

Alabaster Deposits in Helmand Still Being Excavated Illegally

LASHKARGHA - Officials in southern Helmand province on Sunday said six contracts for the excavation of alabaster had been inked but illegal digging of the stone was still ongoing in different areas. Addressing a gathering on the protection of natural resources, forests and historic relics, Border and Tribal Affairs Director Ahmad Naveed Nazariacknowledged the illegal excavation of alabaster had been stepped up in the province. He said most of the gypsum stone was being smuggled to Pakistan, from where it was exported under Pakistani labels. He



urged tribal elders and residents to help stop the illegal excavation of alabaster. Habibullah Haqqarast, head of the mine and petroleum department, confirmed the unlawful digging of the stone was underway at different sites across the province. "The ministry has inked agreements with only six companies, but in some parts of the province people continue to exploit the precious mineral and smuggle it to Pakistan," he said. Haqqarast warned unprofessionally and illegally excavated alabaster lost its value in the market. Ali Shah ...*(More on P4)...(10)*

8 ISIS Loyalists Killed in an Airstrike

JALALABAD - At least 8 loyalists of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group were killed in an airstrike in eastern Afghanistan. According to a local security official, the airstrike was carried out in eastern Nangarhar province, targeting a vehicle of the loyalists of the terror group. The official speaking on the condition of anonymity further added that the raid was carried out in Achin district which was once a stronghold of the terror group. The militants were inside the car and were on their way to conduct terrorist activities when they were targeted, the official said, adding that the local residents did not suffer any casualties in the raid. He did not elaborate further on who carried out the ...*(More on P4)...(14)*

Afghans Mark World Family Day amid Hope and Despair

KABUL - Afghans on Sunday joined nations across the world to mark International Day of Families which is held on May 15 every year. This year the day was observed under the theme Respect For Families. It is said that even in the capital Kabul, where women have a little more freedom than their provincial counterparts, families are still reluctant to let them visit recreational venues or go for picnics - especially as this often leads to undue comments by members of the public. However,



there are still some families who ignore this problem and use the day as an opportunity to spend happy moments together. "There are some people who tease the women and the girls. Today we

Govt. to Bring in Hekmatyar and Members, Giving Special Privileges

KABUL - A draft agreement on peace between the Afghan government and Hezb-e Islami political party shows that government could be willing to bring Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of the party, and other key members into the fold by giving them special privileges. The draft agreement obtained by TOLONews has touched on several issues, including the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan, the return of Hezb-e Islami key members to the country and the provision of housing facilities for them. In this draft agreement, Hezb-e Islami has committed to respecting key points, including following the Afghan constitution, cutting ties with militant groups and joining the efforts to ensure stability in Afghanistan. In exchange, according to the document, members of the party will be allowed to live in safety and if they are interested in working within the security ranks, they can join the Afghan security forces. Some parts of the draft agreement have been



highlighted - which could show the two sides have yet to agree on these points. One highlighted section states: "Both sides support the withdrawal of foreign military troops [from Afghanistan] in order to strengthen the national sovereignty and the national interests in the country and both sides believe that Afghans can overcome the crisis created by wars, and can fight against threats through unity and solidarity." "We hope that the agreement will be finalized and the two sides agree on all the issues in it," said Qutbuddin Hilal, joint head of Hezb-e Islami's branches. The draft agreement also points to the return of key members of Hezb-e Islami party to Afghanistan and says that 20,000 Hezb-e Islami families, who are living as refugees in Iran and Pakistan, should return home. "They should enter their country with dignity and ...*(More on P4)...(13)*

Air Strikes Kill 16 Militants, Wound 22

FIROZ KOH - Up to 16 militants were killed and nearly two dozen others injured as aircrafts pounded Taliban hideouts in Pasawand district of the western Ghor province on Sunday. "The air raids were conducted against Taliban hideouts in Pasawand district this morning, killing 16 rebels and injuring 22 others," spokesman for provincial government Abdul



Hai Khatibi told Xinhua. Taliban militants who are active in parts of Ghor and the neighboring Badghis province have yet to make comment. (Xinhua)

