

**(1) 7 Killed,**

officials had been in attendance at the time, including CEO Abdullah Abdullah and acting foreign affairs minister Salahuddin Rabbani.

Photographs after the explosion showed Abdullah was safe while Rabbani took to Twitter and confirmed he was unharmed but condemned the incident.

Other high-ranking officials were also in attendance including a number of MPs. Early reports indicated that at least one MP had been wounded.

The wounded have been taken to Kabul Emergency Hospital. President Ashraf Ghani, who condemned the attack via Twitter, and said the "country was under attack".

"President Ghani condemns the outrageous attack on mourners burying the martyred. The country is under attack. We must be strong and united," he said.

This comes just hours after two high-ranking security officials warned members of the public against attending mass gatherings. Both the Kabul Garrison Commander and the deputy minister of interior Murad Ali Murad said on television the threat level in Kabul was extremely high, therefore people should avoid public gatherings.

This week has been a particularly deadly week for Kabul after five people were killed during the mass rally in the city on Friday. They had been protesting against Wednesday's massive truck bombing which killed over 100 people and wounded more than 600.

The Taliban immediately denied any involvement in the cemetery bombing. (Tolonews)

**(2) Afghanistan**

Our hearts go out to the families of the fallen and those injured in the attack.

"This tragedy has affected us all. I once again offer my deepest condolences to the families of all the victims ...Friday's protests reflect the frustration of many Afghans.

"While peaceful demonstrations are welcome in a democracy, some narrow political elements used this opportunity to spark violence, resulting in more death and suffering, compounding the grief."

According to the diplomat, June 6 offers another opportunity to send that message, as the government hosts an unprecedented multilateral gathering of regional stakeholders for the Kabul Process Conference to discuss security, reconciliation and economic development.

The conference will be a visible reminder to all those who seek to harm Afghanistan that the Afghan people are never alone, especially in the wake of last week's attack.

"As always, the United States, along with all of Afghanistan's partners, remains shoulder-to-shoulder with our Afghan brothers and sisters in pursuit of a brighter tomorrow for all Afghans." (Pajhwok)

**(3) Firing at**

violent in the capital. More than thousand people took to streets after around 90 people were killed and more than 450 others wounded on Wednesday when a suicide bomber detonated his explosives-packed truck near the Green Zone.

According to a statement from the Presidential Palace, the aim of the meeting --attended by senior security officials -- was to investigate yesterday's protests.

After the submission of a security report, the meeting decided to seriously investigate Friday's protests and identify and punish those who violated the law. Ghani directed security officials to take extra measures for the protection of people.

The meeting was attended by Vice-President Mohammad Sarwar Danish, Chief Executive Officer Dr. Abdullah, National Security Advisor Hanif Atmar and president's special representative Mohammad

Akram Khpalkwak.

Abdul Salam Rahimi, head of the Office of Administrative Affairs, Shah Zaman Maiwand, president's senior advisor, Amrullah Saleh, state minister for security reforms, Abdul Baqi Popal, Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) chief, and Resolute Support (RS) commander Gen. John Nicholson attended the meeting. (Pajhwok)

**(4) AI Demands**

opening fire today on crowds protesting insecurity in the wake of the 31 May bombing in Kabul, Biraj Patnaik, Amnesty International's South Asia Director, said: "The security forces' use of excessive and fatal force on protesters voicing anger over one of Afghanistan's deadliest attacks ever illustrates the authorities' contempt for the lives of ordinary people. While there are reports that a minority of protesters used violence including throwing stones at the police, this does not justify such an excessive and deadly response.

"The people of Afghanistan deserve justice and there should immediately be an independent and effective investigation into the bombing so that the perpetrators can be held accountable.

"The authorities must also investigate the unlawful use of force against protesters and ensure that those responsible for deaths during the protest are brought to justice in fair trials." According to media reports, at least seven protesters were killed after the security forces opened fire on the demonstration in downtown Kabul. (Pajhwok)

**(5) UN Urges**

streets of Kabul, following Wednesday's terrorist attack in the diplomatic quarter of the city that killed and injured many civilians. The protesters blaming the government for not having been able to stop the attacks clashed with riot police.

