

(1) Taliban, Afghan...

According to a Taliban figure, the first round of the negotiations, which started in early September, "went positively and was held in a trouble-free atmosphere." The second meeting, he added, was held early this month.

The secret meetings come at a time when Afghanistan has sent hundreds of troops to Lashkargah, the provincial capital of the southern province of Helmand, in a bid to purge the strategic city of the Taliban militants. The troops were sent there from the capital Kabul and the nearby provinces to launch a "clearance operation."

During the past few months, Afghan security forces have been trying to foil attacks by the group in Helmand and Kunduz, a move that underscores the Taliban's sustained push into urban centers.

The government troops are currently engaged in heavy fighting against the Taliban to recapture Kunduz, which fell to them on October 3 for the second time in a year.

The Taliban started the attacks against the Afghan government in 1994 and managed to overthrow it in 1996. During the next five years, it held power only to be ousted following the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. Since then, the militant group has resorted to insurgency and has gone from strength to strength despite the presence of foreign troops.

In spite of a previous pledge to withdraw all US troops from Afghanistan by the end of his presidency, US President Barack Obama announced last October that Washington would keep thousands of troops in the country after he leaves office in 2017. (Press TV)

(2) Azizi Bank ...

nations and diversified business groups. Azizi Bank earned the fame to be recognized as the only banking institution from Afghanistan to be awarded at this prestigious summit.

Abdul Sattar Murad, Afghan Minister of Economic Affairs and Munir Ghiyasi, Charge D' Affaires, Embassy of the Afghanistan in Colombo, Sri Lanka were the Chief Guests along with the Minister of International Trade, Sri Lanka, Parliamentary Members and other dignitaries from the 8 nations.

Speaking on the occasion, Azizi Bank CEO Dr. Mohammad Salem Omaid reiterated the bank success endeavors over the last 10 years and its future aspirations to become the best quality Afghanistan Bank with world class services. (PR)

(3) Abdullah Holds...

Adviser to Department of International Cooperation at the Ministry of Education Dr. Salem bin Mohammed Al-Malik, Higher Education Minister Dr. Fari-da Moman and Minister of Education Asadullah Hanif Balkhi.

Abdullah also met Saudi Finance Minister Dr. Ibrahim bin Abdul Aziz Al-Assaf and discussed bilateral rela-

tions between the two countries, especially in economic and investment fields. (Pajhwok)

(4) Senators Too ...

budget should be disqualified. According to the Ministry of Finance, most of the budgetary units spent 30 to 40 percent of their development budget in the past 10 months of the current fiscal year.

A Meshrano Jirga member, Mohammad Asif Seddiqi, told today's session that ministers who spent small amount of their budgets should be disqualified and sent to judiciary organs in order others could learn a lesson.

He asked the president to sack authorities unable to implement their financial plans.

The Afghan people right now were in need of development budgets more than any time before and non-implementation of projects was a great treason, he said. (Pajhwok)

(5) MPs Urge ...

pay 700 million afis in outstanding bills. They said the debtors had failed to clear their bills of two months.

DABS spokesman Wahidullah Tawhidi unveiled a list of 73 individuals to media outlets who owed more than 100,000 afis to DABS.

Senator Mohammad Hassan Hottak hailed DABS move of disclosing the list of defaulters and told today's session: "This money belongs to the national treasury and the officials concerned must pay it without any delay."

He said representatives in parliament should support DABS and press defaulters to clear their dues.

Jumma Din Gayanwal, another Meshrano Jirga member said, "The non-payment of power bills is treason and an act of stealing public purse, all people disclosed in the list have the ability to pay their bills, they should pay them as soon as possible."

Another public representative, Latif Zhwandai, welcomed the power utility for publishing the list of defaulters and said the parliament supported DABS in collecting its arrears.

Meshrano Jirga chairman Fazal Hadi Muslimyar and a number of other members of the upper house also urged the power defaulters to pay their bills. (Pajhwok)

(6) Riyadh Renews ...

