

(1) Lawmakers Grill ...

had been summoned to the house to clearly respond to public representatives, he said.

A number of Wolesi Jirga members said security institutions could not defuse enemy's plots despite the availability of intelligence information prior to an incident.

They said that detective and intelligence departments were unsuccessful. Acting defense minister and NDS chief later suggested the session should be continued in closed doors for discussing some important intelligence and security issues of the country.

The session went off-camera after most of the lawmakers approved the officials' suggestion.

However, Ramadan Bashardost, a lower house member said that summoning acting officials was against the law. He then left the house in protest. (Pajhwok)

(2) Calls for Unity Grow ...

people's security. It is a shame for government that it cannot maintain security," said Amanullah Dadgar, a relative of one victim.

The Imam from the mosque that came under attack was among those killed in the explosion. He was also buried on Saturday along the other victims.

Religious scholars at the burial ceremonies meanwhile also called on the nation to remain united.

"Thanks to the security forces for maintaining security today and thanks to all the people," Jafar Musavi, a religious scholar, said.

The Afghan interior ministry has meanwhile only confirmed that 39 people were killed but members of the religious and mosques affairs commission said 60 people were killed in the incident. UNAMA meanwhile put the death toll at 50. (Tolonews)

(3) Car Bomb Kills ...

school and other training academies.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but Taliban insurgents have conducted a wave of attacks this week on Afghan forces who have been struggling since most foreign troops left at the end of 2014.

On Thursday, the Taliban stormed a military base in the southern province of Kandahar, killing at least 43 of the 60 soldiers manning the base, which was left in ruins.

Two days earlier, at least 36 security personnel were killed and scores wounded in Taliban attacks on government compounds in Paktia and Ghazni provinces, with a senior provincial police commander among the dead. (Reuters)

(4) Afghan Personnel ...

Afghanistan)," says the report.

Interviewed by SIGAR, some Afghans spoke of Taliban's threats to their families. They claimed their lives were at risk if they returned home, according to the report.

The soldiers missing in the US are branded as "high risk" by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) counterterrorism unit. The Afghans come to the US with more limited vetting than other visitors and they are military-trained individuals of a fighting age.

In 2014, two Afghan National Army (ANA) officers disappeared during a visit to Washington's Georgetown neighborhood. However, they were found days later, the TV channel reported.

Another three officers vanished from a base in Massachusetts, but they were found within days while trying to cross into Canada.

Two Afghan trainee pilots disappeared from Moody Air Force Base in Georgia just days before they were to return home in December 2015. One of them was later found in Virginia.

SIGAR said: "Trainees we spoke with indicated that recent AWOL cases had a negative impact on morale, and the negative publicity that resulted from these incidents was generally seen as bringing shame to Afghanistan." (Pajhwok)

(5) 'Andar Clash Ended ...

Taliban rejected claims of top Ghazni officials and said firefight were underway in Andar and the Taliban had advanced. The Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid claimed the group fighters captured the Sardar Kala check-post this morning. He said only seven Taliban were killed during Andar clashes. Mujahid claimed killing scores of security personnel in

gun battle. (Pajhwok)

(6) Dostum Slams ...

Taliban and ISIS terrorist groups are acting on the instructions of the outsiders and kill innocent people.

He said the recent attacks on the mosques have been carried out with the support of the regional intelligence agencies, however he did not specifically name any country which he believes is involved in the bloodshed.

The first vice president said the government should act immediately as the persistent attacks on religious sites shows that the security officials have failed to properly perform their duties.

A suicide bomber detonated his explosives among the prayer participants in West of Kabul city late on Friday evening, leaving at least 39 dead and 43 others wounded, according to the ministry of interior.

In the meantime, a similar attack left more than 20 people dead and several others wounded in western Ghor province of Afghanistan. (KP)

(7) President Ghani ...

dismissal came at a time when three weeks earlier he on his social media account wrote about being under presser from some circles.

