

Taliban Control Helmand Districts Despite Operations

KABUL - Despite large scale military operations in the volatile southern province of Helmand, two districts - Nad Ali and Babaji - are still under the control of the Taliban. Reporting from Helmand, TOLNews' correspondent Abdul Wali Arian said although it is poppy-sapping time in the province, fierce battles between security forces and insurgents have resumed. Arian reports that despite security forces being well prepared they are not getting orders from security organizations to move for-



ward. "Whenever forces conduct operations the militants flee the areas and after operations end, the militants return more powerful than the past and insurgents attack check posts," Arian said. Security forces in Helmand province have however criticized central government. They said they are in a defensive position and are waiting for orders to take offensive action. But residents report that their morale is good. "The people's morale is ... (More on P4)...(17)

Taliban Threats Force Afghan Boy, Fan of Messi, Into Exile

KABUL - The family of a 5-year-old Afghan boy who received autographed shirts from his soccer hero Lionel Messi was forced to leave Afghanistan amid constant telephone threats and a menacing Taliban letter, the boy's father said Tuesday. Mohammad Arif Ahmadi - whose son grabbed headlines when he was photographed wearing a home-made Argentina shirt with No. 10 on the back - said they have moved to neighboring Pakistan and settled in the city of Quetta, hoping for a better life there. "Life became a misery for us," said Ahmadi, speaking to The Associated Press over the telephone from Quetta. He added that the family didn't want to leave Afghanistan, but the threats were just getting more and more serious. Ahmadi said he feared that his son Murtaza would be kidnapped after becoming an Internet sensation - both at home in Afghanistan and beyond - after pictures of him wearing a Messi shirt made out of a striped ... (More on P4)...(22)

Unemployed Journalist 'will not Leave Country'

KABUL - A former journalist who lost his job has spoken out about the dire circumstances he now faces - after losing his job in Mazar-e-Sharif - but says despite his hardships he will not leave his country. Sayed He daya tullah Hashimi, 42, said he has been unemployed for two months. He said he has knocked on every door possible in search of work but has been unsuccessful. Hashimi, who has experience in both digital and print media, has studied Dari literature and speaks and writes English and Arabic. According to him he had been working for



Jamhoo news agency until recently. Hashimi said that after failing to find work, he eventually opened a used-shoe shop, with the help of a former friend, who was also once the editor-in-chief of a local media outlet. Married just four months, Hashimi now earns between 150 and 200 Afghanis a day - through the sale of shoes from his shop called Emperor Shoes. Hashimi says poverty and unemployment are driving the youth from the country or forcing them ... (More on P4)...(18)

Following Timber Ban, 3,000 Kunar Carpenters Go Jobless

ASADABAD - Thousands of artisans and carpenters in eastern Kunar province on Tuesday asked the government to provide work opportunities for them or lift the ban on timber movement. Recently, the government banned the transportation of wooden furniture from Kunar to other provinces of the country, leaving many carpenters jobless. Qari Mohammadullah, who owns a furniture factory, told Pajhwok Afghan News thousands of people working in carpentry shops had gone unemployed. He asked the government to allow

the transfer of wood furniture, doors and windows to other provinces for the sake of providing work opportunity for the people and restoring the economic situation of workers. There were people who had invested millions of Afghanis in the business, but they had either closed down businesses or were about to do so, he said. A furniture dealer in Asadabad, Farhad, said he had been involved in the business over the past few years. "Earlier, there were 22 people working in my factory. After the prohibition, most of the workers have become jobless," he said, warning they would lose all their capital if the ban was not lifted. He asked the government to pay attention to the worrisome situation of industrialists and artisans and allow the movement of wooden equipment out of the province. There are 350 carpentry and furniture factories across the province, but after the ban imposed on Jan. 15, 2016, hundreds of people have been rendered jobless. Businesses had collapsed and revenue of the customs department declined. ... (More on P4)...(19)

Taliban Commander among 7 Killed in Zabul

KABUL - At least seven Taliban insurgents were killed including a commander of the group during a gun battle with the Afghan police forces in southern Zabul province. The Ministry of Interior (MoI) said at least four Taliban militants were also wounded during the clash which took place in Meezan district. "During an armed conflict between Afghan National Police and armed Taliban, seven armed Taliban were killed including a commander of armed Taliban named Ahmad Agha," the statement said. "Four other armed Taliban were wounded and no ANP member was harmed," the statement said, adding that the incident took place in Meezan ... (More on P4)...(23)

Foreign Troops Come Under Bomb Attack in Bagram

CHAREKAR - A patrol of international troops has come under bomb attack in the Bagram district of central Parwan province, an official said on Tuesday. Brig. Gen. Mohammad Zaman Mamoza, the Parwan police chief, told Pajhwok Afghan News the foreign soldiers surrounded the scene after the overnight explosion. Place under a culvert, the bomb went off in Nasri area at 9.00pm, the police chief said, adding he had no information regarding casualties. Ahmad Nazir, a resident of the village, claimed seeing a tank that was damaged as a result of the blast. He said foreign troops ringed the site until 8am. Meanwhile, a statement ... (More on P4)...(24)