Abdullah, who travelled to Saudi Arabia on Monday at the head of a high-level delegation, said Afghanistan being a victim of terrorism had rendered huge sacrifices and there was need for regional cooperation and close coordination in the war against the menace.

He added the national unity government remained committed to durable peace and stability in the country. Cooperation from the Saudi government was needed in achieving the goal, he believed.

On the issue of passports, the CEO urged Saudi officials to accept Pakistani passports for Afghan citizens and con-

vert them into Afghan identification and travel documents. (Pajhwok)

(7) MoD Vows...

working on the ongoing Shafaq Operation to clear all areas under the control of insurgents during [upcoming] winter," the Defense Ministry spokesman Dawlat Waziri said.

It is said that Taliban's recent military shifts and government's failure of tackling the group drawn strong criticism from the Afghan political elites and the public with many blasting the Afghan security institutions for what they call poor leadership and a weak management of the ongoing turmoil that has rattled the peaceful life of Afghans in multiple fronts.

"Taliban militants takeover districts, but government still has no plan to retake the areas from them," said head of parliament's defense committee Hashim Alokozai.

"Whenever you keep the forces on standby, they leave implications on their moral, they lose their moral and become weak," former deputy minister of interior Mirza Mohammad Yarmand said.

It is said that the Taliban outfits have sustained their firm control over Baghlan's Dahnae-e-Ghori, Gul Tapa, Aqdash and Kalbad districts and some areas of Chahardara district while the group also controls Kunduz's Dasht-e-Archi and Qala-e-Zal districts. (Tolnews)

(8) UNAMA Calls...

that killed 85 civilians and injured more than four hundred.

The report, released on Tuesday, entitled "Attack on a Peaceful Demonstration in Kabul, 23 July 2016," reviews the challenging context of the demonstration, the planning and preparedness of Afghan Security Forces, their behavior during the demonstration and immediate response to the attack and its aftermath.

It raises, where relevant, human rights concerns for the Afghan authorities. The report also discusses the risk mitigation measures that were taken by the Afghan Security Forces and demonstration organizers. It is not intended to replace the Government's own criminal

A protest body known as the 'Enlightening Movement' organized a large-scale peaceful demonstration in Kabul on 23 July, at the end of which two suicide bombers detonated their explosives' belts against the demonstrators, the second one misfired and the attacker was shot by Afghan Security Forces. Almost all of the casualties were male and from the Hazara community which is predominantly Shia Muslim. The report concludes not only that the 23 July attack deliberately targeted civilians with the apparent aim of spreading terror amongst the civilian population but also was a serious violation of international humanitarian law, which may amount to a war crime. The attack was the deadliest single civilian

casualty incident in Afghanistan since UNAMA started its civilian casualties documentation in 2009.

The report notes that the attack appears, disturbingly, to have deliberately targeted persons belonging to a specific ethnic and religious community. Daesh, also known as Islamic State, claimed responsibility for the attack, employing language that advocated religious hatred and violence. The attack also had a serious negative impact on the demonstrators' rights to freedom of opinion and expression, as well as peaceful assembly.

UNAMA offers recommendations in its report to promote respect for the fundamental human rights of all Afghans, including the rights of religious and ethnic communities, as well as the need for the completion and implementation of a strategy to prevent violent extremism.

The Mission reiterates that international humanitarian law prohibits deliberate attacks against civilians and civilian property, including places of worship. (Tolnews)

(9) Taliban Appoints...

Officially, Iran has never confirmed the Taliban's visits; however, the Iranian media close to the security establishment confirmed such visits on several occasions.

According to The Express Tribune, a senior Taliban leader previously claimed that their former leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour had paid several visits to the Islamic Republic.