Tapped Taliban Phone Conversation Reveals Panic among Fighters in Battlefield

KABUL - A tapped phone conversation between top Taliban leaders reveal panic among the groups fighters in the battlefield as the group is attempting to intensify attacks against the Afghan forces under their new spring offensive. The Ministry of Interior (MOI) claims the phone conversation was tapped as two top Taliban leaders were discussing operations in the country. The authenticity of the audio clip could not be independently verified which reveals a serious disagreement between the two senior Taliban leaders. The commander overseeing the operations in the battlefield says the situation is sharply deteriorating and a number of the group's commanders have been killed with their fighters. He continues saying the fighters are losing moral but the other commander orders ...*(More on P4)...(15)*

Pakistan Blames International Community Failure for the Mess in Afghanistan

KABUL - The Pakistani Ambassador to United States Jalil Abbas Jilani has blamed the international community failure for the mess in Afghanistan. In response to an Editorial by the New York Times, the Pakistani envoy has said "Pakistan cannot be held responsible for the mess in Afghanistan which is the result of the collective failure of the international community." Calling the editorial as biased, Jilani further added that "Allegations of duplicity and double game are extremely painful especially when Pakistan has suffered the most due to the war in Afghanistan. Hundreds of suicide bombings and tens of thousands of civilian casualties are the direct result of the US led war in Afghanistan after 9/11." The Pakistani envoy has also claimed that the country's military has "fractured the back of Taliban" through indiscriminate counter ...*(More on P4)...(16)*

Kabul Police Say Prepared to Maintain Security During Demonstration

KABUL - The police forces are fully prepared to maintain security and order of the city for a major protest due for the capital on Monday. According to the officials in Public Order Police Forces of the Ministry of Interior, the police forces are on alert to maintain the security for the demonstration. This comes as a number of the prominent former Jihadi leaders organized a meeting in Kabul on Sunday to discuss the lat-



est upheavals, including the controversial TUTAP power project. They have warned that the Monday's demonstration could turn violent and urged the government to prevent the implementation of the project until the controversies have been resolved. A member of ...*(More on P4)...(12)*

Outlook Horoscope

Aries (Mar. 22-Apr.20)

You may underestimate the time required to finish your chores today, but your poor judgment won't necessarily ruin your day. In fact, everything could magically fall into place if you just keep pushing ahead, even if you overlook some of the details. Nevertheless, there's no free lunch; you won't feel the satisfaction of a job well done unless you do the work.

Taurus (Apr.21-May 20)

You're exceedingly thorough when managing your calendar today because you don't want to miss out on any of the good times ahead. However, participating in recreational activities may require more planning than you think. But there's no reason to tie up your schedule worrying about trivia. If you can't see the forest for the trees.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)

It's advisable to take the high road when responding to a stressful situation today, especially if you encounter unexpected resistance from your friends or family. It may be necessary to justify your actions, even if you prefer to let them speak for you now. However, if you want the support of others, be clear about your intentions and avoid succumbing to self-doubt. Visualizing your destination improves your chances for success.

Cancer (June 21-July 20)

You wish you were planning a quick little getaway but chores are tugging at you with a sense of urgency. Throwing a temper tantrum won't help you obtain what you want, but neither will a passive-aggressive response. Luckily, showing up with a positive attitude and a willingness to go the extra mile works in your favor now.

Leo (July 21-Aug. 21)

Although you could be worried about financial difficulties that limit your spending, the pressure might suddenly lighten today. You may receive an unexpected cash windfall or discover there's one less bill to pay. Just don't ignore the bottom line if you are swept up in a wave of optimism. Take all variables into consideration now and make your fiscal decisions based on rational choices rather than emotional preferences.

Virgo (Aug. 22-Sep 22)

As much as you want to be able to count on others, you may need to rely on your own survival skills today. It's not that people won't be around to help; it's just that your closest friends seem a bit unpredictable now -- and they could actually disappear without giving much warning. Fortunately, you won't be frustrated if you simply recognize the work in front of you and get on with your day.

