

(1) Americans Head...

cast their votes Tuesday morning. The Democrat was heading to a polling place near her home in Chappaqua, New York, while the Republican was voting in Manhattan.

The candidates blitzed through the battleground states on Monday, accompanied by their families, political allies and celebrities. (Monitoring Desk)

(2) Afghanistan ...

major fight against the growing corruption in the country.

This comes as reports emerged earlier in July this year suggesting that the government is working on at least 20 major corruption cases involving highly political influential figures.

Afghanistan has been consecutively placed among the top three nations with most corruption during the recent years by international organizations combating corruption.

President Ghani pledged a strict anti-corruption measure shortly after he was elected as the new President of the country, calling the growing graft a major barrier to implement reforms and bring changes. (KP)

(3) Operation ...

under a proper plan and the security situation on the outskirts of Kunduz City would be given priority.

Kamawal said four Taliban including Qari Ahmad, a deputy to Muallim Sher Wali, who spearheads terrorist activities in Kunduz City, were killed and four others wounded in security forces' overnight raid.

According to Kamawal, weapons and explosives, landmines, two motorcycles, batteries and armored tools were recovered during the raid.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, however, rejected Kamawal's claims.

Earlier, Army Chief Gen. Qadam Shah Shahim had said "Operation Shafaq-2" which was postponed due to some tactical issues would be launched soon.

He had said militants suffered huge casualties this year compared to the past nine years and so Afghan forces also suffered more casualties than the previous year.

He did not provide figures for security forces losses, but a recent report from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) claimed Afghan forces' casualties increased by nine percent in the ongoing year, compared to the previous year.

SIGAR said a total of 5,523 Afghan service members were killed and an additional 9,665 wounded during the fighting season from January 1 through August 19. (Pajhwok)

(4) Iran, Afghanistan...

international relations to prepare the ground for holding scientific-sports workshops, joint camps and all-out competitions between universities.

Nasimi said that Afghanistan wants to take advantage of Iran potentials.

He called for holding Afghan students' national team camp in Iran especially for Taekwondo and Wushu teams which are scheduled to participate in the 29th World Students Competitions in China. (IRNA)

(5) UNESCO Chief...

the authorities as well as media organizations in Afghanistan do all they can to improve the safety of media workers."

Nematullah Zahir, a reporter for Ariana TV, was killed by a bomb near the city of Lashkar Gah while driving on a reporting assignment.

She said that as part of the drive to save lives and enable the media to continue informing the public, UNESCO and its partners have published guidebook for journalists in high-risk environments, which she called on all concerned to heed.

The Director-General of UNESCO issues statements on the killing of media workers in line with resolution 29 adopted by UNESCO Member States in 1997, entitled "Condemnation of Violence against Journalists." (Agencies)

(6) Next Year's ...

or lower house of the parliament rejected the precise budget account for 1394 fiscal year and decided to summon or introduce to

attorneys leaders of 40 budgetary units who spent less than 70 percent of their development budget. However, Hakimi said the absence of detailed plans, low capacity of procurement sections, lack of a monitoring system, lack of punishment and award culture, administrative corruption and interference of powerful individuals were main problems in budget spending.

"In the next fiscal year, all budgetary units would be assessed for their spending after the first five months, if any of them was unable to spend their budget, their allocations would go to other departments," he said.

He said revenue collected in 1394 reached 122 billion afghanis compared to 140 million afghanis this year with one and a half months remaining in the fiscal year. The revenue collected in 1394 and 1395 fiscal years were more than the target, said the minister, who hoped the country's economic growth would increase to 3.5 percent in the next fiscal year.

Senate chairman Fazl Hadi Muslimyar ordered the house financial and national economy commissions to assess the draft budget and present it to the house's general session for approval.

Under Article 98 of the Constitution, the general and development budgets are prepared in light of Meshrano Jirga's recommendations before being sent to the Wolesi Jirga for final approval. (Pajhwok)

(7) Improper Use ...

members to show commitment in reducing budget for ministries that failed to spend their funds.

A number of ministries are busy in construction activities instead of discharging their main and basic responsibilities, he said. A team from the Ministry of Urban Development should be tasked to monitor and manage standardization in the construction activities of ministries.

The president added the design for construction of district buildings has been prepared and would be implemented in near future. Other government departments would also get new buildings.

Construction of roads and railways and extension of fiber optic network should also be handed over to the administrative unit so relevant projects were properly executed, he said.

Basic reforms in offices are needed for reasonable usage of budget and delivery of effective services to the people, he said.

Ghani added ministers in the next fiscal year should brief the parliament about their ministries expenses after every three or six months.

