

25 Taliban Militants Surrender, 17 Killed

KABUL - Amid ongoing militancy and government forces operations against armed militants in the northern Badakhshan and Kunduz provinces, over two dozen Taliban fighters have surrendered and 17 others have been killed over the past two days, officials said Thursday.

A total of 25 Taliban militants have given up fighting and handed over their weapons to police in the northern Badakhshan province with Faizabad as its capital 315 km northwest of Kabul over the past two days, spokesman for provincial government Ahmad Nawed Frotan said. "A total of 25 Taliban fighters under Sheikh Jamal who were active in Tishkan district over the past couple of years laid down arms and resumed normal life over the past two days," Frotan told Xinhua. He also added that



cleanup operations have been continuing in Tishkan and Tagab districts since mid January to kill or capture insurgents. Taliban militants who are active in parts of Badakhshan province are yet to make comment.

Similarly, mounting pressure against Taliban in the northern Kunduz province have claimed the lives of 17 insurgents. Citing a provincial security official, Mohammad Masoum Safi, local media reported Thursday that clashes between security forces and Taliban militants in Ali Abad district of restive Kunduz province on Wednesday had left 17 armed insurgents, including two senior commanders of the militants - Mawlawi Niazi and Mawlawi Abdul Hai, dead. Meantime, Taliban confirmed in an online statement the clash in Ali Abad... (More on P4)... (18)

Nimroz Residents Concerned Over Growing Kidnap Incidents

ZARANJ - Residents of southwestern Nimroz province complain of growing incidents of kidnappings saying businessmen and well-off individuals have stopped sending children to school and training centres.

Locals say seven incidents of kidnapping and two instances of murder have occurred in the province in the past one month, fuelling serious concerns among the people. Last month, a businessman's son was kidnapped in Zaranj, the provincial capital. Zakria, 5, was found dead two weeks later, sparking angry protests by residents and civil society activists. The child's family says the abductors demanded one million afghanis and finally came down to 400,000 afs for the release of Zakria. But they brutally killed the boy and threw his body into a well. The son of another businessman was also abducted last month, but police rescued the 30 months old from the kid... (More on P4)... (19)

Casualties Surges among Children in Kandahar Conflict: Officials

KANDAHAR - The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) office in Kandahar said Friday that casualties among children have increased in conflicts between security forces and militants in remote parts of the province. According to the commission, at least 90 children were killed and 97 others wounded in Kandahar over the past year. "Figures from hospitals in Kandahar, especially Mirwais Hospital - where they collect information every Wednesday - show that at least 90 children have been killed due to conflict in different parts of Kandahar over the past year - up to January this year," said chairman of AIHRC in Kandahar



Shamsuddin Tanwir. He said the figures are double if compared with those of the past year. "This problem has been common in very remote areas [in Kandahar]. Children in the province have been killed due to roadside bombs and other kinds of violence. We are upset about it," he added. The commission also said that poor economy has pushed a number of Kandahar children to commit a number of illegal acts, including robbery and that government should help them overcome the situation. (Tolnews)

Blast Wounds 16 Civilians in Nangarhar

JALALABAD - Up to 16 Afghan civilians were injured as a blast rocked Jalalabad city in eastern Nangarhar province on Thursday, a local official said.

"An unknown person threw a hand grenade on the employees of a local trading company Ali Baba in Jalalabad city, injuring 16 persons, all civilians," the official who declined to be identified told Xinhua. The attacker escaped after the attack, he added.

Spokesman for provincial government Attaullah Khogiani also confirmed the incident, saying an investigation has been launched into the attack. (Xinhua)

Soldiers Pick US Presidential Candidates with Afghanistan in Mind

DES MOINES, IOWA - While polls show that most Iowans had the U.S. economy on their minds when they participated in Monday's caucuses to choose a candidate for president, one group of caucus watchers was picking candidates with a different issue in mind.

