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Hizb-E-Islami Delegation to Visit US

KABUL - Mohammad Karim Amin, the chairman of Hizb-e-Islami's peace talk's delegation said on Sunday night that a delegation of party representatives will soon visit the U.S, but did not outline a timeframe.

Amin said the delegation will continue with their peace efforts and will possibly talk with U.S officials over "removing of sanctions" against their leader, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

In the meantime, Atiqullah Safi, a member of the party's peace talk's delegation said that "the trip will take place soon and a four member team of the delegation will be led by Ghairat Baheer, head of the political wing of Hizb-e-Islami."

Last week at the Brussels Summit on Afghanistan, the U.S



Secretary of State John Kerry said that the Taliban should look at the example of the deal between the Afghan government and Hekmatyar as a path to an "honorable" peace in Afghanistan.

Addressing the summit, which was aimed at raising funds for the Afghan government, Kerry said that the Taliban could not win on the battlefield.

He pointed out that the recent peace

agreement was reached with Hekmatyar, "one of the country's most notorious figures."

"This model for what might be possible ... I think the message from every person here would be to the Taliban, take note," Kerry said. The agreement signed last month states that Hekmatyar call a ceasefire, cut all ties with international militant groups, and accept the Afghan constitution, including its guarantee of rights for women and minorities.

The agreement will grant Hekmatyar amnesty for past offences and the release of certain Hizb-e-Islami prisoners. The Kabul government also agreed to press for the lifting of international sanctions on Hekmatyar. Before this, the U.S welcomed the peace agreement between the National Unity Government (NUG) and called the move a sign of strong hope for suffering Afghans. (Tolonews)

Kunduz War Sparks Blame Game as Ghani Dismisses Governor's Remarks



Ali Murad, for the crisis.

In addition, when asked about the civilian casualty toll, he said the death toll during the war in Kunduz was part of a divine order.

But on Monday, President Ashraf Ghani dismissed Omarmalai's remarks and said no official should justify their failures and inactions in this way.

"No government official has the right to justify their inactions and failures by misinterpreting a religious perception and fate," said Ghani.

Meanwhile, Murad, has said that he will soon disclose the names of those who allegedly played a role in ... (More on P4)...(6)

NDS Chief Apologizes for Taliban's Siege of Kunduz

KABUL - Chief of Afghan intelligence agency—the National Directorate of Security (NDS) - has apologized to the people of Kunduz over security forces' failure to thwart last week's Taliban attack on the city.

Mohammad Masoom Stanekzai acknowledged that retaliation by government forces was weak in the Kunduz battle.

As war in parts of Kunduz rages, the parliament's defense committee on Monday summoned key security officials including the minister of defense, minister of interior and head of the NDS to respond to questions over a dramatic surge in violence on multiple fronts across the nation. "We apologize to the people of Kunduz, I think we all must offer an apology, because we failed to do our work in a way that could help prevent the event," said Stanekzai, referring to last week's Taliban attack on Kunduz. "But now we are in the final stage of the war, today the war in Afghanistan has reached its peak," he said.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Defense Abdullah Habibi has said that insurgent groups want to create a footprint in Afghanistan. "The enemy was defeated several times, but still they are continuing their efforts and this will not be their final defeat, as well as in the future the enemy will strive to create a footprint in some districts or provinces," he said.

In addition to this, Minister of Interior Taj Mohammad Jahed said that Taliban insurgents have launched at least 150 offensives in seventeen provinces over a week including 215 military movements but that security forces foiled the majority of their plots.

Senators expressed outraged over the justifications offered by the security officials.

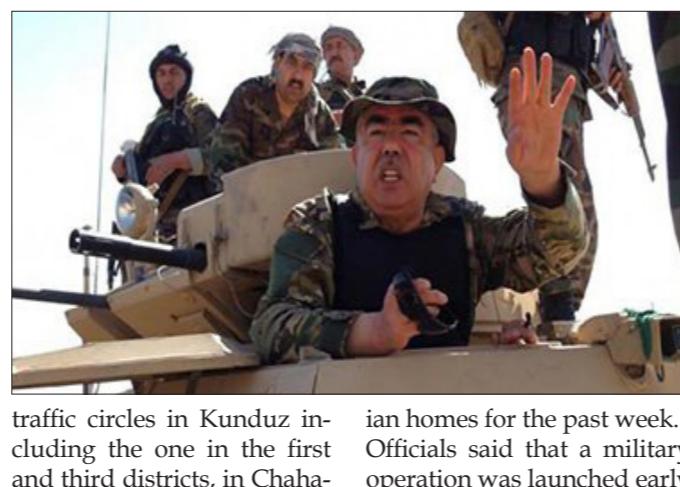
"First Allah and then it is the government forces who save provinces from the Taliban ... (More on P4)...(9)

Dostum to Lead Large-Scale Military Operation in Kunduz

KABUL - General Abdul Rashid Dostum, the first vice president, announced on Sunday night that he will lead a large-scale military operation in Kunduz to clear the province of insurgents.

According to him, he will visit the province in the next few days, along with the interior minister, Taj Mohammad Jahid, and one of the deputy National Directorate of Security (NDS) chief's.

Dostum meanwhile acknowledged that "there are issues in the leadership of the security forces in Kunduz fighting against the Taliban." However, local security officials said that the troops have cleared most areas around



traffic circles in Kunduz including the one in the first and third districts, in Chahara-e-Cinema and in Bandar-e-Kabul.

The security forces have also started house-to-house searches for insurgents who have been hiding out in civil-

ian homes for the past week. Officials said that a military operation was launched early Monday along the Kunduz-Takhar highway and in Bandar-e-Khan Abad area to clear the insurgents.

