

Taliban Seize 11 Passengers in Farah's Bala Balok District

FARAH CITY - The Taliban have kidnapped nearly a dozen passengers in the Bala Balok district of western Farah province, a public representative said on Thursday. Eleven passengers were disembarked from a vehicle in Kansak area late on Tuesday, the provincial council chairman told Pajhwok Afghan News. Farid Bakhtawar said the captives, travelling in a Mirwais Neeka Transport Company bus, had been shifted to an unknown location. The men were on their way to Farah City.



Governor Mohammad Nasir Mehri, meanwhile, confirmed the passengers' seizure. However, he did not provide further details. Akhtar Mohammad, a passenger travelling in the same bus, said at least 13 men were taken hostage on their way from Kabul to Farah City. Afghan National Army (ANA) and police posts are located 100 metres from the scene of the incident, according to the eyewitness. (Pajhwok)

Baghlan-I-Markazi Blast Claims 7 Lives, Leaves 12 Injured

PUL-I-KHUMRI - Seven people were killed and a dozen others wounded in a bomb explosion in northern Baghlan province on Thursday, an official said. The blast happened inside a shop in the main bazaar of Baghlan-i-Markazi district at about 4pm, the governor's spokesman told Pajhwok Afghan News. Mahmood Haqmal said six civilians and a policeman were killed in the bombing, which wounded 12 people. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. Giving an eyewitness account, Mohammad Zahir said the blast resulted from explosives attached to a bicycle that had been parked in front of the shop. A doctor at the district hospital, Khalil Naramgo, confirmed receiving a large number of injured people from the site. He said some of the injured were in critical condition. (Pajhwok)

Foreigners Among 85 Insurgents Eliminated in Khost

KHOST CITY - Dozens of insurgents, mostly foreigners, have been killed in the Spera district of south-eastern Khost province, authorities claimed on Friday. Two drone strikes and a commando operation were conducted against insurgents in the restive town last week, Khost police chief Brig. Gen. Faizullah Ghairat told Pajhwok Afghan News. At least 85 fighters, most of them foreigners, were eliminated during the operations, he said, adding



the militants planned to carry out a string of attacks in the district during the Eidul Adha festival. "Before they could implement their plans, the militants were killed," the police chief said. "They (terrorists) will never succeed in their nefarious designs. I assure you the district will not fall to them." Elaborate security plans had... (More on P4)... (19)

Magnetic Bomb Hits ANA Vehicle; No Casualties

KABUL - An Afghan National Army (ANA) vehicle was hit by a bomb in Kabul on Friday morning, causing no casualties, police said. The magnetic bomb attached to the ANA Ranger pick-up exploded in the Qambar Square in the limits of the fifth police district at 5am. Kabul police spokesman Abdul Basir Mujahid told Pajhwok Afghan News the ANA vehicle was damaged by the blast. However, the soldiers escaped unhurt. Area people were jolted out of sleep by the powerful explosion, according to resident Zia, who said windowpanes of nearby houses were shattered. A day earlier, three people were wounded in a similar attack in the Taimani neighbourhood of the central capital. (Pajhwok)

Highway Cleared, 160 Militants Eliminated: Helmand Governor

LASHKARGAH - At least 160 Taliban militants have killed and 64 others wounded during an operation for reopening the Helmand-Kandahar highway, an official said on Thursday. Governor Hayatullah Hayat told reporters in Wazir-Banda locality security concerns had been addressed as landmines planted on the road had been defused. A month back, the highway was deemed highly insecure, with militants frequently storming security check-posts in the area, the governor said. So far 160 insurgents had been



killed, 64 injured and four others captured by security forces, he said, adding three important sites, where bombs were concealed, had been destroyed. During the offensive, Hayatullah said, around 1020 landmines were defused and check-posts set up in several localities to ensure security. Lt. Gen. Moeen Faqir, the 215th... (More on P4)... (20)

8 Guards of MP Majidi Detained for Killing Police Officer

KABUL - Eight bodyguards of Wolesi Jirga member Farhad Majidi have been detained for killing a police officer in the central capital Kabul, an official said on Friday. The security guards killed the police officer in the upscale Shahr-i-Naw neighbourhood of the city, where they raided the studio of singer Arsh Barez. The MP's bodyguards also fired at police when they arrived at the scene. One police officer was killed. Majidi, a public representative from western Herat province, said he was not present at scene. Basir Mujahid, police spokesman, told Pajhwok Afghan News the detainees were under investigation. The singer was also interrogated last night. (Pajhwok)