New Building Being Constructed for Khost IEC Office

KHOST CITY - A new building for the Independent Election Commission (IEC) office in southeastern Khost province is being constructed with financial support from Japan, an official said on Tuesday. The building is being constructed at the provincial complex located south of Khost City, the provincial capital. The foundation stone of the structure was laid by the governor accompanied by local officials on Tuesday. Governor Hukam Khan said the Japanese-funded project was estimated to cost \$365,000. The two-storey building would have eight administrative rooms and other facilities. ... (More on P4)...(25)

Sar-i-Pul Governor Inaugurates Women's Park

AR-I-PUL - Sar-i-Pul Governor Mohammad Zahir Wahdat has inaugurated a Women's Green Park City and inaugurated a project for training 15 women in bag sewing, an official said on Monday. Women Affairs Director Naseema Arzo told Pajhwok Afghan News the park stretched over an acre land was constructed at a cost of four million Afghanis provided by the Women Affairs Ministry. She added 15 women from poor families would be trained in stitching up bags, with each trainee getting \$2 per day. The objective behind the project is to make women self-sufficient. Masooma, one of the trainees, said: "We work for 5,000 Afghanis a month." She requested the private sector and all purchase the hand craft made by them. (Pajhwok)

Taliban Unlikely to Win Despite Tactical Gains: Ex-Minister

KABUL - A former interior minister believes the prospects of bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table will improve by 2016 fall. Ali Ahmad Jalali said on Monday the militant movement did not have a strategic chance of winning. "I think Taliban, despite (making) some tactical advances in 2015, have no future..." The insurgents did not have a strategic opportunity to prevail, he explained in a speech to the Middle East Institute. The



prospects of peace talks would improve by next fall, the ex-minister believed. Exploiting the security gaps left by the withdrawal of international troops, the Taliban made some gains last year. "They made some inroads in the rural areas, but they were unable even to retain the areas they took," Sputnik ... (More on P4)...(20)

Samangan Flood Washes Away Homes, Crops

AIBAK - Triggered by heavy rains, flash floods caused huge financial losses to people in several districts of northern Samangan province, an official said on Tuesday. The floods wreaked havoc in Ruyi Doab, Hazrat Sultan and Khuram-Sarbagh districts. About 100 homes, shops and health centres in various parts of Ruyi Doab district alone were damaged, said Ghulam Rabbani, the town's executive director. He said standing crops over hundreds of acres of land and livestock were lost to the deluge that hit parts of the province late on Monday. Sirajuddin Fitrat, administrative chief of Hazrat Sultan district, said flood entered the district at around 3:00am and washed away homes in Ghaznijak locality. He said the flood ... (More on P4)...(21)

Outlook Horoscope

Aries (Mar. 22-Apr.20)



Your recent hard work might be due for a reward with a larger paycheck or a sweet promotion. Fortuitous Jupiter trines the Sun in your 2nd House of Money, hopefully bringing you the recognition you deserve. But you may face disappointment if you expect good news right away. Although your anticipation level is high, retrograde season could still get the best of you.

Taurus (Apr.21-May 20)



You can turn new ideas into practical plans quite easily today because your common sense is working overtime. You are often satisfied with maintaining the status quo, but you want to step beyond your regular routine and experience life to the fullest. Thankfully, there's no need to set aside your basic philosophical approach to simple living.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)



It pays to reach a little farther today while the planets are busy working on your behalf. You're already thinking about the future while the Moon is moving through your 11th House of Long-Term Goals. Meanwhile, the sensible Taurus Sun's harmonious trine to auspicious Jupiter enables you to balance optimism with realism. There is enough cosmic magic to empower you to pursue your dreams.

Cancer (June 21-July 20)



Leaning on your friends and associates for companionship today creates special moments to share your hopes and dreams with them. But don't be overly concerned about falling short of your goals, for jolly Jupiter's trine to the Sun in your 11th House of Groups suggests that social networking is as important as career success.

Leo (July 21-Aug. 21)



Steady growth feels restraining if you want to move at your own pace, which might be faster than everyone else's. However, the Sun's trine to jovial Jupiter in your 2nd House of Income allows you to obtain much-needed resources from your boss and your workmates as you bolt ahead of the pack. There isn't any reason to slow down now; explore new territory without worrying about the usual resistance.

Virgo (Aug. 22-Sep 22)



New ideas are flowing into your imagination now, but you must be in the right frame of mind to receive them. You may already be in touch with a variety of alternative plans, but the Sun's trine to philosophical Jupiter in your sign can blast the doors of awareness wide open today. Thankfully, this current growth spurt won't likely feel like hard work or cause you any additional stress. Expanding your thinking is more fun than you might expect.

