

Ulomi Vows to Clear Contractors' Dues in 4 Months

KABUL - The Ministry of Interior (Mol) on Wednesday said it would pay arrears amounting to 3.5 billion afghani to 90 contractors over the next four months. Representatives of the 90 companies had earlier complained the ministry was not paying them their dues after making supplies to police units in 2012 and 2013. The Wolesi Jirga summoned Interior Minister Noor-ul-Haq Ulomi and Deputy Finance Minister Shafiqullah Qarizada to brief lawmakers in this regard. "The contractors are on the right side," said Ulomi, adding that the



Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan (CSTC-A) had agreed to paying the contractors' dues soon. However, Qarizada held former Mol officials responsible for not paying the outstanding amounts, which he said should have been paid in-time. He said CSTC-A had agreed to pay the dues after evaluating the contracts. Haji Zahir Qadir, first deputy speaker of the lower house, said the contractors' money should be paid otherwise no company would provide logistics to the Afghan forces. He tasked the financial, national economy, internal ... (More on P4)...(19)

2 Afghan Trainees Missing from Georgia Air Force Base

VALDOSTA, Georgia - Two Afghan Air Force trainees did not report for duty Monday at Moody Air Force Base in Valdosta, Georgia, and are missing, according to officials. U.S. Air Force officials emphasized there are no indications the two men pose a threat, and the main concern is their failing to show up for duty. "Both [men] are assigned to the 81st Fighter Squadron. They have been at Moody since February 2015 and were screened prior to their arrival in the United States more than a year ago," Air Force officials said in a statement. "The students have trained alongside American counterparts ... (More on P4)...(24)

Man Arrested in Kabul on Charges of Kidnapping and Raping

KABUL - Police in Kabul arrested a man on charges of blackmailing, kidnapping and raping of scores of girls in capital Kabul, officials said. The suspected has been identified as Ashraf who was on the Most Wanted List of the Afghan police during the past several months. Head of the Criminal Investigation Department, Gen. Zahir Zahir, told reporters Ashraf was arrested by police after kidnapping a girl by repeatedly issuing threats to her. Gen. Zahir further added that Ashraf has been involved in several criminal cases including raping the ... (More on P4)...(25)

Finland to Tighten Policies on Asylum Seekers

HELSINKI - The Finnish government published its action plan on asylum policies on Tuesday, sending a clear message of tightening up amid the ongoing refugee crisis. The government said the plan was made in order to curb the uncontrolled influx of asylum seekers in the short term, to restrain asylum costs and to efficiently integrate new immigrants into the society. Finland will also speed up the asylum and repatriation processes and make efforts in con ... (More on P4)...(26)

Lawmaker Suggests US Forces Manipulated Into Striking Hospital

WASHINGTON - Two servicemen have told lawmakers that U.S. special forces called in an air strike on a hospital in Afghanistan because they thought the Taliban were using it as a command post, contradicting the military's claim that the attack was meant for a different building. The unnamed servicemen were quoted by Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., Tuesday in a letter he sent Tuesday to Defense Secretary Ash Carter. The letter highlights gaps in the military's explanation of the October air strike on a Doctors Without Borders hospital in Kunduz that killed 31 civilians. Hunter said the personal accounts raise the possibility that the U.S. was manipulated by its Afghan partners into attacking the hospital. If true, it would be a setback to U.S. efforts to work with and train a local militia capable of handling security efforts in the country. Navy Capt. Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesman, said Carter had received the letter but the Defense Department wouldn't comment on it. Hunter refused to name the servicemen because he said they feared disciplinary action. The two servicemen told Hunter the U.S. special forces soldiers who called in the air strike were not aware the hospital was being used by the charity. Afghan forces, they say, told them it had become a Taliban command and control center. "There were enemy in there," Hunter quotes one of the servicemen as saying. "They had already removed and ransomed the foreign doctors, ... (More on P4)...(22)

Attacks on Analysts will Affect Freedom of Speech: Nai

KABUL - Nai, a non-government organization supporting open media in Afghanistan, on Tuesday said it is concerned about targeted attacks on political analysts and that such incidents will affect freedom of speech in the country. "Seven attacks have occurred against political analysts in a month - which is a big strike to freedom of speech. Such attacks have created concern among organizations that defend journalists' rights," said Mujib Khalwatgar, head of Nai. After an attack on political analyst Ahmad Saeedi, two other political commentators Jawed Kohistani and Toofan Waziri along with Nisar Ahmad Bahawi a well-known taekwondo player and an MP were attacked by unknown armed men in recent days. Mohammad Hashim Alokozay a senator who lives close to political analyst Toofan Waziri, said: "I was not at home when [gunmen] opened fire on Toofan Waziri and the head of Helmand provincial council but they survived and the attackers escaped." He said the attack is a mystery. "I think the incident is linked with the realities that we reveal about the Taliban and they want to limit the freedom of speech by such attacks," Waziri said. Police have not arrested any suspects linked to the incidents but the Interior Ministry spokesman Sediq Seddiqi said they were investigating the incidents. "Security forces have created a core through which we are trying to find out who is ... (More on P4)...(20)

