

RAMALLAH, West Bank (Dispatches) – Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, 82, is undergoing minor ear surgery in a West Bank hospital and is expected to be discharged within a few hours, the official Palestinian news agency Wafa said on Tuesday.

Abbas' surgery coincides with an escalation in Zionist-Palestinian tensions after Zionist troops shot dead dozens of Palestinian protesters on the Gaza border on Monday as the new U.S. Embassy opened in al-Quds.

In February, Abbas was hospitalized in the United States for medical checks during a trip to address the UN Security Council in New York.

To lose or to waste an opportunity will result in grief and sorrow.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Houthis Fire Rocket at Southern Saudi Military Base



Yemenis check the site of Saudi airstrikes at the presidential office in the capital Sana'a on May 7, 2018.

RIYADH (Dispatches) – Yemen's Houthi movement fired a rocket at the King Faisal military base in the southern Saudi Arabian city of Jizan on Tuesday, the group's al-Masirah TV said on Twitter.

Yemen's Arabic-language al-Masirah television network, citing an unnamed military official, re-

ported that the King Faisal military base was targeted with short-range Badr-1 missile on Tuesday afternoon, adding that the projectile hit the designated target with high precision.

The development came hours after Yemeni soldiers and Popular Committees fighters launched

a short-range Zelzal-2 (Earthquake-2) missile at a gathering of Saudi-backed militiamen loyal to Yemen's resigned president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi in the al-Ghayl district of Yemen's northern province of al-Jawf.

Meanwhile, two people lost their lives and as many were injured

when Saudi fighter jets struck two cars as they were travelling along a road in the Kitaf wa al-Boqe'e district of the mountainous northwestern province of Sa'ada.

A civilian also sustained injuries when Saudi border guards opened fire to ward off local residents of Razih district.

The Yemeni Ministry of Human Rights announced in a statement on March 25 that the Saudi-led war had left 600,000 civilians dead and injured since March 2015.

The United Nations says a record 22.2 million Yemenis are in need of food aid, including 8.4 million threatened by severe hunger.

A high-ranking UN aid official recently warned against the "catastrophic" living conditions in Yemen, stating that there was a growing risk of famine and cholera there.

"People's lives have continued unraveling. Conflict has escalated since November driving an estimated 100,000 people from their homes," John Ging, UN director of aid operations, told the UN Security Council on February 27.

Ging said cholera had infected 1.1 million people in Yemen since last April, and a new outbreak of diphtheria had occurred in the war-ravaged Arab country since 1982.

Heavy Fighting Erupts as Taliban Militants Storm Afghan City



Smoke rises from a building during ongoing clashes between Afghan security forces and Taliban militants at a government building in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, on May 13, 2018.

KABUL (Dispatches) – At least six Afghan security forces and eight militants were killed after a heavy fighting broke out in Farah city, provincial capital of western Afghan province of Farah on Tuesday, sources said.

Taliban militants launched a major offensive at around 2:40 a.m. local time Tuesday (2210 GMT Monday) from northern and western neighborhood of the city, in a coordinated effort to seize full control of Farah, a provincial security source told Xinhua anonymously.

"As of now, the initial information said that six security forces were martyred in Farah city," Interior Ministry spokesman Najib Danish told local media Tolo News TV. Local provincial council member Jamila Amini said from inside the city on Tuesday that the militants had attacked the city around midnight, capturing one district and parts of another.

Amini said government airstrikes had been called to assist ground forces.

"Heavy fighting continues inside the city, and aircraft have just started bombarding Taliban positions," she said. Reinforcements, including commando units, have also been deployed to the region,

she added.

Amini further said that at least one army convoy had been struck by a bomber on a motorbike, causing casualties.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Radmanish, a spokesman for the Defense Ministry in Kabul, said two Afghan forces had been killed and four wounded.

Taliban released a statement warning residents to remain inside their houses.

But the Defense Ministry said it had repelled the assailants and "the security forces are now chasing the enemy."

The Taliban militants have escalated their attacks as part of their so-called spring offensive.

The remote and sparsely-populated province of Farah, which borders Iran, has been a key battleground for the militants for months, with heavy fighting in Balabuluk.

Farah has gained more significance for the Taliban as the government plans to build a multi-billion-dollar pipeline in the province, which also involves Turkmenistan, Pakistan, and India. The province has been the scene of several high-profile attacks in the recent past.

Qatari Emir: Doha to Continue Support for Unity, Stability in Somalia

DOHA (Press TV) – Qatar has pledged to continue support for the stability and sovereignty of Somalia amid heightened tensions between the East African country and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), a party to the Saudi-led quartet of Doha's boycotters.

Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, who held talks Monday with visiting Somali President Mohammad Abdullahi, said the relationship between Doha and Mogadishu were based on "brotherhood and mutual respect."

"Qatar will continue to support the unity, stability, sovereignty and well-being of the people of Somalia," Sheikh Tamim said in a tweet following the meeting.

