

# Mass Arrival of 'Poppy Harvesters' in Balkh Sparks Concern

KABUL - As many as 1,000 people from southern provinces arrived en masse in northern Balkh province allegedly looking for poppy harvesting jobs - a move that sparked concern among locals. One hopeful harvester from Kandahar said he had no work and needed the job. "We are here because we do not have any alternative. We are here to work. We are here to cut [poppies]," said Abdul Qahar, from Kandahar. These "harvesters" said they earn between 600 Afs and 1,000 Afs a day. "We are here to work," said another Kandahar resident, Jabbar. "We are here to cut (poppies). Our area is insecure and we are here because we have no way (to work)," said Abdul Ghafar, 18, a resident of Helmand. Highway police have however reportedly stopped many people from entering Balkh due to their lack of identity cards. However, some of them have



been allowed to enter the province after Balkh Provincial Council members stepped in, residents claim. Balkh was not a poppy cultivating province for eight years, but this has changed in the past two years, residents report. Local officials have not given exact figures about the extent of poppy cultivation in the province but have in the past promised to destroy the fields. "Those who would have come (to Balkh) for poppy harvesting were sent back to their relevant provinces by security forces on highways," the Balkh governor's spokesman Ahmad Munir Farhad said. "Those who have been identified by their relatives in Mazar city or by members of the provincial council will be allowed in and there will be no problem if they stay for a few days in the province," ...*(More on P4)...(16)*

## 27 Insurgents Killed in Helmand Operation

KABUL - At least 27 insurgents were killed in an Afghan police force operation in southern Helmand province on Tuesday, public order police said in a statement on Wednesday. The operation was conducted in Garesmir district of the province to clear the area of insurgents, according to the statement. However, the statement did not provide more details about the operation nor about casualties among security forces. This comes just days after U.S. Marines returned to the province, two years after the NATO combat mission ended in the country. The Marines were the first U.S. Forces to be sent to Afghanistan ...*(More on P4)...(17)*

## ACB Bans 3 Players for Breaching Discipline

KABUL - The Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) on Wednesday announced banning three players from participation in domestic and international events. Najibullah Tarakai, Aftab Alam, and Noorul-Haq Malikzai were banned for breaches of discipline during the domestic tournament, Million Cup, a statement from the board said. The ACB Disciplinary Committee took the decision based on an investigation into the umpire's report. Tarakai has been banned for 10 months, according to the statement. Alam has been suspended for four months and Haq for two months. Not allowed to play domestic cricket and international cricket, they have also been deprived of privileges from ACB. According to the ...*(More on P4)...(18)*

## 16 Alleged Drug Smugglers Held in a Week

KABUL - Police arrested 16 people, including a woman and an Iranian citizen, on drug smuggling charges during the past one week in different provinces, an official said on Wednesday. Ahmad Khalid Muahid, spokesman for the Criminal Justice Task Force (CJTF), said the accused were arrested at the Hamid Karzai International Airport, in Badakhshan, Nimroz, Herat, Nangarhar, Parwan and Helmand provinces. More than 274kg of heroin, 62kg of opium, 2,682kg of hashish, 11 liters of alcohol, 12 telephone sets and nine different types of vehicles were recovered from the detainees. The CJTF spokesman said an Afghan woman, 42, and her son were arrested in Jablun Siraj district of central Parwan after a tip off that the two carried drugs in their car. He said the mother and son had denied the drugs belonged to them. The woman ran for a seat on the Baghlan provincial council in 2014 elections. She worked for international and civil organizations as well. (Pajhwok)

## 20 Townships in Balkh Constructed Illegally

MAZAR-I-SHARIF - A two-day workshop on amendments to the national land policy has concluded in Mazar-i-Sharif, the capital of northern Balkh province. Government officials, who participated in the event, said the land policy was violated in the construction of many townships, grabbing of pastures and converting farmlands into residential areas. Organized by the Afghanistan Independent Land Authority (AILA), the seminar ended on Tuesday. Officials and private-sector representatives from the nine northern provinces attended it. The participants shared their opinions on amendments to the land policy which was recently unveiled by the government, Urban Development Director Eng. Dilawar Mazari told Pajhwok Afghan News. Twenty townships had been built illegally in Mazar-i-Sharif, without permission from the Ministry of Urban Development, he said, adding most of the townships were built in recreational areas or pastures. Hussain Rahmani, advisor to AILA, said the policy was in the form of a law that would pave the ground for proper use of landed property. "This policy delineates airports, roads, schools, pastures, township, etc." Rahmani said the participants conferred on changes to the land policy and shared suggestions on the issue. The proposals are to be submitted to the president for approval after being ...*(More on P4)...(20)*

