

(1) Registration...

The IEC however, last week announced that the outline for making the constituencies smaller had been rejected by government.

The IEC chief in the meantime raised concerns over interference in election commission affairs and urged all influential figures, politicians and government to remain neutral in the upcoming elections.

The candidate registration process started amid the ongoing voter registration process and based on the election commission statistics, so far over three million voters have registered their names across the country. (Tolo news)

(2) NDS Special...

KABUL - The National Directorate of Security (NDS) in a statement said the Special Forces of the directorate targeted a large compound of the Taliban group in Farah Rod district which the Taliban wanted to use for the attack.

The statement further added that the group's shadow district governor for Khak-e-Safid Mullah Abdul Bari and two other senior commanders in charge of a group of 100 insurgents were using the compound to mobilize forces for the attack.

According to NDS, the militants were looking to target several check posts located along the Farah and Farah Rod highway. At least fifteen Taliban insurgents were killed during the operation including a commander of the group identified as Lawang, NDS added.

NDS also added in its statement that NDS Special Forces also confiscated six tons of explosives along with several weapons and ammunition during the operation.

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

This comes as the group launched a coordinated attack on Farah city nearly ten days ago and managed to briefly take over some parts of the city before the Afghan forces launched a large scale operation to clear the provincial capital. (KP)

(3) India, Russia...

government should provide the grounds for joint investment of Russia and India in Afghanistan. The spokesman for the Afghan Ministry of Economy, Suhrab-Bahman, said joint investment of India and Russia is important for Afghanistan and the region due to the country's strategic location for trade and transit in the region. (Tolo news)

(4) Over Three...

the number of voters registering is increasing.

"The number of voters registering their names is increasing day by day and we will reach the target that the commission has determined," said Sayyad.

The registration process was launched over a month ago and has three phases. The first phase was registration of voters in provincial centers, which was extended for another month. The second phase started in district centers and the third phase will soon start in villages across the country.

The IEC chief said electoral material has been sent to villages already.

"The main material has been transferred and soon the third phase of the voter registration process will start," said Sayyad. Insecurity however is said to be one of the biggest challenges ahead of elections and some registration centers have not yet opened.

"In Farah province so far no materials and no Tazkeras have been sent and people cannot

use their voting rights as mentioned in the constitution," IEC operations deputy chief WasimaBadghisi said.

"In the districts where voter registration has been delayed, it will be extended for the same number of days as it has been delayed," MP Osman Farahi said. A number of people and institutions overseeing the election process meanwhile said they are worried about the transparency in the voter registration process because the IEC does not have a voter database and cannot differentiate between genuine and ghost names. (Tolo news)

(5) 2 Million Afghans...

and Ghor provinces to Herat City due to the drought and depleted food stocks of families.

"By mid-May, more than 21,000 people had been assessed by humanitarian partners and verified as having migrated due to the drought," the report added.

In the 20 provinces most affected by the drought, nearly 15 million people rely on farming, livestock or labour opportunities in agriculture.

Around two million people might become severely food insecure due to the drought, it warned, with humanitarian partners ramping up their response in a bid to reach 1.4 million of the most vulnerable people.

An amount of \$115 million is urgently needed to provide food support to help families through the lean season and supply them drinking water for six months. (Pajhwok)

(6) Six Men...

and said they will be handed over to the legal and judicial institutions.

Two days ago, armed men helped eight prisoners escape from police custody in Mazar-e-Sharif city and killed a police officer, Sami said.

He said the six men had been arrested in relation to this case.

"We have arrested six people and seized two weapons and one car. The investigations will reveal which group they belong to," said Sami.

Two days ago, eight prisoners were transferred from Balkh's Khulm district to the provincial capital. The prisoners however escaped while in police custody at the MaulanaJalaluddinBalkhi International Airport in Mazar-e-Sharif city.

Khulm district police headquarters released a video that was widely published by social media users. The video shows that Khulm police forces arrested a few illegal armed men and seized their weapons.

Khulm district police chief Noor Mohammad Khaksar said Saturday when they arrived at the airport they were ambushed by armed men and the prisoners escaped.

