

Kabul to Facilitate Returning Refugees: UNHCR

PESHAWAR - The Afghan government, despite the security challenge, has assured the United Nations of full support to resolve the issues of Afghan refugees returning home. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)'s Assistant High Commissioner for Protection Volker Turk said on Thursday donor agencies and states had also pledged to assist Kabul in enforcing its National Development Programme. Speaking to reporters at the UNHCR Voluntary Repatriation Centre in Peshawar, Volker Turk said the Afghan government was facing challenges, including the poor law and order



situation. "However, it has agreed to accommodate people returning from other countries." Earlier, refugee elders presented the UN official a list of complaints and issues they are facing in Pakistan and Afghanistan. They complained of a cut in the travel expenditure. Most of Proof of Registration (PoR) cards of refugees in Pakistan had expired, they grumbled, accusing the police of harassing them. Since April 25, UNHCR has facilitated 160 families, 665 individuals, to repatriate to Afghanistan. Overall 2,579 families -- 10,999 individuals -- were facilitated to return home from Pakistan. (Pajhwok)

4 Rebels Killed as Uruzgan Offensive Continues

TRINIKOT - More than 80 Taliban militants have been killed and 29 others wounded during five days of an ongoing clearing operation codenamed 'Khalid' in central Uruzgan province, officials said on Saturday. Maj. Gen Abdul Qayyum Baqi Zoe, 404th police zone commander, told a press conference here that many areas had been recaptured from the Taliban as a result of the operation. Overall 84 insurgents and one security personnel were killed and 12 security men wounded in the offensive. Uruzgan police chief Brig. Gen. Ghulam Farooq Sangari said Operation Khalid was ongoing successfully and the Taliban would not be able to gain control of any area in Uruzgan. The Taliban have not commented about the operation as yet. (Pajhwok)

Noted Persian Poet Afif Bakhtari Passes Away

KABUL - Famous Persian poet, writer and journalist Assadullah Afif Bakhtari has passed away in northern Balkh province. Bakhtari has died in Abu Ali Sena-i-Balkhi Hospital in Mazar-i-Sharif after protracted illness on Friday night and his funeral would be offered at the Rawza-i-Mobark Mosque. Born in Balkh province, he received his early education in his hometown and higher education from the Faculty of Agriculture in Kabul University. He penned five major poetry volumes -- Sang-O-Sitar, Awazha-i-Khakestari, Man Ba Zabani Darya, Man Ba Kabul, Ba Yak Pyala Chai Chatoori, Azizi Man and Sad Ghazal. (Pajhwok)

Taliban Group Leader Slain in Takhar Clash

KABUL - A Taliban group leader has been killed in a clash with Afghan security forces in northeastern Takhar province, police said on Saturday. A statement issued by the northern zone police headquarters in Pajhwok Afghan News identified the slain Taliban commander as Mullah Muhammad Gul aka Gul Khan, who spearheaded a 20-member rebel group. Takhar police chief Brig. Gen. Faqir Mohammad Jawzjani the commander was killed in a gun-battle with security forces in Charasi village of Khwaja Bahauddin district. He said the Taliban after sustaining heavy losses in Khwaja Bahauddin district were on the run. Security officials said the operation against militants was ongoing and would continue until all areas of the province were cleared of Taliban militants. (Pajhwok)

Fighting Forces Closure of Baghlan-Kunduz Highway



PUL-I-KHUMRI - The Baghlan-Kunduz highway has been closed as a result of a clash between Taliban and security forces, an official said on Saturday. Abdul Qayyum Niazi, acting governor of Baghlan, told Pajhwok Afghan News the rebels attacked Baghlan-i-Markazi district, but the security forces expelled them from the area. The bodies of some militants were still lying at the site, he said, blaming the insurgents for targeting vehicles. Due to heavy fire, the highway had been closed, he added. Mohammad Rauf, an inhabitant of the locality, said the Taliban stormed security check-post in Chapa Siah area. One policeman was killed in the gunbattle that is still ongoing. Zabihullah Mujahid, Taliban's spokesman, said the fighters had launched their summer offensive codenamed (Mansouri) in Baghlan province. One security check-post had been captured by Taliban, he added Mujahid claimed two security personnel were killed and two others wounded. (Pajhwok)

