

Pakistan's ISI Responsible for Pulwama Attack: Congress

ISLAMABAD - The Congress on Wednesday held Pakistan's intelligence agency, ISI, responsible for the ghastly terror attack in Pulwama in which nearly 40 security personnel died on February 14.

"ISI is the designer of terrorism and protects Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM). Masood Azhar is under ISI's protection. JeM took re-

sponsibility for Pulwama attack. So when the designer of terrorism is in Pakistan protecting terror attacks, we know who is responsible for all this," senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal told ANI.

Around 40 CRPF personnel were killed after a suicide bomber rammed his vehicle, laden with massive explosives, into a CRPF

convoy on Srinagar-Jammu national highway on February 14 around 3.15 pm at Ladhu Modi Lethpora in Pulwama district.

The convoy consisted of 78 buses in which around 2,500 CRPF personnel were traveling.

Later, the Pakistan-based and backed terrorist outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed claimed the responsibility for the attack. (Agencies)

Awaza to Host International Gas Congress

ASHGABAT - As part of the International Gas Congress of Turkmenistan, scheduled for May 22-23, 2019, the prospects for international cooperation will be discussed in the Caspian resort of Awaza, Trend reports referring to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Turkmenistan.

The event is organized by Turk-

mengas State Concern. Top managers of the world's largest oil and gas companies and leading industry experts are expected to participate in the event. It is also reported that the "Oil and Gas of Turkmenistan - 2019" conference-exhibition, organized by Turkmennebit State Concern, is set to be held in Ashgabat on October 22-24, 2019. (Trend)

(1) Samar Stresses...

Rabbani said that women should have an active role in the peace process and all parties must accept that women's rights are not negotiable.

Meanwhile, the US Ambassador to Afghanistan John Bass speaking at the event calls for a comprehensive approach to talks with the Taliban to keep current achievements in peace talks.

"We want to see and help you create an Afghanistan in which all its citizens can live in peace and dignity. It is very clear to us that the people of this country want and earn peace. And so also our sense of urgency in trying to create that important negotiation and discussion in between all afghans is based in a response to your desire for peace," said Bass.

"And that is why we through ambassador Khalilzad are talking to the Taliban and try to get the Taliban to sit with of all of the people of this county but that does not that we are substituting ourselves in talking to the Taliban for the government of Afghanistan or the people of Afghanistan. In discussion about those issues that only Afghans can decide for yourselves. The terms of peace are for Afghans to decide because only if you decide and agreed among yourselves will peace be durable. Now when we say that these are issues for Afghans to decide that does not mean my government is in different to the outcome," Bass added.

The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) will place the results of the Inquiry on the National Women, Peace and Security Inquiry and then share it with the people, the government and the international community. (Tolo news)

(2) Saleh Sees 'No...

If you bypass the factor, it becomes an intellectual exercise."

Saleh said that Taliban are "afraid of a pluralistic society" and that they think that they will die in today's Afghan society.

"That future can be tomorrow, but they think [Taliban] they will die in that type of future. That is why they are trying to maintain their habitat away from civilization, away from integration, away from new Afghanistan. Because they are afraid that in a pluralistic society, which Afghanistan today is, Taliban will become another loud cleric, Mullah preaching after death," said Saleh.

This comes after a number of Afghan politicians, representing mainstream political parties in the country, attended a meeting with Taliban representatives in Moscow. (Tolo news)

(3) DIAG: 2,500...

Abid, who received 20 weapons from the provincial police headquarters, said the confiscation of these guns would not have a significant effect on the security situation.

Abdul Qadir Misbah, a political expert, told Pajhwok that the presence of illegal armed men had hugely concerned local people.

Provincial deputy police chief Abdul Razeq Qadiri said police captured 20 various types of weapons during different security incidents over the past few weeks and handed the guns over to DIAG programme yesterday. (Pajhwok)

(4) Miakhel Vows...

drugs selling and trafficking besides providing treatment to drug addicts.

The residents and members of the provincial council asked the governor to deliver on his pledges.