"When we were transferring them (the prisoners), the convoy was ambushed by a large number of armed men," said Khaksar.

A number of civil society activists in Balkh said the prison break was questionable.

"The arrested men should be immediately handed to legal and judicial departments and they should be brought to justice fairly," SayedMukhtarAhmadi, a civil society activist said.

Balkh residents also said illegal armed men in the city have created problems for them and they are tired of the situation.

"We are tired of war and violence," Balkh resident SayedJafar said.

"We are tired of illegal armed men," Balkh resident Zekrullah said.

The residents also asked police to reveal the identities of the arrested men. (Tolo news)

(7) Rashid Earns Praise...

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "I am also thankful to our Indian friends for giving our players a platform to show their skills.

"Rashid reminds us what's best about Afg. He remains an asset to the cricketing world. No we are not giving him away @narendramodi."

Hyderabad paid 40 million rupees (\$590,580) at last year's auction to land the leg-spinner from Afghanistan, where cricket is highly popular but sporting facilities are pitifully inadequate after decades of war.

An intense bidding war erupted for his services in the auction this year before Hyderabad exercised their right-to-match option for a staggering 90 million rupees (\$1.33 million).

He has made rapid strides since making his international debut in October 2015 as a 17-year-old, in February becoming the youngest to top the International Cricket Council's rankings for bowlers in the Twenty20 and 50-overs format.

Hyderabad coach Tom Moody had predicted the leg-spinner to have a major impact on this year's IPL.

He has taken 21 wickets with an economy rate of less than seven and earned a glowing tribute from former India batting great Sachin Tendulkar on Friday.

"Always felt @rashidkhan_19 was a good spinner but now I wouldn't hesitate in saying he is the best spinner in the world in this format," Tendulkar said on Twitter.

"Mind you, he's got some batting skills as well. Great guy." (Reuters)

(8) Badghis Police...

against opponents who indiscriminately kill soldiers and civilians.

"So far, we may not have as many problems, but know I tell you, kill them (terrorists) and if they (terrorists) fire at you, you respond ten times over," said Qaim.

Security officials in the province claim that Taliban are equipped with national army equipment but that since changes have been brought to the provincial leadership there has been an improvement in security - especially since night operations have started. (Tolo news)

Mexico Dismisses Trump's Proposed Tariffs on Imported Autos

MEXICO CITY - Mexico's Economy Minister Ildefonso Guajardo on Friday dismissed as "bombast" the latest U.S. proposal to impose tariffs on imports of foreign vehicles and auto parts.

Appearing on a television news show, the minister, who heads Mexico's negotiating team in talks with the United States and Canada to renegotiate the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), rejected the idea of introducing a new, higher tax on vehicles imported into the United States.

"What one has to understand is that our strategy and negotiating process cannot change because of this bombast that they launched over there," said Guajardo.

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Wednesday that he has instructed Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross to consider initiating a national security investigation into automobile imports.

Ross has initiated a so-called Section 232 investigation into the national security implications of automobile imports, according to the U.S. Commerce Department. Guajardo ridiculed the idea, jok-

ing that "over there, on the comedy shows, they say that having a Mercedes in Manhattan is a national security risk."

The U.S. proposal was widely seen as an attempt to pressure Mexico into agreeing to other U.S. demands, such as changes to the rules of origin for automobiles, but the tactic failed to sway Mexico.

"The more noise this bombast makes, the more we should concentrate and commit to a solid, well thought out strategy," Guajardo added.

He estimated there is a 40 percent chance NAFTA's partners will be able to negotiate a new deal before Mexico holds presidential elections on July 1.

The trade deal has been under negotiation since August on the insistence of Trump, who believes the terms benefit Mexico and Canada at his country's expense. (Xinhua)

National Dialogue Be Held For Creation of New Provinces: Pm

SHUJABAD - Prime Minister ShahidKhaqanAbbasi on Saturday that said a national dialogue must be held to evolve consensus for new province but it should not be used as mere election slogan.

Addressing a public gathering here after inaugurating Multan-Shujabad section of Sukkur-Multan Motorway (M-5), the prime minister said many other countries had also created new provinces that was possible in Pakistan too.

