

(1) China Says...

Wakhan Corridor linking the two countries, and could send hundreds of troops there.

The Hong Kong newspaper later updated its report to quote Afghanistan's embassy in Beijing as saying China was helping the country set up a "mountain brigade" to boost counterterrorism efforts, but that there would be "no Chinese military personnel of any kind on Afghan soil at any time".

Chinese defense ministry spokesman Wu Qian, asked about the mountain brigade at a regular monthly news briefing, said China and Afghanistan had "normal military and security cooperation".

"China and the international community are all supporting Afghanistan to strengthen its defense and counterterrorism building efforts," Wu told reporters.

"At present, both sides are in communication and coordination about the relevant matter. China is willing to continue working hard with Afghanistan to jointly protect both countries and regional security and stability," Wu said.

"As for the so-called reports on China stationing forces in Afghanistan, this does not accord with the facts," he said, without elaborating.

Reports have repeatedly pointed to China seeking a military presence in Afghanistan, although it has denied them.

In January, the defense ministry dismissed a report that it planned to build a military base in Afghanistan, and it previously refuted assertions that Chinese military vehicles were patrolling in the south Asian nation.

China has long worried that militancy in Afghanistan could spill over into its violence-prone Xinjiang region, home to the Muslim Uighur people.

In recent years, hundreds of people have been killed in the far western region in unrest China blames on Islamist militants.

China has also worked with Pakistan and the United States to broker peace talks to end Afghanistan's Taliban insurgency that has raged since the militants were ousted by U.S.-backed forces in 2001.

Last year, China opened its first overseas military base, in the Horn of Africa country of Djibouti. It has previously denied having plans for other overseas bases, but the United States expects it to build more, with Pakistan a possible location. (Reuters)

(2) AGO Says...

anyone who commits crimes," said Popal.

One analyst said endemic corruption in government departments has damaged transparency, good governance and reforms process by President Ghani's administration.

"If an employee is not cooperating with his manager, he will not dare to commit corruption," said Farooq Zamani, a political affairs analyst.

This is not the only instance of corruption in the country's customs offices. An investigation by TOLONews last year found out that a big amount of national revenue was embezzled in Nangarhar customs. The AGO later investigated the case.

In February, Transparency International's annual Corruption Perceptions Index ranks Afghanistan as the 4th most corrupt country in the world, trail-

ing only Syria, South Sudan and Somalia.

The study illustrated Afghanistan in 4th place among 180 countries in the world.

The index highlighted that the majority of countries are making little or no progress in ending corruption, "while further analysis shows journalists and activists in corrupt countries risking their lives every day in an effort to speak out".

The index, which ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and businesspeople, uses a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean.

This year, the index found that more than two-thirds of countries score below 50, with an average score of 43.

This year, New Zealand and Denmark rank highest with scores of 89 and 88 respectively.

Syria, South Sudan and Somalia rank lowest with scores of 14, 12 and 9 respectively.

Afghanistan has a score of only 15, while Yemen and Sudan have a score of 16 and Libya 17. (Tolo news)

(3) Pentagon Sees...

through force, through a political process," he said.

"Secretary Pompeo looks forward to travel to New Delhi with Secretary Mattis for the inaugural India 2+2 ministerial dialogue which takes place starting on September 6th. Their Indian counterparts, external affairs minister (Sushma) Swaraj and Defense Minister (Nirmala) Sitharaman, will discuss enhancing our engagement with India on critical diplomatic and security priorities. The dialogue is an indication of the deepening strategic partnership between our two countries," said Heather Nauert, a spokesperson for US Defense Department. (Tolo news)

(4) Identities of...

violations detained and prosecuted them.

Currently 42 cases of violations were being processed at the Attorney General Office, Muhtat added.

Lt. Gen. Abdul Jabbar Purdil, deputy interior minister who attended the conference, said so far 13 people involved in ID cards forgery had been detained in Kabul, Kandahar and Khost provinces.

