

A Dozen Insurgents Perish in Khost Firefight: Police

KHOST CITY - At least 12 Taliban fighters were killed and scores wounded during a clash in the Bak district of southeastern Khost province on Saturday, an official said. The gun battle took place after militants stormed a police check-post in Chinargai locality, provincial police chief Brig. Gen. Faizullah Ghairat told Pajhwok Afghan News. He said the attack was repulsed by the security forces and heavy casualties were inflicted on the insurgents during the five-hour fire fight early in the morning. According to Ghairat, the check-post is situated in the area where the Taliban infiltrate



into Afghanistan from Pakistan and it is the third time that the post has come under attack.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid claimed seven policemen were killed and four others wounded in

the clash. He confirmed the loss of only two Taliban and injuries to three others. (Pajhwok)

8 Suicide Bombers among 14 Rebels Killed in Kandahar

KANDAHAR CITY - At least 19 militants, including eight suicide bombers, have been killed during a clash in southern Kandahar province, an official said on Saturday. Kandahar police spokesman Zia Durani told Pajhwok Afghan News a group of Taliban militants stormed Afghan Local Police (ALP) posts in Shah Wali Kot district late on Friday. He said a suicide bomber detonated his explosives near one ALP post while seven others along with several associates exchanged fire with security forces. Durani added all eight suicide



bombers and four other rebels were killed during the clash lasting several hours. Four policemen were also wounded during the firefight. In a separate incident, he said, the insurgents killed a prayer leader after

kidnapping him in Raghistan district on Friday. But the governor's spokesman, Samim Khpalwak, said 14 rebels were killed and eight others wounded in the Shah Wali Kot clash. ... (More on P4)... (18)

Pump Stations Reopen as Owners Call off Strike

KANDAHAR CITY - Owners of pump stations in southern Kandahar province on Saturday announced an end to their strike, agreeing to pay taxes for the past seven years. After talks, pump station owners and provincial authorities agreed on setting up a committee to decide the tax rate. The filling stations will stay open to serve the public. On Tuesday, pump owners shut their facilities to protest an increase in the income tax rate by the provincial government. But officials

rejected their complaints, saying the pump owners had been refusing to pay taxes for the last few years. Haji Massoud Akhundzada, the Petrol Pumps Owners' Union (PPOU) head, told Pajhwok Afghan News as many as 137 stations had been closed to protest the tax hike. He said the owners could not pay the increased income tax and that the government still used manual tax-collecting procedures. Taxes on pump stations levied on the basis of their revenues, he demanded.

On the other hand, Revenue Director Azim Khan Ahmadzai alleged the filling station owners had not been paying taxes over the past seven years, although they had been reminded repeatedly of their obligation. He rejected the claim that extra money was charged in the names of income tax, saying every petrol pump had been asked to pay duties in line with the relevant law. The closure of pump stations landed local residents in trouble. Mohammad Anwar, a taxi driver, ... (More on P4)... (19)

Drone Strike Kills 15 Pakistani Militants in Paktika



SHARAN - A drone strike has killed 15 militants belonging to Pakistani militant group Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Pakistani media reports. The Express Tribune news agency reported on Friday that the airstrike was conducted in Gomal District bordering South Waziristan on Wednesday. The news agency quotes three unnamed Pakistani intelligence officials as saying that these militants belonged to the Gandapur faction of the TTP. It further adds that the 15 dead bodies would be transferred to their native area in Pakistan.

"Fifteen dead bodies of killed militants will be shifted soon to their native areas in Dera Ismail Khan," one intelligence official is quoted by the news agency as saying. Due to the ongoing military operation in Pakistan, militants cross the border into Afghanistan to find new home. The operation was launched last year in the aftermath of a deadly attack on a military-run school in Peshawar that left at least 150 people killed and more than 130 others wounded, most of them students. (KP)

Lawmaker's Son Survives Suicide Attack in Kabul



KABUL - A lawmaker's son survived but one of his companions was wounded in a suicide attack in the Qarabagh district of Kabul on Saturday afternoon, an official said. The district's administrative chief, Abdul Same Sharifi, told Pajhwok Afghan News that the incident took place at around 2:30pm. The explosion was

carried out by two suicide bombers in a Corolla car. He said the son of legislator Amanullah Gulzar came under attack on his way to Parwan province. Gulzar's son survived the blast but one of his friends was wounded. No any group has so far claimed responsibility for the attack. (Pajhwok)

