

### (1) Afghan Forces...

however the structure was being rebuilt. According to Muqbil, the Afghan National Army troops had started the clearing operation from the US Marines forward operation base Geronimo, pushing the Taliban back from various areas.

He said so far only the Afghan forces were taking part in the operation and foreign troops would provide air support if required.

ANA's 215 Maiwand Military Corps deputy spokesman Maj. Abdul Qadir confirmed the operation to recapture Nawa district was launched on Saturday morning, but provided no further details. District social council head for Nawa, Haji Juma Gul, told Pajhwok Afghan News the security forces were achieving their objectives in the operation and had so far reached Fazluddin square in the district centre.

The Taliban have so far said nothing about the second such major operation in Helmand during the past one month. The previous operation in Nawa and Marja districts had little gains. (Pajhwok)

### (2) Islamabad Asked...

situation in Afghanistan either migrants problems or border problems between Iran and Afghanistan," he said.

A member of the High Peace Council meanwhile labeled lack of rule of law and drugs mafia influence in government as the main reasons behind insecurity and instability in the country.

"Those who have weapons they will have more power, those who have money they will have extra power. Unfortunately, the international community is involved in unjust distribution of money," the HPC deputy chief Habiba Sarabi said.

Representatives of at least 10 countries attended the two-day Afghanistan-Central Asia Dialogue conference in Bamiyan where they discussed ways to create coordination in the region in order to cope with the challenges on the ground, namely terrorism. (Tolonews)

### (3) Govt Limits ...

acting mayor said the municipality has plans to create alternate routes for motorists.

"We practically have started the work and it will take four to six months to create the alternate route," said Habibzai. Removing of T-walls to ease traffic flow in some areas was also part of this plan, he said. (Tolonews)

### (4) Mattis Asked ...

2017 ,1 to December 400.0\$ ,2018 ,31 million would not be eligible for a waiver unless the secretary of defense certifies that Pakistan continues to conduct operations against the Haqqani Network in North Waziristan.

One of the legislative amendments proposes withholding reimbursements to Pakistan unless the secretary can certify the country is not providing military, financial, or logistical support to any individuals designated by the US as a terrorist operating in Pakistan or Afghanistan.

"It is well known that Pakistan is a Benedict Arnold ally who supports multiple terrorist organisations, including groups that target Americans working to stabilise Afghanistan. But current limitations on military reimbursement funding to Pakistan only apply to the Haqqani Network," Poe said. (Pajhwok)

### (5) Pakistan Takes...

millions of Afghan refugees living in Pakistan.

Afghanistan opposes the border fencing plans because it disputes the demarcation of the border, which was set by the former British rulers of the Indian subcontinent. Afghan leaders also accuse Pakistan's military and its ISI spy agency of helping Taliban insurgents and their dreaded Haqqani network ally sustain the insurgency in Afghanistan. The allegations have long strained bilateral relations and Islamabad's border fencing project has fueled tensions.

'No option'

Speaking at an international conference in Islamabad this week, army spokesman Major-General Asif Ghafoor said that the military has deployed over 200,000 troops along the border and established nearly 1,000 posts while Afghans have maintained just over 200 outposts. This has left a large portion of the nearly 2,600kilometer border unguarded, making it impossible to control illegal cross-border movement, he complained.

"So, under compulsion we had no option but to go for unilateral border management. So, what we have done is that we have started to construct new border posts and new forts along the border. On the average, every 1.5 kilometer will have either a border post or the fort where our troops will be there," the general explained. Islamabad dismisses traditional Afghan objections to the international frontier between the two countries. Officials also deny Pakistan is supporting Afghan

insurgents, saying the charges are an attempt by the Kabul government to divert attention from their internal political and security challenges.

Ghafoor said "As long as Afghanistan looks towards Pakistan through the lens of anti-Pakistan forces, the region will never be stable. The day Afghanistan looks towards Pakistan from the lens of their own national interest, it will be stable."

Pakistan also accuses rival India of using growing influence within Afghan security institutions to destabilize Kabul's ties with Islamabad, accusations Afghan and Indian officials deny.

Refugee population

Ghafoor said that presence of -2.7million Afghan refugees in the country, an estimated 44 percent of them undocumented, is another prime driver of blame game between the two countries and a security challenge for Pakistan.

For long the displaced population, particularly unregistered Afghans, have lived in Pakistan with no checks on their movement, encouraging militants to exploit the situation, he said. But a recently concluded national census has now enabled authorities to identify every Afghan citizen living in the country, disclosed the general.