Libra (Sep 23-Oct. 22)

You may feel as if you're on edge these days because satisfaction seems close enough to grasp, but it stays just out of reach. It's like a storm is building on the horizon but the rain doesn't come. Ironically, it's your desire for resolution that creates the tension. Instead of concocting a better plan or battering down the hatches, enjoy the smooth sailing today while it lasts.

Scorpio (Oct.23-Nov.22)

Making plans is tricky because people might not follow through on their promises. For example, your day might turn chaotic if someone lets you down at the last minute. However, all is not lost; in fact, a sudden change of direction could be the best thing that ever happened. No matter how you react, don't infuse your negative emotions into external dynamics.

Sagittarius (Nov.23-Dec.20)

You don't want to take responsibility for anyone else because you believe you've earned a day off. However, the tables are turned when you realize that being in charge enables you to steer events to your liking. Much to your surprise, assuming a leadership role now requires very little extra effort on your part. Happily, when you make decisions based on your personal preferences today, they work out in everyone's favor.

Capricorn (Dec.21-Jan19)

Participating in social events is challenging today because you feel like there's too much going on in your life. You want to be an integral part of your extended family or community, but you could take yourself so seriously now that you become wrapped up in your own personal story. Nevertheless, don't isolate yourself from those who love you; the support you offer to others returns to benefit you in the long run.

Aquarius (Jan 20-Feb.18)

Discussing your feelings isn't all that comfortable for you heady Aquarians. But your practical concerns outweigh your personal preferences today, encouraging you to address a long-overdue issue. Thankfully, you can perform a balancing act with one foot on the ground while the other one explores the uncertain realm of emotions. Unfortunately, a productive discussion becomes unlikely the longer you delay.

Pisces (Feb.19-Mar.20)

A relationship dilemma that has been dangling from a giant pendulum swings in your favor today. Although it's normal for your emotions to change over time, it seems as if they are finally about to settle down. However, it's a mistake to think everything is as good as it appears now. Nevertheless, there's no reason to go looking for trouble. Enjoying the pleasantries is healing for your heart.

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers indicating starting points for clues.

Across
1. Spurs, 5. Food thickener, 9. Sprockets, 13. Send forth, 14. Comforter, 16. Hodgepodge, 17. Plateau, 18. Lacquer ingredient, 19. Egghead, 20. Piques, 22. Codes of behavior, 24. Anagram of "Tine", 26. Investment, 27. Repeating, 30. Make wealthy, 33. At whatever time, 35. A Musketeer, 37. Hearing organ, 38. Desire, 41. Genus of macaws, 42. Churns, 45. Peril, 48. Steps, 51. Round pieces of linen, 52. Satiates, 54. Roman emperor, 55. Amount emitted, 59. Repeat, 62. Extinct flightless bird, 63. Begin, 65. Equipment, 66. "Comes and", 67. Claw, 68. Satan's territory, 69. Being, 70. A covered garden walk, 71. 3.

Down
1. Precious stones, 2. So be it, 3. Disown, 4. Train depot, 5. Citrus drink, 6. Mouthful, 7. Declares, 8. Distant, 9. Vanity, 10. Margarine, 11. Lass, 12. Mats of grass, 15. Moon of Saturn, 21. Anagram of "Ties", 23. Gumbo, 25. Covetousness, 27. Pitcher, 28. Pandemonium, 29. G, 31. Driver of a chariot, 32. Mob, 34. British rule in India, 36. Articulates, 39. Crimson, 40. Midday, 43. Milk sugar, 44. Sediment, 46. Multicolored, 47. Okay, 49. Cut of beef, 50. Phrase structure, 53. Leprose, 55. Border, 56. Cow sounds, 57. Midmonth date, 58. God of love, 60. Story, 61. Paris airport, 64. Explosive.

Yesterday's Solution
barber, belle, carry, charm, cross, dainty, each, famous, geography, grace, henna, hips, honey, idiomlegume, manicure, massage, massive, mottle, niche, nymph, parlor, patch, picture, press, reign, rough, sail, salon, sauce, sent, sharp, sire, smile, sport, stand, sustain.

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