Lawmaker Majidi's Guards Gun Down Police Officer in Kabul

KABUL - Wolesi Jirga member Farhad Majidi's bodyguards have shot dead a police officer in the central capital Kabul on Thursday, an official said. The murder occurred in Shahr-i-Naw area of the city, a source in the police headquarters confided to Pajhwok Afghan News. Requesting not to be named, the official said the parliamentarian's guards raided the studio of singer Arsh Barez in the upscale neighbourhood. He added the MP's bodyguards also fired at police when they arrived at the scene. One police officer



was killed by the guards. Kabul police spokesman Abdur Rahman Rahimi, meanwhile, confirmed the shooting. Five suspects have been arrested in connection with the murder. Majidi, a public representative from western Herat province, said he was not present at scene. The incident is under investigation. (Pajhwok)

Tirinkot Fighting Ends Amid Heavy Taliban Casualties

TIRINKOT - Fighting between the Taliban and security forces in the capital of central Uruzgan province ended on Thursday evening, an official said. Heavy clashes erupted in the morning when the insurgents stormed into Tirinkot, attacking the police headquarters and the governor's house. However, the militants were forced to retreat from the city after the arrival of air support and reinforcements from southern Kandahar province. Dost Mohammad Nayab, the governor's spokesman, told Pajhwok Afghan News the rebels suffered heavy casualties in air raids. He put the Taliban's toll at 180 dead and 75 others wounded. Eleven policemen also lost their lives in the fighting, which left 17 others injured. The Provincial Council (PC) chief said

Kandahar police commander Gen. Abdur Raziq and the 205th Maiwand Corps commander arrived along with their forces in Tirinkot today. Abdul Karim Khadimzai said the reinforcements mounted an operation, led by Gen. Raziq, against the militants and pushed them back from different parts of the provincial capital. "The Taliban have treated and I'm confident they can't re-enter the city," remarked the PC head, who had earlier warned of Tirinkot falling to the fighters. But a Tirinkot resident, Zabiullah, said the Taliban were still hiding in civilian houses in several areas of the city. He added residents were staying indoors. On the other hand, Taliban spokesman Qari Yousaf Ahmadi denied the rebels' casualties. He said the movement fighters would soon take control of the provincial capital. (Pajhwok)

Outlook Horoscope

Aries (Mar. 22-Apr.20)

Solutions to problems at work that recently eluded you are now ripe for the harvest. The transformative nature of cryptic Pluto in your 10th House of Career can reveal your assumptions about people who previously held power over you. Your old ways of relating to authority are no longer relevant. You can't go back to the safety of the past; commit to what's ahead, rather than clinging to what you once had.

Taurus (Apr.21-May 20)

Your creativity is cooking up a storm today while powerful Pluto harmonizes with the illuminating Sun in your 5th House of Self-Expression. Refining the skills required to manifest your desires demands unwavering concentration, yet your complacency makes it easy for social distractions to derail your best-laid plans. Fortunately, your determination allows you to cut through the clutter.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Your coworkers might fall into the trap of underestimating your power now. However, you can shock others with the depth of your understanding and your unrelenting persistence. But there is no reason to be concerned about anyone else's judgments; you are working with a deep emotional reserve and can accomplish more than anyone thinks. In fact, the old motto of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is your rallying cry today: "The difficult we do immediately."

Cancer (June 21-July 20)

You're feeling your oats now that the radiant Sun is reinforced by its regenerative trine to ruthless Pluto. But rather than putting your physical resources to the test, the methodical Virgo Sun advises you to conserve your strength for the long haul. Luckily, unrelenting Pluto in your 7th House of Companions indicates that collaborating with others fuels your passion to work even harder.

Leo (July 21-Aug. 21)

It seems as if everyone is suddenly eager to drop their previous positions and cooperate with you today. But you may overestimate someone's abilities or underestimate the resources needed to finish a project. A little discernment prevents you from wasting your time chasing rainbows across rugged terrain.

Virgo (Aug. 22-Sep 22)

You're longing to color outside of the lines today. In fact, your creativity can have a profound impact on others when you simply show up and be yourself. Although you might not have a specific goal in mind now, the willful Sun in your sign forms a smooth trine with passionate Pluto in your 5th House of Romance, enabling you to make a lasting impression on someone you admire. Nevertheless, an overly rigid plan could be your downfall.