Earlier this month, a Qatari of-

ficial told Reuters that Doha had provided \$385 million in infrastructure, education and humanitarian aid to the Somali government.

The Monday meeting, which is the third in less than a year, comes at a particularly sensitive time when Mogadishu abandoned a military deal with Abu Dhabi and seized millions of dollars from an Emirati plane.

Last month, an Emirati plane was grounded in the African country for several hours after UAE officials refused to allow the search of suspicious luggage.

Emirati military trainers were held for hours at Bosaso International Airport in Somalia's semi-autonomous region of Puntland,

as they refused to allow security forces to check their suspiciously "heavy" luggage.

In an earlier incident, the Somali federal government had confiscated nearly 10 million dollars from a UAE Royal Jet at the Mogadishu International Airport.

Following the incident the UAE ended its military training program in Somalia, which started in 2014.

Tensions between Somalia and the UAE emerged in March after the Dubai-based DP World granted a 19-percent stake to Ethiopia in the Berbera port in breakaway Somaliland, which Somalia has not recognized as independent.

Under that deal, the UAE builds a military base in Berbera Port and trains the soldiers of the break-

away Somali region.

Mogadishu censured the agreement as a violation of international law.

Somalia's internationally-backed government is reportedly planning to file a legal complaint against the UAE for setting up the military base.

Somaliland is located along the strategic Bab al-Mandab Strait across from Yemen, where the UAE has been waging a devastating war as part of a Saudi-led coalition.

Relations between Somalia and the UAE first soured last year when Mogadishu refused to take sides with the Saudi regime and the UAE in their diplomatic dispute with Qatar.

After Years of War Road Linking Damascus to Central Syria Reopens

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – The highway linking Syrian capital Damascus to the central region reopened on Tuesday after years of closure due to the war, according to the state news agency SANA.

The road opened after the northern entrance of Damascus was rehabilitated following the liberation of the Eastern Ghouta countryside of the Damascus from the terrorists.

The road that has been opened stretches 17km long linking the northern entrance of Damascus to the Baghdad Bridge on the way to Homs.

During the terrorists' presence in Eastern Ghouta, which is overlooking the road between 2012 and 2018, the travelers used to take a longer route through the al-Tal area, but it was not an official highway because it was exposed to the terrorists' snipers and was called "the road of death."

After their full withdrawal from

Eastern Ghouta, which ended in April, rehabilitation work on the road started.

The extension of the road between the central provinces of Homs and Hama is also being rehabilitated as the Syrian army entered the southern countryside of Hama province after the recent withdrawal of the terrorists toward terrorist-held areas in northern Syria.

The highway used to connect Damascus with Homs, Hama and Aleppo province in northern Syria.

After the recent achievements in dislodging the rebels from Eastern Ghouta, the northern countryside of Homs and the southern countryside of Hama, travelers to Aleppo will be able to travel more easily but they will have to make a turn to a sub-route between Hama and Aleppo, as the original road also passes through the countryside of Idlib province in northwestern Syria, which is still under the terrorists' control.

Turkey's Pro-Kurdish Opposition Seeks Release of Jailed Presidential Candidate

ANKARA (Reuters) – Turkey's pro-Kurdish opposition applied on Tuesday for its jailed presidential candidate to be released before next month's snap election, saying the detention of Selahattin Demirtas jeopardized voter freedom.

This month, the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) nominated Demirtas, who has been in prison for about 17 months on security charges and faces a jail sentence of up to 142 years if convicted, as its candidate in the June election.

Turkey's High Electoral Board has approved his candidacy and Demirtas is running his presidential campaign from behind bars.

The HDP said it had filed an appeal for the release of Demirtas, the party's former leader, saying the imprisonment of a candidate violated

electoral law and jeopardized voter freedom.

Demirtas, a former human rights lawyer, has expanded HDP's support beyond its traditional Kurdish base by appealing to secular, left-leaning Turks. He has also won support from some other opposition candidates, such as nationalist Meral Aksener.

"He is not someone who has been convicted," Aksener, the head of the Iyi (Good) Party, told reporters. "Let's say he is freed three months after elections, how will Turkey explain the competitive inequality during the campaigning period then?" Her comments were notable as nationalists and pro-Kurdish politicians rarely find common ground in Turkey.

The presidential candidate from the main op-

position Republican People's Party (CHP), Muharrem Ince, has also called for the release of Demirtas. The HDP commands only about 10 to 12 percent of support from the electorate, so Erdogan faces a bigger challenge from Aksener and Ince in the polls.

Aksener, a former interior minister, founded her Iyi Party after splitting with the nationalist MHP party, which backs Erdogan. This election will herald the switch to a powerful executive presidency narrowly approved in a referendum last year.

Aksener said that if the anti-Erdogan alliance were to obtain a majority in parliament, it would immediately move to revert to a parliamentary system, taking necessary constitutional changes to a referendum as soon as possible.