"Threat to the IEC, personal insult, propaganda campaign and fraud by some circles has been started, but my message is preservation of national interest, social justice, professionalism and making justice to individual," he wrote. (Pajhwok)

(8) Traders Boycott ...

Afghanistan was the member of South Asia Association for Regional Countries (SAARC), Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) and South Asia Free Trade Area (SAFTA). Being the member of this organisation Pakistan did not have the right to increase custom duty on Afghanistan good, he recalled.

The ACCI deputy director said Afghan traders stopped export of vegetables and fresh fruits to Pakistan in protest to the surge in custom duty asking the Pakistani and Afghan government to cancel it. (Pajhwok)

(9) Tadamichi ...

Imam-e-Zaman Mosque in Kabul claimed at least 50 lives, with 50 more persons injured. All of the victims were civilians. Islamic State - Khorasan Province claimed responsibility. The suicide attack in the village of Khojagan in the Dolaina district of Ghor province targeted a local pro-government armed group leader and members of his group in a Sunni mosque, killing at least nine and injuring a further ten. No responsibility has been claimed.

The incidents are the latest in a pattern of attacks against mosques, particularly Shi'a religious sites. UNAMA's most recent quarterly report on civilian casualties notes that during the first nine months of 2017 attacks directed against the Shi'a population as they attended mosques or religious ceremonies resulted in 278 civilian casualties (84 deaths and 194 injured).

International humanitarian law prohibits deliberate attacks against civilians and civilian property, including places of worship, and places a specific obligation on parties to enable religious personnel to carry out their work.

The Mission sends its condolences to the families of the victims and wishes a speedy recovery to those injured.

UNAMA is mandated to support the Afghan Government and the people of Afghanistan as a political mission that provides 'good offices' among other key services. 'Good offices' are diplomatic steps the UN takes publicly and in private, drawing on its independence, impartiality and integrity, to prevent international disputes from arising, escalating or spreading. UNAMA assists the process of peace and reconciliation; monitors and promotes human rights, including the protection of civilians in armed conflict; promotes good governance; and encourages regional cooperation. The Mission also promotes coherent development support by the international community. (PR)

(10) Iran Condemns ...

cooperation and adopt joint strategies, Shamkhani said.

Fighting against Daesh believes should be parallel with taking security and military action against them and the role of Ulema mainly in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Afghanistan play significant

role to this end, he said.

Some 30 civilians were killed and over 60 others were injured in Imam Zaman (AS) mosque blast in west of Kabul.

In another terrorist attack on a mosque some 30 civilians were killed the same day.

According to eye-witnesses the number of victims will increase due their critical conditions. (IRNA)

(11) US Shuttles ...

"She [Wells] will also work to integrate SCA Bureau and SRAP operations. State Department employees arrive and depart from positions regularly, and we have well-established mechanisms to transfer their expertise and contacts to successors," the spokesperson told VOA. Current and former U.S. diplomats say the SRAP office focused on three specific areas.

First, the unit took the lead in pursuing Afghan reconciliation, specifically talks with the Taliban. Second, the office was tasked with building support for its efforts within the international community, including at EU and NATO summits. And lastly, the SRAP office took steps to facilitate the success of Afghanistan's national unity government, including putting together the Ashraf Ghani-Abdullah Abdullah political deal in Afghanistan. State Department officials say Wells is tasked with heading efforts to integrate SRAP operations within the broader South and Central Asia Bureau. The consolidation began in June, with the departure of then-acting SRAP Laurel Miller.

Integration A State Department spokesperson told VOA, "We are at the beginning of a process to determine the bureaucratic and management steps required to integrate the SCA bureau and SRAP operations. But no decisions have yet been made with respect to the timeline and process of this integration."

This lack of clarity has added to the apparent sense of uncertainty within the State Department, which is already dealing with proposed budget cuts and a number of unfilled positions.

Some former senior U.S. diplomats are skeptical about the timing of the decision to roll back SRAP, saying disbanding the policy team and losing crucial expertise increases risk at a time when the United States is renewing its commitment to stabilizing Afghanistan and promoting reconciliation.

