Obama Can Do Iran Nuclear Deal Even if Congress Disapproves

WASHINGTON - The September vote on the Iran deal that is billed as a titanic standoff between President Barack Obama and Congress. Yet even if U.S. lawmakers reject the agreement, it’s not game over for the White House.

A congressional vote of disapproval would not prevent Obama from acting on his own to start the process of implementing the agreement. While he probably would take some heavy criticism, this course would let him add the foreign policy breakthrough to his second-term list of accomplishments. Obama doesn’t need a congressional OK to give Iran most of the billions of dollars in relief from economic sanctions that it would get under the agreement, as long as Tehran follows its commitments to curb its nuclear program. “A resolution to approve the Iran agreement may have substantial political reverberations, but limited practical impact,” says Robert Stobb of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. “It would not override President Obama’s authority to enter into the agreement.” [AP]

3-Day Countrywide Polio Eradication Drive Launched

KABUL - The Public Works Minister on Saturday said more than 10,000 kilometres of roads had been reconstructed across the country at a cost of $6 billion, but the President’s Special Representative for reforms and good governance said Afghanistan still lacked proper road networks.

Speaking at a national conference on local transport, Public Works Minister Malalai Ralph said all the 10,000 kilometres roads had been asphalted with the help of the international community. He said the government had prioritised building roads and railway lines because transport played a key role in a country’s economic development. He however, said such projects needed enormous financial resources and time.

Alam Hazrati, President Ashraf Ghani’s special assistant, said “Media is one of the basic and effective tools in creating awareness and changing mindsets.” [More on P4, 6]

Union Stops Import of Pakistan Medicine

KABUL - The Medicine Importing Companies Union - a private sector union on Sunday announced that its affiliated companies will not import pharmaceutical products from Pakistan in protest over the count-intradays of exports for which Pakistan has been banned. The decision was reportedly immediately backed by the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACC). Members of the Medicine Importing Companies, (MCI) said “On which the ban is imposed, I have been produced, hence I cannot be imported.” [More on P4, 6]

Rula Underlines Media Role Against Drug Addiction

KABUL - First Lady Rula Ghani on Saturday underlined the need that the government and media should join hands to create awareness against drug addiction.

Rula Ghani asserted that media should be utilised about adverse effects of drug abuse through media. “Media play important role in all aspects of life. Media should introduce television plays, discussions and several others to join hands against drug addiction.” [More on P4, 6]

10,000 Km of Roads Asphalated Countrywide

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Iran’s Oil Products Export to Afghanistan to Rise: Official

TEHRAN - Director of National Oil Products Distribution Company of Iran’s Khorasan region said that increasing oil products export to neighboring countries, including Afghanistan, is an agreement between the two states. Official of Iran’s oil products export to Afghanistan said that Iran would increase exports to Afghanistan. He added that Pakistan had imposed an embargo on exports to Afghanistan. [More on P4, 6]

3-Fold Increase in Number of Returnees

KABUL - The Refugees and Repatriation Minister on Sunday said the number of Afghan families returning from Iran and Pakistan witnessed a three-fold increase during the first six months of the year. Syed Hussain Alami Alhass said that in the first six months of the year, 400,000 refugees had returned from Iran and Pakistan, and the number was expected to rise by 50% by the year-end. The minister said that 70% of the families returned from Iran. They included around 30,000 refugees who had been living illegally in the country. [More on P4, 6]

Smooth Power Supply to Develop Industries: AISA

KABUL - Afghanistan Investment Support Agency (AISA) documented the government’s recent unsecured power supply to the vital industrial sector, which would go a long way to ensure progress and prosperity in the country. Currently 17 industrial parks are active throughout the country. AISA said 2,000 factories were available in the country, but most of them did not get enough electricity that caused them less productivity. [More on P4, 6]

Alami Balkhi

Survey: Ghani’s Popularity Continues to Slide

KABUL - The findings of the fourth survey in a series conducted by ATR Consulting and TOLCnews shows Afghan President Ashraf Ghani’s popularity has further dipped, illustrating a decrease of 5.7 percent as compared to results published in May.

According to the findings released on Sunday, slightly less than 20 percent of the entire population of Afghanistan is “very satisfied” with the performance of Ghani since he assumed office last year in September – this down from 25 percent in May.

Approximately one person out of five – or 22.8 percent – are “moderately satisfied” with Ghani’s performance, the report said.

But the largest percentage of the population – 51.3 percent – is “not satisfied at all” with the government of Ghani – that came into power after a disputed election with rival Abdullah Abdullah. [More on P4, 6]

British Special Forces Back in Afghanistan

KARUL - The British Special Forces have been returned to Afghanistan and reportedly took part in military operations against Taliban and other militant groups.

According to a British media organization, these forces to Afghanistan, special forces from the United States are taking part in military operations almost every night. The Mirror quoted unnamed defense officials on Sunday who said the British forces from the Middle East had been re-deployed to Afghanistan, and the special forces from the United States had been re-deployed to Afghanistan as well.

Insecurity Bars PCs from Monitoring Projects

KARUL - Provincial council members say that growing insecurity have prevented them to evaluate and observe provincial implementation of projects and local government.

The WSNJ and the US government have also been forced to halt provincial council from training local councils in 2014 elections program.

Most of the provincial councils have closed their offices to protect the safety of employees. However, the councils have organized meetings with the provincial council members to discuss the current situation. [More on P4, 6]

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