

Quote of the Day

An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.

Benjamin Franklin (1706 - 1790)

Taliban Trying to Erode Govt. Hold in a Number of Areas: CIA

WASHINGTON - The Taliban were unsuccessfully trying to erode the hold of the Afghan government in a number of areas, a top American spy master told lawmakers on Thursday adding that this summer season is witnessing an intense fighting between the Taliban and national security forces.

The Taliban were really trying to erode the government's hold in a number of areas the CIA Director, John Brennan, told members of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence during a Congressional hearing on ISIS. Brennan said the United States was working closely with the Afghans to have them better consolidate their forces so that they could



protect the critical infrastructure in the cities and transit routes. But the Taliban were determined,

working with the Haqqanis, a sub-group of the Taliban. So there was continued concern about the Taliban's

ability to carry out these attacks both in some of the outlying areas, but also as they tried to go after the provincial capitals, as well as Kabul, Brennan said.

"It is still uncertain in my mind whether or not the Taliban is going to continue to make incremental progress," he said adding that the US was providing support to Afghan intelligence partners so that they have the capabilities that they need. "But there was still a long, hard fight ahead in Afghanistan for the Afghan government," he acknowledged. Brennan said during the height of this fighting season, the number of casualties on both sides in terms of the ANSF, the

Afghan ... (More on P4)...(1)

Pakistan Not Breaching Any Accord on Torkham: Aziz



KABUL - Adviser to Pakistani Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz on Thursday his country was not breaching any agreement by constructing a gate on Torkham border and will go on with the project to make effective border management possible. In his policy statement, Aziz told the National As-

sembly that Pakistan had informed the Afghan authorities about its intention to build the gate and the construction work had started back in November 2014. "When Afghan authorities expressed their reservations, we took them into confidence and told them that the gate is ... (More on P4)...(2)

Torkham Crossing Closure: Afghan Delegation to Visit Islamabad Soon

KABUL - Afghan deputy foreign minister is expected to visit Islamabad soon to discuss the Torkham crossing issue with Pakistani officials, an official said on Friday. Tawab Ghorzan, spokesman for the National Security Council (NSC) told Pajhwok Afghan News that Pakistan foreign affairs advisor Sartaj Aziz telephoned National Security Advisor Mohammad Hanif Atmar late on Thursday and dis-

cussed recent clashes and tensions development between the two countries in Torkham crossing. Both discussed the Torkham issues and ways to resolved it, said Ghorzan, adding that Mr. Aziz suggested that Afghan foreign minister or Atmar should visit Islamabad to talks over the issue. Ghorzan said government had decided that a ... (More on P4)...(4)

US Expands Air Strikes on Taliban in 2016: Survey



WASHINGTON - A new report suggests that the US forces in Afghanistan has increased air strikes against the Taliban this year in a move to curb the group's insurgency in the country and to help the conventional forces in their counter-terror missions.

"The US has carried out more than 200 air missions in Afghanistan with 60 percent of the attacks hitting the Taliban insurgents," the survey reads. The new development takes place a week after US President Barack Obama approved giving the American troops in Afghanistan greater role to support and enable the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) in their campaign against a resilient Taliban insurgency, in a move to assist the embattled Afghan security forces more proactively on the warfronts. In 2014, Obama declared the end of US combat mission in Afghanistan after ... (More on P4)...(5)

Taliban Attempted to Shift Quetta Council to Helmand: MoD

HELMAND - The Taliban militants attempted to shift the Quetta Council to southern Helmand province, the Ministry of Defense (MoD) said Thursday. Dawlat Waziri, spokesman for the Ministry of Afghanistan (MoD), said the attempts by the enemies of Afghanistan (Taliban) was thwarted by the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces. The leadership councils of the Taliban group and the notorious Haqqani terrorist are believed to be based in Peshawar and Quetta cities of Pakistan as the Afghan officials have long been demanding from Pakistan to take actions against the sanctuaries of the terror groups acting against Afghanistan. The observers believe the latest upheavals have forced the militant to ... (More on P4)...(8)

Afghanistan Loses \$100 Million A Year Through Illegal Mining: EU

KABUL - The European Union's (EU) special envoy to Afghanistan has expressed frustration over illegal mining in Afghanistan, saying the trend has had a significant impact on the economy and is fueling the war economy.

