Govt Slammed Over Deadly Hotel Attack

KABUL - Some politicians have lashed out at the attack stating that some government officials were involved in the attack.

Following a 17-hour siege of the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul this weekend, the Afghan government has come under fire after some political figures accused government officials of having been involved in the incident.

This was the second time the hotel had been attacked – the first time being in June 2011.

On Monday, some prominent Jihadi leaders and politicians slammed government for its security system.

This incident indicates that government is weak, its incompetence and fragile. Foreigners were also present in the hotel, thus this weakness is evident to other countries as well,” said ex-Jihadi leader MohammadAkbari.

They claim that elements inside government collaborated with insurgents to launch the deadly attack on the hotel.

... (More on P4)... (3)

New Balkh Governor Barred from Talking to Media

AZARSHARIF - The newly-appointed governor for northern Balkh province, Eng. Daud, was not allowed on Sunday to speak to the media at the provincial capital, Mazarr-Sharif, before returning to Kabul.

Daud, who traveled to Mazarr-Sharif province to attend his father’s funeral ceremony, returned to Kabul on Sunday. He was expected to talk to journalists at the Balkh airport today, but sources close to the governor said he was not allowed despite deliberations had been made in the airport.

Zamir Qayumi, secretary of Daud, told Pajhwok Afghan News that the governor was expected to talk to media at the Jalalabad Balkh Airport today.

Therefore all media outlets were invited to come to the airport, he said. But Balkh people’s representative in the Wolesi Jirga, Assadullah Sharifi, and the airport’s security chief, Mohammad Khan, did not allow the governor to talk to reporters.

Qayumi said the motive behind not allowing the governor to speak to the media was to weaken his morale in the public.

However, the airport security chief rejected the claim, saying the new governor’s plan of talk to media was coordinated with him. “It is a lie, we have not coordinated with him,” he said.

Journalists were invited to the airport at 1pm, but they were never (More on P4).

KABUL - Afghan security officials met on Monday to draw up a response to a deadly attack on Kabul’s Hotel Intercontinental that exposed once again how vulnerable the capital remains to militant assaults.

Even in a city long used to violence, the attack by gunmen dressed in army uniforms has caused shock, with questions raised about how they were able to penetrate security at one of the most prominent landmarks in Kabul.

The smoke-blackened hotel, on a hill overlooking the city, remained blocked off on Monday and even the final casualty toll from the attack, which began on Saturday night and was claimed by Taliban insurgents, remains unclear.

Officially, the government says at least 19 people were killed but people in the security system say the real figure is certainly above 30 and probably many more.

The Taliban are seeking to re-impose Islamic rule after their 2001 ouster at the behest of US-led troops. Many of the victims were Indians and Pakistanis, who have been frequent visitors to the capital.

New Afghan Ambassador Looks to Enhance Ties with Turkey

ANKARA - Afghanistan's new ambassador to Turkey, Fazl Ahmad Aman, was invited to the airport at 1pm, but he was not allowed to speak to the media at the Istanbul airport.

He said he intended (More on P4).

Ghani Grants Apartments to Fallen Soldiers Families

KABUL - President Ashraf Ghani has granted residential apartments to families of seven martyred security personnel, the President Office said.

In a statement from the Presidential Palace quoted President Ghani as praising ‘the bravery and sacrifice’ of the security forces in protecting their soil, national interests and their families’ patience. The statement said “There is no limit to services of our martyrs will be written golden words”.

“We cannot compensate your children’s sacrifices, all security and defense forces are my children and I always order the victim families needs to be met in time,” Ghani assured the families.

Wali Mohammad Ahamad, a member of a victim’s family, appreciated the president’s thoughts. “The children of those are protecting the country 24/7, it is very much and they always pray for him,” he added.

Syed Sadat Memmn-Nadum, Minister of Urban Development, said some parts of the apartments allocated for the families were under construction. (Pajhwok)

US Considers Sending 1,000 More Troops to Afghanistan in Spring - Reports

KABUL - The United States is pondering increasing the number of its military personnel in Afghanistan by 1,000 more troops this spring, Washington Post newspaper reported, citing the source of the US military.

According to the Washington Post newspaper, US Defense Secretary James Mattis has not yet signed the relevant decree, however, the move is aimed at enhancing the Afghan forces so that they may counter the Taliban.

The total number of troops is reportedly expected to reach 13,000 in spring, with some of the personnel present being returned as new forces are to come. The US Army leadership backs the proposal increase of troops, the newspaper added.

In August, US President Donald Trump announced a new Afghan strategy, in which he pledged to continue US support to Afghanistan in Spring - Reports.

... (More on P4)... (4)

Gates Says He Opposed Obama’s Afghanistan Timeline

WASHINGTON - Former US defense secretary Robert Gates says he opposed former president Barack Obama’s Afghanistan war strategy that set dates for the drawdown of US troops.

In an interview with The Seattle Times, Gates said he supported President Donald Trump’s decision to end timelines for troop drawdown. “The policy basically told the Taliban how long they had to wait. I think it (More on P4).

KABUL - Former US defense secretary Robert Gates says he opposed former president Barack Obama’s Afghanistan war strategy that set dates for the drawdown of US troops.

In an interview with The Seattle Times, Gates said he supported President Donald Trump’s decision to end timelines for troop drawdown. “The policy basically told the Taliban how long they had to wait. I think it was a mistake,” he said.

... (More on P4)... (5)

Insurgents Broached Hotel without Being Searched: Source

According to survivors some of the hotel attackers had been checked in as guests and had their weapons delivered to their rooms.

A security source told Daily 24 that the attackers checked in to the hotel on condition of anonymity on Monday that the heavily-armed insurgents who stormed the Intercontinental Hotel, with a vehicle load of explosives, managed to access the facility without being searched at the main gate.

The source said that the security cameras showed that the vehicle and passengers were not stopped and searched at any point after entering the premises.

Meanwhile Zamarrud Hamdard, Herat’s head of telecom Regulatory Authority of Afghanistan (ATRA), who was one of the survivors, said that on the day of the attack weapons belonging to attackers checked in to the hotel had been delivered to their rooms. He said additional insurgents managed to gain access to the kitchen by breaking one of the windows. (More on P4)

Afghan Officials Search for Answers to Deadly Hotel Attack

Afghan security officials met on Monday to draw up a response to a deadly attack on Kabul’s Hotel Intercontinental that exposed once again how vulnerable the capital remains to militant assaults.

... (More on P4)... (1)

Pakistan’s National Security Council (NSC) Chairman Lt. Gen. Hamid Mir reportedly told the Afghan leader that Pakistan’s priority is to try to bring the Afghan war to an end.

In an exclusive interview with Anadolu Agency last Thursday, Jan said he was very pleased to be appointed to Ankara and that he liked the country very much.

“I am proud of Afghanistan like your president very much and they always pray for him,” he said, adding the people of Afghanistan saw Turkey as a role model for the Islamic World and as one of the most developed and modern Muslim countries.

Everybody wishes to have this kind of development, democracy and justice. So, when I was informed that I was appointed here I was very glad,” he said.

Afghanistan’s ties with Turkey have a long history and both sides share “very common” values, Jan added.

... (More on P4)... (2)