Mansour was killed in a US drone strike after he entered Pakistan from Iran in May this year. (Tolnews)

(10) Expo Held...

and medium enterprises to meet local demand and create jobs is impressive, and a crucial step towards the self-sufficiency of Afghanistan."

USAID Acting Mission Director Tamara Halmrast-Sanchez said that rapid growth in manufacturing, construction and the services sectors in Afghanistan offer many opportunities for business start-ups.

"USAID helps Afghan entrepreneurs to seize these opportunities and prosper. We believe that the private sector, working hand-in-hand with public institutions, is the key to long-term economic growth and prosperity in Afghanistan," she said.

The USAID ABADE program supports public-private alliances to encourage sustained business growth and create new jobs by mitigating the risks of investment. Under the program, partners in small and medium enterprises develop plans for growth and commit their own resources to implement the plans.

USAID provides them with capital equipment and technical assistance. Since its inception in October 2012, the five-year, \$105 million USAID ABADE program has developed more than 297 public-private alliances with Afghan small and medium enterprises with a

combined value of over USD 292 million, resulting in increased sales and employment. (Pajhwok)

(11) 2,000 Jawzjan...

alongside security forces to secure people's lives and ensure security. Alti was once attacked by insurgents but he was able to defend himself using a weapon. Alti said he had a weapon of his own and would not hesitate from fighting against Taliban even in insecure areas of Afghanistan.

Jawzjan Governor Maulvi Lotfullah Azizi expressed gratitude to the people's decision and analysts instead of thanking and encouraging our brave soldiers who defend the country at the cost of their lives, they weaken their morale."

He said some elements spoke on TV screens criticizing the security forces and the 1st vice president, Gen. Abdul Rasheed Dostum's efforts at ensuring security and fighting terrorism. (Pajhwok)

(12) Taliban Fail ...

ment process had been initiated to strengthen the ranks of security forces in Helmand.

"Only the youth of Helmand can bring to an end the conflict and that's why we have started recruiting the youth in police and military," he said.

Brig. Gen. Wali Mohammad Ahmadzai, 215 Maiwand Military Corps commander in Helmand, told the gathering that additional security forces had reached the province and a positive change in the situation would come soon.

He said the security forces had devised plans for defeating the rebels and the Taliban had no longer the ability to make advance.

Gul Mohammad, a resident of Lashkargah, told Pajhwok Afghan News the past one week had been tense and people endured many hardships. (Pajhwok)

(13) Taliban Impede ...

drive, but there is no response yet" he added.

Nasar added the vaccination had been ongoing in 27 districts of Badakhshan for the past five days to cover about 255,545 children. Deworming tablets will also be given to 195,296 children between 2-5 years of age.

He added: "We have managed to conduct vaccination drives despite is poor security in the province. (Pajhwok)

(14) Abdullah ...

rently busy spearheading a military campaign against Taliban militants in Ghormach district of Faryab province. A media report said Dostum was returning from overseeing fighting in Ghormach district when Taliban militants ambushed his convoy, but the VP escaped unhurt. (Pajhwok)

(15) 2 Killed in...

attacker's was also killed. Col. Abdul Samad Zalmi, the crime

branch chief, said one person was killed in the incident. He did not give further details. (Pajhwok)

(16) 8 Insurgents...

Last night, he rejoined the Taliban with weapons and motorcycles." Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said that the fighters had captured three police check-points in Sardara village. (Pajhwok)

(17) EU to Address ...

published after the meeting, EU foreign ministers called for an end of all military flights over Aleppo and an immediate cessation of hostilities to be monitored by a strong and transparent mechanism. (Xinhua)

(18) Trump Invites...

convention speech, Smith accused Clinton of lying to the families of the four Americans who were killed in the 2012 attack on the U.S. diplomatic facility in Benghazi, Libya. Smith said Clinton, secretary of state at the time, falsely attributed the attacks to a spontaneous protest over an anti-Islamic video rather than a planned assault. The speech, which left some Republican convention delegates in tears, concluded with Smith saying Clinton should go to prison. (Reuters)

(19) Russia, U.S....

opposition from the Jabhat Fateh al-Sham militants, also known as the Nusra Front, and other terrorist groups, a commitment that Moscow has blamed Washington for failing to fulfill. (Xinhua)

(20) Ultra-Nationalist ...

some are dissatisfied with President Vladimir Putin's handling of the war in Ukraine and believe he has not gone nearly far enough.