Yamamoto, who is also the head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), recognized the constitutional right of those with grievances to express them peacefully in public demonstrations, but reminded those protesting, and also those in a position to protect the protestors, that all have an obligation to avoid violence. "During the emotional period following the horrific attack that took place this week in Kabul, it is imperative to seek ways to listen to and voice grievances peacefully," said Mr. Yamamoto, welcoming the Government's willingness to meet with those who have protested today.

He said UNAMA was encouraged by the government's promise that its security forces would ensure the principles of tolerance, professionalism and law-based behavior. He also hailed the government's commitment to prosecute the perpetrators of crimes against the people. (Pajhwok)

**(6) Stay Away**

as there was threat of terrorist attacks. The security forces were trying day and night to deter possible attacks and ensure the safety of people, it added. (Pajhwok)

**(7) NATO Vows**

Helmand and sought NATO's help.

Gen. Walters said the aim of his visit to Helmand was to assess the overall security situation and problems of the Afghan security forces.

He said the United States was committed to cooperating with the Afghan forces under the bilateral security agreement between the two countries.

He said decisions and measures would be taken about proposals of local officials in Helmand.

Hundreds of American soldiers have been stationed in Helmand providing air support and training to Afghan forces. (Pajhwok)

**(8) Washington**

legislation, Pakistan has long been a safe haven for terrorism," Askaryar said.

"Most notably, in 2011, Osama bin Laden was killed in Abbottabad, Pakistan, where he lived less than a mile away from the largest Pakistani military academy. The United States had direct evidence that ISI chief, Lt Gen. Ahmad Shuja Pasha, knew of bin Laden's presence in Pakistan," said a memorandum submitted by the protestors.

"We implore the government of Pakistan to take a stand against terrorism and end its duplicitous actions that have cost thousands of Afghan and American," it said. (Pajhwok)

**(9) Kabul Assault**

and the ISI for orchestrating the attack.

"Contemptible foreign agents, who neither believe in God nor know Islamic teachings, are behind Wednesday's attack and other similar incidents," Hekmatyar said in a statement from HIA.

"Islam orders the security of non-combatants while allowing fighting against the aggressors. It warns against aggression, as Allah doesn't like aggressors," the ex-jihadi leader added.

He called women the most exploited class in the country, deprived of all human and Islamic rights. He underlined the need for an end to war and making the country self-reliant. (Pajhwok)

**(10) Protesters**

protest action. He said until their demands are met, they will continue to demonstrate.

Five people were killed on Friday during a protest march through the streets of Kabul. One of those killed was Mohammad Salem, the son of Mohammad Alam Izdyar, a Meshrano Jirga senator.

The demonstrators said Saturday they would wait for government's response following the issuing of their demands. However, they warned they might take to the streets and march towards the Presidential Palace after Salem's funeral service at 3pm local time Saturday.

By mid-afternoon, the crowd at Sherpur circle, in Ankara Street, in downtown Kabul, had swollen to about 2,000 and reports indicated a number of people had come in from Panjshir and Parwan provinces.

However, the Kabul Garrison commander and the deputy minister of interior on Saturday both called on demonstrators and members of the public to avoid large gatherings citing a heightened terror threat level. (Tolonews)

**(11) Khost**

until recently. When he was in the government, the government was right, but now when he is out, the government is not right."

Former jihadi leader Mohammad Sardar Zadran in his address lashed out at former president Hamid Karzai, saying the former leader had given much space to leaders of the protestors.

Zadran said they would support the government in dealing with the protestors. (Pajhwok)

**(12) Pakistani**

we have," he said, adding that the attack should serve to "strengthen our resolve" to work with Kabul on counter-terrorism operations.

The Afghan intelligence said late Wednesday that credible intelligence information confirms the attack was carried out by the network on direct instructions and with the support of the Pakistani military intelligence, Inter Services Intelligence.

The incident in the diplomatic area of Kabul took place around 8:30 am local time after a vehicle packed with explosives was detonated, leaving at least 90 dead and more than 400 others wounded. (KP)

**(13) Nangarhar**

Laghman province. Three per-

sons were arrested in connection with the narcotics.

