No Unilateral Action Against Pakistan: Gen. Votel

PESHAWAR - After days of testy exchanges between Washington and Islamabad, the US Central Command (Centcom) chief has ruled out unilateral action against terrorists on Pakistan’s soil. Centcom Commander Gen Joseph Votel, assuring Pakistan’s concerns, held out the assurance to Chief of Army Staff Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa during a telephone conversation last week, the army’s media wing said on Friday. A statement from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) released the details of Gen Bajwa’s recent contacts with the US leaders. The army chief was contacted by Votel and an unnamed US senator. The contacts were apparently aimed at defusing tensions sparked by President Donald Trump’s New Year Day tweet, accusing Pakistan of deceiving the US in return for massive assistance. Last week, the State Department announced suspending nearly all security assistance to Pakistan for its failure to crack down on terrorist groups blamed for attacking US and Afghan forces. Gen Bajwa, according to the ISPR statement, told the Centcom chief that Pakistan would press on with counterterrorism operations without financial support from the Trump administration. Gen. Votel conveyed Bajwa three concrete messages: The problems in relations were temporary; there would be no unilateral action against Pakistan and the US did not want a disruption in ties. The... (More on P4)

President Ghani Appoints Hashimi as IEC Commissioner

President Ashraf Ghani on Saturday appointed Syed Hafizullah Hashimi as a new Independent Election Commission (IEC) member, an official said.

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KABUL - A statement from the Presidential Palace received by Pajhwok Afghan News said that the president interviewed three members-designate for the IEC introduced by the selection committee two days ago. The source said Second Vice-President Sarwar Danish, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, Chief Justice Sayed Yousuf Halim and Attorney General Mohammad Farid Hamidi were present during the interview. After the interview and assessment of the candidates’ documents, the... (More on P4).

Interior Minister Vows More Reforms, Anti-Corruption Efforts

KABUL - The Ministry of Interior continues its efforts to overcome corruption and bring more reforms to the security agency, Interior Minister Wais Ahmad Barmak said. He addressed an event titled ‘The Guidance Conference for Civilian Deputies of Provincial Police Commanders’ where he said that afterwards he would not accept any personal recommendation by employees of the ministry to promote them or increase their privileges. The... (More on P4).

Central Bank Calls on People to Limit Use of Foreign Currencies

KABUL - The state-owned Central Bank of Afghanistan says the fluctuation of Afghani against foreign currencies is out of control therefore the bank will not be accountable to those who suffer losses from the exchange of Iranian and Pakistani currencies in Afghan markets. The bank called on the people to limit the use of foreign currencies. (More on P4).

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