Nangarhar Officials Claim ISI Supports Local Daesh

JALALABAD - Local officials in Nangarhar said Wednesday that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) is supporting Daesh in their province. After visiting the area to assess Daesh activities in the district, officials said the insurgent group is getting its orders from Pakistan but that they do not have the capacity to stand up to the Afghan security forces. Nangarhar provincial council said the security forces should be able to eliminate Daesh in the province. Provincial police chief Fazil Ahmad Sherzad said: "We received documents which show Daesh directly getting orders from outside the border and it is causing the ongoing war in Nangarhar." Head of the National Directorate of Security (NDS) Gen. Dad Mohammad Harifi said: "Our security forces are not afraid of any threats and bravely defend the country and we say to Daesh ... (More on P4)...(23)

Taliban Clashes Force Herat Residents to Flee Their Homes

HERAT - Herat Human Rights Commission on Wednesday raised concerns over the number of Herat residents being forced to flee their homes due to ongoing fighting between Taliban factions in Shindand district in Herat province. The commission has called on both factions not to attack residents or their properties. Clashes between Mullah Akhtar Mohammad loyalists and Mullah Rassoul supporters have been ongoing for the past four days in the district. Reports indicate that so far a number of civilians have been killed and wounded as a result of the Taliban battle. Much needed aid has also not reached wounded and affected residents. "Little attention is being paid to civilians during these battles and civilians are becoming casualties and having their properties damaged - which is against the ... (More on P4)...(21)



Wardak Residents Seek Justice Over Killing of Nine Children

MAIDAN WARDAK - Residents of Maidan Wardak province on Wednesday gathered at the provincial governor's office and called for justice over the recent deaths of nine children who were killed in government forces attack. The residents called on government to hold those responsible for the recent mortar attack accountable. The provincial governor Hayatullah Hayat said that if the perpetrators of the incident are not brought to justice he will resign. "I told the people if the perpetrators are not brought to justice I will resign from my post," said Hayat. "A rocket hit the wall where eight children were martyred and one other severely wounded. Later that night the wounded child died in the emergency hospital," said ... (More on P4)...(27)



Outlook Horoscope

Aries (Mar. 22-Apr.20)

Obviously, you know that getting angry for no apparent reason is unproductive. Unfortunately, you can't always prevent your emotions from impacting your life by simply hiding them. Although burying your negativity might postpone a difficult interaction, denial makes matters worse in the long run. In the final analysis, it's best to acknowledge your feelings and bring them out into the open.

Taurus (Apr.21-May 20)

You wish your coworkers would support your ideas, but they don't understand your true intentions. You may be annoyed by your unsuccessful attempts to explain your motives, especially if an authority figure shuts you down before you get a chance to say anything. Unfortunately, an act of rebellion is a waste of time and energy now.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)

People seem to crawl out of the woodwork today, anxious to share their plans for the future with you. Thankfully, most of them could be rather inspirational as the forward-thinking Sagittarius Sun illuminates your 7th House of Relationships. You can benefit greatly from your interactions with anyone who encourages you with their big ideas and emboldens you with their confidence.

Cancer (June 21-July 20)

You excel when you're in charge today, even if you're operating on blind faith for a while. Unfortunately, the best situation can grow awkward if you just pretend that everything is okay. Instead of covering up your uncertainty with foolish behavior, just be honest and let everyone know exactly where you stand. Thankfully, this straightforward strategy takes very little effort on your part.

Leo (July 21-Aug. 21)

You're on the rebound now as new possibilities for fun and games pop up in your life. You might have struggled with maintaining your spirits recently, but the skies are brighter and the horizons are clearer today. Nevertheless, complications still lurk in the shadows and you may grow discouraged if your plans run amok. Ignoring reality only delays the inevitable.

Virgo (Aug. 22-Sep 22)

You have a clear handle on what you must do today, but it's no simple matter to concentrate when your mind is wandering all over the place. Ignoring an intriguing person is impossible, even if you should focus on your work. Luckily, being aware of your feelings doesn't require you to act on them right away. However, your unacknowledged desires will just continue to resurface until you give them their just due.

