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| <b>Jalalabad</b><br>Clear<br>39°C<br>23°C | <b>Ghazni</b><br>Clear<br>27°C<br>11°C | <b>Kandahar</b><br>Clear<br>37°C<br>19°C | <b>Mazar</b><br>Clear<br>33°C<br>18°C | <b>Herat</b><br>Clear<br>31°C<br>16°C | <b>Bamayan</b><br>Partly Cloudy<br>17°C<br>4°C | <b>Kabul</b><br>Clear<br>28°C<br>13°C |
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## Reinforcement Troops Drive Back Taliban from Shindand



HERAT - Herat provincial police chief Abdul Majid Rozi said Thursday afternoon that following a large-scale military offensive troops were able to push back Taliban insurgents that had tried to overrun military posts in the Shindand region of Herat. Insurgents reportedly attacked the military posts early Thursday morning but were driven out once reinforcement troops arrived in the area. As a result of the fighting,

nine Taliban were killed and four others wounded. According to Herat police, a number of vehicles used by the Taliban, and weapons belonging to them, were seized by security forces during the clash. No details on civilian casualties were reported as yet. Taliban has not yet commented on the incident. Shindand, is one of 16 districts in Herat province in western Afghanistan, and is situated in the southern part of the province. (Tolonews)

## Afghanistan Needs Good Ties with Neighbours

Douglas Lute

KABUL - US ambassador to NATO Douglas Lute on Thursday said Afghanistan should develop good ties with its neighbouring countries besides ensuring good governance and honouring pledges Kabul had made with the international community. Lute was talking to Afghan journalists via a video conference from Brussels, where the alliance is headquartered. Referring to a recent NATO foreign ministerial summit



in Antalya, Turkey, the ambassador said foreign ministers from 42 NATO and allied nations had discussed

Afghanistan at the two-day meeting, reassuring their cooperation and assistance with Afghanistan. He said the meeting had insisted on continued cooperation with Afghanistan and that the international community remained committed to supporting the war-torn country. He also said NATO had made huge investment in Afghanistan over the past more than a decade and the Afghans... (More on P4)... (10)

## Wheat Crop Replaces Helmand Poppy this Year

LASHKARGAH - Farmers and agriculture officials' of southern Helmand province claimed on Thursday bumper wheat and other harvest yielded good crops but the farmers were facing shortage of storage facility. Helmand is one of the provinces where poppy was widely grown in the past. Haji Gul Ahmad, a resident and farmer of Girshek district, told Pajhwok Afghan News that growers had grown wheat on more land than the past. "We have cultivated tomatoes and other vegetables but we don't have proper markets and cold storage facilities to keep our harvest afresh," he noted.

Ghaysyusuddin, a local elder in Nad Ali district, said: "I have cultivated tomatoes and cucumber on one and half acre of land besides wheat and have got good production but there is no market to sell our vegetables with good prices." Ghazi Mohammad, a fruit and vegetable seller in Lashkargah, said vegetables and fruits from Iran and Pakistan were sold with high rates but local fruits and vegetables had low prices since there was not cold storage facility. He demanded the government to build cold storages in the province which would help farmers to improve their financial status. Roohullah, director agriculture, pointed out that wheat were grown on 98,000 hectares of land but the wheat growth was higher than last year. He added: "the growth has been increased because the agriculture department provided guidance to farmers." The director acknowledged there was no cold storage facility but the government was planning to build few facilities for farmers. (Pajhwok)

## Steps Being Taken to Bolster Khost Security: Police Chief



KHOST - Police chief of southeastern Khost province on Thursday said he was building close coordination with other departments aimed at bolstering security of this strategically important province. Brig. Gen. Faizullah Ghairat expressed these views while addressing a ceremony arranged in his honor by provincial council for keeping security tight in the province. Bridging the gap among all intuitions would lead them to beef-up law and order even in the remote areas of Khost, he added. "Our security forces are well prepared to improve security in villages, towns and

even border areas. We have stepped up our efforts to discharge our duties in a more efficient way," he remarked. He urged masses to extend their all out support to the security forces for greater peace and stability in the province. "People's cooperation with the law enforcement agencies is direly needed to strengthen security. We hope you will fully back us," he stressed. Amirullah Zraswand, head of provincial council, while addressing the gathering said that law and order situation in Khost was far-better than other provinces. Security forces, he hoped would leave... (More on P4)... (12)