"We desire an early, smooth, honorable and socio-economically gainful and possibly irreversible repatriation of all Afghan refugees," Ghafoor reiterated. Increased monitoring of the refugee population coupled with border restrictions and raise in financial assistance by UNHCR for voluntary repatriation in 2016 prompted more than 750,000 Afghans to return to their homeland amid allegations of forced evictions and harassment by Pakistani authorities, according to officials in Kabul.

But the Afghan government faced challenges in handling the returnees and reintegrating them in the society, along with increased insecurity in most parts of Afghanistan. A reduction in financial assistance for the voluntary repatriation has led to a significant decline in the number of returning families this year. As of early July fewer than 40,000 refugees have returned to Afghanistan, according to UNHCR.

"The development investments in the high-return communities and areas in Afghanistan have not been commensurate to the demands and the needs," said Indrika Ratwatte, UNHCR chief in Pakistan, while addressing the conference.

'Slow process'

Afghanistan's ambassador to Islamabad, Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal, says that despite its limitations, Kabul is doing all it can to absorb returnees and dismisses assertions the refugees are a source of terrorism in the host country.

"In this year [repatriation] is a slow process, particularly because the pool of refugees has certainly shrunk but at the same time of course the security situation is worse than it was a year ago," Zakhilwal told the conference organized by National University of Science and Technology (NUST).

"But about those who have returned I am very glad to say that you will find very few refugees who regret their decision to have returned to their country," Zakhilwal asserted. The Afghan envoy also disagreed with official Pakistani assertions that the refugee population is a cause of insecurity for the host country. (VoA)

### (6) Murad to Deliver...

Suhrab Bahman said.

Meanwhile, a number of economic analysts said first of all government should have an exact idea of the country's status and then based on the needs of the people implement highly valuable and lucrative plans to achieve the sustainable development goals.

"First we should define Afghanistan's absolute and relative advantage in four development dimensions that include economy, politics, culture and society and also should specify Afghanistan's economic roadmap. For instance, when we talk about fighting poverty, we should put it into practice," economic analyst, Shabir Bashiri said. (Tolonews)

### (7) Afghan Officials...

"Every Afghan deserves nothing less than a peaceful and prosperous nation; and we are getting there day by day," he said.

High ranking government officials praised Kaiser for his services to Afghanistan.

"(The Afghan) people will not forget that they put behind a dark era with the help of the international community, the ISAF forces and now the Resolute Support mission," the acting defense minister Tariq Shah Bahrami said.

"Kaiser is a disciplined and highly professional officer. I deeply appreciate all his efforts," the interior minister Taj Mohammad Jahid said.

Major General Robin L. Fontes has been appointed as the new commander

of the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) and deputy chief of staff, security assistance for headquarters of the Resolute Support mission in Kabul.

Fontes has served in the region for 12 years. She has served in Tajikistan, Pakistan and many times in Afghanistan. "It is an honor to serve with you again and this Nobel mission and I look forward to working with you as we continue to build upon the achievements of the past years in order to build a stable, secure and prosperous Afghanistan," she said. At the event, the Resolute Support and U.S forces Commander Gen. John Nicholson reiterated his commitment to Afghanistan.

"These are political events last year and it is clear demonstration of commitment to Afghanistan. As demonstrated that we have not lost our will we are committed to the stability and peace of Afghanistan," he said.

The CSTC-A's mission is to plan, program and implement reform in the Afghan security and defense agencies. (Tolonews)

### (8) NATO Rejects ..

Salvin further added "While US forces conducted airstrikes in Kunduz last night, according to Afghan officials the damage to the school was caused by a kitchen fire."

According to Salvin, a review of the gun camera footage confirms the area where the strikes occurred was clear of civilians at the time.

He also added that the strikes destroyed Taliban fighting positions and emplaced IEDs.

The Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid had earlier claimed that the school building was totally destroyed in the airstrike by the US forces on Friday night.

Mujahid also claimed that several people lost their lives while others were wounded in the airstrikes.

Some provincial education officials had earlier said that the school compound located in east of the city was damaged along with some homes located in the vicinity of the incident. (KP)

### (9) Melon, ...

"Farmers feared their produce would not reach the market because of insecurity. Other growers were displaced and many farmlands remained uncultivated due to the conflict," he explained.

About grower complaints regarding lack of market and cold storage facilities, the official said he had repeatedly asked senior officials to provide the facilities, but no one paid attention to his calls.

Qalam added he had requested the central government to construct cold storage facilities worth 500,000\$ and a 700,000\$ market in Helmand. He promised the facilities would be provided in future.