Gang of Kidnappers Busted in Takhar

TALEQAN - The National Directorate of Security (NDS) - Afghanistan's intelligence agency has busted a gang of kidnappers in northeastern Takhar province. A statement released by the NDS on Saturday states that gang was busted red handed with a Kalashnikov and pistol after kidnapping Abdul Aziz S/O Ata Bai from Baharak District of Takhar province. The gang members are identified as Faridullah S/O Bahlol, Khairullah S/O Abdul Bar, Khan S/O Abdul Bari and Mirza S/O Rahim. In another raid NDS has arrested a member of Taliban group who was assigned to send 100,000 AFG to Mawlawi-Nasrullah, a Taliban shadow governor for Yakawlang District. (KP)

Security Personnel Among 19 Dead in Kamdesh Battle

JALALABAD - Fifteen Taliban, three security personnel and a civilian have been killed during a clash in the Kamdesh district of eastern Nuristan province, officials said on Saturday. The ongoing clash erupted on Friday when the Taliban attacked the checkpoints in Kamdesh district, the governor's spokesman, Musa Shami, told Pajhwok Afghan News. Air support was provided to police last night when 15 insurgents were killed and a dozen others wounded.

Some civilians were also injured, he said. An official of the 201st Selab Military Corps said on condition of anonymity 21 militants were killed as a result of airstrikes by Afghan forces in the district. Provincial Council Chairman Eng. Sadullah Paindazai said the Taliban fighters attacked the district centre from five directions on Friday. Three security personnel and one civilian were killed. Thirteen other people, including some policemen, sustained injuries in the

attacks, he said, adding Taliban also sustained injuries. The road to the district had been blocked over the past few years and the security personnel had been provided logistic support by air, he said. Kabul to increase the number of security personnel there. Meanwhile, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid claimed 21 security personnel suffered casualties in the attacks. He acknowledged the death of only two fighters and injuries to two others. (Pajhwok)

On Their Way to Sar-i-Pul, 4 Officials Kidnapped in Jawzjan

SHIBERGHAN - Unidentified gunmen kidnapped four government officials on the Shiberghan-Sar-i-Pul highway in northern Jawzjan province on Saturday, an official said. The officials were travelling from Shiberghan to their duty station in Sar-i-Pul on Saturday morning when unidentified gunmen abducted them in Kikar Takjar area. Provincial police chief Brig. Gen. Faqir Mohammad Jawzjani told Pajhwok Afghan News an investigation into the incident had been launched.



On Wednesday, unidentified gunmen had kidnapped five passengers from the same area. (Pajhwok)

Outlook Horoscope

Aries (Mar. 22-Apr. 20)



Your senses are on high alert and your acute perceptions register every single nuance in your immediate environment today. Unfortunately, you may be so receptive to other people's feelings now that you start noticing things that aren't actually there. Be careful with your pronouncements about what is real; you might be fabricating stories to justify what's in your imagination.

Taurus (Apr. 21-May 20)



Everyone seems to be out of step while you are marching along to the beat of a very reliable drummer today. The Sun and Moon are walking hand in hand through fellow earth sign Virgo, supporting your efforts to maintain a steady pace. However, a few unexpected events could rattle your rhythm. Be gentle with yourself because you can easily grow anxious if you try to perform your work.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)



You think you're ahead of the game only to discover that you somehow outsmarted yourself as trickster Mercury makes his presence known. There's no need to let your inquisitive nature tempt you to look for problems that haven't even surfaced when there is so much positive potential in front of you. Your mental agility is your strong suit, but it's more useful now to just stick with your original plan.

Cancer (June 21-July 20)



Tinkering with your calendar one more time still won't enable you to fit everything into your day. You need to face the facts and decide what to eliminate before it's too late. Unfortunately, talking about your current time crunch may be a lot easier than actually resolving it. Nevertheless, you will feel a sense of welcome relief after you postpone a few things on your schedule.

Leo (July 21-Aug. 21)



You might feel a loss of momentum today as you readdress issues of financial security. Although you're eager to replenish your reserves, it will take longer than you think to put your finances back in order. Spring into action if you don't want your concerns about money to be more problematic in the weeks ahead. Remember, there's no need to spend what you don't have just to keep up appearances.

Virgo (Aug. 22-Sep 22)



You're struggling with balancing two divergent approaches to life today. On one hand, the Moon, the Sun and Jupiter conspire in your discerning sign, inspiring you to singularly focus your intentions on your work. On the other hand, wildcard Uranus could change the rules of the game in a blink of an eye. Thankfully, you can manage the volatility by instinctively reacting in the present moment and sorting through the details later on.

