

Afghan Forces Kill, Arrest More Daesh Terrorists in Continued Clashes



Afghan security forces arrive at the site of a suicide attack in Kabul, Afghanistan March 21, 2018.

ZARANJ, Afghanistan (AP/Xinhua) – Afghan security forces stormed a hideout of Daesh terrorist group in Afghanistan’s western Nimroz province on Sunday, killing two militants and arresting another, provincial director for Information and Culture Mufti Habibullah Elham said.

“Units of Special Forces stormed a hideout of Khawarej (a reference to IS group) in Sayedabad area of Police District 3 in Zaranj city today morning killing two insurgents and arresting another,” Elham confirmed in talks with Xinhua.

No security personnel and civilians have been harmed during the operations, the official contended.

The security forces also discovered and seized a good quantity of arms and ammunition during the operations that lasted for a while, the official further said.

This is the fourth operation launched by Afghan forces against Daesh hideouts over the past week.

Earlier, security forces raided Daeshhideouts in the northern Mazar-i-Sharif, eastern Charikar and the western Herat cities, killing sev-

eral Daesh-affiliated terrorists, according to officials.

The regional affiliate of the Daesh group — known as the Daesh in Khorasan Province — has been the key rival of the ruling Taliban since the religious group’s takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021.

The Afghan caretaker government, which has downplayed the rival Daesh outfit as a serious threat, has vowed to smash the armed opponents in the war-torn Asian country.

Daesh has increased its attacks in Afghanistan, targeting both Taliban patrols and members of Afghanistan’s Shia minority.

Deputy Afghan government spokesman Bilal Karimi said authorities were serious about Afghanistan’s boundaries and sovereignty.

“The Daesh has no place in the country or among the people, nor does the Islamic emirate allow it,” he told The Associated Press. “The number of (Daesh) fighters killed or arrested so far is in the hundreds, but there is no exact number.”

The Daesh terrorist group has claimed responsibility for a number of high-profile attacks in Afghanistan. It said one of its members was behind a deadly bombing near a checkpoint in January at Kabul’s military airport, the same man who took part in an assault on a hotel in the capital last December, and a gun attack on the Pakistani embassy.

Once Everywhere, Saddam’s Image Scrubbed From Baghdad

BAGHDAD (AP) – Of his countless stories of his life as a hairdresser in Iraq, the one Qaiss al-Sharaa most enjoys retelling is about the day April 9, 2003, when he watched Iraqis pull down the statue of Saddam Hussein in front of his salon in Baghdad’s Firdos Square.

The 12-meter (39-foot) statue of the Iraqi dictator extending his right hand had been erected just a year earlier to celebrate his 65th birthday.

“There were lots of younger Iraqis from around the country — who naturally wanted their freedom,” al-Sharaa told The

Associated Press. “The statue showed the face of a man everyone feared.”

For the world, it became an iconic moment; live TV coverage as Marines tied the statue to a vehicle to pull the statue down inflated it into a symbol of the end of Saddam’s quarter century rule. In reality, the Firdos Square statue was a minor part of the huge number of monuments and palaces that Saddam erected to show off his power.

All his statues and images are long gone now, 20 years after that day. Many of his palaces and buildings have been re-

purposed for a new Iraq. But much of the hope that came in wiping away Saddam’s oppressive visual presence has also evaporated, burned away first by years of brutal violence and now by a wrecked economy.

Firdos Square has been refurbished as a small park, funded by private banks.

It’s not known what happened to most of the Saddam statue, but pieces of it were taken away by souvenir hunters.

A group of young U.S. Marines from Utah in 2003 said they sawed off the statue’s right hand and intended to sell

it on eBay. But it disappeared from their cargo as they tried to smuggle it home on their military flight back. All they have is the photo they took of themselves holding it like a prized fish.

Saddam’s policy of filling Baghdad and other cities with palaces and statues and portraits of himself “created this image of this leader,” Senior Research Fellow at Chatham House Renad Mansour told the AP. Saddam “needed to project power in different ways to remind the people who was in charge.”

6 Killed as Microbus, Tractor Collide in Egypt

CAIRO (Xinhua) – At least six people were killed and eight others wounded as a microbus collided with a farming tractor in Egypt’s Giza province adjacent to the capital Cairo, an Egyptian Health Ministry official said.

“The accident took place early in the morning as the microbus crashed into the tractor near an exit on al-Kurimat Road in Giza,”

Hossam Abdel-Ghaffar, spokesman of the Health Ministry, told Xinhua, noting the injured people were taken to a nearby hospital.

Egyptian local media said that most victims were passengers of the microbus that was severely damaged.

Road accidents claim thousands of lives in the most populous Arab country every year.

Most of the accidents are caused by human errors including speeding and negligence of traffic rules, as well as poor maintenance of roads.

Over the past few years, Egypt has been upgrading its road network by building new roads and bridges and repairing old ones to ease traffic and reduce relevant accidents.

ter the holy fasting month of Ramadan which ends later in April.

Rabha Saif Allam, specialist in Middle Eastern affairs at the Cairo Center for Strategic Studies, noted “an acceleration” in the normalization of ties.

She said this means an intensification of meetings “at the economic and security levels”, and believes normalization will be sealed by Raisi’s planned visit to Riyadh at the end of April.

The United States has for decades been the destabilizing factor in the Middle East and has an alliance, albeit a frequently strained one, with Saudi Arabia.

In a separate development on Saturday, Omani mediators arrived in the Yemeni capital Sanaa to discuss a new truce between Ansarullah and Saudi Arabia, an airport source said.

Diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict have multiplied since the Chinese-brokered Saudi-Iran deal to restore relations.