"War with Ukraine is inevitable, but so far we have done only half of the task," says Alexander Dugin. (Fox News)

(21) Russia, Syria...

Russian Defense Ministry Monday announced a pause in strikes against rebel-controlled areas in the city of Aleppo for eight hours from 8 a.m. (0500 GMT) till 4 p.m. (1300 GMT) local time on Oct. 20. (Xinhua)

(22) Up to 1 Mln...

a limited number of gas masks being supplied.

According to estimates, some 200,000 people could be forced to flee their homes in the first weeks of the long-awaited military campaign launched on Oct. 17 by Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi. (Xinhua)

(23) France to...

Iraq would likely push militants to retreat to their Syrian stronghold of Raqqa.

"The coalition have to assume its responsibilities. After Mosul, it's Raqqa and skipping that would be a serious mistake," Ayrault said. (Xinhua)

Outlook Horoscope

Aries (Mar. 22-Apr.20)



Your current wanderlust has an uplifting effect on your entire life, offering the possibility of new friendships and even romantic love. Your spirit is more adventurous now, both in emotional and financial matters, as Venus in happy-go-lucky Sagittarius sparks your ignition. However, there may be a darker side to all this lovely news if your enthusiasm encourages you to take on commitments that you can't fulfill.

Taurus (Apr.21-May 20)



You can be quite conservative and determined when you're working to meet your basic needs, especially while the Moon is still in your obstinate sign. However, Luna's shift into adaptable Gemini changes your attitude and lifts your spirit. Your caution is further eroded when Venus sashays into extravagant Sagittarius, encouraging you to spend time, money or energy even when the returns are unclear.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)



A weight has been lifted from your shoulders and you're eager to channel your newly discovered exuberance into a relationship as flirtatious Venus surfs into your 7th House of Others. Nevertheless, you know that hard choices still need to be made if you're to succeed in the Department of Love. Thankfully, the planet of pleasure becomes a major player in your world now, helping you attract people who open your heart as well as your mind.

Cancer (June 21-July 20)



Emotional satisfaction is tangible now and your love light radiates even brighter as you gaze toward the future. Your energies shift and the clouds dissipate as the Sun leaves the dark waters of Scorpio and heads for the adventurous lands and blue skies of Sagittarius. Reconnecting with your inner child rekindles a sense of spontaneity and joy.

Leo (July 21-Aug. 21)



Although people may arrive bearing gifts today, their offerings are in the form of opportunities, not packages. However, you must pay close attention or you could miss a wonderful chance to improve the quality of your life. Nevertheless, it's your heartfelt experiences that put you in closer touch with your dreams now.

Virgo (Aug. 22-Sep 22)



Settling into the comforts of family activities brings you great pleasure today, counterbalancing your current busyness at work. Sweet Venus takes up residence in farseeing Sagittarius and your 4th House of Domestic Conditions, sweetening your experiences at home by helping you look beyond the current limitations and visualize a more rewarding future. You're no longer constrained by the old list of rules. Believing is seeing.

Libra (Sep 23-Oct. 22)



Your psychic antenna is readjusting to the changing cosmic landscape as you tune into new interests today. Friendly Venus slips into your 3rd House of Immediate Environment, amplifying your curiosity in people, places and things. Your dreams can motivate you to reach too far, but don't be too hard on yourself if you fall short of your lofty expectations. Although you want more than reality is offering now.

