14 Militants Killed, 20 Lay down Arms Amid Afghan Forces Mounting Pressure on IS Outfit

KABUL - Up to 14 militants affiliated with the Islamic State (IS) outfit have been killed in Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province and 20 others have given up fighting and handed over their weapons to police in the northern Jawzjan province over the past 24 hours, officials said Friday.

Afghan forces have stepped up operations against IS militants' hideouts as government forces from ground and air targeted the hardliner group's positions in the eastern Nangarhar province since Thursday, killing over a dozen fighters, spokesman for provincial government Attaullah Khegja said.

According to Khegja, 14 fighters of the Islamic State group have been killed in Haska Mina, Ghani Khil, Nanzad and Achin districts over the past 24 hours. During the operations which also involved airstrikes, several more IS fighters have been injured, the official added.

Confirming the operations, the National Army Corps in the eastern region, in a statement released Friday, said that a weapon cache of IS outfit had also been destroyed during the ongoing operations. IS outfit has yet to make comment on the report.

Same day, the ongoing crackdown on IS militants and fighting with the rival Taliban group in the northern Jawzjan province has forced 20 fighters to give up fighting. (More on P4,1)

KABUL - A thousand US soldiers will be deployed to Afghanistan later this year to join the two brigades from Fort Carson that are already in the war-torn country, says the Department of Defense.

The Pentagon announced on Thursday the 4th Infantry Division headquarters would replace troops from the 101st Airborne Division at Bagram Airfield in central Parwan province.

In a statement, reported by the Military Times, the Fort Carson head said: “The 4th Infantry Division has a legacy of answering the nation’s call and serving with distinction for more than 100 years.”

Maj. Gen. Randy George, ...(More on P4)...(2)

AFGHANISTAN - Activists, journalists, musicians and artists from Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Pakistan participated in a one-day festival for peace to bring their ideas together strengthening ties between the three nations.

Musicians and artists from the three countries performed at the event. Meanwhile, handicrafts from Afghanistan and Tajikistan were displayed at the festival.

Ten representatives from Tajikistan, seven from Pakistan and 20 from Afghanistan attended the festival.

“The number of youths in Afghanistan and Pakistan is high. ...(More on P4)...(3)

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“...(More on P4)...(1)

BAMABAD - “Afghanistan has suffered a lot in the war on terror and before that in the jihad. Peace in Afghanistan means peace in Pakistan,” he said in a televised address to the nation.

In order to boost bilateral cooperation, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman said he envisioned open borders with Afghanistan like those in the European Union.

His government would work to bring peace to Afghanistan, the cricketer-turned politician promised. “I want both our countries to have open borders like countries in European Union have.”

He also vowed to strengthen ties with Saudi Arabia, Iran and China. Pakistan and India needed to sit across the negotiating table to address bilateral issues, he added.

“No other country needs peace like we do. We will strengthen our relations with China; they have given us a chance by investing in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor,” he remarked. (Pajhwok)

IMRAN KHAN Envisioned Open Borders with Afghanistan

Flushed with success after sweeping the general election, Imran Khan has linked peace in Afghanistan to stability in Pakistan.

“...(More on P4)...(4)