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of men, women, elderly people and children were staying overnight to pray. Some eyewitnesses said rubber-coated steel bullets were also fired.

They beat up worshipers with batons and riot guns, wounding many and arresting around 500 Palestinians.

Videos from inside the mosque showed Zionist officers repeatedly hitting people with batons while they appeared to lie on the floor. In the meantime, the cries for help from women and children could be heard in the back-ground.

Within less than 24 hours, the regime’s forces staged a second attack against the Palestinian worshipers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound.

In response to the aggression, more than 30 rockets were fired towards the occupied territories from southern Lebanon on Thursday, with the occupying regime targeting Gaza and positions of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas in Lebanon.

Since the start of the holy month, the Zionist regime has imposed strict restrictions on the entry and exit of Palestinians to and from the gates of Al-Aqsa Mosque. Amid heightened tensions with Palestinian worshipers, Israeli settlers also press ahead with their frequent incursions and provocative rituals at the holy site.

Expert... (Continued From Page 2)

IRGC military advisors Milad Heidari and Meqdad Mehqani were martyred on March 31 aerial assaults conducted by the occupying regime of Israel on the suburbs of Damascus.

Iran maintains an advisory mission in the Arab country, helping it in the face of foreign-backed terrorism. Back in 2017, the advisory assistance helped Syria vanquish the takfiri terrorist group of Daesh.

Role... (Continued From Page 3)

of Mary eating dates while in labor with Jesus to ease her pains.

“Dates are a part of the Muslim identity,” says Sha-

hina. “The tree is mentioned several times in the Qur’an as a source of food and fiber, help in childbirth, providing shade and symbolizing wisdom. Dates are considered a fruit, food, medicine, drink and sweetmeat.”

Dates also play an important role in many cultures. In the Middle East and South Asia, dates are available in abundance from street vendors and shops. The fruits, which symbolize gratitude, generosity and good health, are served to guests in people’s homes, at weddings, religious ceremonies and festivals.

“Dried dates play an important role in weddings among the Muslims in Pakistan and India,” adds Shahina. “Dried dates and sugar sweets are distributed among the guests in celebration once the marriage of the bride and groom has been solemnized. This practice, though losing popularity, is making a come-back among Muslim communities.”

“Date festivals are held in several countries of the Arabian Peninsula. There, date growers bring their date varieties to sell. Over the last decade, date festivals are beginning to attract tourists as a cultural festival.”

Dates are resilient to pests, do not rot when ripe so can be stored and transported easily and offer countless benefits when eaten.

“There is an old Arabic saying - the uses of dates are as many as days in the year,” says Shahina.

Dates are high in fiber, protein, natural sugars and various vitamins and minerals, which can help to tackle many health issues, such as cancer, diabetes, liver disorders and many more.

In some eastern cultures, pregnant women are encouraged to eat dates daily to help strengthen the muscles needed for childbirth and reduce bleeding. Soft dates are rubbed onto the palate of newborn babies to help them kickstart their new life.

Other parts of the tree have many uses too. The trunks are used for making roofs, the leaves are used to weave rugs, baskets and screens and the seeds are used to make prayer beads and sometimes ground for animal feed. Old trees are felled, and their trunks are used in light building work, mostly in villages. Accessories made from the date palm are common in fashion, in people’s homes and within hotel and garden architectural designs.

“It’s difficult to imagine a landscape in the Arab World without date palms,” says Shahina. “The tree, dates and products made from them are very much a part of Arab life.”

“I’ve always had some dates in my field bag when I’d go plant collecting in the Sultanate of Oman and elsewhere in the Arabian Peninsula. I’ve found them energizing, and eating just one or two dates was quite enough to keep me going for a few more hours.”

Perennial plants are receiving more attention as a possible answer to future food security. The date palm has sustained life for millennia and it’s likely the plant will continue to do so for many years to come.

Hezbollah... (Continued From Page One)

youth during an attack on unarmed civilians in the town of Azzun, east of the occupied West Bank city of Qalqilyah.

The Palestinian health ministry identified the young man as Ayed Azzam Saleem, 20, adding he died shortly after being critically injured by Zionist forces.

Witnesses said Israeli forces directly fired at young Palestinians who were demonstrating at the entrance to the town of Azzun in protest at the daily atrocities across the occupied territories.

Saleem, was first reported critically injured and rushed to a nearby hospital where he was pronounced dead of his injuries.

According to the Palestinian Information Center, the new fatality increased the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli forces’ live fire in the occupied West Bank and the 1948-occupied Palestinian territories since the beginning of 2023 to 98.

The new development came amid heightened tensions across the occupied Palestinian territories after Israeli forces violently stormed the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in the holy occupied city of Al-Quds and attacked Palestinian worshipers there.

Iranian ... (Continued From Page One)

importance of following up on the implementation of the Beijing Agreement and its activation in a way that expands mutual trust and the fields of cooperation and helps create security, stability and prosperity in the region,” a joint statement said.

On Saturday, a Saudi “technical delegation” met Iran’s chief of protocol, Mehdi Honardoust, at the foreign ministry in Tehran, SPA said.

The two countries severed ties after protesters in the Islamic Republic held angry rallies out-

side Saudi diplomatic missions following Riyadh’s execution of a prominent Shia cleric.

The shock rapprochement between mainly Saudi Arabia, the world’s biggest oil exporter, and Iran has the potential to reshape relations across a region characterized by turbulence for decades.

Under last month’s agreement, the two countries are to reopen their embassies and missions within two months and implement security and economic cooperation deals signed more than 20 years ago.

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has also been invited by Saudi King Salman to Riyadh, a trip planned to take place af-