In the meantime, Afghan and foreign ... (More on P4)...(7)

Critics Urge Leaders to Step Down Amid Growing Insecurity



KABUL - MPs and some ex-government officials on Monday called on the leaders of the National Unity Government (NUG) to resign from their posts due to their "failure to address national issues" - specifically that pertaining to the recent attack by the Taliban on Kunduz city and the political rift between President Ashraf Ghani and CEO Abdullah Abdullah.

Critics hit out at government over what they claim is poor leadership in tackling issues and delivering on their commitments to the nation.

Referring to the political rift between Ghani and Abdullah, the critics said that the rift and disputes over power sharing issues have increased challenges for the country. "They (government leaders) have failed to manage international terrorism, but the expectation is that they use all their capabilities to curb violence and ensure better management of the conflict and to bring down the level of ... (More on P4)...(10)

sues, but they do not have the courage to confess to their failure; if they accept it, they must step down, therefore they want to ignore the issues," former minister of finance Anwarul Haq Ahadi said.

They accused NUG leaders of sidelining national issues amid their dispute over power sharing issues. "Factions within the government attack each other, they continue their war on (government) posts instead of going to the frontline," said former governor of Nuristan ????

"They (government leaders) have failed to manage international terrorism, but the expectation is that they use all their capabilities to curb violence and ensure better management of the conflict and to bring down the level of ... (More on P4)...(11)

He said grapes prices were lower this year due to poor market of the fruit. Last year, a kilogram of grapes was for 45 afghanis but this year price of the same quantity of the fruit declined to 40 afghanis. Seventy percent of Samangan's grapes were exported to Pakistan, he said. Mohammad linked the poor market of the fruit due to high exports of Tajikistani grapes to Pakistan.

Gardeners were also happy about the fruit yield this year but grumbled about the poor market. Mohammad Nasir, an orchard ... (More on P4)...(12)

Taliban Overrun Police Station in Lashkargah



LASHKARGAH - Taliban fighters have captured a police station in Lashkargah, the capital of southern Helmand province, a reliable source said on Monday.

One security official, who wished to go unnamed, told Pajhwok Afghan News the Taliban captured the post before noon in the limits of the 2nd police district. He said some policemen were likely killed and wounded.

Mohibullah, a resident of locality, said the insurgents had entered the provincial capital and there was fear and chaos all around.

But Omar Zwak, the governor's spokesman, rejected the claims. He said clashes were underway at the police station in Mukhtar locality but reports of security forces' defeat were false.

Meanwhile Taliban spokesman Qari Yousaf Ahmadi told Pajhwok Afghan News: "With the help of Almighty Allah, the mujahidin are about to enter Lashkargah."

The governor's house is situated six kilometres from Mukhtar locality, where heavy clashes are ongoing between the Taliban and security forces. (Pajhwok)

Taliban Retreat from Farah City after Airstrikes: Officials



KABUL - Taliban insurgents who have been in ongoing clashes with security forces in Farah city for almost a week have reportedly retreated following air strikes against them by the Afghan Air Force.

According to local officials 27 Talibas were killed in the airstrikes on Sunday.

Iqbal Bayer, a spokesman for the provincial police, said that "the insurgents came under attack from four different directions and then the air force also attacked them, killing 27".

He said one policeman was injured on Sunday night during the clash. In the meantime, Raz Mohammad Oryakhil, a military commander from 207 Zafar Military Corps believes that "Farah city will not collapse now and the insurgents retreated after the Afghan air force conducted air operations on Sunday night."

Oryakhil said more troops have arrived from Herat, Badghis and Kabul provinces and "soon a large-scale military clearance operation will be ... (More on P4)...(12)

Af-Pak Trade Resumes as Transporters End Strike

PESHAWAR - Cargo traffic across the Pak-Afghan border has resumed after three days of suspension as transporters from both countries called off their strike against the imposition of 'land tax' by the Afghan government.

Hundreds of vehicles, stranded on both sides of the border as Afghan authorities denied them entry without paying the newly imposed tax, started moving to their respective destinations at the end of fruitful negotiations on Sunday.

Afghan and Pakistani transporters ended their three-day strike after Pakistani exporters agreed to pay the new tax at the Torkham border. Representatives of transport unions said exporters were willing to pay the levy, fearing that food items could perish if trucks and containers remained stranded.

Khyber Transporters Union head Haji Azee-mullah said many vehicles were loaded with perishable commodities, which were stranded at the border on the Pakistani side for more than 72 hours. After firm guarantees from exporters to pay the tax, the transporters decided to end their strike.

Meanwhile, ... (More on P4)...(8)

Polio Cases Reach 8 in Afghanistan So Far this Year: Official



KABUL - The number of polio cases recorded in Afghanistan has risen to eight this year with a new confirmed case, the country's Public Health Ministry said on Monday.

"The investigation revealed that the case of Bermal, Paktika, was a polio case that was genetically linked to a virus from South Waziristan (Pakistan), whereas the case of Kabul was confirmed to be negative for polio," the ministry said in a statement.

"This brings the total number of polio cases to eight in Afghanistan in 2016," the statement noted.

After the detection of the fresh case in the eastern Paktika province bordering Pakistan, the ministry has launched two supplementary immunization activity (SIA) campaigns there in recent months, according to the statement.

The ministry will also launch "the National Immunization Days on Oct. 17 to deliver oral polio vaccines (OPV) house-to-house along with de-worming tablets for children under the age of five," throughout the country.

"Afghanistan remains one of the last three polio-endemic countries in the world. The Ministry of Public Health and partners continue their efforts toward polio eradication," the statement added. (Xinhua)