China Says it is Helping Afghanistan with Defense, Counterterrorism

China’s defense ministry said on Thursday that it was supporting Afghanistan’s defense and counterterrorism efforts, a day after Beijing denied a plan to build a base in Afghanistan and to send Chinese forces to the war-torn country.

KABUL - The (arrested) official has confessed his crime and his case is at the customs protection unit. The AGO spokesman Jamshid Rasuli said one member of customs’ protection unit in Farah province was arrested while taking bribe from another member. He said the customs official was arrested on charges of taking $3000 as bribe from another officer of the unit to allow him to remain in his position. “The (arrested) official has confessed his crime and his case is completed at the AGO and soon will be sent to court,” said Rasuli.

The customs protection unit protects and maintains the safety of customs offices across the country. Assad Rashid Popal, General Director of Customs, meanwhile said there is corruption in customs offices. He said the arrested individual should be investigated and that he should be punished if he was found guilty.

The legal and judicial centers will take action based on the law against... (more on Page 58).

India Pledges Support for Children Suffering from Heart Diseases

KABUL - India has assured to continue financial assistance for the treatment of Afghan children suffering from Congenital Heart Disease, a statement from the Indian embassy in Kabul said on Thursday.

India has been providing annual financial assistance of one million dollars since 2015-16 to the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS).

The third installment of USD one million was disbursed to ARCS in August 2017. With this assistance, from August 2017 to July 2018, a total of 467 Afghan children, covering ages from as young as 6 months to 15 years have been treated at Artemis, Fortis, Max Hospital and hospitals associated with SRF Technologies in Delhi, India.

This assistance would continue for a further period of two years. It is hoped that many more needy Afghan children and their families would benefit from this assistance. India takes pride in being able to contribute towards the good health and well-being of Afghan children and people of Afghanistan. India remained... (more on Page 60).

Pentagon Sees Signs of Improvement with Taliban

KABUL - A senior official of the US Defense Department has said that signs of improvement have been seen in talks with the Taliban as he addressed a debate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Randall Schriver, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs, said at the debate that Taliban can be part of a stable political future.

He said one of the main points of the talks between the US and India defense secretaries would be ways to find a solution for the Afghanistan crisis.

“We are seeing some signs that a political process is moving. President (Ashraf) Ghani is pursuing another move and we will see if there is a way they are going to step up to that,” he said.

The Pentagon official said Washington is assessing its pressure on Pakistan.

“There is no question we need Pakistan’s help in encouraging, persuading and presenting the Taliban to come to the negotiating table, deal with the national unity government under President Ghani and talk about where they are included but not fully...” (more on Page 68).

AGO Says Corruption Still Endemic in Customs

KABUL - AGO said they have arrested a member of customs protection unit while taking $3000 as bribe from another officer of the Attorney General’s Office (AGO) on Friday said the level of corruption in the country’s customs offices and other relevant departments is still high. The office said the problem needs to addressed.

The AGO spokesman Jamshid Rasuli said one member of customs’ protection unit in Farah province was arrested while taking bribe from another member. He said the customs official was arrested on charges of taking $3000 as bribe from another officer of the unit to allow him to remain in his position. “The (arrested) official has confessed his crime and his case is completed at the AGO and soon will be sent to court,” said Rasuli.

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Afghanistan Plans to Send First Cargo to Europe Via Azerbaijan

Baku - Afghanistan plans to send the first cargo to Europe via Azerbaijan in the near future. Afghanistan media reported.

As noted, the goods will be sent through the Lapis Lazuli route, which runs through Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey and passes on to Europe. The goods will be delivered by road, rail, and maritime transport.

Afghanistan plans to supply coveted, sodium, medicinal plants and other goods. Abdul Qadir Baluch, CEO of Afghan-Turkmenistan International Chamber of Commerce, said that trade via Lapis Lazuli is safer and cheaper in comparison, and further with the Georgia part of Turkmenistan.

The corridor will extend to Baku, going further through Tbilisi to Ashkhabad with branches leading to Peshawar and Kabul in Afghanistan, and go ahead from Ashkhabad to Turkmenistan.

The budget of the project is at $2 billion. This large-scale project aims to boost both countries’ economies by increasing trade.

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