Five thousand of Iowa's National Guard troops have served in Afghanistan since the U.S. went



to war there after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. And it has changed the perspective of many of them. Sergeant Devin Burgett served in Afghanistan from 2010 to 2011 with Company B, 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry... (More on P4)... (20)

New Baghlan Police Chief Vows to Improve Law and Order

PUL-I-KHUMRI - Brig. Gen. Mohammad Ewaz Badakhshi, the newly-appointed police chief for northern Baghlan province pledged to protect lives of people at every cost. The pledges of new police chief about law and order came at times when heavy clashes between security force and insurgents were underway in Dand-i-Ghori locality situated just two kilometres from Pul-i-Khumri, the provincial capital. The Taliban



have reportedly destroyed two electricity pylons in the nearby locality of Dand-i-Shahabuddin that caused hours of outage in capital Kabul from the past one week. Badakhshi earlier worked on senior... (More on P4)... (22)

Flour and Fuel Prices Down in Kabul Markets

KABUL - The prices of flour and fuel declined during the outgoing week in Kabul, but of other food items remained unchanged, market sources said on Thursday. Abdul Hadi, a filling station worker in Wazirabad locality, told Pajhwok Afghan News one liter of petrol's rate declined from 40 afghanis to 38 afs this week and the same amount of diesel fell from 33afs to 32 afs. Mohammad Sharif, a liquefied gas seller in Kolola Pushta neighborhood, sold a kilogram of gas for 40afs against last week's 45afs. Per 560... (More on P4)... (21)

ANA Soldiers Among 42 Dead in Clashes: MoD

KABUL - Six Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers and 36 insurgents have been killed during clearing operation in seven provinces of the country in the past 24 hours, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) said on Friday. Twenty six more rebels wounded seven arrested during security forces operation, a statement from the MoD said. The operations were conducted in the Khogyani district of Nangarhar, Shegal, Nari districts of Kunar, Ab Band district of Ghazni, Kurkh district of Herat, Dand-i-Ghori locality of Baghlan, Tushkan district of Badkashshan and Helamnd provinces. Security officials recovered weapons, ammunition and over hundred hand grenade during the operation, the statement said. Militants have not yet comment over MoD claims. (Pajhwok)

6 Suspected Militants Detained in Baghlan

PUL-I-KHUMRI - Six suspected militants, including one from Pakistan's tribal region of Waziristani, have been arrested in northern Baghlan province, an official said on Thursday. Mohammad Tahir, hailing from Waziristan, and two local Taliban were detained on Wednesday night in the Bagh-i-Shamal area of Pul-i-Khumri, Governor Abdul Sattar Barez told a press conference. ... (More on P4)... (23)

Outlook Horoscope

Aries (Mar. 22-Apr.20)

Acknowledging your ambitions can be emotionally satisfying if you're willing to make some hard choices today. You may need to set aside your personal desires in order to accomplish your career objectives. Or, you might have to pay a professional price if you decide to resurrect an old flame. Something is lost and something is gained either way.

Taurus (Apr.21-May 20)

You won't be content talking with your friends about safe topics like the weather today. You are driven to get right to the magic filling hidden at the center of the piece of candy. Fortunately, you are willing to move mountains now to experience the juice of your emotional and sensual life. But there's no reason to worry about reaching your personal nirvana just yet.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You can exhaust yourself trying to sidestep your partner's intensity today. Uncomfortable issues continue to pop up wherever you go, resurfacing in different forms, no matter what you do. Strangely, the messenger may change while the primary message stays the same; the truth is you have plenty to learn from anyone who can put you in touch with your passion.

Cancer (June 21-July 20)

You may be obsessing about someone close to you today. Often, there are things that are better left unsaid, yet now these same uncomfortable feelings might have their grand moment in the limelight. There's no reason to reveal your deep secrets casually, but focusing on the truth can be enough to initiate a dramatic change.

Leo (July 21-Aug. 21)

Perhaps you remember a time in your past that you lost your temper, followed by waves of regret. Paradoxically, a tantrum you throw today can actually end up stabilizing a relationship if your audience is willing to listen. Nevertheless, it's still wise to tread lightly because fear of rejection may not be enough to prevent you from sharing your heart's deepest desires.

Virgo (Aug. 22-Sep 22)

Voicing a strong opinion in a relationship might bring you face to face with an emotionally challenging issue today; however, the present circumstances aren't as dangerous as they appear at first. Your obsessive concern with unimportant details just makes the situation more problematic in the heat of the moment. Adopting a flexible attitude is the first move to overcoming the obstacles blocking you from experiencing the intimacy you seek.

Libra (Sep 23-Oct. 22)

You're in your element when asked to play the role of a diplomat, looking for the most tactful way to deliver a difficult message. Although you want everyone to like you, you might have to be the bearer of bad news now. Your popularity is not the priority today; remove your velvet gloves and simply tell the truth. Just remember you could easily offend someone if you push an issue too far.

