

(1) Ambulance Bomb ...

carried out by the militant group in the Afghan capital in a week -- triggered chaotic scenes as terrified survivors fled the area scattered with body parts, blood and debris, and hospitals were overwhelmed by the large number of wounded.

It came as both the insurgents and the Islamic State group have escalated their attacks on Kabul, one of the deadliest places in Afghanistan for civilians. An AFP reporter saw "lots of dead and wounded" civilians in the Jamuriate hospital, which is metres away from the blast and where medical staff struggled to treat the bloodied men, women and children lying on the floor in corridors.

Health ministry spokesman Waheed Majroh told AFP that the toll "now stands at 95 dead, 158 wounded", shortly after the interior ministry warned that an earlier death toll of 63 could rise.

The blast happened in an area where several high-profile organisations, including the European Union, have offices. Members of the EU delegation in Kabul were in their "safe room" and there were no casualties, an official told AFP.

The force of the explosion shook windows of buildings at least two kilometres (more than a mile) away and caused some low-rise structures in the immediate vicinity to collapse.

The suicide bomber passed through at least one checkpoint in the ambulance, saying he was taking a patient to Jamuriate hospital, an interior ministry spokesman told AFP.

"At the second checkpoint he was recognised and blew his explosive-laden car," Nasrat Rahimi said.

Rahimi told a news conference that most of the victims were civilians. He said the Taliban-affiliated Haqqani Network was responsible and four suspects had been arrested.

Twenty minutes before the blast an AFP reporter saw police checking ambulances several hundred metres from the scene of the explosion, as the drivers and patients stood on the street. Ambulances are rarely checked in the city.

The International Committee of the Red Cross in Afghanistan condemned the use of an ambulance in the bombing, saying on Twitter it was "unacceptable and unjustifiable".

The Taliban used social media to claim responsibility for the attack, which comes exactly a week after its insurgents stormed Kabul's landmark Intercontinental hotel, killing at least 25 people, the majority foreigners.

Photos shared on social media purportedly of the blast -- the deadliest in Kabul since a truck bomb ripped through the city's diplomatic quarter on May 31, killing 150 people and wounding hundreds -- showed a huge plume of smoke rising into the sky.

Near the blast site civilians walked through debris-covered streets carrying wounded on their backs as others loaded several bodies at a time into ambulances and private cars to take them to medical facilities around the city.

The Italian NGO Emergency said 131 wounded had been taken to its hospital, with its coordinator Dejan Panic tweeting that it had been a "massacre". A photo posted on Emergency's Twitter account showed hospital staff treating injured people in an outdoor walkway next to a garden.

A man told Ariana TV he had taken his wounded brother to Jamuriate and Emergency hospitals but had been turned away.

"They are asking people with non-life threatening wounds to go to other hospitals," he said.

Aminullah, whose stationery shop is just metres from where the explosion happened, said the force of the explosion shook the foundations of his building.

"The building shook. All our windows broke. The people are in shock in our market," he told AFP.

A man told Tolo News he was passing the area when the explosion happened. "I heard a big bang and I fainted," he said, outside the Emergency hospital.

"There were dozens of people who were killed and wounded. There were pools of blood."

The attack was condemned by the presidential palace as a "crime against humanity". There was international outcry too, with NATO, the US embassy in Kabul and British foreign minister Boris Johnson among those expressing horror at the latest attack.

The offices of the High Peace Council, charged with negotiating with the Taliban which has been waging a more than 16-year insurgency in the war-torn country, are also near the blast site.

"It targeted our checkpoint. It was really huge -- all our windows are broken," Hassina Safi, a member of High Peace

Council, told AFP.

"So far we don't have any reports if any of our members are wounded or killed."

A security alert issued on Saturday morning had warned that the Islamic State group was planning "to conduct aggressive attacks" on supermarkets, shops and hotels frequented by foreigners. (AFP)

(2) Condolences Pour...

Our priority and focus right now is to help those in need and provide the best treatment for those wounded. This is the moment when we all need to stand together and punch our enemy hard. This is enough!

As other messages of support poured in from around the world, UK ambassador to Kabul Sir Nicholas Kay said: "I condemn in strongest possible terms today's atrocity in Kabul. All responsible must be brought to justice. UK in Afghanistan grieves with those lost and injured. Search for peace must continue," he said.

