

## Trump's Secret Iraq Visit Proof of US Defeat: Iran's Rouhani

TEHRAN - Iran's President Hassan Rouhani says the fact that US President Donald Trump recently had to travel to Iraq secretly and briefly shows America's failure in the countries that it has invaded. Speaking during a cabinet meeting in Tehran on Wednesday, President Rouhani referred to Trump's unannounced visit to Iraq late last month — during which he merely stopped at a military base — and said the secrecy that characterized the trip was proof of America's "defeat."

"Since 2003, the Americans have been claiming that they have salvaged Iraq and Afghanistan; but if this claim is true, then why don't you openly make an official trip to see how the Iraqis would welcome you on the streets of Baghdad and Basra?" Rouhani said.

"The fact that you enter a small military base secretly and under the cover of the night, take pictures with a few soldiers, speak briefly, and leave Iraq a couple of hours later indicates your defeat," the Iranian president said.

Rouhani noted the secrecy also meant that "you have not been successful, that you know the people of Iraq are not happy with you, and that you don't dare to be [publicly present] among them." Iraq, he suggested, was a feasible destination for Trump. "As for Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen, you don't even dare to travel there!" he said.

On December 26, Trump spent a few hours at al-Asad Air Base in Iraq's western Anbar Province but did not visit the capital Baghdad. A scheduled meeting between Trump and Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi was scrapped and they only talked over the phone. (Press TV)

## It Will Take a Lot of Time for Pakistan to Mend Its Ways: Pm Modi

ISLAMABAD - Prime Minister Modi said that while India favours a dialogue and good friendly relations with Pakistan, it is also wary of the fact that the neighbouring country is not going to mend its ways of promoting cross border terrorism any time soon.

Two days after the Indian Army foiled a fresh attempt by Pakistan's Border Action Team (BAT) to push infiltrators through the LoC (Line of Control) in Kashmir, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India will make all efforts to keep pressure on Pakistan, but it will be huge mistake to believe that the country will mend its ways anytime soon. In an exclusive interview to ANI, Prime Minister Modi said that whether it is surgical strikes or action at other levels, the Indian government is working out various strategies to



keep up the pressure on Pakistan to check terrorism. Prime Minister Modi said that while India favours a dialogue and good friendly relations with Pakistan, it is also wary of the fact that the neighbouring country is not going to mend its ways of promoting cross border ter-

rorism any time soon. When asked why cross border attacks have not stopped after the surgical strikes PM Modi replied, "Whatever strategy is to be adopted, how to do, is ongoing at appropriate levels, has been happening. (Outlook India)

## Australians Are Top Target for International Scammers: Report

CANBERRA - Australians are the top targets of international investment scams based in the Philippines, a report has warned.

Ken Gamble, executive chairman of Internet Fraud Watchdog (IFW) Global, has conducted an investigation into the investment scams, finding that they have been set up by 150 Australians, Canadians, Americans and Britons using the Philippines as a base.

The scams, which start with a cold call, involve companies claiming to be real reputable financial advisory firms seeking investment in discounted shares.

Gamble said the scale of the problem was being underestimated by Australian authorities because of victims' reluctance to report the crimes.

"Thousands of Australians are being



called and a lot of them are converted into clients," he told News Corp Australia on Wednesday.

"There would be hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars of unreported fraud," Gamble added.

In one case, he said they were target-

ing just Aussies and they completely Australianized the scam. "Your average, honest everyday Aussie is falling for it. They're getting these high-pressure cold calls that say, 'You can invest your money. This is much better interest than the banks.'" (Xinhua)

### (1) In Quest of...

the insurgent movement?

In order to find convincing answers to the three vital questions, the official said, they were holding consultations with the people. Kabul's redlines and flexibility in negotiations with the Taliban came up for discussion at the gathering. (Pajhwok)

### (2) Trying to Catch...

and buy some food.

"A few bottles were floating in the Ghazni River, the children tried to catch them, as one of them tried first and entered the water, the water was very cold and it drowned him, the second tried to rescue him but he also drowned and the third brother also jumped into the water to rescue his two brothers," he said. Niamatullah, a resident of the area, said, "People were able to fish out two of the children from waters, but one of them was missing and was found later after police reduced the water in the river."

Ghazni governor's spokesman, Mohammad Arif Noori, told Pajhwok that they were aware of the incident.

He said the government would soon provide assistance to the affected family. He said displaced families in Ghazni received more aid this year compared to the past. Many children from poverty stricken families collect plastic bottles for selling them and earning some money to feed their families. (Pajhwok)

### (3) Public Urge...

"Power's meter reading process should be carried out monthly. We get only 7,000 AFN salary, if we use our salaries for electricity bills, then what should we eat," said a resi-

dent of Kabul, Sayed Hussain Perwaizi.

"Those reading the meters should report actual consumption," said a resident in Kabul, Naseeruddin.

"We do not know how much transparency there is when it comes to the distribution of electricity, electricity should no longer be distributed on the whims of a member of parliament, electricity is not being distributed in Kabul in a transparent way," said Kabul governor, Mohammad Yaqoub Haidari.

Haidari also called on the private sector to cooperate in upgrading power delivery to the people. (Tolo news)

### (4) Taliban Closing...

According to him, militants from Takhar, Kunduz, Baghlan and Badakhshan provinces have coordination with each other and they have created a corridor for their movement in the area as well.

