

Strategic Areas in Kunduz Cleared of Taliban

An army commander in Kunduz says security forces have retaken two areas which were key strongholds of the Taliban in the past two years.



KUNDUZ CITY - Army officials in Kunduz said strategic locations in Dasht-e-Archi district - in the south of the province - have been cleared of Taliban and that local residents are slowly returning to their normal lives.

Hamid Saifi, commander of the second battalion of the first regiment in Kunduz, said Tapa-e-Muhibullah and Se Rahi Mohammad Alam were the two main strongholds of the Taliban in Dasht-e-Archi district over the past two years. He said the areas are now under the control of the security forces and that many routes into the area have been closed by soldiers.

"We retook the Se Rahi Mohammad Alam and Tapa-e-Mohibullah areas. We call on government and aid organizations to help those civilians who are living in poverty and are living in areas between the two sides. They need emergency aid," he said.

"The battle went in to other areas. We want peace in our region," said Abdullah, a resident of the district.

"We have been provided with a bigger space for our shop and need things as the battle has moved on from our area. We want the areas to be maintained after they have been cleared of militants now," said Mohammad, a shopkeeper in Dasht-e-Archi.

Soldiers said the military operation continues in order to remove all threats against civilians in the district. (Tolonews)

Taliban Local Leaders and Militants Suffer Heavy Casualties

LASHKARGHA - The Taliban militants and their local leaders suffered heavy casualties during the ongoing operations in southern Helmand province of Afghanistan. According to the local government officials, the Taliban insurgents suffered the latest casualties during the operations of the Afghan forces in Sangin, Nad-e-Ali, and Washir districts. The provincial government media office in a statement confirmed that 29 Taliban insurgents including their local commanders were killed during the operations. The statement further added that the operations are being conducted under the name of Maiwand-70 and as a result at ...*(More on P4)...*(18)

9 Afghan Soldiers, 17 Militants Killed in Farah Battle

FARAH CITY - Nine Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers and 17 Taliban insurgents have been killed during a clash in the Pushtrod district of western Farah province, an official said on Wednesday. Nasir Mehri, the governor's spokesman, said the militants attacked an ANA check-post in Belandi area on Tuesday midnight. He said nine soldiers were killed and four others wounded in the three hours clash. With the support of air power, the fallen check-post was recaptured and at least 17 insurgents were killed. The bodies of the slain militants are still lying at the site of the gun battle, he added. A resident of the area, ...*(More on P4)...*(19)

Rebel Groups in Afghanistan: A Run-Through



News Analysis

KABUL - The United States has said at least 21 terrorist groups have been active on both sides of the Durand Line, but some believe less than 20 terrorist outfits are operating in Afghanistan. US and NATO forces commander in Afghanistan Gen. Nicholson on February ...*(More on P4)...*(20)

Taliban Shadow District Chief Among 11 Killed in Logar Raids



PUL-I-ALAM - At least 11 Taliban insurgents have been killed, including a shadow district chief, in central Logar province, an official claimed on Wednesday.

Salim Saleh, the governor's spokesman, told Pajhwok Afghan News Special Forces carried out an operation in the Aab Paran area of Mohammad Agha district and Qala-i-Naw neighbourhood of Charkh.

He said Taliban's shadow district chief for Chahar Asiab was killed in the overnight raid. "The so-called district chief, Noor Rahman, also known as Hussaini, had been appointed two years ago."

In Qala-i-Naw, 10 militants were killed and five others arrested in injured condition. Eight Chechens fighters, who fought against the Logar government, were among the dead.

A resident of Qala-i-Naw said the forces raided the area at midnight. Taliban suffered casualties in the attack, he said without giving the exact numbers. The Taliban have not yet commented on the raids. (Pajhwok)

Daesh Insurgents in Burqas Kill 15 Taliban Members in Jawzjan



SHEBERGHAN - At least 15 Taliban insurgents were killed in a Daesh attack in Qoshtepa district of northern Jawzjan province on Tuesday, local officials confirmed.

Two Daesh insurgents, wearing burqas, shot and killed 15 Taliban members in northern Jawzjan province on Tuesday, local officials confirmed on Wednesday.

The incident happened in Chaqma Chaqor village of Qoshtepa district of the province after the two Daesh insurgents opened fire on the Taliban who had gathered in the area, the district governor Aminullah said.

