

Baghdad (AP) – More than 20 people have been killed in a bombing attack in the Iraqi capital Baghdad as the country's forces are grappling with Takfiri ISIL terrorists. The attack, which took place at a police checkpoint located at the entrance to the Kazimiyah district, killed at least 23, including more than a dozen civilians en route to the shrine of Imam Musa Kazim (PBUH) in the last days of the holy month of Ramadan.

People in this world are like travelers whose journey is going on though they are asleep.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Syria Army Forces Blow Up Terrorists HQ



File photo shows Syrian army troops.

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – Syrian army forces have blown up a building in the northwestern city of Idlib that foreign-sponsored Takfiri

terrorists used as headquarters. According to local sources, a number of terrorists were killed in the operation on Tuesday. Syrian army

units also managed to kill many Takfiri terrorists in other parts of Idlib Province.

Also on the same day, Syrian army

troops retook the strategic town of Murk, situated some 200 kilometers (124 miles) north of the capital, Damascus, and some nearby villages.

The takeover has reportedly cut off the terrorists' supply route between the restive provinces of Hama and Idlib.

The Syrian army also conducted successful clean-up operations against terrorists in other parts of the country, including Darra, Quneitra, Homs, and Aleppo, inflicting heavy losses on them.

Meanwhile, the Syrian authorities have released 105 former terrorists who pledged not to carry out any acts that would destabilize the country. They had surrendered to the authorities earlier.

Syria has been gripped by deadly violence since March 2011. According to some sources, over 160,000 people have been killed and millions displaced due to the violence fueled by the foreign-backed terrorists.

The Western powers and their regional allies - especially Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey - are supporting the terrorists operating inside Syria.

US-Led Airstrike Kills 4 in Afghanistan's Helmand



The site of a US-led airstrike in Afghanistan

KABUL (Dispatches) – At least four people have been killed in another US-led airstrike in Afghanistan's southern province of Helmand, Press TV reports citing provincial authorities.

A statement released by the provincial media said those killed in the drone attack were Taliban militants. Another report said the death toll may be as high as 15 Taliban militants.

The Taliban are yet to issue a statement on the airstrike.

Helmand, which sits on the border with Pakistan, has been a focal point of Taliban activities.

The Taliban militants have vowed to escalate attacks on Afghan forces and US-led troops, their bases, diplomatic missions and their convoys before the drawdown of the US-led foreign forces by the end of the year.

Meanwhile, Kabul and Washington have long contended over US-led air attacks in Afghanistan.

US-led forces have recently expanded their aerial attacks across the country, leaving a large number of Afghan civilians dead.

The United States and its allies invaded Afghanistan in 2001 as part of the so-called war on terror. The offensive removed the Taliban from power, but insecurity remains across the country.

The US-led war in Afghanistan, which has caused record-high civilian and military casualties, has be-

come the longest military conflict in American history.

37 Taliban Killed

At least 37 Taliban militants were killed during military operations by Afghan national army soldiers during the past 24 hours.

Defense Ministry Spokesman Gen. Zahir Azimi said the operations were conducted in various provinces of Afghanistan, Khaama Press reported. Azimi further added that three leaders of the anti-government armed militants were also arrested during the operations.

He said various types of weapons, ammunition and explosives were discovered and confiscated by Afghan army soldiers during the same operations.

Azimi also added that Afghan army soldiers neutralized 14 improvised explosive devices (IED) planted by anti-government armed militants.

In the meantime, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) said at least 29 militants were killed during the joint military operations in the past 24 hours.

A statement released by MoI said the operations were conducted in Nangarhar, Herat, Maidan Wardak and Helmand provinces.

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

Twin Bombings in Libya Army Base Kill 4

TRIPOLI (AFP) – Twin bombing attacks on a military base in the eastern Libyan city of Benghazi have killed at least four soldiers amid continuing clashes between rebel and government forces in the major port city.

The first attack took place on Tuesday when a bomber detonated his explosives at the entrance of Benghazi's Special Forces Headquarters, allowing a second bomber to intrude into the base and set off another bomb killing at least four soldiers, security authorities said.

A medical official said the blasts killed four people, not including the two attackers themselves, and there were an "unknown number of wounded" people.

No group has yet claimed respon-

sibility for the twin bombing, which came a day after deadly clashes between the army and anti-government militia forces loyal to retired General Khalifa Haftar in Ben Ghazi.

Haftar launched a military offensive in the country's east on May 16, saying that he wants to crush the militants and "establish stability in Libya."

At least 16 people, mostly soldiers, were killed and 81 others wounded in the clashes.

In a separate development, Libya's oil production has fallen, turning back a hard-won increase since April in revenues for the state just as it faces an escalation of fighting around the airport in the capital, Tripoli, and across Benghazi.



Libya militiamen are seen in this file photo.

National Oil Company spokesman Mohamed El Harari said the country's oil output as of Monday was around 450,000 bpd compared with 555,000 bpd on Thursday.

UN:

Polio Spread Threatens Middle East



A Syrian child rides a bike in Damascus.

BAGHDAD (Press TV) – Thirty-eight children have been paralyzed by polio in Syria and Iraq since October last year and there is a high risk that the dis-

ease will spread further in the Middle East, the United Nations says.

"It is now even more imperative to reach every child mul-

tiplied times, and to do whatever we can to vaccinate children we could not reach in previous rounds," said Maria Calivis, regional director for the Middle East and North Africa at the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in a report on Tuesday.

The disease, which broke out in Deir al-Zor, the largest in the eastern part of Syria, has infected 36 people in the crisis-hit country so far.

Most of the Syria cases were recorded in Deir al-Zor, but others were in Aleppo, Idlib, Hama, and Hasakah.

"Right now we estimate that there are 765,000 children inside Syria who live in areas that

are hard to reach. And as long as we don't get full and regular access to these children, the chances of polio spreading further will continue to exist," said Juliette Touma, a spokesperson for UNICEF.

The two cases in Iraq are children living around the capital Baghdad.

Between December 2013 and June, a polio vaccination campaign was launched in seven countries of the Middle East, which reached a record 25 million children, according to UNICEF and the World Health Organization.

A second phase of the campaign is planned to take place from August.

Indian MP Force-Feeds Muslim Man in Ramadan

NEW DELHI (Press TV) – A right-wing Hindu lawmaker in India has been videotaped while allegedly trying to force-feed a Muslim man during the fasting month of Ramadan.

India's parliament burst into a fury on Wednesday as opposition Congress MPs protested the force-feeding of a Muslim man by Hindu lawmaker Rajan Baburao Vichare.

"It is absolutely reprehensible and should be condemned in the strongest possible manner," said Congress party spokesman Manish Tewari.

The television footage showed a group of furious lawmakers from the nationalist Shiv Sena party confronting a catering supervisor in New Delhi on July 17.

MP Vichare was caught pushing bread several times into the supervisor's mouth as a crowd started to swarm.

"The canteen management here is in a bad state," said Vichare, adding, "The Chapatis (Indian flatbread) they ... bake didn't even break, ...vegetable and pulses" are of low quality.

The lawmakers were complaining about the quality of food at a guest house which regularly serves officials from the state of Maharashtra.

Meanwhile, the company manager says the supervisor is deeply hurt over the incident as "religious sentiments are attached."

Last week, Shiv Sena lawmakers were filmed throwing kitchen items and physically threatening the kitchen and service staff at the guest house. Shiv Sena, a key ally of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party, is infamous for creating a history of intimidation and unrest against minorities.

Experts say the latest incident is likely to raise concern among religious minorities, including Muslims, over Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government.