MoD Backtracks on Katawazai Prosecution Announcement

KABUL - the deputy spokesman for the Ministry of Defense (MoD), Mohammad Radmanesh, announced that General Mohammad Katawazai, the former commander of the Afghan National Army's 209 Shaheen Military Corps in Balkh province will be prosecuted for negligence over last week's attack, but on Friday MoD officials said Thursday's announcement had been a mistake. "My deputy made a mistake. Once the investigations are finalized by the task-team, he will be introduced to the judicial centers," Dawlat Waziri, MoD spokesman said. On Thursday Radmanesh said Katawazai will be prosecuted



after failing to prevent the deadly attack last Friday on the army base, which ended in a bloodbath. "In the first move, the military corps commander was dismissed and introduced to the judicial institutions," Radmanesh said at the time. Parliament Members (MPs) sharply criticized this development by the defense ministry officials and said government is not honest in prosecuting those who are ... (More on P4)...(15)

IS Kills Senior Afghan Taliban Official in Pakistan: Militants

KABUL - Islamic State killed a senior Afghan Taliban official in the northwestern Pakistani city of Peshawar, the Afghan militants said on Saturday, in a rare clash between the rival Islamist groups inside Pakistan. Afghan Taliban sources told Reuters Maulvi Daud was killed on the outskirts of Peshawar with two other men on Thursday. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid confirmed Daud's death. The Islamic State on Friday claimed responsibility for "assassination of a Taliban leader" a day earlier, without naming him, through the group's affiliated news agency AMAQ. The Islamic State, which at one point controlled huge chunks of territory across Syria and Iraq, has made some inroads into Afghanistan but the group has met tough resistance from the Taliban as well as U.S. and Afghan special forces. Afghan Taliban sources said Daud was based in Afghanistan's Logar province but would frequently visit Pakistan. Islamic State does not control any territory inside Pakistan but the group has claimed responsibility for several large-scale bomb attacks. Pakistani officials say the Islamic State does not have a presence inside the country. (Reuters)



Dozens of Cyclists Complete Kabul to Parwan Road Race

KABUL - About 70 cyclists on Saturday successfully completed a 70km cycle race from Kabul to Parwan province. The race, known as the Arghawan Cup, saw Rohullah Nazari from Kabul scoop first place while Ali Asghar Jafari and Ali Akbar Jafari were second and third respectively.

In addition to the road race, a mountain bike race was also held. Mohammad Murtaza from Kabul came first in this event. Cyclists from a number of provinces including Bamiyan, Balkh, Khost, Nangarhar, Kabul and Wardak provinces participated. "The competition is good for building the capacity

of cyclists," said Zabihullah Qahar, a cyclist from Kabul. "I hope that I can represent my province in this competition and I want to be part of the national cycling team in future," said Rahman Fitrat, a cyclist from Balkh. The race was organized by the National Olympics Committee. (Tolonews)

Outlook Horoscope

Aries (Mar. 22-Apr.20)

You Rams are known for your directness, yet today you could easily outdo yourself. Messenger Mercury's direct turn in your 9th House of Big Ideas would normally be enough on its own to have you spontaneously spouting your thoughts, whether they are valid or not. However, several cosmic factors are also encouraging you to express your feelings even if you know you are likely to push someone's buttons.

Taurus (Apr.21-May 20)

Your friends may confront you with an issue that was recently swept under the rug. However, it's like someone opens Pandora's Box when communicator Mercury shifts into forward gear today, accentuating your 8th House of Deep Sharing. Although you might feel uncomfortable with the topic of discussion at first, accepting the inevitable can actually feel liberating.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)

If it seems like you have reached the end of your rope, take a few deep breaths and prepare yourself for a pleasant surprise. Everything is about to change once your key planet Mercury completes its retrograde period in your 7th House of Partnerships. However, you may need to take responsibility for your feelings before you see the tension in a relationship begin to dissipate. Standing up to someone who is holding you back shifts the dynamics and puts you in control of your destiny.

Cancer (June 21-July 20)

Interpersonal dynamics have been quite complicated lately, making you wonder whether or not the stress is truly worth it. Thankfully, the cosmos gives you the green light today, informing you that things are about to improve if you're willing to do the work. Cerebral Mercury resumes its forward movement in your 6th House of Habits, reminding you that the planning period is over and it's time to make your move.

Leo (July 21-Aug. 21)

Although it may take a while to get going today, there's no stopping you once you do. Mercury's direct turn in your 5th House of Self-Expression triggers a barrage of creative communication that sets the tone for the days ahead. Don't wait for a better time to put a project into motion, especially if it's one that you've been thinking about for a long time.

Virgo (Aug. 22-Sep 22)

You might be looking forward to a day of relaxation but the pace of events picks up suddenly, requiring you to leave your idyllic daydreams behind. Your key planet Mercury resumes its forward motion in your 4th House of Family, redirecting your attention to your closest relationships. However, your relatives don't seem to be playing the parts in your script that you previously assigned to them.