## 20-Km Road Being Built in Takhar

TALOQAN - The Rural Rehabilitation and Development (RRD) department has launched work to build the 20-kilometer long road connecting Rastaq district with Taloqan in northern Takhar province, an official said on Thursday. Raz Mohammad Faiz, director RRD, told Pajhwok Afghan News the road was estimated to cost 40 million afis to be funded by the World Bank (WB), which would be completed in one year. The road was 19.5 km long and six meters wide which was being graveled, he added. Thousands of residents of Rastaq, Yanki Qala, Dasht Qala and Khwajaghar districts would be facilitated, he added. Earlier, the residents used donkeys as a means of transportation as there was no road facility and they were facing with severe problems. In addition, 52 culverts, protecting walls and water channels would be constructed to develop the agriculture sector, he said. Nawrozi, a resident of the locality, the people of his locality... (More on P4)... (13)

## US Not Losing Against Daesh: Obama

WASHINGTON - US President Barack Obama has described the loss of key Iraqi territory to Daesh as a tactical setback, while insisting the war against the jihadist group is not being lost. "I don't think we're losing," Obama said in an interview with news magazine The Atlantic published Thursday, days after the Iraqi city of Ramadi was overrun. "There's no doubt there was a tactical setback, although Ramadi had been vulnerable for a very long time," he said.



Since August 2014, on Obama's orders, a US-led coalition has hit more than 6,000 targets in Iraq and Syria with airstrikes, with the aim of degrading the Islamic State group. Obama has refused to return US combat troops to Iraq, following a long brutal war after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein... (More on P4)... (11)

## Religious Leaders

## Afghans Want Peace, Stability

KUNDUZ - Elders and religious leaders in northern Kunduz province on Thursday announced their support for the peace process, saying they were backing the Afghan security forces to achieve peace. Over 200 religious scholars and elders underlined unity among people, which was prerequisite for achieving peace. Maulvi Najibullah, a religious scholar, said Afghan people were thirsty for peace and the government was obliged to ensure peace through any possible means. He urged people to cooperate with government for the sake of peace, security and law and order... (More on P4)... (14)



## 'ISI, NDS Agreement Useless Exercise as War Ranges on'

KABUL - The Civil Movement for Social Justice on Thursday termed the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the spy-services of Afghanistan and Pakistan a useless exercise and warned masses might lose trust over the country's intelligence agency. Earlier, the Afghan spy agency confirmed it had signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Pakistan's Inter-Services

Intelligence or ISI to share intelligence against terrorists on their respective sides of the border. National Directorate of Security (NDS) spokesman Hasibullah Siddiqui told reporters in Kabul both the intelligence agencies would share intelligence gathering, technical information and inform each other about possible security threats under the agreement. He said a similar agreement in 2008-9... (More on P4)... (15)

## Armed Insurgents Take Control of 10 Army Posts in Uruzgan

TRINKUT - At least ten Afghan Army posts have been overrun by armed insurgents in southern Uruzgan province, local officials said Friday. According to officials, heavy clashes have been ongoing for the past week in Khas Urozgan district and as a result ten outposts have been seized by insurgents. "Around ten outposts col-



lapsed into the hands of insurgents and 40 police, with all their equipment, have joined the Taliban," a police officer... (More on P4)... (16)

## Time is Ripe for Lasting Peace in Afghanistan: JI Chief

KABUL - Following Afghan government invitation, Pakistan's Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) chief Senator Sirajul Haq said he would head his party delegation to visit Afghanistan by mid June, media reports. The Pakistani media reported Siraj as saying: "There should be people-to-people contacts. We should see the interest of Afghan people rather of one group." He was visiting Kabul

following invitation by Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. "Brotherly relations and trust is necessary between the two Muslim neighbouring countries for peace in the region," he said. However, the JI chief vowed that hurdles in the establishment of peace in Afghanistan should be removed after the withdrawal of US and NATO forces from Afghanistan. After the withdrawal of... (More on P4)... (17)

## Wary Analysts, Political Leaders Cast Shadow on NDS-ISI Agreement

KABUL - A number of high profile commentators have voiced harsh criticisms against the national unity government's recent move to have the National Directorate of Security (NDS) sign a co-operative agreement with the Pakistani intelligence service (ISI). Critics have admonished the government against placing trust in the Pakistani clandestine bureau, pointing to its long history of subversive activity in Afghanistan. In an exclusive interview with TOLONews, former U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Zal-

mai Khalilzad discussed the recent memo of understanding (MoU) between the NDS and ISI. While he said that in theory improving ties with the ISI is important for Afghanistan, in practice, Kabul should be wary about cooperating with them. "Our experience with Pakistan is that we can't trust their words," Khalilzad said on Thursday. "In all countries a gap exists between word and action. But when it comes to Pakistan, the gap is too large," he added. Recently a large number of Jihadi leaders, MPs and members of the media have raised alarm about the MoU signing, expressing deep dissatisfaction with the central government at a time when the country's... (More on P4)... (18)



Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) display weapons captured from Taliban militants and armed groups during an operation in Herat Province, western Afghanistan. (Xinhua/Sardar)