He said police would not allow the enemies to sabotage the national process of ID cards and elections.

Also present on the occasion was Abdul Baday Sayyad, the Independent Election Commission (IEC) chief, who expressed his concern about forgery in ID cards distribution.

He said people's concerns about fake ID cards should not be ignored as there was high possibility of forgery in the distribution process.

"We have tasked hundreds of employees with entering information of voters into the database and identifying who took two ID cards or committed fraud," he added.

However, the PRD head said he had asked the president to task a delegation of experts and auditors with giving a second look to the ID cards distribution process and identifying challenges the process faced. (Pajhwok)

(5) India Pledges...

committed continuing partnership with the people and government of Afghanistan in their areas of priority for socio-economic development and peace

and stability of the country. (Pajhwok)

(6) Williamson in...

He said his country was ready to help equip the Afghan forces with advanced medical facilities. NSA Mohib, who received Williamson, said the Kabul administration was committed to bringing peace and stability to the country in order to save the coming generations from inheriting the conflict.

He said every possible way and opportunity would be availed for ending the war and bloodshed in the country.

Mohib briefly shared the Afghan government's programs about strengthening the abilities of the Afghan security forces and the air force. (Pajhwok)

(7) IEC Says Early...

said the photos are installed on street banners to wish a happy Eid or Independence Day, but the slogans on them indicate that candidates are campaigning for elections.

"This is a type of campaign for gaining people's votes. In general, we can say it is deceiving the people," said Ehsanullah, a Kabul resident.

"The pictures and posters have been installed around the city and are apparently for Eid and contain national unity slogans, but in fact they are all for campaigning," said Ali Iqbal, a Kabul resident.

Based on elections timeline, the parliamentary elections' campaigns will start on September 28 and will continue for 20 days. The campaigns will slow down on 18th and 19th of October and elections will be held on October 20. (Tolo news)

(8) Visa Applicants...

Pakistan visa so they would be able to get visas in an organized manner," he said.

Pakistani consulate general officials had promised handing over the visa issuance process to a private company, but they did not materialize the pledge despite being provided required facilities, said the governor, who added efforts were underlay to get privatized the visa issue process as soon as possible.

To a question, Hayat said security officials at the consulate general had been changed more than 10 times in the last few months in order to discourage corruption.

"We will watch the management in this process until it is handed over to a private company, we see many problems here and a large amount of money is pocketed, we receive many complaints in this regard every day," Hayat added.

Visa applicants thanked the governor for his efforts but stressed continued oversight of the visa issuance process.

They said women, children, elders and patients faced hardships while trying to obtain Pakistan visa but the new measures taken by the governor would resolve the issues to some extent. Ghulam Rahman, a visa applicant from Kunar province, said that officials often made promises to earn fame.

He said such temporary management measures would be forgotten after some days and disorganization would take over again. (Pajhwok)

(9) Govt Wants to...

of agriculture and irrigation, we have supplied over 56,217 tons of wheat to 20 provinces in the country, delivery has started to up to 120,000 families," said

Haseebullah Shaikhani, head of the public relations department of the ministry of national disaster management.

"Until now Kazakhstan has not officially certified the issue. The objective of the Afghan delegation under the leadership of the minister of agriculture and irrigation and head of the wheat processing factories union to convince the Tajik officials on the issue," said Mohammad Shaiber Bashiri, head of the industrial council.

Based on statistics, Afghanistan currently has nine storage facilities in nine provinces.

Afghanistan needs six million tons of wheat annually and of this, 4.5 million tons comes from domestic sources and another 1.5 million from abroad.

According to MAIL, Afghanistan's current storage capacity for cereal is estimated to be 270,000 tons. However, MAIL officials have said government would like the private sector to invest in the establishment of such facilities - especially for wheat. (Tolo news)

(10) 11 Killed...

of Security or NDS forces raid. More details about the incident would be shared with the media, pending an ongoing investigation, the gubernatorial spokesman said.