Libra (Sep 23-Oct. 22)

You don't often commit to more than you can deliver, but you may say yes today when you should say no. Your irrational optimism might stir up a hornet's nest of trouble now, but you can dream up more escape routes than you need. Nevertheless, it's unwise to introduce too much freedom into your life all at once, or you will grow nervous with the number of choices. In the long run.

Scorpio (Oct.23-Nov.22)

It might seem as if your emotional lights dim when the Moon leaves your sign this afternoon. However, there's no need to replace the passion with anything else if you experience a sense of emptiness now. You're not automatically required to take charge of the situation if your workmates are unreliable today. Nevertheless, you can choose to adapt to the changing circumstances.

Sagittarius (Nov.23-Dec.20)

Your feelings may be hurt today as unkind words are thrown at you by someone who's trying to manipulate your loyalties. Normally, you would laugh, let this negativity go and move on. However, the Moon's return to your sign heightens your sensitivity, inspiring you to respond with sincerity even while maintaining a non-judgmental attitude. Meanwhile, Mercury shifts into cautious Capricorn tonight.

Capricorn (Dec.21-Jan19)

Suppressing your artistic urges can be quite irritating today, and you grow increasingly unhappy if someone blocks your self-expression. You might even lash out if you think he or she is the source of your current creative stagnation. The problem is you could project your anger on the wrong person unless you thoroughly process your emotions. If you feel the shadows growing longer.

Aquarius (Jan 20-Feb.18)

You could be bent out of shape by a series of meaningless social encounters since you're inexplicably drawn toward the center of the emotional volcano now. Paradoxically, digging into other people's hidden motivations can also become your own personal journey inward. But you'll miss an important piece of the puzzle today if you just intellectualize what you learn.

Pisces (Feb.19-Mar.20)

Your workweek continues on its high-intensity path, revealing secrets from the shadowlands of your awareness. The adventurous Sagittarius Moon saunters into your 10th House of Career today, encouraging you to believe that no professional challenge is impossible. Although self-confidence can move mountains, unfounded optimism doesn't help at all. Do whatever is necessary to keep your feet on the ground.

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-61 indicating starting points for clues.

Across

- 1. Stake, 5. A long narrow opening, 10. Tibetan monk, 14. Ride the waves, 15. Passageway, 16. Dash, 17. Occupation, 19. Essence, 20. Clairvoyant's gift, 21. Swindle, 22. Promises, 23. Sewing tools, 25. Fancy, 27. Uncooked, 28. Reflected, 31. Fourpence, 34. Lines of verse, 35. How old you are, 36. Parental sister, 37. Get hitched, 38. Anagram of "Ties", 39. Sick, 40. Filaments, 41. Loamy deposit, 42. Relating to a newborn, 44. Glass container, 45. Rowed, 46. Ecstasy, 50. Nonsense, 52. Double-reed instruments, 54. Soak, 55. Twin sister of Ares, 56. Overstate, 58. Skin disease, 59. Locale, 60. How old we are, 61. Indian music, 62. Glacial ridge, 63. Joke.

Down

- 1. Type of poplar tree, 2. Medical professional, 3. Metaphor or hyperbole, 4. F, 5. A type of nut, 6. Ascends, 7. Largest continent, 8. Haberdashers, 9. Barbie's beau, 10. Smooth, in music, 11. Uneducated person, 12. Sitcom set in Korea, 13. Picnic insects, 18. Panache, 22. Not yours, 24. "Damn!", 26. Legion, 28. Type of mushroom, 29. Auspices, 30. D D D D, 31. Acquire, 32. Govern, 33. Witnessing, 34. Contradictions, 37. Small amount, 38. Classify, 40. Not cool, 41. Expire, 43. Queasiness, 44. Coastal diving bird, 46. Scoundrel, 47. Habitual practice, 48. Anagram of "Store", 49. Excrete, 50. Listen, 51. Killer whale, 53. Financial institution, 56. Night before, 57. British rule in India.

Yesterday's Solution

Grid for yesterday's crossword solution with words filled in.

ancestry, anger, apart, attach, attract, brain, burnt, contact, exist, foyer, gadget, garland, ghost, knock, neutral, ores, people, phone, positive, purpose, rear, relish, retain, roil, sense, shambles, share, shirt, site, slave, standard, stoke, strong, tern, trace.

Word search grid with words hidden in letters.