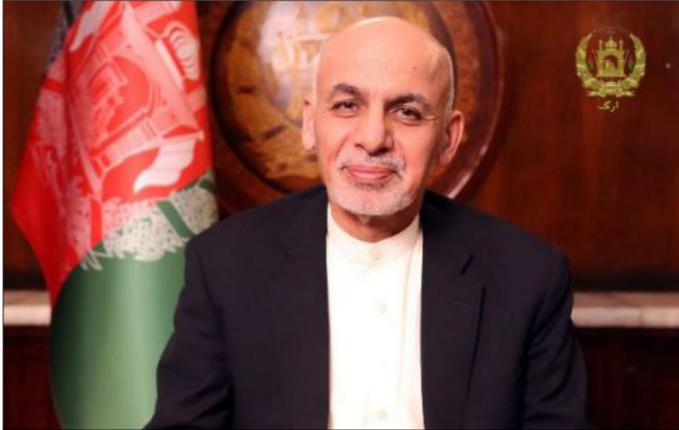


Jalalabad Clear 32°C 18°C	Ghazni Clear 19°C 5°C	Kandahar Clear 28°C 10°C	Mazar Partly Cloudy 17°C 9°C	Herat Clear 22°C 6°C	Bamayan Partly Cloudy 10°C 2°C	Kabul Clear 21°C 7°C	
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Ghani Backs Efforts for Women's Empowerment

KABUL - Government officials, including ministers, will be fired immediately if they are found involved in disrespecting women, President Ashraf Ghani has warned. Ghani issued the warning in his address to the participants of a meeting on women's leadership role in government institutions in Kabul on Thursday evening, according to a statement from the Presidential Palace. At the meeting, the UN Women chief thanked First Lady Rula Ghani for her strong belief in women's leadership and her untiring efforts for women's empowerment.



She said the word today badly needed new ways in terms of leadership. Women could play a proactive role in this regard, she remarked, saying such programmes provided them a chance to work together with women for achieving important goals. Susan Coleman, organiser of the programme, told the audience: "Working with women at the governmental level and empowering them is a matter of pride for us." The participants shared their experiences and discussed different issues facing women, opportunities and challenges, ...*(More on P4)...(10)*

Delegates Urge Normalisation of Af-Pak Relations



PESHAWAR - Participants of an informal event have urged the normalisation of Afghanistan-Pakistan relations and an immediate end to tensions between the neighbours. A declaration issued at the conclusion of the two-day-long dialogue in Lahore said: "Peace and stability is the priority of both nations. Disengagement, therefore, is not desirable." The delegates stressed high-level exchanges must be resumed to promote dialogue at all levels to create a conducive environment for removing mistrust. The call came days after Afghanistan joined India and other regional states to boycott the SAARC Summit that Islamabad was scheduled to host in November. The first meeting of the second phase of 'Beyond Boundaries', a Track 1.5/II dialogue series, was undertaken by the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) in partnership with its Afghan counterpart, Women Peace and Security Organisation (WPSO). Journalists, civil society activists, former diplomats, parliamentarians, academicians, ex-members of law enforcement agencies and scholars as part of the Pakistan-Afghanistan Joint Committee (PAJC) are part of the series. The Afghan delegation included Sayed Ishaq Gilani, Mozammil Shinwari, Wazhma Frogh, Palwasha Hassan, Ketabullah Kholwak Sapai and Elay Ershad. The workshop was chaired by Dr Rasul Baksh Rais. The declaration demanded revival of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) of Afghanistan, China, Pakistan and the US and that it should continue to encourage the Taliban to negotiate. It called terrorism a common concern, which continued to affect families on both sides of the border. An effective regulatory framework is needed to check movement of goods and people on both sides. Media played a major role in shaping relations and public perceptions, participants agreed, calling for facilitation of exchanges of media persons and formulation of a shared code of conduct. Both governments were urged to simplify visa procedures for genuine businesspeople, students and parliamentarians. "Special counters offering speedy processing should be set up in respective embassies to facilitate visas to medical tourists and disabled persons."