"Unfortunately, I think with the closure of SRAP office or really a departure of temporary employees, we have lost a great deal of expertise and institutional knowledge — deep domain expertise about the Taliban and how to attempt to negotiate with the Taliban," said former Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Olson. Olson, who also served as the U.S. ambassador to Pakistan, noted, "There continues to be a need for some kind of special envoy, special representative — whatever you want to call it — someone who is focused full time on Afghan reconciliation that is pursuing political settlement."

He added if the U.S. is going to get a diplomatic initiative going, "you can't wait till you have the initiative to build the team."

Olson, however, acknowledged that the integration of SRAP's duties into a broader bureau may add some clarity to South Asia strategy.

"The disadvantage to SRAP was putting India and Pakistan in separate bureaucratic domains, which tended to reduce the coherence of U.S. policy toward South Asia," he said.

Now a lost relic of former President Barack Obama's administration, the SRAP post was created in the wake of a troop surge in the Afghan war, with Richard Holbrooke appointed to lead U.S. policy in the volatile Afghan-Pakistan war zone. (VoA)

(12) 117 Rebels ...

capital.

During the operation, 74 other suspects were detained and 36 different types of weapons, 1,544 bullets and 11 bombs seized, he added.

Rahimi said 43 other people were detained in connection of kidnapping, murder, robbery, land grabbing and some other crimes. Some of the convicts were also showed to the media.

Children who were trained to commit suicide attacks were also among those

detained, he added, saying police had many achievements in the counternarcotics area in last two weeks.

"Our detective agents were able to seize 1,424 kilograms of hashish, 51 kilograms of opium and 47 kilograms of heroin and 22 suspects along with 11 vehicles were detained in their trafficking," he said.

He said operations for elimination of militants, controlling crimes and drug trafficking and other destructive activities had been accelerated.

However, Nangarhar residents complain about worse security situation than any times before in the province. (Pajhwok)

of Indonesian green tea cost 280af and the same amount of African black tea 300af -- same as last week's.

Ahmad Wali Panjsheri, who owns a grocery shop in Dahn-i-Bagh area, sold a 50-kg bag of Kazakhstani flour for 1,220af and a 49-kg sack of Pakistani sugar for 1,900af.

He sold a 16-litre tin of Khurshid ghee for 1,150af, a 24-kg sack of Pakistani rice for 2,100af, a kilogram of Indonesian green tea for 300af and the same quantity of African black tea for 350af, higher than wholesale rates.

Haji Fawad Ahmad Salehzada, a jeweler in Timr Shahi area of Kabul, said one gram of Arabian gold cost 2,300af but the price of the same quantity of Russian gold increased from 1,800af to 1,850af.

According to Sara-I-Shahzada money-changers, one US dollar accounted for 68.30af and 1,000 Pakistani rupees 639af this week against last week's rates of 68.20af and 638af respectively. (Pajhwok)

(14) Mosque Damaged,...

actions do not believe in religion, mosques or the Quran. It is a mosque, not a place for suicides and explosions," Ali Asghar, a resident of the area said. On Saturday morning Kabul's municipality workers arrived at the mosque to clean up the scene.

Angry residents of Dasht-e-Barchi meanwhile blasted government for its inability to maintain security. They said government has an obligation to ensure people's safety and it should carry out its responsibility properly.

"The public's political consciousness is being questioned — about where society is going, where it has fallen and about its indifference to such incidents," Aziz Royesh, a teacher said.

This comes about two months after the massive attack on the Imam Zaman mosque in Khair Khana in Kabul's PD11, which killed over thirty people — another attack that Daesh claimed responsibility for. (Tolonews)

(15) Zazai Maidan ...

walked freely through the streets of villages both day and night and clearly appeared to have no security concerns.

This in itself is an anomaly as most remote regions in the country have serious security challenges.

According to Hamid, if strangers are spotted out on the streets, especially at night, the locals immediately report them to the police. The police in turn follow up on this and ensure the stranger poses no threat.