Khogyani said police had arrested one person for his alleged ties with Taliban in Khogyani district and another two persons for their connections with Daesh group in Haska Mena district.

Two armed individuals were arrested in Jalalabad last night, he said. One person was arrested on kidnapping charge in Jalalabad and four others on land-grab accusation. (Pajhwok)

**(14) Asfandyar**

the gruesome incident, showing solidarity with the bereaved families and the Afghan nation. He called terrorism a threat to global peace and stressed the need for consolidated efforts to eradicate the menace.

Pakhtuns living on both sides of the border had become victims of terrorism and it required efforts to stop their bloodshed. He said that ANP stood by the Afghans at this critical moment and prayed for the early recovery of the wounded people. (Pajhwok)

**(15) Landmine**

forces coordination centre for further identification.

Taliban have not commented about the incident. (Pajhwok)

**(16) Damascus Did**

deadly intoxication was possibly caused by the explosion of chemical weapons produced and stored by the rebels in a local depot during a raid by the Syrian Air Force.

Moscow, Tehran and Damascus stick to an "unbiased" on-site investigation into the alleged chemical attack. (Xinhua)

**(17) US Hackers**

to media, Putin said hackers in the United States could have made it look like Russia was behind the hack for political reasons.

"Hackers can be anywhere. They can be in Russia, in Asia ... even in America, Latin America," Putin said. "They can even be hackers, by the way, in the United States, who very skillfully and professionally, shift the blame, as we say, on to Russia."

"Can you imagine something like that? In the midst of a political battle. By some calculations it was convenient for them to release this information, so they released it, citing Russia. Could you imagine something like that? I can." (Reuters)

**(18) U.S. Secretary**

re-enter the agreement. However, he indicated that re-entry may not be a top priority for his administration.

"If we can, great. If we can't, that's fine," said Trump, adding that the new agreement must ensure "fair" treatment to the United States, its business, its workers, and its taxpayers. By leaving the Paris Agreement, Trump fulfilled his campaign promise, but had aroused discord both at home and abroad. (Xinhua)

**Iraqi Forces Recapture Neighborhood in Western Mosul**

MOSUL, Iraq - Iraqi government forces on Friday completed liberation of al-Saha neighborhood after days of heavy clashes against Islamic State (IS) militants in north of the old city center in the western side of Mosul, the Iraqi military said.

"The commandos of the Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) completely freed al-Saha neighborhood and raised the Iraqi flags over some of its buildings," Abdul-Amir Yarallah from the Joint Operations Command (JOC) said in a statement.

On Monday, a CTS commander said that the special forces freed 70 percent of al-Saha neighborhood and killed and some 70 militants after four days of a push by the CTS forces, army soldiers, federal police and interior ministry elite forces, known as Rapid Response

into the neighborhood and the adjacent neighborhoods of al-Zanjili and al-Shifaa.

"The commandos of the Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) are fighting fierce clashes in al-Saha neighborhood and now they are in control of about 70 percent of the neighborhood," Staff Maj. Gen. Maan al-Saadi, commander of CTS' special operations, told Xinhua reporters in the western side of Mosul.

The CTS forces managed to kill some 70 IS militants, most of them were foreigners and non-Iraqi Arabs, in the battles during the past two days in the IS stronghold of al-Saha, Saadi said.

The troops recaptured parts of the al-Zanjili and al-Shifaa, but heavy back and forth street-to-street battles are still underway, as the extremist IS militants showed stiff resistance so far, according to a local army source. (Xinhua)

**May's Conservatives Send New Mixed Message on Tax as UK Election Nears**

LONDON - An ally of British Prime Minister Theresa May has said income tax will not rise for higher earners in an apparent new promise to voters less than a week before a national election with opinion polls showing a narrowing of her lead.

The comments from Defence Minister Michael Fallon to a newspaper, which May sought to play down, looked like the latest mixed message from the ruling Conservatives who have seen their popular support fall ahead of the June 8 election.