"After the Daesh insurgents killed the Taliban, Daesh took control of Khan Aqa village which fell to the Taliban on Monday," he said.

However, he did not provide further details about the attack.

The Taliban has not yet commented on the incident. (Tolonews)

Germany Expels 14 Afghans Amid Protests



BERLIN - Germany expelled 14 rejected Afghan asylum seekers, the interior ministry said Wednesday, amid angry protests that the war-ravaged country is unsafe for returnees.

A chartered Czech plane with the Afghans on board, all of them men, took off late Tuesday from the eastern German city of Leipzig and arrived in Kabul on Wednesday. Eleven of the deportees had criminal re-

ords for acts including manslaughter, causing grievous bodily harm, the sexual abuse of children, fraud and theft, interior ministry spokeswoman Annegret Korff told reporters.

The other three Afghans had refused to cooperate on establishing their identity, she added.

Saxony state interior minister Markus Ulbig told public broadcaster MDR that Germany was ...*(More on P4)...*(21)

Outlook Horoscope

Aries (Mar. 22-Apr.20)



Aries You're not satisfied easily today because you're so sure of your destiny that you'll do nearly anything to fulfill it. You can visualize a best-case scenario and can't wait to put your plan into motion. Although there may be other people involved who have a variety of conflicting issues, you believe you intuitively know how to steer the group in your direction.

Taurus (Apr.21-May 20)



Taurus Someone may present you with the proverbial deal you can't refuse today. An offer could look so good on paper that you want to say yes before reading the fine print. Luckily, the opportunity might actually turn out to be as awesome as it appears. Nevertheless, doing due diligence is always prudent when stepping into unknown territory.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)



Gemini Your physical wellbeing is on your mind today, whether you're feeling under the weather or just looking for an energetic boost. Thankfully, a propitious Sun-Jupiter conjunction blesses your 6th House of Self-Improvement, all but ensuring positive results from any changes you make now. Although you might have a clear idea of what your perfect regimen entails, there are experts who can offer sound advice to help you on your path.

Cancer (June 21-July 20)



Cancer You don't want to waste your precious time fending off the manipulative behavior of someone at work. Confronting the person won't likely help now; they'll just deny your accusations or take the position that they're doing it for your own good. Thankfully, you have a secret defensive weapon in your arsenal that doesn't involve direct conflict.

Leo (July 21-Aug. 21)



Leo There may be an impossible list of chores that must be finished today, and you don't know if you're feeling up to the task. Nevertheless, your stamina is strong and you might even surprise yourself with what you can do now. There's no need to proclaim your superiority or get swept up in an old drama.

Virgo (Aug. 22-Sept 22)



Virgo Your practical sense of reality informs nearly every aspect of your behavior. You might harbor extreme feelings about someone close to you today, but you don't want to say anything negative because you think it will reflect badly on you. Nevertheless, avoidance is not a strategy that works for anyone involved now. Calmly express your anger before it transforms into resentment, which makes matters much more complicated to resolve in the long run.

Libra (Sep 23-Oct. 22)



Libra Paradoxically, your self-esteem soars today, but you still may need to face your insecurities. You're confident of your capabilities on the job and can create a strategic ladder that will carry you to the top of your field. However, your feelings stand on shakier ground now, and you might slip into the underworld for a remedial course on the magic of emotional transformation.

Scorpio (Oct.23-Nov.22)



Scorpio You move through the day with exaggerated emotions and behaviors that are symptoms of your larger-than-life approach to everything. An auspicious Sun-Jupiter conjunction occurs in your sign every twelve years, opening the floodgates of opportunity and inspiring you with such confidence that you believe anything is possible.

Sagittarius (Nov.23-Dec.20)



Sagittarius Your favorite tune comes wafting through the cosmos today, and nothing will prevent you from singing along. The Sun's annual conjunction with your key planet Jupiter is a beacon of hope that inspires you to live your life according to your highest ideals. However, shining your light in the right direction doesn't automatically mean you will reach your destination. Nevertheless, your word is sacrosanct; skipping out on your commitments is not an option.

Capricorn (Dec.21-Jan.19)



Capricorn You can see right through someone's negativity today, like a cosmic ray passing directly through a wall. The take-no-prisoners Moon-Pluto conjunction lands in your pragmatic sign, making you a passionate catalyst for change wherever you go. The good news is you don't even slow down when confronted with unwarranted criticism.

