mohammadullah Batash, arrived in Iran on Wednesday at the head of a delegation. Batash reportedly visited border terminal of Meilak in Heirmand city, north of Sistan and Baluchestan province. Governor of Hirmand city, Mohammad-Ali Peiri, told IRNA that the Afghan minister and the accompanying delegation are to visit 'Border meil 78' and 'Dogharoun Border' and are to discuss issues of mutual interest with governor general of Sistan and Baluchestan province. He said the aim of the visit is to remove problems with trade and with growth in the two countries' border exchanges. The Afghan minister is also to follow up the agreement on Chabahar Port, which was signed in Tehran in April 2016 by presidents of the three countries. Representatives from Ministries of Transport, Trade, Finance as well as Chamber of Commerce and private sectors of Afghanistan are accompanying Batash. Heirmand city is located 240 kilometers north of Zahedan, capital of Sistan and Baluchestan, and is bordering Afghanistan. Iran and Afghanistan share 945 kilometers common border. (IRNA)

Clash Leaves 24 Militants Dead in Helmand

LASHKAR GAH - Up to two dozen Taliban militants have been killed and 25 others injured in Sangin district of the southern Helmand province in Afghanistan, according to a statement of 215 Miwand Corps released here Wednesday. According to the statement, 19 Taliban fighters have been killed in the ground and airstrikes; while five more militants were killed in a mine blast over the past couple of days. The statement also confirmed that an army soldier had been killed and two others sustained injuries in a clash for the control of Sangin district. Meantime, Afghan government Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah visited the restive Helmand province on Tuesday to review the security situation there. Taliban militants who have been fighting government forces in Helmand over the past several years and are in control of parts of the province, haven't commented. (Xinhua)

6 Suspected Terrorists Held in Baghlan Raid



PUL-E-KHUMRI - The National Directorate of Security (NDS) has arrested a group of six suspected terrorists in northern Baghlan province, a statement from the spy-network said on Wednesday. The suspected terrorists had been arrested during NDS personnel raid on the outskirts of Khenjan district, the statement said. The detainees planned to target influential people, elders, extort people, take Zakat and Ushar by forces so they could align themselves with the Taliban. (Pajhwok)

600 Foreign Fighters Sent to Northern Provinces: Police

KABUL - General Baba Jan, the commander of 707 Pamir Police Unit, on Wednesday said that up to 600 foreign fighters and their families have moved in to some provinces in the northern parts of the country. According to Baba Jan, the total number of militants fighting security forces in Samangan, Balkh, Jawzjan, Sar-e-Pul and Faryab provinces is estimated to be around 7,000. He said the Afghan security forces are determined to clear insurgent hideouts in the northern zone next spring in order to prevent any further advancement. "Up to 600 foreign militants and their families are in



our area of responsibility," said Baba Jan. However, no details as to the origins of these fighters were given. Foreign militants are deployed in Kohistanat, Balcharagh, Garizwan, Ghor-mach and Dawlat Abad districts of Sar-e-Pul and Faryab where they frequently engage in armed confrontation with security forces, he said. Baba Jan said some police commanders have handed over their weapons to some powerful elements in the north ... (More on P4)...(9)

11 Detained for Trafficking, Holding Narcotics

KABUL - The Afghan security forces have detained 11 persons for alleged trafficking and holding narcotics in four of the country's 34 provinces within a week, authorities said on Wednesday. "Counter-Narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA) and Afghan security forces have cracked 14 drug cases and captured 11 persons involved in the cases in Kabul, Farah, Nangarhar and Balkh provinces within the past one week," the Counter-Narcotics Criminal Justice Task Force of Afghanistan (CJTF) said in a statement. They also found and seized narcotics and drugs, including 220 kg heroin and about 5,700 kg opium, from the arrestees besides confiscating a pistol and eight vehicles, the statement added. After an initial investigation, the cases were handed over to the Central Narcotics Tribunal (CNT), a special Afghan court for jurisdiction of major drug cases, the statement noted. Some 4,800 tons of opium has been produced in Afghan provinces where government security forces had little presence in 2016, according to Afghan officials. (Xinhua)

Lashkar Gah City at the Range of Taliban Rocket



LASHKAR GAH - The city of Lashkar Gah witnessed firing of three rockets that claimed at least one life and injuring two others on Wednesday. The attacks, which claimed the life of a school student and injured two more civilians, took place amid the visit of Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah to Lashkar Gah, causing panic among the locals. Lashkar Gah is the capital of Helmand province, 555 km south of Kabul, and it is the main target of Taliban militants over the past couple of years. Abdullah traveled to Lashkar Gah on Tuesday to inspect the security situation in the poppy growing Helmand province, where Taliban militants have been fighting over the past several years to re-establish their rule in the strategically important province along the border with Pakistan. Abdullah was in the major city in southern region on Wednesday morning when the rocket attacks happened. In a meeting with security officials in Lashkar Gah on Tuesday, Abdullah directed the security apparatus to defeat militants before the arrival of spring in the troubled province. According to local observers, Taliban by firing rockets on Lashkar Gah, demonstrated their ability and wanted to give the message that the armed outfit can target any place whenever they want. The rocket attacks have added to the concerns of Lashkar Gah residents, as many shops remained closed and the bazaar seems deserted on Wednesday. Meanwhile, spokesman for Helmand's provincial government Omar Zawak has blamed Taliban militants for firing the rockets, saying the militants by organizing such attacks want to terrorize the people. ... (More on P4)...(10)

ACB Announces Appointment of Ex-West Indies Coach

KABUL - According to Farid Hotak, ACB's spokesman, Simmons will be assisting the current head coach on technical issues. Hotak said Simmons has tremendous experience in team management and has immense technical expertise. "The ACB management considers Simmons appointment a valuable step in players' capacity development. His appointment will have a great impact on team performance." Simmons' cricket career has spanned more than 20 years. He played for a number of first-class sides in the West Indies and England as well as international cricket for the West Indian cricket team. Simmons has been head coach over the years for West Indies, Zimbabwe and Ireland. (Tolonews)

President Visits Ailing Veteran Jihadi Leaders

KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani on Wednesday visited veteran former jihadi leaders Sibghatullah Mujaddedi and Abdul Rab Rassoul Sayyaf at their residences and enquired about their health. A statement from the Presidential Palace said the president talked to both the ailing leaders about various topics including issues of national interest. Mujaddedi and Sayyaf thanked the president for visiting them at their homes



and wished him and all government functionaries successes in serving the nation and bringing peace and stability to the country. Mujaddedi lives in Qarghai area of Kabul and Sayyaf in Paghman district. (Pajhwok)

Ousted for My Anti-Corruption Efforts: Ex Mining Dept Head

JALALABAD - Former Mining Department head Shukrullah Tolo has claimed was unseated from his job



and introduced to the attorney general office on the bases of personal and political issues.

During an exclusive interview Shukrullah accused former Governor Maulvi Lodin for removing him from his post and hiring a man from his own party. "I refused to be involved in corruption with him and so he fired me and brought someone from his own party to benefit him and his party," alleged the former mining department head. "I was indulged in conspiracy and was accused of ... (More on P4)...(11)