Franz-Michael Mellbin said that Afghanistan loses nearly \$100 million per year through illegal mining. "I am a little careful with numbers here, because just like when you talk numbers in the drug indus-

try, you know there is one price the farmer gets and there is a different price at the street level. So you can calculate in different ways as these things progress towards the value change, but if we focus on the loss for the Afghan government and the state and such, we believe its foreign access of a \$100 million per year. Already at the current level and this is a very conservative estimate," the EU envoy said. Meanwhile, monitoring group The Natural Resources Monitoring Net-



work (NRMN) has said the illegal extraction of mines in the country will lead to a financial crisis for the country unless the government

takes steps and stops the practice. "In economic perspectives, there are a lot of ... (More on P4)...(3)

UNHCR Launches Global Campaign to Seek Action on Refugees

NAIROBI - The UN refugee agency on Thursday launched a global campaign calling on governments to take action for refugees. The campaign launched through video messages in the lead-up to World Refugee Day asks the world to stand together #WithRefugees.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi said the campaign seeks to mobilize massive audiences, creating the largest-ever petition to support refugee cause.

"We are in a period of deepening conflict and turmoil in the world, which



is causing many more people to flee their homes than before," said Grandi in a statement received in Nairobi. "It affects and involves us all, and what it needs is understanding, compassion and political will to come together and find real answers for the refugee plight.

This has become a defining challenge of our times," he added.

In a stunning video message more than 60 global celebrities join with refugees and aid workers to echo the message, "we stand with refugees, please stand with us." The petition appeals for ... (More on P4)...(6)

Ankara Could Deploy More Soldiers to Afghanistan: Turkey

KABUL - Turkey will continue supporting Afghanistan, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu has said, adding that Ankara could deploy more soldiers to Afghanistan if needed.

"We are for the continuation of the determined support mission in 2017 and beyond. We have more than 700 troops in Afghanistan. We will not decrease this number. We could even increase this figure if there is a need," said Çavuşoğlu, during an official visit to Afghanistan's capital Kabul on June 16. According to diplomatic



sources speaking anonymously due to restrictions on speaking with the media, Çavuşoğlu first met with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in his office.

During the meeting, Ghani thanked Çavuşoğlu for Turkey's military support,

mentioning the longstanding and close relationship between Turkey and Afghanistan.

Turkey's support for Afghanistan comes at a time when NATO agreed on June 15 to hold onto its ... (More on P4)...(7)

US Rules out Mediation, Urges Kabul and Islamabad to Resolve Differences

WASHINGTON - Ruling out any mediatory role for itself in the ongoing tension between the two neighbors, the Obama Administration on Thursday urged Afghanistan and Pakistan to ratchet down the violence and begin a dialogue to reduce the tensions.

"We want both sides to ratchet down the violence and begin a dialogue to try to reduce the tensions, keep the crossing open, and have it done peaceably," the State Department Spokesman John Kirby told reporters at

his daily news conference. Separate and distinct from that, Kirby said the US still believed that the right approach is an Afghan-led reconciliation process.

"We continue to support (Afghan) President (Ashraf) Ghani as he continues to try to get that process back on track. Now what effect the border clashes are having on reconciliation, I don't know," he said in response to a question. "I haven't seen any practical effect of it to date. ... (More on P4)...(9)

Govt. Urged to Strengthen Badakhshan Security



FAIZABAD - A number of residents and provincial council members of Badakhshan on Friday called on government to boost up security in the province, particularly in Faizabad city. They said insurgents have extended their activities in the outskirts of Faizabad city, the

capital city of the province. "We have seen an increase in insurgent activities. Security forces have failed to retake Warduj district. Taliban fighters are seen in the outskirts of Faizabad city. The province will fall to the militants if government did not pay ... (More on P4)...(10)

'Once Afghanistan Achieves Stability there will be No Need for US & Int'l Forces': Hekmat

KABUL - Afghanistan's security sector and particularly the security forces still need assistance and support from the international community, Hekmat Khalil Karzai, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, told Russia Today (RT).

RT: Reports emerged last month that the Taliban's former leader Mullah Mansour had been killed by a US airstrike. The US had decried Mansour as being a hindrance to the peace process. How have negotiations with the Taliban been since

his death? Hekmat Khalil Karzai: As you may know, Afghanistan together with China, the US and Pakistan established what is known as the QCG or Quadrilateral Coordination Group. This group met several times and invited the Taliban to the table. Quite sadly, the Taliban did not accept our offer to come to the table. In the QCG we had very specific language and we had a specific road map that was established. The key objective was that we will sit down ... (More on P4)...(11)