Helmand Police Strength Reduced By 800 Personnel

KABUL - Some 800 policemen have been dethroned from the police force in southern Helmand province, leaving the force unable to capture areas lost to militants, the police chief complained on Saturday.

Brig. Gen. Abdul Rahman Sarjang told reporters here that the Ministry of Interior in the past two months had reduced by 800 personnel the police and had cut the number of police guarding different government entities in Nawa, Dolo and Baghlan districts.

He said the police staff not have been reduced because police were fighting against insurgents in the frontline. He said the reduction came in response to allegation that ‘ghost police’ existed in Helmand. He said the available number of police force was enough to maintain security, but not enough to recapture areas lost to insurgents. He said they needed enough police and equipment to recapture the lost areas from militants. Sarjang said security issues, poppy cultivation and drug trafficking and the presence of natural resources needed security in Helmand. However, Ministry of Interior spokesman Saqib Sadqi said they had not reduced the number of police in Helmand, but 600 policemen had been shifted to the public order police force in the previous. Sarjang said the security forces had launched search operations in Khoshmab and Sangin districts and were planning to conduct operations in Marj in near future. There are currently 7,000 policemen in Helmand province maintaining security while Dashu, Baghlan, Niazabad and Mais Kala district are with Taliban. (Pajhwok)

Hashish Addiction a Growing Problem among the Youth

KABUL - Psychologists, who warned that addiction to hashish among the Afghan youth is fast growing problem. Hazrat government on Friday for not taking action against drug dealers. They said that the trend could bring the health and the future of the younger generation who are the country’s biggest national asset. They called on all relevant government institutions to help create jobs for them and to address their issues. They also warned that there are certain social and economic issues which have led to the rise in addiction to hashish among the youth. Psychologists have said that poverty, inflation and the lack of healthy entertainment and activities have been reasons for this spike. But they also attribute it to the fact that it is easily available. Poverty, anxiety, trusting at home and joblessness are main reasons that the youth go toward addiction," a Kabul resident Niazuddin Hashemi said. He said students from Saudi Arabia and other countries took part in the addiction competition held at one of Jeddah’s seminars. He said his son Javed Hashemi stood first among hundreds of competitors. (Pajhwok)

TAPI Shareholders Sign Agreement to Kick Start Construction

KABUL - Shareholders of TAPI Pipeline Company Limited (TAPC) have signed an Investment Agreement at a ceremony attended by petroleum ministers and senior government officials from Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Pakistan and India, as well as senior Asian Development Bank (ADB) officials. According to a press release issued by ADB, the agreement will pave the way for the delivery of a long-term supply of natural gas, supporting Afghanistan’s energy needs and helping it rebuild its links with neighboring “Silk Road” countries.

The Investment Agreement provides an initial budget of over $20 million USD to fund the next phase of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) natural gas pipeline. This includes funding for detailed engineering and route surveys, environmental and social safeguard studies, and procurement and financing activities, to enable a financial investment decision, after which construction will begin. It is estimated that construction will take up to three years. "Once completed, the TAPI pipeline..." (More on P4:10)

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Several Kapisa Police Officials Detained Over Corruption

MAHMUD RAQJ - Several police officials have been detained on corruption charges in central Kapisa province, officials said on Saturday. A Ministry of Interior delegation has been in Kapisa for last one week investigating corruption related cases, the provincial council head, Hazain Samji, told Pajhwok Afghan News. As a result of the investigation, some officials have been detained on charges. (More on P4:07)