Polls suggest the Conservatives are set to win but are no longer likely to get the kind of landslide victory that would have boosted May ahead of the launch of complicated negotiations on Britain's exit from the European Union.

Fallon told the Daily Telegraph that the Conservative Party would not hike the top rate of income tax, striking a contrast with the main opposition Labour Party.

The Telegraph said it asked Fallon if high earners could be sure their taxes would not go up under a new Conservative government, to which he replied: "Yes. You've seen our record. We're not in the business of punishing people for getting on. On the contrary we want people to keep more of their earnings." (Reuters)

**France, India to Cooperate in Fighting Climate Change**

PARIS - French President Emmanuel Macron and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday their countries would cooperate in the fight against climate change, just days after the U.S. withdrew from the Paris climate agreement.

Modi, whose country is the world's third-biggest emissions generator, said in Russia on Friday that he would continue to back the deal and Macron has said the 2015 Paris agreement is irreversible despite U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw. "The protection of the environment and the mother planet is an article of faith," Modi said at a joint news conference with Macron in Paris.

The two leaders, who met for the first time, announced no contracts or new initiatives.

"We are both convinced that our countries have to do a lot for the ecological and environmental transition and the fight against global warming," Macron said, adding that France would go above and beyond its Paris agreement commitments. He said he planned a visit to India before year-end for a first summit of the International Solar Alliance, an initiative launched by New Delhi and Paris during the Paris climate talks. (Reuters)

**Iran, Russia Ink Roadmap for Cooperation in Energy Sector**

Tehran - Iran's Deputy Minister of Petroleum for International Affairs and Trading Amir-Hossein Zamaninia and Deputy Minister of Energy of the Russian Federation Kirill Molodtsov on Saturday inked roadmap for cooperation in energy sector.

The roadmap for energy cooperation between Tehran and Moscow was signed in a meeting between Iran and Russia joint energy taskforces.

Iran and Russia energy taskforces held a meeting simultaneously with the 21st St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF 2017).

Iran's deputy minister of petroleum for international affairs attended the SPIEF 2017 panels.

SPIEF 2017 opened late Thursday in a ceremony attended by the Chairman of Iran-Russia Joint Economic Commission Mahmoud Vaezi, Managing Director of the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) Mohammad Khoddadi and Iranian Ambassador to Russia Mehdi Sanaei.

Over 12,000 people, including the incumbent and former senior officials of the participating countries and the UN representative, are also present in the ongoing event.

Reviewing major international economic and social challenges, Middle East situation, regional crises, future of the world and relations among the countries are of major topics to be discussed in the meeting, which is to be attended by Russian President Vladimir Putin. (IRNA)

**Japan, France Welcome US Leadership in the Asia-Pacific**

SINGAPORE - Glossing over disagreements, the defense chiefs from Japan and France on Saturday welcomed U.S. leadership in the Asia-Pacific to manage the nuclear ambitions of North Korea and maintain regional peace. Speaking at a security summit in Singapore, Japanese Defense Minister Tomomi Inada applauded America's presence in the region and its tough stance on North Korea.

"The United States is a longtime Pacific power," she said. "The ongoing presence of the United States in the Indo-Pacific continues to under-guard the rules-based order of the region. We welcome U.S. policy to strengthen its position."

Japan is "further deepening cooperation and coordination" with the Trump administration," Inada added.

"The security threat North Korea poses to the region and beyond has now entered a new stage," she said. "We must stand shoulder to shoulder to intensify pressure on North Korea." (AP)

**Turkish PM's Chief Advisor Detained over Suspected Gulen Links**

ANKARA - Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim's chief advisor Birol Erdem was detained Saturday for suspected links to Gulen movement.

Birol Erdem, the former Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice, and his wife Gulsumer Erdem were detained on Saturday morning in Ankara as part of an investigation carried out by Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, according to local media.

Erdem last year testified as witness in an investigation over followers of the U.S.-based Islamic preacher Fethullah Gulen.

Preacher Gulen and his followers are accused by Turkish government of masterminding the 2016 failed coup attempt, which left 249 people dead and some 2,200 injured. (Xinhua)