Scorpio (Oct.23-Nov.22)

You're entrenched in redefining who you are and what's most significant to you now as alluring Venus cozies up with your key planet, Pluto. Even if you identify with a caterpillar on a leaf today, remember that you are in the process of magically morphing into a magnificent butterfly. Once you start stretching your wings, you will be well on your way to flying.

Sagittarius (Nov.23-Dec.20)

Although you may be uncharacteristically self-critical now, people are much more willing to forgive your shortcomings than you are. The conjunction of beautiful Venus and powerful Pluto emphasizes the cluster of four planets working their magic in your 2nd House of Self-Esteem. However, the cosmos can magnify your negative feelings, forcing you to acknowledge your shadow.

Capricorn (Dec.21-Jan19)

You're likely to experience emotional turmoil today while vulnerable Venus hooks up with secretive Pluto in your emotionally reserved sign. But people might not even realize that anything is wrong unless you tell them. There's always a danger in keeping things quiet because venting some of your anger or passion stops it from spilling over at an inconvenient moment. Your volatile reactions may upset someone now.

Aquarius (Jan 20-Feb.18)

A vivid dream could feel so real today that you search for ways to make it come true. There is an unusually strong power to your desires now that draws you into unexplored territory. Thankfully, you receive help from your higher self if you remain open to a little assistance from the universe. Don't be afraid to entertain an unrealized fantasy since others might be inspired to join your cause.

Pisces (Feb.19-Mar.20)

Your social world might be a surprising source of a dark power struggle now, even if you don't understand why the dynamics are so complicated. Or, you could find yourself in the middle of an intense melodrama with no exit in sight. Thankfully, complete self-control isn't required for resolution today. Find a healthy way to express your most passionate and honest feelings.

Across

1. Tucks away, 6. Valuable metal, 10. "Darn!", 14. Hearing-related, 15. Chocolate cookie, 16. Hawkeye State, 17. Commencement ceremony, 19. Knife, 20. Sign up, 21. French for "Summer", 22. Spring, 23. Reddish brown, 25. Heart artery, 26. A Maori club, 30. Courtyard, 32. Tilting, 35. Slang for infantryman, 39. Mysterious, 40. Chest, 41. Walks unsteadily, 43. Public toilet, 44. Group of three, 46. Makes lace, 47. Water balloon sound, 50. Slander, 53. Relating to urine, 54. Vigor, 55. Providing, 60. "Geel!", 61. Frugal, 63. Competent, 64. Anagram of "Note", 65. Run away to wed, 66. Marsh plant, 67. Winter precipitation, 68. Feel.

Down

1. Wise one, 2. Change direction, 3. By mouth, 4. Dry riverbed, 5. Partially melted snow, 6. Snagged, 7. The far east, 8. Body suit, 9. Accomplished, 10. Soreness, 11. Turbine part, 12. Expect, 13. Small drum, 18. Consumed food, 24. Henpeck, 25. A quantity of no importance (archaic), 26. du jour = Meal of the day, 27. Relating to aircraft, 28. Diplomacy, 29. Uncommitted, 31. Greek letter, 33. Unreactive, 34. Roman emperor, 36. Operatic solo, 37. Camber, 38. X X X X, 42. Semiconducting material, 43. Chemist's workplace, 45. A loose robe, 47. Sweetener, 48. Investigate, 49. Fine thread, 51. Conceit, 52. Not lemons, 54. Ex-servicemen, 56. Wicked, 57. Computer symbol, 58. Short sleeps, 59. Delight, 2. Not used.

Yesterday's Solution

abates, ahead, assassin, attic, bins, brink, cabin, carp, casket, certainty, cheap, chips, corner, toward, dale, empty, ferry, florid, fossil, garb, grown, guess, hiss, lawns, lend, lock, mere, murder, nest, pager, peanuts, poise, pure, rate, rebel, roost, salty, seer.

Y C O R N E R E M P T Y S
C O E T E N N A N T X X E
A W F R S B T W I S T E R
B A C L T G E P R X W W P
I R H S O A U L O E C R N
N D I S N R I E O I A I X
C A P N E B I N S C S T T
H B S W K Y H D T S K E H
E A O A T T I C A Y E F E
A T G L F O S S I L T E O
P E A N U T S P A G E R R
U S U R P A H E A D T R Y
G R O W N M U R D E R Y F