Aquarius (Jan 20-Feb.18)

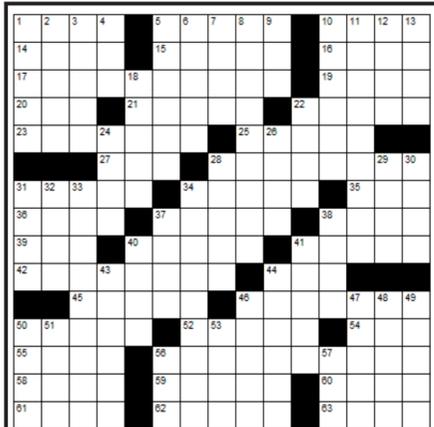


Aquarius Your career is like a rocket ship on the launch pad now, and your optimism can propel you to new heights. Although all systems have been meticulously checked and are in working order, you still need to decide on a destination. Fortunately, you know more about your goal than ever before, even if you haven't revealed it to anyone yet.

Pisces (Feb.19-Mar.20)



Pisces You spend a lot of time projecting your current situation into the future, playing out every possible scenario in your mind now. In fact, you could become obsessive as you try to increase the odds of your success, operating as if your life is a casino game of chance. Although the Sun's conjunction with lucky Jupiter is a fortuitous sign, you're not home free yet.



Across

1. Corpse, 5. 3rd Greek letter, 10. Hairdo, 14. Unit of land, 15. Operatic solos, 16. A ball of yam, 17. Having purpose, 19. Greenish blue, 20. Alcove, 21. Buffoons, 22. Cereal and soup, 23. Diabetics lack this, 25. Overweight, 27. 16 1/2 feet, 28. Momentary, 31. An small olive-grey bird, 34. Slumber, 35. A state of SW India, 36. Operatic solo, 37. Stalwart, 38. Leveling wedge, 39. Not bottom, 40. Earthquake, 41. Attempt again, 42. Breathing devices for swimming, 44. Foot digit, 45. Alcoholic, 46. Gigantic, 50. Minim, 52. Not here, 54. Menagerie, 55. Largest continent, 56. Resembling snoring, 58. Confined, 59. Australian "bear", 60. Initial wager, 61. Border, 62. Type of poplar tree, 63. A short strap of leather

Down

1. Fictional deer, 2. Sea, 3. Low heavy horse carts, 4. Hankering, 5. Primitive fishes, 6. A noble gas, 7. Annoy, 8. Burial chamber, 9. American Sign Language, 10. Waylay, 11. A boxing weight class, 12. Genuine, 13. Possesses, 18. Snow house, 22. Horn sound, 24. Component of urine, 26. Red vegetable, 28. Clean between teeth, 29. French for "Black", 30. Malodorous, 31. Tanks, 32. Weightlifters pump this, 33. Retorting, 34. High narrow heels, 37. Views, 38. Appear, 40. Gull-like bird, 41. Juliet's love, 43. Spin, 44. Plaid, 46. European blackbird, 47. A form of oxygen, 48. Gloats, 49. Flexible tubes, 50. Stare, 51. Utilized, 53. Pile, 56. Calypso offshoot, 57. British rule in India

Yesterday's Solution

across: 1. SNITS, 2. BIAS, 3. ABLE, 4. TABOO, 5. EDGE, 6. LEX, 7. POTUM, 8. LEGAL, 9. SITTE, 10. PASTEBOARD, 11. SEAS, 12. HAW, 13. OVENS, 14. RENEW, 15. ADMIT, 16. UNISON, 17. OBLITERATE, 18. GATT, 19. EDIFY, 20. LOTA, 21. EROTICIST, 22. FLOCK, 23. SKELTON, 24. SEETHE, 25. SWUM, 26. OBLITERATE, 27. AIDE, 28. BLIP, 29. ROUES, 30. SPUN, 31. OURS, 32. APRES, 33. HEST, 34. XRAY, 35. LEASE

down: affix, bare, barrier, boisterous, bring, canal, claim, cooks, dares, deepen, dents, doubt, drink, earn, first, flags, forth, frill, glade, gnarl, image, larva, market metal, power, race, range, raves

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