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47 dead, 65 injured in multiple assaults

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KABUL (*PAN*): Forty-seven people, including militants, were killed and 65 others wounded during coordinated group assaults in Kabul, Nangarhar, Logar and Paktia provinces, the interior minister said on Monday.

On Sunday afternoon, Taliban insurgents launched a daring blitz on diplomatic missions and other high-security areas in the four provinces. The subsequent clashes left 36 attackers, eight security men and three civilians dead and 40 others, including 25 civilians, injured.

The attackers in Nangarhar and Paktia were gunned down on Sunday, but those in Kabul and Logar put up strong resistance. Assaults on the governor's office in Logar and the parliament building lasted 19 hours.

In the capital, where security recently transitioned to Afghan forces, the gunmen took positions in under-construction buildings in Sherpur, Darul Aman, near the parliament building, Paktiakot and Pul-i-Charkhi, striking key government offices.

At the same time, the fighters detonated their explosives-laden vehicles close to the Provincial Reconstruction Team (*PRT*) and the airport in Jalalabad, the capital of eastern Nangarhar province.

Addressing a press conference, Interior Minister Besmillah Mohammadi said the fighting in Kabul legthened because security forces were careful in repelling the insurgents to prevent civilian casualties.

He added two of the attackers, from the *Haqqani Network*, had been detained in Jalalabad and Gardez. The rebels had ifilterated into Afghanistan to create panic among civilians, the minister said, without explaining where the fighters had come from..

In a statement, Taliban said the attacks -- marking the beginning of their spring offensive -- were conducted by 30 fighters. The rebel movement claimed 220 Afghan and international soldiers had been killed in the assaults.