He was accompanied by Governor Punjab Muhammad RafiqRajwana and Minister for Water Resources Javed Ali Shah.

The prime minister earlier unveiled the plaque of the project what he said had been completed a year ahead of schedule.

The Sukkur-Multan Motorway is part of Karachi-Lahore Motorway Project and is being constructed under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that would cost Rs 294 billion.

Work on the motorway was started in 2016 and is scheduled to complete by 2019. It is a 6-lane access controlled facility, taking off from Sukkur and terminating at Multan, after passing through several major cities includingGhotki, Rahim Yar Khan, Sadiqabad and Bahawalpur.

The prime minister told the gathering that those who had now been calling for South Punjab province were part of Pervez Musharraf's government when new province could have been created within no time.

He said such people were just cheating the people and challenged them to prove their performance during their respective tenures with that of the PML-N government in all sectors.

He said the whole political elite should join heads on the issue of new provinces and other national issues as the politics of blackmailing and impersonation would not work anymore.

He said the present government had delivered even beyond its commitments and besides its own projects, it had also accomplished the half-complete projects of previous government that had been lingering for decades. He said the previous governments too had same resources but failed to deliver.

During the last five years, the government had executed record projects, comparing with the last 65 years. It had added around 10,400MW to national grid, comparing with 20,000 MW generated since creation of Pakistan. (Monitoring Desk)

End 'Hide and Seek' Brexit Approach, Barnier Tells UK

BRUSSELS - The EU's Brexit negotiator urged the British government on Saturday to stop playing "hide and seek" over its aims for trade ties and warned that delays in agreeing on judicial oversight risk wrecking any Brexit deal.

In pointed remarks after an ill-tempered week of talks in Brussels, Michel Barnier insisted he would not be intimidated by what he called a "blame game" from London of accusing the EU of inflexibility in rejecting British demands for close cooperation on security, trade and other issues after Brexit.

the unique legal structures of the EU, to which Britain had contributed for 45 years, which underpinned trust among member states. These, he said, could not be extended to a non-member.

The former French minister's comments come two days after an EU official dismissed as "fantasy" London's ideas for a customs deal, the border with Ireland and other issues.

British ministers said those remarks were not "helpful". Both sides are hoping to make progress on a treaty before Prime Minister Theresa May meets the other 27 EU national leaders in a month in Brussels. They aim to agree a treaty by October.

Barnier said he was ready to have "political level" talks to try to advance in three key areas where uncertainty remains, 10 months before Britain is due to leave in March 2019 -- how to rule on future disputes over the withdrawal treaty, a "backstop" solution for the Irish border and a framework for future ties. (Reuters)

Wide US-North Korea Gulf over Nuclear Deal Terms

WASHINGTON - Even if conciliatory rhetoric revives U.S.-North Korea summit plans, President Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un must overcome a gaping disconnect over what a deal on the North's nuclear weapons would look like.

Observers of the soap opera-style Trump-Kim summit drama could be forgiven for thinking that a fragile courtship is underway, where the tenor of each side's statements will determine whether the two can agree to sit down together.

At the heart of the North's negative rhetoric that led Trump to cancel the summit is a fundamental difference of views on the path to denuclearization. Reconciling those views may determine not just the success of any future meeting but whether a summit is feasible.

"You could look at this as trash talking in anticipation of the big game," said Christopher Hill, the lead U.S. negotiator with North Korea in the George W. Bush administration. "Frankly speaking, I think it's more serious."

Trump's letter to Kim on Thursday blamed "tremendous anger and open hostility" by Pyongyang for derailing the June 12 meeting in Singapore.

Then Trump changed his tune after North Korea's vice foreign minister, Kim Kye Gwan, responded not with more threats but qualified praise of the president and openness for talks. Trump said Friday that the two sides were talking about putting the summit back on track, possibly on the originally planned date.

And then on Saturday, Kim and South Korea's president, Moon Jae-in, held a surprise meeting to discuss carrying out the peace commitments they reached in their first summit and Kim's potential meeting with Trump, Moon's office said. On Sunday, Moon planned to disclose the outcome of that meeting. (AP)