About the reduced prices of melons and watermelons, he said, "Farmers are obliged to sell their produce immediately after harvest because they have no storage facilities."

Two cold storage facilities, which had been built previously in Marja and Greshk districts, were looted by local residents during conflict, the official disclosed.

Mohammad Wali, a farmer from Lashkargah city, the provincial capital, said they had cultivated melon and watermelons on a smaller area this year, but they had better yields.

He said their melon and watermelon fields were not attacked by pesticides this year but prices were very low due to warm weather and lack of cold storage facilities.

Abdullah Jan, a roadside melon seller in Lashkargah, said the fruit was either exported or sold in Kabul and many other provinces at higher prices. This year, traders evinced little interest in purchasing melons and watermelons. (Tolonews)

### (10) New Boy ...

children, the goal was to create a boy character to emphasize the importance of gender equality and education in a country where the vast majority of girls don't go to school and the literacy rate for women is among the lowest in the world.

"In a male-dominant country like Afghanistan, I think you have to do some lessons for the males to respect the females. So by bringing a male character to the show who respects a female character, you teach the Afghan men that you have to respect your sister the same way as you do your brother," Sanjer said. In keeping with that goal, Zeerak proclaimed in a recent episode of the program, "I love Zari so much and as much as I love Zari, I love her friends too."

It's an important message broadcast on a medium with a nationwide reach: While television in Afghanistan is largely restricted to urban areas, "Sesame Street" is also broadcast on radio in both official languages, Pashtun and Dari, expanding its audience to most of the country.

Both Zari and Zeerak were created

in New York and their costumes incorporate fabrics and designs from all of Afghanistan's major ethnic groups to promote inclusiveness in a society racked by decades of conflict.

Afghanistan has been at war for almost 40 years, since the 1979 Soviet invasion and the subsequent mujahedeen war that lasted a decade. That was followed by a devastating civil war in which warlords drew lines based on ethnicity and killed tens of thousands of people in Kabul alone.

The Taliban took over in 1996, and their five-year rule was one of brutal extremism in which they banned women from work and girls from going to school, confining them to their homes. The radical Taliban regime was forced from power by the 2001 U.S. invasion that ushered in a democratic experiment and billions of dollars in international aid to help rebuild the country.

Ahmad Arubi, the producer of the local version of "Sesame Street," said he is hopeful that the new characters will eventually have a wider audience outside of Afghanistan.

"Possibly, in the coming years other Muslim countries, which are running this program, might use our characters, such as Zeerak and Zari. They might use our scripts, translate them in their own languages and use them in their countries," he said. (AP)

### (11) US Forces in ....

in the statement.

Meanwhile, Afghan forces have killed nine IS fighters and injured five others during a military operation in Pachiragum district of eastern Nangarhar province, the provincial government spokesperson Attaullah Khogiani told Xinhua.

Hundreds of IS militants including their top three commanders have been killed during the Afghan and NATO forces operations over the past year.

In April, US forces dropped a massive bomb on IS complex tunnel and hideout in Nangarhar province and reportedly killed more than 100 fighters. (Xinhua)

### (12) Four Policemen..

weapons and also took the bodies of the four policemen with them.

There is no report of Taliban casualties nor has the Taliban comment about the incident yet. (Tolonews)

### (13) Two Suicide...

This comes as the Afghan intelligence said last week that the security forces foiled a plot by the Haqqani terrorist network to carry out a coordinated attack in Gardez city, the provincial capital of southeastern Paktia province.

The National Directorate of Security (NDS) in a statement said Wednesday that a group of eight insurgents were arrested in connection to the attack plot.

The statement further added that the suspects were arrested during an operation of the intelligence operatives in the vicinity of Gardez city.

The detained militants have confessed that they were deployed to Gardez city by the Haqqani network commanders, Ghazi and Jihad, who they claim are based on the other side of the Durand Line. (KP)

### (14) Uzbek Snipers ..

"Uzbek militants who have entered Khawaja Sabz Posh district have sniper type guns, they targeted the four uprising group fighters with the same guns," he said.

The third uprising member was killed and the fourth wounded after they attempted to shift the two killed colleagues, he said. A resident of the area, who wished to go unnamed, said uprising fighters were asleep when Taliban targeted them with a sniper gun from a house.

Abdullah Masumi also said an insurgent killed a bodyguard of a local uprising commander, Salim Bai, in the center of the Khawaja Sabz Posh district, the closest to the provincial capital, Maimana, late on Friday.