A security official in the Khogyani district told Pajhwok Afghan News on the condition of anonymity that a clash broke out after security forces destroyed the house of Rafiullah with landmines.

In the clash, he said, Rafiullah and 10 others were killed. Eight people were killed inside the house of Rafiullah and two inside a neighbor's and a third house.

The security official said there were no children, women or foreigners among the dead.

A family member of the slain Taliban group leader, wishing not to be named, confirmed his eight family members, including Rafiullah and his deputy, were killed in the attack.

Taliban's spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said Afghan and US forces had broken the gates of several homes in the Bar Bahar area during the last night operation. He claimed nine civilians were killed and several others arrested during the operation. Besides Taliban militants civilians have also suffered casualties in previous such night time operations in Nangarhar, prompting local residents and their representatives to demand an end to the raids. (Pajhwok)

(11) Samangan...

include Sitarbai, Khairuddin, Shokorbai, Qambari, Marwaji, Sandoqi, Kaghazi and Sangak. He claimed 60 per cent of Samangan's almonds are exported to India, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). (Pajhwok)

(12) Up To 10,000 Afghans...

recent weeks.

"When the currency loses its value, refugees cannot afford their daily expenses there therefore they decide to return to Afghanistan," said Islamuddin Jurat, head of Communication and Public Relations Department of MoRR.

An Afghan refugee who has returned from Iran last month said the money a refugee gains from working in Iran is only enough for his living costs and that he cannot save the money for his family.

Shahida Durani said he was working in Tehran but was not

earning enough money due to the fall of Iranian Rial against US dollar.

"Six months ago, we would work from 16,000 to 17,000 AFs in a month. But now one million Iranian Toman is equal to 7,000 AFs which is not enough," said Durani.

Durani, 28, said two years ago he spent lots of money to reach Iran through illegal routes, but this year he had no option but to leave as he could not make savings there.

IOM statistics show that 514,405 Afghans returned home from Iran and Pakistan from January 1 to August 25 of which 492,343 of them returned home from Iran.

Statistics show that Iran still hosts 2.14 million Afghan refugees. (Tolo news)

(13) Drought...

grip of drought.

Kandahar governor Zalmai Wesa also said drought remained a serious problem and the government and the public had joint responsibility to deal with it.

He said he was trying to encourage the government and donor organizations to build water dams in the province for increasing ground water level.

Kandahar agriculture director, Hafizullah Sayedi, said the groundwater level had lowered from 180 to 200 meters in the province.

"The main reason behind this problem is digging of arbitrary deep wells by people," he said.

Storing rainwater, building green belts and protecting jungles can help increase the groundwater level, he concluded. (Pajhwok)

Iran Will Remain Powerful Regional Actor despite US Demonization: FM Zarif

TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says the Islamic Republic will continue to play a "stable and powerful" act in the region despite US demonization of the Iran.

The Iranian foreign minister on Friday took to his official Twitter account to respond to earlier remarks by President of the United States Donald Trump who claimed that the government in Iran may collapse because of his administration's policies.

"Bipolar demonization of Iran as either 'taking over MidEast' or 'fighting for survival' indicates US cognitive disorder & demagoguery unleashed by collapse of America's moral compass," Zarif said.

He added, "Iran has been and always will be a stable, powerful & responsible regional actor."

In an Oval Office interview with Bloomberg News on Thursday, Trump claimed that his administration's policies, including leaving the international nuclear agreement with Tehran, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) negotiated by his predecessor, may lead to the collapse of the Iranian government.

"When I came into here, it was a question of when would they take over the Middle East," Trump said and added, "Now it's a question of will they survive. It's a big difference in one and a half years."

Trump withdrew Washington in May from the landmark Iran nuclear agreement, reached between Iran and the P5+1 group of countries in 2015, and decided to re-impose unilateral sanctions against Tehran.

Under the deal, Iran undertook to put limits on its nuclear program in exchange for the removal of nuclear-related sanctions. (Press TV)