Scorpio (Oct.23-Nov.22)



A fresh round of optimism helps you cast aside doubts, inspiring you to dream about bigger rewards ahead. It makes sense to pay more attention to your finances while enriching Venus visits your 2nd House of Resources. Luckily, you can garner recognition that pumps up your self-esteem and reinvigorates the flow of money-making ideas.

Sagittarius (Nov.23-Dec.20)



Satisfaction might be within reach today but you must take the initiative before receiving the fruits of your labor. Happily, beautiful Venus waltzes into your sign, inviting you to open the curtains wide and let the world in on your secret. Exhilaration replaces fear when you're not withholding your true emotions. When you feel good, everyone around you will benefit from the joy you exude. No doubt, laughter is the best medicine, no matter what ails you.

Capricorn (Dec.21-Jan19)



You might want to treat this workday as an occasion to play. Your mind is set on less professional goals now because vivacious Venus enters cavalier Sagittarius, lighting up your heart with sweet thoughts. Nevertheless, you appear quite serious on the surface, confusing others as they misread your intentions. Although you might not reveal your desire for affection, attending to your own needs is a high priority.

Aquarius (Jan 20-Feb.18)



Your professional ambitions are not as captivating now that magnetic Venus floats into adventurous Sagittarius and your 11th House of Networking. Instead of striving to climb the ladder of success, you want to participate in group-oriented activities. You could be the life of the party as you're drawn into social situations where you can have fun instead of just furthering your career.

Pisces (Feb.19-Mar.20)



The pleasure of pursuit takes center stage as your search for memorable experiences becomes as important as their discovery. But persuasive Venus moves into freedom-loving Sagittarius and your 10th House of Public Status, sending you on a wild goose chase if you set your sites too high. Your artistic abilities and people skills garner new respect that increases your sense of self-worth, making you even more popular.

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-62.

Across

- 1. First Greek letter, 6. Smog, 10. Anagram of "Sage", 14. Pertaining to burning, 15. Dogfish, 16. Half-moon tide, 17. Sound of contempt, 18. Lease, 19. Unit of pressure, 20. Live through, 22. Lazily, 23. Shade tree, 24. Ascends, 26. Having a woven pattern, 30. Licorice-like flavor, 32. Interprets written material, 33. Replaced, 37. Backside, 38. Enumerates, 39. Container weight, 40. Skeeters, 42. Sad song, 43. Not rural, 44. Winner, 45. Large long-necked wading bird, 47. Female sib, 48. Fired a weapon, 49. Stationery, 56. Citrus fruit, 57. Chocolate cookie, 58. Expenditure, 59. A Freudian stage, 60. "Do ... others...", 61. Music genre, 62. Numerous, 63. Sow, 64. Leave out.

Down

- 1. Church alcove, 2. Wildcat, 3. Brace, 4. Employ, 5. She plays roles, 6. Seraglio, 7. So be it, 8. Brass component, 9. Diners, 10. Disinfectant, 11. Crystal-lined rock, 12. Noblemen, 13. Agile, 21. Type, 25. Belief, 26. Apothecary's weight, 27. Relating to aircraft, 28. Catholic church service, 29. In a sufficient manner, 30. Malicious burning, 31. Catches, 33. Falafel bread, 34. Sourish, 35. Therefore, 36. A whitetail, 38. Defamatory, 41. A large vase, 42. Undress, 44. Compete, 45. Fine dinnerware, 46. Ancient empire, 47. Got up, 48. Close violently, 50. Sea eagle, 51. French for "Head", 52. Body of a ship, 53. Decorative case, 54. Matured, 55. An amount of medicine.

Yesterday's Solution

Small crossword puzzle grid.

arena, basis, borrow, cans, compel, compulsion, conspiracy, dear, drive, earth, embrace, empty, greed, idiocy, indicate, locate, location, maim, manage, memory, owner, pain, pest, planet, point, ports, signature, simple, sound, stick, system, think, vapor.

Large crossword puzzle grid with letters filled in.