## Senior Al-Qaeda Member Killed in Pakistan Drone Strike

KABUL - A "senior" al-Qaeda member was killed in a U.S. drone strike in the restive North Waziristan tribal region last week, a Pakistani intelligence official said on Tuesday. Iraqi Abdul Raheem -- in his mid 30s -- was an "important" commander of al-Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan, the official told Anadolu Agency wishing not to be named as he was not allowed to speak to media. At least eight suspected militants loyal to Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)



were also killed in the drone strike -- the first since President Donald Trump took office -- on April 26 on the outskirts of the town of Datta Khel, which borders neighboring Afghanistan. Prior to this, the U.S.'s last drone strike in Pakistan was in May 2016, when former Afghan Taliban chief Mullah Akhtar Mansour was killed in the southwestern ...*(More on P4)...(19)*

## Taliban Militant Killed while Planting Roadside Bomb

KABUL - A Taliban militant was killed as he was planting an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) in northern Balkh province of Afghanistan. The 209th Shaheen Corps of the Afghan National Army (ANA) forces in the North said the incident took place recently in Chamtal district. The source further added that the militant was busy planting the IED on a roadside when it went off prematurely, leaving the insurgent dead. The anti-government armed militant groups including the Taliban militants have not commented regarding the report so far. Taliban insurgents and militants belonging to the other insurgent groups frequently use Improvised Explosive Device (IED) as the weapon of their choice to target the security forces and government personnel but in majority of such incidents the ordinary civilians are targeted. This comes as the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) released its latest civilian casualties report last week, stating 715 civilians were killed in the first three months of 2017. UNAMA attributed 21 per cent of civilian casualties to Pro-Government Forces - 451 civilian casualties (165 dead and 286 injured). ...*(More on P4)...(22)*

## Taliban's Shadow District Chief among 11 Killed in Airstrikes

KABUL - At least eleven Taliban insurgents including the shadow district chief of the group were killed in airstrikes in north-eastern Takhar province of Afghanistan. The 209th Shaheen Corps of the Afghan National Army in a statement said the airstrikes were carried out in

the vicinity of Khwajah Bahauddin district of Takhar. The statement further added that eleven Taliban insurgents including the shadow district chief of the group identified as Mawlawi Ansarullah were killed in the airstrikes. At least six insurgents were also wounded in the air-

strikes conducted by the security forces, the 209th Shaheen Corps added. The anti-government armed militant groups including the Taliban insurgents have not commented regarding the report so far. Takhar is among the relatively calm provinces in ...*(More on P4)...(21)*

## Outlook Horoscope

### Aries (Mar. 22-Apr.20)



Your energy is uncontrollable today and you see signals to go ahead everywhere you look. But reality isn't as kind as you wish and the green lights don't tell the whole story. Your head-on approach might not be working in your favor now; in fact, the resistance you face is likely your own creation. There's no need to push so hard or go so fast.

### Taurus (Apr.21-May 20)



You have a lot on your mind today, but might choose to keep your thoughts to yourself. It's not that you're unsure of your position. Actually, the opposite may be true: you're so certain of your perspective that you have no tolerance for anyone else's. You could even be afraid that you'll instigate a fight just so you can prove your point.

### Gemini (May 21-June 20)



You appear to have a finger in nearly every pie today, and your friends might be judgmental of how you're spending your resources. They may remind you that spreading yourself too thin means you can't give your best to any one activity. On the other hand, you feel as if everyone is vying for your time and it annoys you that anyone is asking for more. Unfortunately, a gentle nudge from an ally could feel like an act of aggression now.

### Cancer (June 21-July 20)



You might feel as if your private life is too public today. You may be required to deliver a report, make an introduction or just be on display when you wish you were working quietly in a more sheltered space. Remember that you are still in complete control of what you disclose and what you keep to yourself.

### Leo (July 21-Aug. 21)



It doesn't seem to matter how much planning you put into an endeavor because there are still loose ends that defy your attempts at wrapping them up. You want to keep your pet project on track, but progress is like greased lightning today. Instead of seeing external circumstances as annoyances that must be eliminated, think like a coyote and engage your competition in play.

### Virgo (Aug. 22-Sep 22)



You don't want people to notice your moodiness, so you might go out of your way to speak in a logical manner. However, your mechanical approach makes it readily apparent that you're hiding something now, prompting others to ferret out the missing pieces by asking questions. But your current sensitivity could trigger a defensive reaction, thereby escalating a conflict.