Provincial Council head Israrullah Murad said the previous governor had worked to recover grabbed land, eliminate corruption and remove tinted glasses from vehicles. He asked the new governor to continue his predecessor's mission.

Amir Hamza, a resident of Jalalabad City, said fresh security and crime incidents recently occurred, but if security forces remained quick in their response, crimes would be eradicated from the city. (Pajhwok)

(5) 8 alleged...

Shahzada Money market of Kabul. The two kidnappers were arrested when they wanted to shift Ahmad Gul to Jabalus Saraj district of central Parwan province. Gul was reunited with his family before the ransom money was paid to the kidnappers.

No timing and date of the operations were mentioned in the statement. (Pajhwok)

(6) Japan Contributes...

"Last year, severe food shortage has hit many areas of the country and Japan decided to work with WFP to provide Emergency Grant Aid to the damage caused by drought in Afghanistan. It is our great pleasure to see here the wheats procured arrived in this. (Pajhwok)

(7) US Officials Warn...

Tuesday while on a visit to Afghanistan.

The terror group, known as ISIS-K, has been actively recruiting from schools and mosques and has been asking new recruits for their social media contacts and phone numbers of people they know in the US, to likely help their efforts to attack the US, according to the intelligence official.

The official said that this intelligence has been gained from ISIS-K fighters that have been captured on the battlefield and interrogated by Afghan security forces.

ISIS has the "mandate to attack across the Atlantic" and ISIS-K is one of its affiliates that has been "tasked to do that," the official said.

"ISIS, as a violent extremist organization has been successful in exploiting social media and looking at people that are on social media and very quickly reaching out to them and using that as a medium to bring them in the organization," Votel said.

"I think they have a very sophisticated way of recruiting. We certainly have seen that in Iraq and Syria and we see it here," Votel added.

The warnings about the threat

posed by ISIS-K comes as the terror group is on the cusp of being driven from its last bastion in Syria.

While the two affiliates share an ideology and tactics, the depth of their relationship with regards to organization and command and control has never been entirely established.

The US intelligence official said that the membership of ISIS-K includes "a small number of veteran jihadists from Syria and other foreign terrorist fighters," saying that the US has identified 10 to 15 of their top operatives in Afghanistan.

US officials have previously expressed concerns that as ISIS loses its last strongholds in Syria, its fighters may seek to flee to other affiliates in places like Afghanistan.

Votel said that the membership of ISIS-K "reflects more of a local South Asia flavor and includes some elements of foreign fighters but also includes some elements of people that are local to the area here."

ISIS-K has established itself in remote areas in Afghanistan's mountainous eastern provinces and the official said that the Afghanistan affiliate "doesn't need large swathes of land like ISIS in Iraq and Syria does."

The head of US Special Operations Command, Gen. Raymond "Tony" Thomas told the Senate Armed Services Committee earlier this month that the US military has "made huge progress against ISIS-K which is the primary external threat in Afghanistan."

The US has killed several ISIS-K leaders in recent years and has conducted numerous airstrikes and raids targeting the terror group in its redoubts in eastern Afghanistan.

The Taliban has also fought ISIS as the two anti-government groups compete for territory and recruits. Despite those battlefield successes, US officials would not say how many fighters are currently in ISIS-K.

A Pentagon Inspector General report on the US military mission Afghanistan said that "as of September 2018, it estimated that there were fewer than 2,000 ISIS-K fighters in Afghanistan."

"We conducted operations against them for some period of time and I think we've had a good disruptive impact on them, they operate in areas that are extraordinarily remote, difficult to get into and you have that challenge here in Afghanistan with mountains and some of the rugged terrain that exists here in Afghanistan," Votel said.

And despite nascent negotiations between the US and the Taliban regarding a potential peace settlement in Afghanistan, Votel said that the US has vested interests in combating international terror groups like ISIS.

"The fact of the matter is that we have an enduring interest here to make sure that violent extremist groups in this part of the world can't be used to hurt Americans, American interests and American

homeland," he said. (CNN)

(8) Stomach Cancer...

from Herat, Kandahar, Helmand, Farah and Kabul provinces to meet him in Zaranj City, the provincial capital.