Libra (Sep 23-Oct. 22)

Your inner rebel awakens today, encouraging you to behave contrary to what others expect. Of course, this urge to stir the pot conflicts with your natural desire for everyone to live in harmony. Nevertheless, your key planet Venus forms a stressful alignment with revolutionary Uranus, temporarily altering your values. Currently, it's more critical for you to be different than it is to conform.

Scorpio (Oct.23-Nov.22)

Your psychic antennas are overly sensitive these days, dissolving boundaries between your internal and external worlds. Although your heightened awareness deepens your compassion, it also can be emotionally overwhelming. You want others to become more conscious of everyone else's feelings and to contribute to the well-being of humanity.

Sagittarius (Nov.23-Dec.20)

You've been not so patiently waiting for the moment when the clouds part and the endless blue sky becomes visible again. Logical Mercury's shift into forward motion occurs in your philosophical sign, allowing you to express your thoughts without restraint. However, it's crucial to know your limits, especially when the horizon appears so far away. Although you have little reason to moderate your opinions, you'll lose your audience unless you know when to stop.

Capricorn (Dec.21-Jan19)

There is a sense of urgency in the air and it's challenging to maintain a rational mindset when you get swept up by unexpected circumstances. Although these are intense times and the issues you face are real, your need for immediate resolution is not necessarily based upon the current situation. Trickster Mercury turns direct in your 12th House of Destiny, convincing you that an impulsive reaction must be the correct one.

Aquarius (Jan 20-Feb.18)

You may be worried that the window of opportunity is closing too soon, but your sense of immediacy is probably based on a false assumption. Don't waste valuable time lost in regret. Instead, concentrate on the present to make sure your current actions are consistent with your beliefs. Self-esteem is a key ingredient to your success, so steer clear of any behavior that feeds your doubts now.

Pisces (Feb.19-Mar.20)

There are many ways to distract yourself from what's really important today. Although this may be an intended day of rest, you might choose to fill it by pursuing unusual experiences that could bring you pleasure. Whether you go skydiving, visit an art gallery or make new friends, you don't want your activities to consist of the same old things. Nevertheless, once the amusement is over.

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Across

- Set of principles, 6. Glance over, 10. Rapsallions, 14. A pungent stew, 15. Expect and wish, 16. Ark builder, 17. Stream, 18. If not, 19. Anagram of "Note", 20. Unsurpassed, 22. Sea eagle, 23. Against, 24. Decrease, 26. Not barefoot, 30. Nourished, 31. Eastern Standard Time, 32. An enclosure, 33. Angers, 35. Assistants, 39. A company that flies, 41. Killer wave, 43. Hemorrhage, 44. East Indian tree, 46. Modify, 47. Obtain, 49. Card with one symbol, 50. Achy, 51. Convulse, 54. Chilled, 56. Warmth, 57. Illogical, 63. Hindu princess, 64. Awestruck, 65. Small amount, 66. Therefore, 67. Three-some, 68. Latin name for our planet, 69. Biblical garden, 70. Cravings, 71. Alpine call.

Down

- Beige, 2. Not fat, 3. Apiary, 4. Holly, 5. Approximately, 6. Protected, 7. Clash, 8. Church alcove, 9. Sewing tool, 10. Bowels, 11. Berths, 12. A fabric resembling velvet, 13. Gloss, 21. Finally (French), 25. Brother of Jacob, 26. Anagram of "Cabs", 27. Salute, 28. Monster, 29. A group of representatives, 34. Disconnected musical sounds, 36. Carpenter's groove, 37. Arab chieftain, 38. Location, 40. Midmonth date, 42. Shooting sport, 45. A 180-degree turn of a road, 48. 30, 51. Half of six, 52. Listened to, 53. Cooktop, 55. A short simple song, 58. Unusual, 59. Chocolate cookie, 60. An aromatic ointment, 61. Unit of land, 62. Loyal (archaic).

Yesterday's Solution

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G	U	I	D	E	V	S	E	E	W	A	C	V	
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S	S	E	R	V	A	N	T	A	F	T	E	R	

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A	G	A	I	N	Y	H	O	T	E	L	S	U	
T	H	E	R	E	G	A	O	M	F	I	E	D	
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G	U	I	D	E	V	S	E	E	W	A	C	V	
Q	T	V	A	N	G	E	L	O	Z	R	E	E	
S	S	E	R	V	A	N	T	A	F	T	E	R	