

Taliban Still in Control of Parts of Kunduz City: Locals

KUNDUZ CITY - Taliban are still in control of several parts of Kunduz City, residents said on Friday, contradicting security officials' claim that the entire city has been cleared of insurgents. On the night between Sunday and Monday, hundreds of Taliban gunmen stormed Kunduz City from various directions, capturing the strategic city after a few hours of clashes with security forces. Earlier, Interior Ministry spokesman Sediq Siddiqui told Pajhwok Afghan News security forces had launched a special operation on Wednesday night to drive militants from the city. He said the security forces



were able to take control of the entire city during the operation that continued until 3:30am. NATO forces also provided air support, Siddiqui added. But Mohammad Anwar, a resident of Bandar Imam Sahib locality, a number of city areas were still under Taliban control. *... (More on P4)... (19)*

Mahmoud Saikal New Afghan Ambassador to UN

WASHINGTON - Seasoned diplomat Mahmoud Saikal has been appointed as Afghanistan's new ambassador to the United Nations. With over two decades of experience with government, international organizations, private sector and civil society, he replaces Dr. Zahir Tanin. Tanin has been appointed as special representative of the UN secretary general and head of the UN Mission in Kosovo. A formal change of guard took place in New York on Thursday in the

presence of Chief Executive Dr. Abdullah, who is attending the 70th session of the UN General Assembly. On the occasion, Dr. Abdullah thanked Tanin for his services to Afghanistan and mentioned his achievements during his long ambassadorial tenure. He congratulated Tanin on his appointment as SRSG and introduced Saikal as new Afghanistan's permanent representative to the world body. Previously, Saikal served as special representative and senior advisor to the

CEO, deputy minister of foreign affairs and ambassador to Australia and New Zealand. Saikal has been instrumental in negotiation of various agreements, including the 2014 deal on the formation of the unity government and the Joint Declaration on Regional Peace and Stability, an initiative launched in Kabul in 2013. He was also part of negotiations of the Afghanistan Compact, which was launched at the London International Conference in 2006, as well as the 2006 Afghanistan-NATO Declaration. *(Pajhwok)*

Khost Doctors Threaten Strike over Withheld Salaries

KHOST CITY - Doctors and other staff at government-run hospitals in southeastern Khost province on Friday threatened to go on strike in protest against non-payment of salaries over the past six months. The Union of Doctors in Khost said no health worker had received salary since the international health aid non-governmental organization, HealthNet, had stopped its activities in the province. Six months ago, the HealthNet lost bid for healthcare services in provinces after



the Public Health Ministry decided to give the contract to another bid winner NGO. Khost Union of Doctors president Dr. Noorullah Noori told a press conference here that their three months salaries had been pending with the previous NGO and three months with the current contractor. He said the number of doctors and health workers in the provincial capital and districts was above 700 and none of them had so far received salaries. *... (More on P4)... (20)*

Taliban Leader Says Afghan Insurgency Strong

KABUL - The new leader of the Afghan Taliban said Friday that the capture of the northern city of Kunduz this week was a "symbolic victory" that showed the strength of the insurgency - even though the Taliban pulled out of the city after three days. Still, the three-day occupation of Kunduz was "a historic event," which was "celebrated by the ordinary people of the city," claimed Mullah Akhtar Mansoor. Mansoor, who spoke to The Associated Press over the telephone from an unknown location, was appointed the Taliban leader in August, after revelations that the group's founder, Mullah Muhammad Omar, had died more than two years ago. The Taliban captured Kunduz in a blitz Monday and held it until Afghan government forces pushed them out on Thursday. The fall and three-day occupation of this important city of 300,000 residents, along a strategic road to the border with Tajikistan, was a huge boost for Mansoor whose leadership of the Taliban had been questioned from the start. At the same time, it was a humbling defeat for Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and raised questions over whether the U.S.-trained military was capable of defending the country now that most coalition forces have withdrawn. "The victory is a symbolic victory for us, and moreover, it is also a historical event which will be remembered," Mansoor said. "People who said we were a small force with an unchosen leader can now see how wrong they were about the potential and strength my people have." The Taliban have been fighting to overthrow the Kabul government since their 1996-2001 regime was toppled in a U.S.-led invasion. Kunduz was the first provincial capital and urban area they have taken since then. Ghani has launched an investigation into how the Taliban, with only a few hundred gunmen, could have overwhelmed the city defended by a few thousand government troops. A statement from Ghani's office on Friday said initial reports indicated the Taliban had looted and burned government property, as well as offices of non-government organizations such as the U.N, shops and media outlets. *... (More on P4)... (22)*

Afghani & Gold Down, Food Prices Remain Stable in Kabul

KABUL - The Afghan currency and gold prices dipped while rates of other items remain unchanged during the outgoing week in the capital Kabul, market sources said on Thursday. Mohammad Fawad, a jeweller in Timor Shahi area, told Pajhwok Afghan News the price of one gram of Arabian gold decreased from 2,100afghanis to 2,015af. The same quantity of the Russian variety fell from 1,650af to 1,600af. The Afghan currency slightly decreased in value against the