Nimroz lacks enough specialized health services for being 1,000 kilometers far from Kabul.

The gastroenterologist in Zaranj City, Dr. Shakrullah Haidari, told Pajhwok that he had so far diagnosed and treated about 1,880 cancer cases during the past 17 months.

He said stomach cancer patients were treated against 300,000 afghans but it was done for 24,000 afghans in Nimroz by him.

Noor Mohammad, a resident of Nimroz province, said his mother had cancer and he took her to Herat and Pakistan but nothing changed.

He then brought his mother to the doctor in Nimroz and the doctor said his mother's disease was treatable. Noor Mohammad said his mother was now healthy. (Pajhwok)

(9) A Jawzjan Widow...

provide a good life to her children and not let them feel deprived.

She was alone with her children after the death of her husband and was struggling after having spent all her assets on treatment of her spouse.

"We had no proper house for living, I finally decided and built three rooms from mud with my children, I prepared a bag for my son to sell chewing gums and cigarettes, my son's sales improved and we built a boat for him but one night thieves stole our boat and we started again from zero," she said.

She said next she started selling dairy products such as milk, yogurt, butter, cheese and others from local sources to shops.

"I educated my seven children thanks to my dairy business, I now want to engage my third son, some of my children have completed bachelor's and others are in high school, I am their power and I am happy with my income," Sharifa added. She said she recently opened a shop for her younger son to make him busy.

Zabihullah, a shopkeeper in Shiberghan, who buys dairy products from Sharifa, said, "I buy around 80 kilograms of dairy products from this woman a day, she brings butter, yogurt, curd, milk and other products." He said the products the woman prepared were of high quality and had good market.

"I know buying products from this woman is good both for me and her, I meet the requirements of customers and she meets the needs of her family," he added.

Halima, in charge of families co-ordination affairs at the Agriculture Department of Jawzjan, said, "We cover around 200 women who suffer from bad economy in training programs for preparing dairy products and animal husbandry."

"One of these women is Sharifa

who was able to make her life better," she said, adding the aim of their programs was to empower women so they were able to stand on their feet and improve their living standard. (Pajhwok)

(10) Political Parties...

implementation of affairs, poor leadership and widespread rigging.

But the IEC only introduced Awal Rahman Rodwal to judicial organs and the rest continued their duty.

On Feb 7, President Ashraf Ghani fired 12 commissioners of the IEC and IECC after approving draft amendments to the electoral law. Later, the AGO announced placing the former commissioners on the exit control list.

Basharmal added political parties had shared documents and proofs with the IECC about rigging and fraud but they all were ignored and members of the electoral commissions continued to commit fraud.

"We will submit all the documents and proofs to the AGO in order to prosecute all corrupt officials of IEC," he informed.

In a resolution letter, they asked the justice and judicial organs to establish a board and task it with sealing and locking all gates of the IEC related departments until the body's new leadership was appointed.

"According to information obtained, the IEC is scheduled to launch an audit of more than 80 polling centers in Kabul, which is an insult to the national process and is not acceptable to political parties and civil societies," the resolution letter read.

Pajhwok tried frequently to contact the IEC officials for comment, but failed. (Pajhwok)

(11) Afghanistan to...

In their last encounter, when Ireland hosted Afghanistan, the latter defeated them in both the T20 series as well as ODIs. (Agencies)

(12) Taliban Suffers...

Local officials say that the highway is not completely cleared of insurgents; therefore, civilians are not allowed to travel across the highway.

Officials add, the Taliban have planted mines across the highway and the security forces have disarmed at least 58 mines.

The highway is yet to be cleared of the Taliban militants.

The Taliban who controls at least 6 districts of Ghazni province has not made a comment about the operations, yet. (ANT)

(13) Taliban Kills 8 Pro...

the Taliban assault and lost eight fighters.

He said a large number of the Taliban fighters had also been killed and wounded, but exact figures were not immediately available.

Local residents said the uprising forces suffered casualties after security forces did not reach timely to their aid.

A resident, who declined to be named, said a woman was among the dead.

The Taliban have so far said nothing in this regard. (Pajhwok)