Afghanistan Exported 1,655 Tons of Pomegranate to Pakistan and India

KABUL - Afghanistan exported 1,655 tons of pomegranate to India and Pakistan amid an unprecedented rise in pomegranates cultivation in the country this year, local officials in Kandahar said. The head of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI) in Kandahar, Nasrullah Zahir, told RFE that the pomegranates were exported to Pakistan and India as the farmers have freshly started harvesting of the fruit in Kandahar. Zahir further added that 1,140 tons of pomegranates have been exported to Pakistan while 515 tons have been exported to India so far. According to the officials, the cultivation of pomegranates in Kandahar has increased by 43 percent this year and the authorities are looking to send the pomegranates sample to France as well. This comes as the United States Agency for International ...*(More on P4)...(11)*

US Forces Providing Air Support to Afghan Soldiers during Special Operations

KABUL - NATO's Resolute Support Mission (RS) has said that the U.S forces have participated in more than 20 percent of special operations in Afghanistan, noting that the U.S soldiers conducted at least 220 air strikes on insurgents' hideouts and safe havens this year. Talking on the impact of foreign air power in the battles, the Afghan Ministry of Defense (MoD) has said that air cooperation by the US forces to their Afghan counterparts has foiled numerous plots by insurgents to takeover some areas across the country. War against terrorism, backing, advising and training the Afghan security forces are the main duties of U.S forces in Afghanistan within the framework of NATO Resolute Support Mission (RS) in Afghanistan.



"The targeted attacks which are carried out with special concentration in fact eliminate Taliban's power pole and their strength," said Sediq Sediqqi, spokesman for the MoL. Afghan security forces have carried out more than 3,000 anti-terror and anti-Taliban operations since the start of the current year with the foreign forces participating in 20 percent of the special operations. "With the power of our security and defense forces and with the help of air power support of NATO and US forces we managed to defend our freedom, national sovereignty, territorial integrity and collapse of some areas," said Mohammad Radmanish, deputy spokesman to MOD. This comes at a time that the embattled Afghan ...*(More on P4)...(12)*

Uruzgan Rally Demands Operation against Militants

TIRINKOT - Hundreds of residents of this capital city of central Uruzgan province on Thursday staged a protest demonstration to ask the government to launch an operation against militants besieging the city. The insurgents have laid siege to Tirinkot over the past two months and intermittent clashes between security forces and the rebels take place. As a result of the clashes, thousands of families have been displaced from Tirinkot and nearby areas to secure places. Hundreds of members of the displaced families on Thursday staged a protest demonstration to press the government to launch an operation against the insurgents in order to pave the ground for their return. The protesting people said they had left their agriculture fields which were their main source of income and now they led a life full of miseries. One of the protest organizers, Malak Tawos, said clashes in Tirinkot and nearby areas had been ongoing over the past 50 days, but the government was doing nothing. He said government officials had many times promised the launch of an operation, but the promises were yet to be honoured. Malak Tawos said if the security forces lacked the ability to fight against militants, the residents should be allowed to pick up arms and fight. Muallim Abdul Raziq, another protestor, said they lived under tough conditions and the government should restore order in the city before winter. He said if the displaced families did not return to their homes at the earliest, their farm fields and orchards would dry up. He warned of public uprising if the government did not launch a massive operation against militants who had laid siege to the provincial capital. The protest comes after the governor and security officials many times announced the launch of an operation against militants. Yesterday, Governor Mohammad Nazir Kharotai told reporters that the special forces had arrived in the province and an operation would be launched soon. *(Pajhwok)*