The US Ambassador to Kabul also condemned the attack.

He said: "I condemn today's senseless and cowardly bombing in Kabul and those who perpetrated it. Our thoughts are with the victims and their families. My government and I stand with the brave people of Afghanistan. Their work to create a peaceful, prosperous future for all the citizens of this country is the best response to terrorists and others who know only violence."

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said he was "appalled by the barbaric attack in Kabul. I strongly condemn this terrorist act. My thoughts are with the victims, their families and the Afghan people."

"NATO stands with Afghanistan in our common fight against terrorism," he said.

Saturday's bombing, thought to have been an explosive laden ambulance, happened in a busy area in the heart of the city.

The ICRC Afghanistan said in a tweet that the use of an ambulance in Saturday's attack in Kabul is harrowing. "This could amount to perjury under IHL. 'Unacceptable and unjustifiable.'"

By mid-afternoon about 5pm, four hours after the incident, health officials confirmed that at least 53 people had been killed and over 51 wounded.

This comes after last Saturday's deadly siege on the Intercontinental Hotel, which killed over 40 people, and Wednesday's hours-long siege on Save the Children in Jalalabad in Nangarhar. At least six people were killed in this attack, including four Save the Children employees. (Tolo news)

(3) Trump Says ...

"We are committed to ensuring that Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven for terrorists who want to commit mass murder of our citizens."

"I want to thank those nations represented here today that have joined in these crucial efforts. You are not just securing your own citizens, but saving lives and restoring hope for millions," the American president said.

When it comes to terrorism, Trump said the US would do what is necessary to defend its citizens and borders. Efforts are on for securing the country's immigration system as a matter of both national and economic security, he added.

"To make the world safer from rogue regimes, terrorism, and revisionist powers, we are asking our friends and allies to invest in their own defences and to meet their financial obligations," he said, adding that "our common security requires everyone to contribute their fair share".

Trump said the US is leading a broad coalition to deny terrorists control of their territory and populations, to cut off their funding, and to discredit their wicked ideology.

"I am pleased to report that the coalition to defeat ISIS has retaken almost 100% of the territory once held by these killers in Iraq and Syria. There is still more fighting and work to be done to consolidate our gains," Trump said. (Tolo news)

(4) Ulema Can ...

Peace in Afghanistan was necessary for regional development and progress, President Hussain said, believing Indonesia could play a positive role in the Afghan peace process.

Widodo also addressed a joint sitting of the Pakistani parliament, calling for political stability and security to ensure regional economic progress.

He stressed a negotiated end to armed conflicts that took a heavy toll on women and children and stymied economic stability and prosperity in the region. (Pajhwok)

(5) Millat Baba ...

due to lack of personnel.

"We have no budget, the money collected from people visiting the park

now goes to another account," he said. In response to a question, he said, "In the past, we would water the park from the Helmand River, but now the river area is under the Taliban control and we do not receive water."

On the other hand, provincial agriculture, irrigation and livestock official, Rafiullah Qalam, said a plan had been prepared for the protection and repairing of Millat Baba Park and the park would be privatized.

Mohammad Nabi Khan, provincial environment protection director, said that besides the Millat Baba Park, other parks also needed attention.

"If these parks are not protected, it would cause a bad air in Lashkargah city," he said.

Lashkargah has around 80 parks but 10 of them are currently active, he said. (Pajhwok)

(6) Villagers End ...

Darnama area of Kohband district, said that the enmity between the two villages had led increase in the number of illegal armed men.

He said many people had left their homes and moved to safe areas due to clashes between the two villages. (Pajhwok)

(7) MPs Lashout...

"Currently Afghan government (officials) are busy with internal issues and they prefer to work for their own interests instead of the interests of the Afghan people," Mohsin Ahmadi, a member of Kabul provincial council said. In the last 10 days five deadly attacks have been carried out across the country, including two major ones in Kabul city. The casualty toll has also involved mainly civilians. (Tolo news)

(8) Above 14,000 Acres

grabbing in the province and the list provided to them by the Land Authority. He said 6.5 acres of land of Sugar Mill, Cement Factory, Spin Zar Company and Mining had been grabbed by powerful individuals. "If the central government takes steps for reclaiming the grabbed land, the local authority is capable of executing the orders."