Libra (Sep 23-Oct. 22)



An emotional breakthrough is possible today if you examine your feelings from a broader perspective before the upcoming changes impact your relationships. Letting go of fixed ideas isn't always easy to do, but today's Sun-Jupiter trine may seem like a free ticket to the destination of your choice. Nevertheless, it's still up to you to use it. Take a risk or you might stay stuck in your current situation.

Scorpio (Oct.23-Nov.22)



Your relationships feed your creativity now, especially if you listen carefully to others as they share their brilliant ideas. However, inspiration doesn't just happen on its own; you must breathe it into life. Put on your thinking cap and be diligent about maximizing your cleverness potential. Once you begin your current masterpiece, stick with it, even if your certainty wavers or your muse slips away.

Sagittarius (Nov.23-Dec.20)



You may be pleasantly surprised by all the fantastic support you receive at work today. However, assistance arrives in funny ways and you could miss it if you are looking too hard in a different direction. Nevertheless, you have a wonderful opportunity now to improve the quality of your everyday life if you can get past your own resistance to change. The choice is yours; be courageous and let others nurture your current growth.

Capricorn (Dec.21-Jan19)



The importance of having fun cannot be overstated because you're highly creative today if you're free to play while you work. But there's no reason to impose arbitrary limits on what you can do. Even if you don't reach an unattainable goal now, you will still progress further along your path. Extending yourself as much as you can improves your chances of making the most of the current opportunities.

Aquarius (Jan 20-Feb.18)

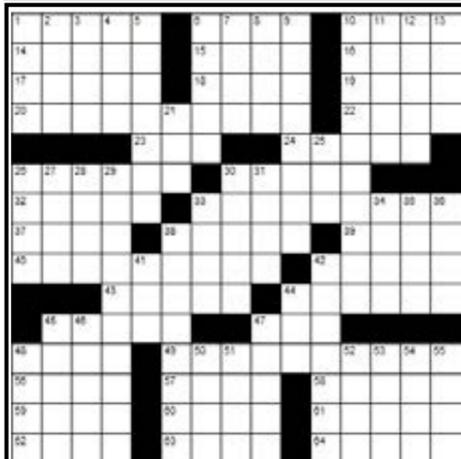


Your dreams are a significant source of inspiration, yet you need to exercise a bit of caution today. It's easy to get lost within your own mind, but auspicious Jupiter is so radiant now that you might not even realize if something is amiss. Fortunately, you have the power to direct your thoughts away from outrageous fantasies and turn them into profound visualizations that can change your life for the better.

Pisces (Feb.19-Mar.20)



Your recent efforts may come to fruition today, but not necessarily in the ways you expect. You are more content with your life now and might stop to bask in the awareness of a job well done. Be careful or your blind optimism will lead to laziness, since this isn't the time to relax yet. Reveling in your current accomplishments could be counterproductive if they are only part of a larger goal.



Across

1. Cite, 6. Greek cheese, 10. Midmonth date, 14. Shrewd, 15. "Oh my!", 16. Anger, 17. Scrawny one, 18. Kiln-dried grain, 19. Wander, 20. Plague, 22. Biblical garden, 23. Central, 24. Parts portrayed, 26. Semidetached house, 30. Redress, 32. Labor group, 33. Ones who accomplish, 37. "Darn!", 38. Overgrown with ivy, 39. Nursemaid, 40. Replace, 42. Sharpshoot, 43. Lascivious looks, 44. Scattered, 45. Interrogative pronoun, 47. Ambition, 48. King of the jungle, 49. Not oriental, 56. Church alcove, 57. Website addresses, 58. Throw with effort, 59. V V V V, 60. Essence, 61. German iris, 62. Contributes, 63. Type of sword, 64. Forests.

Down

1. Coarse file, 2. Behold, in old Rome, 3. Pelts, 4. French for "State", 5. A systematic plan for therapy, 6. Widely known, 7. Dash, 8. After-bath powder, 9. Planetoid, 10. Beside the point, 11. Thermionic tube, 12. Santa's helpers, 13. Observed, 21. 59 in Roman numerals, 25. In song, the loneliest number, 26. Clothing, 27. Two-toed sloth, 28. Panderer, 29. Solitariness, 30. Corrosives, 31. You (archaic), 33. Affirm, 34. Send forth, 35. Sexual assault, 36. Outbuilding, 38. A structure for storing ice, 41. Record (abbrev.), 42. In some way, 44. Accomplished, 45. Rubbed, 46. Fleeced, 47. Passageway, 48. Magma, 50. Prune, 51. Hint, 52. Roman emperor, 53. Tropical tuber, 54. Keen, 55. Not more.

Yesterday's Solution



adroit, advocate, ardor, buns, cans, clamp, clever, consecrate, crook, demon, devout, digit, dilettante, direct, empty, fiend, follow, frame, girdle, gorge, hellish, hues, load, loyal, manta, pelt, piety, rued, scheme, shift, skill, sonar, theme, toot, tortuous.