Libra (Sep 23-Oct. 22)

You might not want to follow the well-meaning advice of others who encourage you to risk more than you're willing now. Thankfully, your keen intuition will successfully guide you with a mix of faith and focus. This is a time for a spiritual renewal as the discerning Virgo Sun in your 12th House of Destiny trines evolutionary Pluto.

Scorpio (Oct.23-Nov.22)

A strong dose of purpose and perseverance today enables you to have your way without being pushy to achieve your aims. A superconductive Sun-Pluto trine blesses you with the power of precision rather than brute force. Although you may have recently tried yet failed to make an impression.

Sagittarius (Nov.23-Dec.20)

You are capable of accomplishing more than you ever dreamed possible today. The dedication of the hard-working Virgo Sun in your 10th House of Public Responsibility is supported by a trine from powerful Pluto, blessing you with an apparently infinite reserve of vitality and the commitment to deliver on your promises. But tread carefully, since poorly managed energy will not last forever.

Capricorn (Dec.21-Jan19)

It's tempting to seek security in what you know, rather than facing the unknown. But the greatest potential for positive change does not always come from taking the safest route. Furthermore, waiting to initiate action is not a smart idea. Luckily, you may feel invincible while the Sun in your 9th House of Adventure trines fierce Pluto. But uncertainty will soon creep back into the picture.

Aquarius (Jan 20-Feb.18)

There is more potential packed into the present moment than you realize. Thankfully, you can work behind the scenes quite effectively while the industrious Virgo Sun in your 8th House of Shared Resources conspires with obsessive Pluto. Completing a job is more crucial than gaining attention today. Be as specific as possible when you focus your intention, for the power of precision can help make your dreams come true.

Pisces (Feb.19-Mar.20)

Compassion, sentimentality and a vivid imagination are your trademarks. However, giving people too much leeway today can weaken your position. While your soft-heartedness is admirable, you risk wasting resources if you scatter your gifts indiscriminately. Fortunately, a confident Sun-Pluto trine activates your 7th House of Relationships and empowers you to be a more effective leader.

Across

1. A dish of tomatoes and greens, 6. Assist in crime, 10. Curved molding, 14. Excuse, 15. Magma, 16. Places, 17. Snouts, 18. Handle, 19. Scheme, 20. Distressing, 22. Sexual assault, 23. Spelling contest, 24. Blockade, 26. Gossamer, 30. Abominable snowmen, 32. Orderly grouping 33. Fortresses, 37. Capelin, 38. Shrewd, 39. Notion, 40. Resembling torpidity, 42. Declares, 43. Violent disturbances, 44. Turns away, 45. Desert plants, 47. Lyric poem, 48. Vagabond, 49. Prodigious, 56. Egg-shaped, 57. Legal wrong, 58. Bird poop, 59. A style of design, 60. If not, 61. Finally (French), 62. Celebrity, 63. Absorb written material, 64. Relaxes.

Down

1. Found on most beaches, 2. Balm ingredient, 3. Speech disorder, 4. Cain's brother, 5. Refuse, 6. Seaweed, 7. Stinging remark, 8. Wicked, 9. A wall hanging, 10. Domineering, 11. Internment camp, 12. French for "Storehouse", 13. Feudal worker, 21. Confederate soldier, 25. 3 in Roman numerals, 26. Taxis, 27. By mouth, 28. French cheese, 29. Water-soluble pigment, 30. Americans, 31. Sea eagle, 33. Pace, 34. Smell, 35. Colorful salamander, 36. Back talk, 38. Religious residence, 41. A sizeable hole, 42. Retaliator, 44. Citrus drink, 45. Desire, 46. Hemp, 47. Chose, 48. Boxes for bricks, 50. Lacquered metalware, 51. Constellation bear, 52. A ridge of sand, 53. Clods, 54. Module, 55. Male offspring.

Yesterday's Solution

abashedly, aborts, abcess, adage, apple, baboon, bible charge, determinate, does, east, economy, elaboration, elects, ensign, first, goat, gongs, grant, greet, hand, karat, mote, nasal, north, odorously, onion, other, range, rents, short, shrug, sire, spoon, stage, stand.

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