Governor Abdul Hai Naimati confirmed the issue but refused to provide exact numbers. He said till the end of former President Hamid Karzai regime, a number of powerful individuals and government official taking full advantage of their authority had grabbed government and private lands.

He said efforts were underway to retake grabbed lands, adding that a commission headed by the Provincial Council had been formed and directed to find the exact figures of grabbed land. He said land grabbing issue did not belong to the provincial government, adding thousands acres of land had been grabbed in provinces and the central government needed to take steps in this regard.

According to the Independent Land Authority, over 65,000 acres of land in 30 provinces has been captured by powerful individuals. No incident of land grabbing has been reported in Daikundi, Panjshir, Nuristan and Kunar provinces.

According to sources, 15,831 individuals have been involved in small and large scale land usurpation, but the government seems not serious about retaking of the grabbed land. (Pajhwok)

(9) Trade Through...

of the ministry, Mohammad Yahya Akhlaqi, said.

Chabahar port is 871.9km from Zaranj, the capital of Nimroz province, while Karachi port is 1,416km from Torkham.

Many economists say that if Iran and India provide more opportunities to Afghan businessmen, this route will be an alternative to Pakistan's Karachi port.

"The Chabahar port has good transportation and transit benefits for Afghans, and I think that soon, the Iranian port of Chabahar will be an alternative to Pakistan's Karachi port and routes," said Abdul Karim Arifi, an economist.

The Chabahar port is the closest port for Afghanistan. Meanwhile, many businessmen said that Chabahar port could become an important route for Afghanistan in the long term.

Although the Chabahar port is a new port and still need work, this port is in the Free Zone of Chabahar and Iran and India are trying to ease trade for Afghanistan. (Tolo news)

(10) Dawod Pledges...

strategy would have positive impacts in fight against Daesh and the Taliban.

He added, he had no differences with former governor Atta Mohammad Noor and dubbed him as friend of Jihad period and brother. (Pajhwok)

(11) Ghulam Khan...

the Customs House here, the collector claimed the MCC had seized a huge quantity of smuggled gold and currency from July 2017 to January 2018.

Efforts were being made to creating an environment conducive to trade and easy clearance of imports and exports at the Afghanistan-Pakistan border stations.

A modern customs station, financed by the Asian Development Bank, is being developed to facilitate trade at the Torkham border. "It will be completed by 2020." (Pajhwok)

Noor Lambastes Intelligence and Security Leaders

KABUL - Ousted Balkh governor and executive director of Jamiat-e-Islami party Atta Mohammad Noor appeared at his usual meeting on Saturday, just hours after the deadly ambulance bombing in Kabul, and said if he was president he would execute all intelligence and security leaders.

In addition he blasted the National Unity Government (NUG) for its inability to safeguard people's lives.

Addressing his supporters in Mazar-e-Sharif, Noor said all high-ranking security officials should be prosecuted.

"If I was president, I would execute all leaders of investigative and security departments," said Noor.

Noor blasted NUG's inability to maintain security and said the National Security Council (NSC) and Directorate of National Security (NDS) embezzles money allocated for operational purposes.

"These repeated and boring figures (security officials) should be prosecuted," Noor added.

Meanwhile, a number of residents of northern Balkh province said in reaction to recent attacks, especially Saturday's ambulance bombing, that the NUG leaders must step down if they do not have the ability to safeguard people's lives.

"We see everyday suicide attacks, explosions and kidnappings. Why does government not take a decision in this regard," a resident of Balkh said.

In the last week, this is the third deadly attack that has claimed the lives of dozens of people, mostly civilians. (Tolonews)

Hospital Full To Capacity Following Deadly Attack

KABUL - A large number of victims of Saturday's deadly ambulance bombing were taken to the Emergency Hospital which quickly filled up resulting in patients having to be treated outside.

Following the attack, which claimed the lives of 95 and wounded over 160, a number of victims were taken to the nearest hospital, Jamhuriat Hospital, but most of the wounded were transferred to the Emergency Hospital.

Afghan public health ministry meanwhile said a number of wounded are in critical condition.