US dollar, said money-changer Ahmad Shah, who put the buying rate of one dollar at 64.20af. He added 1,000 Pakistani rupees accounted for 616af. Last week's exchange value of the dollar stood at 64.10af and 1,000 Pakistani rupees at 615af. Rates of food items remained steady. Fazzal Rahman, Food Traders' Union head, said a 24-kg bag of Pakistani rice cost 1,650af, a 49-kg sack of sugar 1,700af and a 16 liters of tin of Shaista ghee 960af. He added a kg of Madina green tea was

priced at 210af, the same quantity of African black tea at 240af and a 49-kg sack of Pakistani flour at 1,350af - same rates as last week's. But a retailer in the Dahn-i-Bagh area of Kabul, Ahmad Omaid, sold a 49-kg bag of flour for 1,400af, a 49-kg sack of sugar for 1,800af and a 24-kg bag of rice for 1,800af. He sold a 16-liter tin of Shaista ghee for 1,100af, a kilo of African black tea for 260af and the same quantity of Madina green tea for 250af - higher than wholesale prices. *... (More on P4)... (23)*

Taliban Militants Committed Gang Rapes and Mass Murders in Kunduz

KUNDUZ CITY - The Amnesty International said Thursday that the Taliban militants have committed gang rapes and mass murders in northern Kunduz province of Afghanistan. Citing testimonies by the local residents and women rights activists, Amnesty International's Afghanistan Researcher Horia Mosadiq said "The harrowing accounts we've received paint a picture of a reign of terror during the Taliban's brutal capture of Kunduz this week. The multiple credible reports of killings, rapes and other horrors

meted out against the city's residents must prompt the Afghan authorities to do more now to protect civilians, in particular in areas where more fighting appears imminent." Mosadiq further added "Heavy fighting continues as Afghan forces try to regain full control and restore law and order in Kunduz. Protecting civilians from further onslaught and serious abuses at the hands of the Taliban is of the utmost importance." "Many humanitarian agencies have bravely continued their work in and around Kunduz over the past days. They must be granted access to carry out their life-saving work. With thousands forced from their homes, it is also crucial that all parties agree to a humanitarian corridor that allows civilians to leave the city safely," she said. According to the rights organization, the Taliban group had also prepared a 'hit list' with one woman who was providing assistance to victims of domestic violence in Kunduz and escaped to safety in a nearby province told Amnesty

... *(More on P4)... (21)*

US C-130 Plane Crashes in Nangarhar

JALALABAD - A C-130 U.S. military transport plane crashed on Thursday in Nangarhar province. According to Nangarhar province police the crash took place Thursday night at the airport of Jalalabad city of Nangarhar province. A U.S. Colonel confirmed the incident and said that eleven people including five civilian contractors were killed in the crash. The cause of the crash is not yet clear but a U.S. senior military official



said an investigation is underway. According to NATO information currently around 1,000 coalition forces including U.S and Poland forces are based the eastern Afghanistan beside Afghan security forces. *(Tolonews)*

Outlook Horoscope

Aries (Mar. 22-Apr. 20)

You're cosmically disposed to be a pioneer, bravely exploring unknown territories and eagerly pursuing the rush of doing things for the first time. Today's fidgety Gemini Moon prompts you to pile on even more activities to your already hectic schedule just for the thrill of it. Although you may thrive on blasting off in several different directions at once.

Taurus (Apr. 21-May 20)

A realistic assessment of what you need versus what you want produces some pretty interesting results today. You understand that life is less complicated when you get by with just the basics, but you're unwilling to make the adjustments necessary to change your lifestyle. Thankfully, no immediate action is required now; starting with a fresh perspective is enough.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Making an important decision can be challenging today because the dualistic Gemini Moon has you seeing double. Even after you make your choice, a single goal morphs into two very distinct possibilities -- just like the mythical Hydra who regrew two more heads each time one was cut off. Fortunately, there's no need to answer every question posed to you now; some dilemmas are better left unresolved.

Cancer (June 21-July 20)

You probably sound more certain today than you actually feel. Although you may be inwardly lost in self-doubt, your coworkers won't realize that anything is wrong. Ironically, you're likely to receive support from others and be more successful professionally if you share your current concerns now, rather than trying to hide your insecurities.

Leo (July 21-Aug. 21)

Although you Lions often prefer playing in a pack, you might want to venture off on your own today. The truth is you need to maintain your autonomy or you will feel trapped by the very same people you want in your life. Don't sacrifice your individuality just to be accepted and loved. You will likely need more freedom, rather than less, over the days ahead.

Virgo (Aug. 22-Sep 22)

Maintaining your sense of purpose is a struggle today, even if you have a very clear sense of what you need to do. Nevertheless, circumstances will likely pull you in several directions at once while you prefer to drill down on the details with a singular focus. Simultaneously, responsibilities demand that you spread yourself thinner to cover the workload. You don't do anyone any favors promising more than is humanly possible.