He urged the government to urgently conduct a military operation against the Taliban in the area.

Meanwhile, Hayatullah, a resident of the district, also expressed his deep concern to Pajhwok about the latest insecurity situation in the district.

He said clashes occurred on a daily basis near the district's bazaar and if a clearing operation was not launched, the district would fall to the Taliban soon.

Hakimullah Khan, another resident, told Pajhwok Taliban militants seemed more powerful than the government in their area and they could easily take people hostage from the main bazaar of the district.

He urged the government to ensure people's security in the district and conduct a major military operation

as soon as possible across the district.

Provincial deputy police chief Col. Nizamuddin Ghori confirmed the security situation had deteriorated in the district and said he had discussed the issue with relevant authorities.

He said due to police personnel shortage, security of the district was bad. He said if local people supported police and their strength was increased, security issues in the Dashti Qala district could be reduced. (Pajhwok)

### (5) Nimroz Farmers...

Abdul Shakoor, a resident of Kang district, said his 20 sheep perished due to the drought and his farms produced nothing this year due to shortage of water.

The agriculture director Sharifi said 386 metric tons of animals feed provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock had been distributed free of cost to livestock owners in Nimroz to prevent further cattle losses.

The animal feed was distributed to those people who owned more than 50 livestock, he said.

Khudaidad, a livestock owner in Chakhansor district, said the fodder they received from the ministry was not enough for a week. He said the government should provide more assistance to them.

"Our main source of income is breeding animals, if we lose our livestock, we will lose our lives," he said. (Pajhwok)

### (6) Taliban Blow...

paramilitary base in the western province of Herat on Wednesday. Noorullah Qadri, the commander of 207 Zafar military corps, said two attackers who had infiltrated

the border security forces tried to kill the Italians.

"The Italian nationals escaped uninjured. One attacker was gunned down immediately and the other was arrested," said Qadri.

The Italian forces are part of the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission focused on training, advising and assisting the Afghan forces in four western provinces. Italy has 895 soldiers attached to Resolute Support.

Officials at the Italian embassy in Kabul were not immediately available for comment. (Reuters)

### (7) Call to Facilitate...

then railways minister had promised expanding it. But 32 years on, the commitment is yet to be honoured.

Sarhadi, who is also chairman of the dry port and standing committees of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, blamed successive governments for ignoring problems of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. (Pajhwok)

### (8) Foreign Forces...

Support mission confirmed the incident and no coalition member had been injured. "Today, an insurgent acting as a member of the Afghan security forces fired on coalition members, the coalition members returned fire and killed the attacker," a short statement from the mission said. (Pajhwok)

### (9) Iranians Among...

Another two notorious commanders Mullah Nasrat and Mullah Sade were also among the dead who were killed in an airstrike in Khwaja Sabzposh.

The military cited intelligence organs saying another 23 rebels were injured and the hideout of Shafiq

## Britain Can Punch Above Its Weight Even After Brexit: Hunt

SINGAPORE - Britain can still punch above its weight globally even after it exits the European Union (EU), Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said Wednesday ahead of a crucial parliamentary vote at home.

Although Britain is neither a superpower nor in possession of an empire, the country still has the military might, economic muscle and diplomatic connections to play a major role in world affairs, Hunt said in Singapore.

Britons in a 2016 referendum voted to leave the EU, a political and economic partnership that currently has 28 members, triggering months of tortuous negotiations that have left the country bitterly divided.

Parliament is due to debate Britain's withdrawal from the EU -- called Brexit -- next week ahead of a key vote the following week, as the country prepares to leave the bloc on March 29.

Amid doubts over whether the deal will have enough backing, Prime Minister Theresa May used her New Year's message to rally support.

In a speech outlining Britain's global role after Brexit, Hunt said his country would remain an influential global player independent of the EU, even as he warned that failure to reach a deal would "cause disruption that could last some time".

While Britain should not overestimate its strength, it should not underestimate it either, he said at a diplomatic forum organised by the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS).

"We are not a superpower and we do not have an empire," he said. (AFP)

Haqyar, a local Taliban commander, was destroyed.

On the other hand, four security forces were slightly wounded during a clash on the Maimana-Andk-hoi highway.

The Taliban have not yet commented about these incidents. (Pajhwok)

### (10) Paktia...

claimed they lost six members in a night raid by "campaign forces" in Zurmat district in the province.

The family said that Naeem Farooqi, a tribal elder and member of Paktia peace committee, was killed along with his three sons and two of his brothers in this operation. (Tolo news)

### (11) Kot Residents...

Hayatullah Hayat meanwhile said the local government will help the displaced families and will reconstruct their homes.

"We, along with the local officials of the district, will strictly follow government promises for the residents," Hayat said. "We will serve the residents of the district who stood against Daesh fighters."

Malik Cheragh, a 70-year-old man, who was in Daesh custody for two months, said two years ago Daesh fighters kept him hostage along with six other tribal elders.

Cheragh said he was released by his sons in exchange for six AK-47 weapons.

"There were foreign fighters and local fighters among Daesh ranks who took us hostage and we were sentenced to be killed, but Allah saved us," said Cheragh. The district was cleared of Daesh in July 2016. However, the district witnesses clashes between government forces and militants who claim to be Daesh fighters. (Tolo news)