Hamid's friend, Shafiullah, who is an economics student, said the locals all cooperate with security forces and because of this, their district is secure.

"All the tribes should work together and support the government," said Shafiullah.

Another local, Abdul Malik, who is a graduate with an engineering degree, said because of the stability, their district has become a tourist attraction and hundreds flock to the region to experience the security and beauty of the local landscape.

"Zazai Maidan residents have worked for the entire Afghanistan. Because now people from all parts of the country come here and the district is a place for tourists," said Abdul Malik.

Another resident, Ali Akbar, said he has been working in the district center for 20 years and has never witnessed any insecurity. He said he and his friends have often wondered why the people in the rest of the country do not work for a better future.

"There are lots of incidents in Afghanistan - that we see on TV or hear from people. But here and around us, we have not faced any problems," said Ali Akbar. Even the shops in district are open until late at night. A shopkeeper who sells

flowers at the district center said he stays open late as often wedding guests drop in to buy flowers.

"There are parties and wedding at nights and all comes and buy flowers and other things from me," shopkeeper Abedullah Abed said.

In his shop he has hung Afghan flags — which he said were in memory of fallen Afghan soldiers. (Tolonews)

(16) Afghanistan ...

before Rashid returned to finish off the innings.

In reply, Ahmadi and Ihsanullah Janat shared a 124-run opening-wicket stand to put Afghanistan in the driver's seat.

The two scored at a decent pace before Rath dismissed Ihsanullah. The right-hand batsman smacked eight fours and a six in an 82-ball 63.

Despite losing his partner, Ahmadi carried on to complete his century. His 108 came off 113 balls and was studded with 16 fours and two sixes, and his knock finally ended in form of a run-out.

Rahmat Shah (34 not out) and Asghar Stanikzai (58 not out) then made sure that Afghanistan ended the day well on top. (Pajhwok)

US House to Discuss Missile Sanctions Bill against Iran Next Week

TEHRAN - The US House of Representatives is scheduled to vote on a new sanctions bill on Iran's ballistic missile program and Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement next week.

In a Friday joint statement, Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, the number two House Republican, and Representative Ed Royce, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, stressed Congress' resolve to work with US President Donald Trump's administration to iron out a strategy against Iran. "Immediate action towards this goal will come from the House next week as we vote on legislation that furthers sanctions on Hezbollah and Iran's missile proliferation," they said.

The new bipartisan sanctions bill against Iran, which is expected to pass the Senate, targets entities with assets outside the US if they are found to support Iran's ballistic missile program.

The development comes a week after Trump refused to formally certify that Iran is complying with its nuclear agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), with world powers, and warned that he might ultimately terminate the deal. (Presstv)

Spanish Ministries to Take Control over Catalan Powers: PM

MADRID - The Spanish ministries will take control over the Catalan regional government under the application of the article 155 of the Spanish constitution, Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy said on Saturday.

In a press conference after an extraordinary cabinet meeting to deal with the implementation of the article, Rajoy explained that the regional government of Catalonia, Generalitat, would be dissolved, their powers would be controlled by the Spanish ministries and elections would be called within six months.

Rajoy explained the measures of the application of the article 155 which must be approved by the Spanish Senate to be implemented. The Spanish government justified the decision based on "rebel, systematic and conscious disobedience" of the regional government of Catalonia, Generalitat. (Xinhua)

Macron Hails Syria's Raqqa Liberation, but Says Combat Against IS Not over

PARIS - French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday hailed liberation of the Syrian city of Raqqa from the Islamic State (IS), but warned that the war against the terror cell was not over.

In a statement released by his office, Macron welcomed "the victory of the Syrian Democratic Forces backed by the International Coalition" which he described as a "major milestone" in the fight against terrorism, and preparation for political transition in Syria.

"The battle against Islamic State did not end with the fall of Raqqa, and France will maintain its military effort as long as necessary," he said (Xinhua)