### Libra (Sep 23-Oct. 22)



You might not be able to believe what comes out of people's mouths today. Honestly, it's as if they're not thinking before speaking. Although unpremeditated revelations can create an awkward situation now, it's not as disconcerting as being stuck with no one saying anything at all. Thankfully, common sense prevails; it's obviously simpler to modify a thought that has been said than one that hasn't.

### Scorpio (Oct.23-Nov.22)



Getting along with your friends can be a struggle today because you're unwilling to put up with anyone's inconsistencies. However, your lack of flexibility likely stems from your extreme level of self-criticism, and it's less stressful to judge others than yourself. Of course, there's no reason to compromise high standards when it comes to production or personal interactions.

### Sagittarius (Nov.23-Dec.20)



You're more than willing to rearrange your day in order to accommodate your creative instincts. Although you might be struck by a flash of inspiration concerning a current project, it's tough to set aside your previous commitments to follow an out-of-the-box idea today. Nevertheless, pursuing your passion is worth a try, even if you must stir up a bit of conflict along the way.

### Capricorn (Dec.21-Jan19)



Your coworkers seem on edge today, as if they have lost patience with you. But you are quickly irritated with their attitude and might not hesitate to let them know of your displeasure. However, you're moving through tricky territory now. It's likely that someone else's short temper originates with your unwillingness to acknowledge your own shortcomings.

### Aquarius (Jan 20-Feb.18)



You might think you can successfully make your schedule up as you go along today. Unfortunately, there's a severe price to pay for winging it now and you're much better off to make a plan and stick with it. But you can't put the work off; you must start early to gain the maximum benefits. Even if you run into complications, keep returning to your original intentions.

### Pisces (Feb.19-Mar.20)



A close friend or partner may surprise you with his or her criticism today. Although you might not expect this kind of feedback, remain open to the silver lining behind the storm cloud. Author Bryant McGill wrote, "We are never taught more deeply and more truthfully than by pain." Instead of taking anyone's advice as a slap in the face, acknowledge where you can improve your game.

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58				59					60			
61				62					63			

**Across**

1. Couch, 5. Burn maliciously, 10. Heredity unit, 14. Dainty, 15. French school, 16. Out of control, 17. Responsibility, 19. Disgorge, 20. Paraphernalia, 21. Opaque gems, 22. Hides, 23. C2H5OH, 25. Consumer of food, 27. Make lace, 28. Peculiarities, 31. Ancient Hebrew vestment, 34. Any animal with no feet, 35. Feline, 36. Let go, 37. Expels, 38. Headquarters, 39. Point, 40. Long for, 41. Automaton, 42. Light opera, 44. Passenger vehicle, 45. Tether, 46. A decorative musical accompaniment, 50. Whinny, 52. Excrete, 54. Ghost's cry, 55. District, 56. Letterhead, 58. A crumbling earthy deposit, 59. Lubricated, 60. If not, 61. Anagram of "Sees", 62. Frighten, 63. Noxious plant,

**Down**

1. Talked, 2. Course around a star or planet, 3. Grime, 4. French for "Friend", 5. Part of a tea service, 6. In base 8, 7. Agitate, 8. Termination of operations, 9. Female chicken, 10. A ring that seals, 11. Experimental, 12. Person, place or thing, 13. Anagram of "Seek", 18. Testicle, 22. Anagram of "Ties", 24. At the peak of, 26. Contributes, 28. A drama set to music, 29. Convenience, 30. Flower stalk, 31. Cocoyam, 32. Brace, 33. Hotelkeepers, 34. Indifferent, 37. Collections, 38. Pear variety, 40. "Sure", 41. Zest, 43. Wine and dine, 44. Next to, 46. Discourage, 47. Poplar tree, 48. Like the Vikings, 49. Trifled (with), 50. What a person is called, 51. Historical periods, 53. Big party, 56. Mayday, 57. Not used

**Yesterday's Solution**

S	L	O	O	P	H	A	Z	E	G	R	A	M
H	O	U	R	I	A	M	J	A	R	O	D	E
O	C	I	E	T	V	E	N	I	T	I	D	O
D	I	S	S	I	D	E	N	C	E	N	C	E
F	U	N	R	A	D	O	N					
T	I	S	S	I	S	E						
O	R	I	E	P	R	I	E	S	I	S		
M	I	L	D	E	R	A	S	I	S	O	G	I
E	S	T	A	B	L	I	S	H				
T	O	U	G	H								
S	I	E	G	E	S	O	S					
L	I	C	O	R								
T	O	T	E									
E	R	A	S									
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because, caller, cheer, clear, clown, dance, devotion, drive, electricity, environment, escort, facts, green, groove, increase, limit, lint, listen, magic, match, media, moose, name, nest, package, pies, point, police, prison, regardless, school, slow

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