

Ghani Wants Control Enhanced Over Projects

KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani on Tuesday asked the Ministry of Public Works to enhance its control over national infrastructure development projects and their management and weekly report to him in this regard.

As part of his surprise visits to ministries and departments, Ghani visited the Public Works Ministry to assess its activities, a statement from the president spokesman's office said.

Calling the control over national projects as weak, Ghani insisted the Public Works Ministry should remain 90 percent technical and 10 percent managerial to effectively



perform its real job of being technical.

Ghani assured the ministry of providing it all needed facilities. "Unfortunately, over the past 13 years little has been done on capacity building in areas of engineering and management, something necessary for projects management and maintenance," he added.

The president underlined the need for coordination among the ministries of public works and the higher education in training engineering students at the Kabul and Polytechnic universities based on the country's needs.

He ...*(More on P4)...*(1)

Stable Afghanistan in Pakistan's Interest: Sharif



ISLAMABAD - Claiming that the ongoing Zarb-e-Azb operation in Waziristan has dismantled terrorist networks, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday reiterated a stable and peaceful Afghanistan was in his country's larger interest. Sharif, who met a delegation of Afghan lawmakers in Islamabad, said the neighbouring countries were committed to not allowing their soils to be used against each other, except for progressing towards prosperity. Both the countries, he said, needed to bolster bilateral cooperation on political, economic, trade and security fronts. He said the offensive in North Waziristan near the ...*(More on P4)...*(2)

ANSF Prepared to Take Lead in Providing Security: ISAF

The government of Afghanistan remains in control of its 34 provincial capitals and all major cities, according to a spokesperson for NATO's International Security Assistance Force.

MOSCOW - The Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) are prepared to take the lead in ensuring security and stability in their country, spokesperson for NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan Chris Belcher told Sputnik on Tuesday.

"The Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) have proven they can win the tactical fight," Belcher said. "The ANSF overmatch the enemy wherever and whenever challenged. Our Afghan partners can and will take the fight from here," he added.

Belcher noted that the government of Afghanistan remains in control of its 34 provincial capitals and all major cities.

"Because of the ANSF's success on the battlefield we're transitioning to the Resolute Support mission," he stressed. "The goals and tasks for the near future are to complete our transition from ISAF to Resolute Support and continue to Train, Advise and Assist our Afghan partners as they provide 100% of the security for Afghanistan." ...*(More on P4)...*(4)

75 Foreign Troops Killed in 2014 Violence



KABUL - The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) lost 75 soldiers during the outgoing year, showing less fatalities suffered by the alliance during its mission in the past 10 years, well-placed sources said Wednesday.

However, the casualties of Afghan forces this year increased at a time when nearly 5,000 Afghan soldiers were killed compared to 2,767 in 2013.

In 2004, only 60 foreign soldiers were killed while the number of ...*(More on P4)...*(8)

8 Journalists Killed in 2014 in Afghanistan: NAI

KABUL - Reporting of 64 percent increase in the violence against journalists, a media supporting agency (NAI) called 2014 a deadliest year for reporters in Afghanistan.

In a press conference presenting the annual report of 2014, the NAI director Sediqullah Tawhidi told media that eight journalists were killed in 2014 in Afghanistan.

Tawhidi added these reporters were killed while on duty in the armed attacks and bombings by the insurgents.

"This year we had eight deaths including two foreigners of which one was killed in Kabul and the other one in a southern province," Tawhidi reported. ...*(More on P4)...*(9)

Afghanistan Could Go the Way of Iraq, Boehner Warns

WASHINGTON - The US House Speaker John Boehner has warned that Afghanistan could go the way of Iraq if the U.S. does not do enough to backstop Kabul against the Taliban and terrorists.

Boehner said Obama's withdrawal strategy from Afghanistan is already foundering, insisting that the troops pullout from Afghanistan is premature as



combat deaths are on rise and areas of territory lost to the Taliban. ...*(More on P4)...*(3)

NATO Has Greater Responsibility to Maintain Security: Russia

KABUL - Russia considers NATO's mission in Afghanistan codenamed Resolute Support as an "heir at law" of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and proceeds from the assumption that the alliance continues to bear a great share of responsibility for maintaining security in Afghanistan, the Russian Foreign Ministry said



in connection with the expiration of the ISAF mandate, Tass news agency reports. ...*(More on P4)...*(5)

Turkish Forces Take Command of Kabul Airport

KABUL - In a ceremony marking the end of 13-year NATO combat mission in Afghanistan, the French forces handed over the control of Hamid Karzai International Airport of Kabul to the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) on Wednesday.

Stationed in KAIA compound of ISAF in the north side of the airport, the French forces were responsible for providing air services, training of technical staff and equipping of the airfield.

"Today we also remember 80 sacrifices made by the French forces in Afghanistan," said Gen. John McMullen, the 9th Air and Space Expeditionary Task Force commander of NATO. "These force had nearly 20,000 operational flights, transferred thousands of passengers and more than 60,000 metric tons of materials."

Emphasizing on lasting peace and stability, the Turkish Major General Mehmet Cahit Bakir welcomed his forces for their sacrifices. "Beloved commanders, Turkey ...*(More on P4)...*(6)

New Role for Australian Soldiers in Afghanistan



SYDNEY - Australian Defense Force (ADF) operations in Afghanistan will enter a new phase in the New Year to train, advise and assist local soldiers, defense authorities said on Wednesday.

There are 400 Australian troops still in Afghanistan, who will undertake the work along with 9,800 American troops and other foreign soldiers.

The change marks the end of Operation Slipper, which has been Australia's commitment to the NATO-led international mission in Afghanistan for the past 13 years.

The transition also recognizes that the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) have now taken the lead for all combat operations.

Commander of Australia's joint task force in Afghanistan, Major General David Mulhall, praised the efforts of the more than 26,500 Australian soldiers who have served in Afghanistan since 2002.

"As we move into this new operation, ...*(More on P4)...*(7)

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