Dozens of family members of victims gathered outside of the hospital on Saturday afternoon waiting anxiously for news of their loved ones.

Among the people gathered outside the hospital, were many who did not know if their relatives were even alive. "My brother was wounded in the suicide attack and brought here to the hospital," Fawad, a resident of Kabul said.

"My son is here. He has been brought here," the father of a wounded boy said.

Victims' relatives said mostly civilians had been killed and wounded in this deadly attack.

Public health ministry officials meanwhile said all state hospitals in Kabul have been mobilized to treat the wounded.

"Some injuries were very serious and they are undergoing serious treatment," Muhibullah Zir, director of forensic medicine of the ministry said.

Wounded people describing the scene said it was a horrific incident.

Women and children are also among those wounded in Saturday's bombing. (Tolonews)

ASEAN Leaders Attend India's 69th Republic Day Celebration

NEW DELHI - At least 10 Southeast Asian leaders attended the 69th Republic Day of India where they watched parade and stunt performances.

The event included marching bands, floats, military hardware, camels and stunt performers on motorbikes were paraded from the president's palace through the tree-lined roads of central Delhi, the Associated Press reported. Flags of the Southeast Asian group of

countries fluttered at the 90-minute parade. The celebrations also included aerial displays and floats from Indian states.

India's Constitution came into effect on Jan. 26, 1950. It won independence from British colonialists in 1947.

Leaders from Vietnam, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Indonesia were invited by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi to commemorate the 25th anniversary of ASEAN-India ties.

Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said at the event that there was "significant potential" for expanding trade and economic cooperation between India and ASEAN.

"Southeast Asia and India together represent a quarter of the world's population, about 1.8 billion people, and a combined GDP of more than 4 and a half trillion US dollars," he said.

A declaration at the end of the summit on Thursday reaffirmed the importance of promoting maritime safety and security, freedom of navigation and overflight in the region. It also underlined the lawful uses of the seas and maritime commerce and called for peaceful resolutions of disputes.

In 2016, French President Francois Hollande was the guest of honor at India's Republic Day parade. In 2015, former President Barack Obama viewed the display. (Tolonews)

Taliban Kill 4 Police, Capture Post near Maimana

KABUL - At least six Taliban insurgents including a commander of the Red Unit of the group were killed or wounded during a clash in northern Kunduz province of Afghanistan.

The 209th Shaheen Corps of the Afghan army in a statement said three Taliban insurgents including a commander of the Red Unit of the group were killed during the clash with the Afghan forces.

The statement further added that the Taliban commander killed during the clash has been identified as Mumtaz and at least three others were critically wounded.

According to the Shaheen Corps, the clash took place in the vicinity of Chel Cheragh Bagh Sherkat area of the province.

The anti-government armed militant groups including the Taliban insurgents have not commented regarding the report so far.

Kunduz is among the relatively volatile provinces in North of Afghanistan where the Taliban insurgents are actively operating in some of its districts and often carry out insurgency activities.

At least eighteen militants were killed during the operations of the Afghan armed forces in this province last week. The ministry of defense said last week that the operations were conducted with the close air support of the Afghan Air Force in Chahar Dara district. According to the defense ministry, five militants were also wounded and three others were arrested during the same operations.

The Afghan security forces also destroyed a vehicle and seven improvised explosive devices during the operations while some weapons and ammunition were confiscated, MoD said. (KP)

Taliban Kill 4 Police, Capture Post near Maimana

MAIMANA - A post commander was among four policemen killed during an hours long firefight with Taliban insurgents in the Pashtunkot district of northern Faryab province, police said Saturday.

The rebels stormed and captured the police post in Boldak Arab area of the district last night, Faryab deputy police chief Col. Mohammad Naem Andarabi told Pajhwok Afghan News.

Meanwhile, a reliable security source said the attack in Pashtunkot district took place about 10 kilometers from Maimana, the provincial capital, on the post manned by six police.

The Taliban killed four police including the post commander, Amanullah, after an hours long gunbattle as reinforcements did not reach them, the source said, adding the two other policemen were able to flee.

Col. Andarabi said two uprising members were killed in a Taliban ambush in SherinTagab district and separately the rebels killed a tribal militiaman in Sarhouz locality of the Pashtunkot district yesterday. (Pajhwok)