Libra (Sep 23-Oct. 22)

You may secretly worry that your expectations for the future will be impossible to meet. However, adopting a common sense approach actually enables you to live out your dreams. But this isn't an overnight project; your long-range planning might take months, or even years, to manifest. If you find yourself growing anxious or restless now, remember the old adage, "Rome wasn't built in a day."

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 22)

Sometimes you dive into an emotional situation with such abandon that you lose all sense of perspective. However, you're capable of being fully engaged without being hooked by someone else's melodrama today. Your rational approach rewards you with a cool head now, so others may lean on you even more in their times of need.

Sagittarius (Nov. 23-Dec. 20)

You are a pro at gazing far off into the distance, but sometimes miss seeing what's right under your nose. A close friend or partner may overwhelm you with too much information about something that's occurring now. Although people might go to great lengths to change your opinion, you can't help but think that the current events are merely a distraction from your more evolved perspective.

Capricorn (Dec. 21-Jan 19)

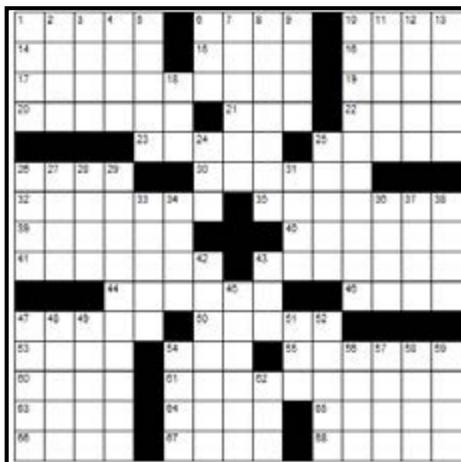
Spending the day talking around the water cooler seems like more fun than actually performing your job today, but idle chatter only leads to major trouble. Thankfully, the loquacious Gemini Moon's visit to your 6th House of Daily Routine is stabilized by the willful Sun, reminding you of your long list of obligations. Nevertheless, it's challenging to settle down if you are busy socializing.

Aquarius (Jan 20-Feb. 18)

You are buzzing with so many creative ideas today that your innovative thinking could lead you in endless circles. You must slow down and take the time to turn your brilliant thoughts into bold action. However, initiating a new project doesn't ensure success now; you need to follow through on every detail to finish whatever you start. Ultimately.

Pisces (Feb. 19-Mar. 20)

There is so much going on around you now that you might attempt to lose yourself in a daydream for a while. Unfortunately, you are involved in too many activities for you to get very far with your escape. In fact, you may be drawn from one project to another, without having enough time to settle into any of them. Instead of working yourself up into a state of high anxiety.



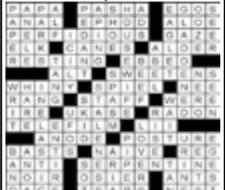
Across

- 1. Everglades bird, 6. Beige, 10. A heavy open wagon, 14. Hack, 15. "Comes and ", 16. Double-reed woodwind, 17. Miscellany, 19. Anagram of "Snob", 20. Black Sea port, 21. Wander aimlessly, 22. Six-stringed instrument, 23. Surpass, 25. Greek letter, 26. Stepped, 30. Beginning, 32. The largest flatfish, 35. Pinna, 39. Occurring together, 40. Unsaturated alcohol, 41. Improvised, 43. Timidity, 44. Large lizard, 46. French for "Head", 47. Manicurist's board, 50. 6 6 6 6, 53. Sandwich shop, 54. Eastern Standard Time, 55. Kleenex, 60. Modify, 61. Instructions, 63. Small amount, 64. Wicked, 65. Spritlike, 66. Breezed through, 67. Between the head and shoulders, 68. Tablet.

Down

- 1. Reflected sound, 2. Well-behaved, 3. Boorish, 4. Hens make them, 5. Not those, 6. Conceit, 7. Old man, 8. Fine or decorative clothing, 9. Utilized, 10. Handy, 11. Agitated, 12. Android, 13. Electrical pioneer, 18. Latin for «Peace», 24. Small portable bed, 25. Grimy, 26. As a result, 27. Deliver a tirade, 28. Hodgepodge, 29. Demoralized, 31. Spurt, 33. Swamplike, 34. Two-toed sloth, 36. Algonquian Indian, 37. Misplaced, 38. If not, 42. Inactive, 43. A single-reed woodwind, 45. Azotic, 47. Swelling under the skin, 48. Army doctor, 49. High society, 51. And so forth, 52. Locations, 54. Biblical garden, 56. Window ledge, 57. Couch, 58. Module, 59. Feudal worker, 62. Antlered animal.

Yesterday's Solution



- ahead, artist, bran, bridge, confirmation, consent, crisis, debacle, deuce, drain, enough, feet, grab, green, income, labor, large, laugh, level, lowest, market, military, moll, mundane, opportunity, pair, public, right, roan, satisfaction, search.