Elsewhere in the province, provincial police spokesman Abdul Karim Yourish said a police officer was killed and another wounded in a roadside bombing in Bazar Tapa area of Sherin Tagab district this morning. (Pajhwok)

## Women and Children among 8 Released from ISIS Captivity in East of Afghanistan

JALALABAD - At least eight civilians including women and children were released from the captivity of the militants affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group in eastern Nangarhar province of Afghanistan.

The provincial government media office in a statement said the civilians, including five children and two women were kept as captives by the terror group in Haska Mina district.

The statement further added that the civilians managed to escape from the

captivity of the terror group as they were kept by the militants of the terror group as captives.

It is believed the women and children belonged to a ISIS group member who was killed during the operations, the provincial government said, adding that the ISIS group member had taken his family with him after joining the ISIS ranks.

The provincial government also added that the civilians are currently being kept in the custody of the security forces and investigation is underway in this regard.

The anti-government armed militant groups have not commented regarding the report so far.

This comes as the Afghan forces are busy conducting counter-terrorism and clearance operations in some restive districts of Nangarhar as the ISIS loyalists have been attempting to expand their foothold and activities in certain districts of the during the recent years.

The US forces based in Afghanistan have also stepped up airstrikes against the anti-government armed militants in Afghanistan.

The airstrikes were increased particularly after the former US administration granted broader role to the US forces to resume counter-terrorism operations, a step that was taken after growing instability in the country, mainly due to the insurgency led by the Taliban and ISIS militants. (KP)

## Flour Price Down, Ghee up in Kabul

KABUL - The price of flour has dipped while that of ghee increased during the outgoing week in the capital Kabul, market source said Saturday.

Food Traders Union head, Fazal Rahman, told Pajhwok Afghan News that the price of 50 kilograms of Kazkhistani flour decreased from 1,250 Afghanis to 1,120 Afghanis.

However, he said that the price of 16 liters of Khurshid ghee increased from 1,100 Afghanis to 1,120af.

The prices of other food items remain unchanged. Fazal Rahman said 24-kg of Pakistani rice cost 1,800af and 49-kg of Pakistani sugar 2,100af, the same prices of last week's.

Noor Ahmad Kherkhwah, a tea merchant in Kabul Mandavi, said a kilogram of Indonesian green tea cost 280af and the same amount of African black tea 300af, the same rates as last week's.

But Ahmad Wali Panjsheri, a grocer in Dahn-i-Bagh area, sold a 50-kg bag of Kazakhstani flour for 1,300af, a 49-kg sack of Pakistani sugar for 2,150 af and a 16-litre tin of Khurshid ghee for 1,220af. Similarly, he sold a 24.5-kg sack of Pakistani rice for 2,000af, a kilogram of Indonesian green tea for 300af and the same quantity of African black tea for 350af, higher than wholesale rates.

Fuel prices remain unchanged. Abdul Hadi, a worker at the Wazir Abad Fuel Station, said one litre of diesel cost 40af and the same quantity of petrol 44af, the same rates as last week's.

Ahmad Javed, a liquefied gas seller at in Taimani area, said a kilogram of the commodity cost 50af, no changes have been recorded. Haji Fawad Ahmad Salehzada, a jeweller in the Timor Shahi area of Kabul, said one gram of Arabian gold cost 2,250af and the same quantity of the Russian variety 1,800af.

According to Sara-i-Shahzada Money-changers Union, one US dollar accounted for 68.40af and 1,000 Pakistani rupees for 634af against last week's rates of 68.33af and 638af. (Pajhwok)

## Afghan MPs React at US Envoy's Remarks Regarding Dostum-Ishchi Case

KABUL - The lawmakers in the Lower House of the Parliament, Wolesi Jirga, reacted at the remarks of the US embassy Charge d' Affaires regarding the controversial case of the first vice president General Abdul Rashid Dostum and former Jawzjan governor Ahmad Khan Ishchi. A member of the parliament, Nasrullah Sadiqzada, said the case has nothing to do with the embassy of the United States, stressing that the US envoy should focus on torture allegations of detainees in Iraq, Bagram, and Guantanamo, if he really cares about the abuse cases. He also added that the supreme court of the country is either dealing with the case politically or it acts based on the recommendations of certain political figures and circles, warning that such approach could be very dangerous to the legal system of the country. Ali Akbar Qasemi, another member of the parliament, said the case should be closed as soon as possible and called on Attorney General Office and supreme court to refrain from adopting political decisions. (Pajhwok)