Libra (Sep 23-Oct. 22)



It feels as if people are pressuring you to participate in a group activity today, but you're not feeling very social. Normally, you're the neighborly one who seeks out the company of friends; however, the loud planetary noise in your 12th House of Privacy prompts you to run for the nearest cave. People might not understand your current need for solitude, but the secret to your happiness may be found by spending time.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 22)



You need to set aside a chunk of time for a serious relationship discussion with a close friend or partner today. Nevertheless, you're not interested in revisiting an old issue now because you really want to create forward movement. Unfortunately, you may feel as if you're stuck in an energetic holding pattern. Don't let your unspoken feelings fester.

Sagittarius (Nov. 23-Dec. 20)



You're happily racing ahead on the road of life today, but could be careening toward an unexpected roadblock in the distance. You might even be required to suddenly change directions if you're not willing to stop and reassess your motives. Although there's no need to finalize your new destination, the sooner you begin discussing your lingering fears with someone you trust, the quicker you'll be able to regain a clear perspective.

Capricorn (Dec. 21-Jan 19)



You may be very thankful that you have a concrete plan in place now, even if it will take considerable time to put it into motion. You're eager to dig in your heels and get serious about reaching your goals. Luckily, you excel at strategic calculations when it comes to obtaining what you want, especially if long-range ambitions are on the agenda. Nevertheless, gaining control of the details of your day will actually help you.

Aquarius (Jan 20-Feb. 18)



You have magic at your fingertips today whether you realize it or not. However, this cosmic gift is not meant to be used for personal benefit. Answers are more likely to appear in your dreams now instead of rational logic, so don't seek solutions to global problems through the usual channels. Although your thoughts might mislead you, images won't.

Pisces (Feb. 19-Mar. 20)



A significant relationship may fall short of your expectations now, especially if you believe your partner is being excessively critical. It might seem as if he or she is emotionally distant and you don't have a clue why. Meanwhile, you long for deeper personal connections in your life while others seem to be less available for one reason or another. Although it's easy to get confused by all the missing pieces of the puzzle.

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-61.

Across: 1. A neutral color, 5. Line of a poem, 10. Sun, 14. Indian music, 15. Gladden, 16. Ripped, 17. Nonsectarian, 19. Train track, 20. Spelling contest, 21. Equestrian, 22. Father, 23. Gist, 25. Nannies and billies, 27. G, 28. Diversified, 31. Exploded stars, 34. Labyrinths, 35. Mineral rock, 36. Matured, 37. Public transit vehicles, 38. Not a single one, 39. Implore, 40. Fathered, 41. Bottoms of shoes, 42. Legumes, 44. Letter after sigma, 45. Make fun of, 46. Informant, 50. Splines, 52. Spacious, 54. Animal doctor, 55. Square block, 56. Tableware, 58. Website addresses, 59. Drop to one's knees, 60. Border, 61. Encounter, 62. Woe, 63. Accomplishment. Down: 1. Diving bird, 2. Contests of speed, 3. Chills and fever, 4. Sweet potato, 5. City in Italy, 6. Leave out, 7. Dash, 8. Daydreamed, 9. Snake-like fish, 10. Layers, 11. An inedible mushroom, 12. Desiccated, 13. Depend, 18. Sea eagles, 22. Speaker's platform, 24. Quaint outburst, 26. Mining finds, 28. Flower jars, 29. Sea eagle, 30. D D D D, 31. Apprehends, 32. Curved molding, 33. «Animal, or mineral», 34. Slaying, 37. Life stories, 38. Person, place or thing, 40. Resorts, 41. Nymph chaser, 43. Hate, 44. At an opportune time, 46. Interlaced, 47. Avoid, 48. Twilled fabric, 49. Horse, 50. Pond gunk, 51. Attraction, 53. Margarine, 56. Calypso offshoot, 57. Married.

Yesterday's Solution: amuse, believe, broke, cinnamon, climax, coast, commercial, competition, define, detail, dozen, figure, fixes, frost, gentleman, grill, hear, ideal, lame, mislead, movie, neat, onion, pillow, price, public, realize, slot.

Word search grid containing words like BELIEVE, PUBLIC, GRILLS, SNARE, BDL, CMY, GRO, FIGURE, IO, FEI, DOZEN, OAM, ASRN, FIXES, SBKLA, SLOTR, TRAVEL, WEPX, TESL, LHDE, TAIL, LIB, PATE, WEEK, ENDL, RDAM, USEM, GUALE, IREAL, IZE, OTHOF, CINNAMON, NOVQWI, EHC, COMPETITION, COMMERCIAL, ZEE.