New Operation Against Taliban Launched in Helmand



LASHKARGAH - A new major operation has been launched against insurgents in southern Helmand province, a military official said on Thursday. Maj. Gen. Wali Mohammad Ahmadzai, the 215 Maiwand Military Corps commander in Helmand, and Bost Zone police commander Brig. Gen. Mohammad Hakim Angar made the announcement at a press conference here. Gen. Ahmadzai said the operation codenamed "Qahr-i-Maiwand" was launched last night from Shnah village of Nad Ali district and 15 militants were captured alive. He said the security forces also confiscated arms, ammunition, a vehicle and two motorcycles from the detained militants. He said the spy service special unit, commando forces and police 444 unit had also conducted raids in Lashkargah's Godar, Muhajiro and 601 road areas, killing three militants. The military official said the insurgents could no longer make advance and they would be driven from areas they had captured gradually. Bost zone police commander Angar said air raids, night raids and ambushes were being carried out as part of the Operation Qahr-i-Maiwand. He said such operations had good results. He said during the past two days of the operation, the insurgents were caused heavy casualties, but provided no figure. To a question, Angar said security forces had the plan to prevent the insurgents from sneaking into Lashkargah and further advances by the rebels had been blocked. Though security officials say they have ...*(More on P4)...(13)*

Afghan Parents Urge Timely Response after Fresh Case of Polio Detected

KABUL - The discovery of the latest poliomyelitis case in a mountainous Afghan district has exacerbated concerns among war-weary parents, prompting them to demand a timely response from the government. "Afghan children are victims of war and conflicts. They are being killed or maimed by explosions and clashes. Now, we are worried that the polio outbreak will add to their miseries," Balqees, a female villager in the eastern Wardak province, told Xinhua on Wednesday. "I heard that polio is dangerous and could kill or cripple children forever. The government and international aid agencies must take immediate action," said Balqees, a mother of four, who lives in the Jalriz district of Wardak. The number of polio cases recorded in the mountainous country has risen to eight this year, with a newly confirmed case in the Barmal district of eastern Paktika province, bordering Pakistan, the Afghan Public Health Ministry said earlier this month. On Monday, the health ministry in partnership with UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) kicked off a countrywide vaccination campaign against polio. The house-to-house campaign will cover 9.5 million children under five years old, the ministry said in a statement. "The campaign runs throughout Afghanistan for four days, from Oct. 17 to 19, with a catch-up day to revisit missed children on Oct. 21," said the statement. "I hope that the sporadic fighting will not deter the current vaccination process in Jalriz. The insurgents frequently clash with security forces around villages. If there are clashes, the health workers cannot ...*(More on P4)...(14)*

60 ANA Soldiers, Pilots Attending Air Control Training



KABUL - Dozens of Afghan soldiers are attending a NATO-organised training programme aimed at bringing accuracy to airstrikes on ground targets. The training course, seeking to help reduce civilian casualties, includes approximately 60 soldiers at a military range in central Logar province, a media report said on Friday. According to the International Business Times, 100 Afghan Tactical Air Controllers are to be trained by March 2017 -- a time when mountain snow begins to melt and Taliban step up their offensive. Afghanistan had 41 aircraft capable of conducting air strikes until June, compared to the 28 it had by end-2015. With the rise in the number of air strikes, there has been an increase in civilian casualties. About 133 Afghan citizens are said to have been killed and 159 others wounded in the first nine months of 2016, going up by 72 percent from corresponding period in 2015. Under air control training programme, soldiers and pilots are practicing coordinated airstrikes, with warplanes and helicopters pounding old cars used as targets on the ground. *(Pajhwok)*

60 Militants Eliminated in Operations, Claims MoD

KABUL - Sixty armed militants were killed and 18 others caught alive during security operations in different parts of the country over the past 24 hours, the government claimed on Friday. The operations were conducted in Nangarhar, Paktika, Ghazni, Paktia, Uruzgan, Helmand, Kandahar, Ghor, Badghis, Herat, Kunduz and Baghlan provinces, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) said in a brief statement. At least five Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers were killed during the offensives, which led to the seizure of weapons, ammunition, walkie-talkies and other equipment from the militants. *(Pajhwok)*