"If we do not implement our promises with people and the international community, we may lose current opportunities and resources, we should have a clear plan for effective use of resources in the next three years," Ghani said.

The president added 10 international companies would be selected for the implementation of large-scale projects in coordination with the parliament and the people.

He said 10 provinces with poor economic situation should be focused for more investments so balanced development and social justice was observed in the country.

"Development of 20 border provinces is vital so that we observe Islamic and economic unity in Afghanistan," he said.

The attraction of \$2.1 billion investment for Afghanistan showed investors' strong trust in the country's future, he said, adding \$800 million of investment would be carried out in the power sector. Pointing to regional cooperation, Ghani said the railways line between Turkmenistan and Aqnaport would be inaugurated soon. Transportation of goods through railways would be five times cheaper than previous routes, he said.

Senate Chairman Fazl Hadi Muslimyar thanked the president for meeting with the Meshrano Jirga members and said the president had so far held 29 consultative meetings with senators.

Such close coordination and respect from the president was unprecedented and more of such meetings ensured better coordination and cooperation, he said.

He said budget and national projects were the rights of people and

no one should misuse them for their personal interest.

Muslimyar said the upper house supported administrative reforms because it could ensure stability and peace in the country. (Pajhwok)

(8) Kabul Blames...

The US-led airstrikes was carried out near the village of Buz-e Qandaghari in Afghanistan's Kunduz province on November 4 as US and Afghan troops clashed with the Taliban. In an interview with Sputnik Dari, Afghan Defense Ministry spokesman Davlat Vaziri pointed the finger at the Taliban militants, who he said "used their homes as human shields." He said that 30 Taliban militants were killed in the airstrikes, including ten field commanders. Vaziri admitted the civilian deaths during the raid, expressing regret about the tragedy.

"If as a result of our military operations, God forbid, the civilian population is suffering, we realize our mistakes and learn from them so that they can never happen again in the future," according to Vaziri. "Yes, we admit the civilian casualties who were citizens of Afghanistan and who died as martyrs. The Afghan Defense Ministry expresses its regret over it. I assure once again that we will draw lessons from what has happened," he said. He claimed that there are allegedly negative and positive aspects related to the deadly airstrikes. "We see both pros and cons [concerning the airstrikes]," he said. "We have destroyed the most dangerous Taliban warlords, who masterminded numerous attacks in Kunduz province. We obtained information that they planned a new attack on the city of Kunduz," Vaziri said. He added that the November 4 airstrikes targeted the Taliban's headquarters in Kunduz, where the militants' children also lived. Vaziri said that those children were killed in the airstrikes and that they were included in the civilian death toll because he said the Taliban militants' children are seen as shaheeds, or martyrs.

Meanwhile, mass protest rallies have been held in the city of Kunduz, with participants demanding the punishment of those responsible for the death of innocent people.

According to the demonstrators, the airstrikes targeted houses located at least a hundred meters away from the Taliban's headquarters. Protesters demanded that the authorities wrap up the investigation and make public its results by Thursday, otherwise the nearby motorways will be blocked.

Earlier, Vaziri held a meeting with the elders of the tribes in the province of Kunduz, during which he pledged a meticulous and unbiased investigation in the deadly November 4 airstrikes. (Sputnik)

(9) 2 New Polio... more children from being paralyzed. These steps included a large campaign in Paktika province from November 14 to 18 and increased surveillance, the statement said.

"We are deeply saddened by the news of two Afghan children have been paralyzed by polio. The government has made significant strides to stop this paralyzing disease. The main priority now is to rapidly immunize all children in Paktika and ensure that no other children succumb to this terrible disease," the Minister of Public Health Dr. Ferozuddin Feroz was quoted as saying.

It was necessary that all children in Paktika, particularly children of families recently returned from Pakistan, got their children vaccinated. The polio vaccine is safe and effective and the only way to prevent the polio disease. (Pajhwok)

(10) 6 Agriculture ...

back by the Ministry of Counter-narcotics under the Good Performance Initiative (GPI) programme. He said the storehouses were equipped with power and air conditions and also had electricity-generating machines.

He said earlier there was no place in Ghazni to preserve agriculture products as fruits and vegetables and farmers had option but to sell their harvest early against low prices.

Each of the warehouses have the

capacity of storing nearly 1,000 tonnes of agriculture items, the provincial agriculture, irrigation and livestock director, Abdullah Tasal, told Pajhwok Afghan News.

He said the storehouses were constructed keeping in view standards and had been currently put at businessmen's disposal for free.

He said this year onion harvest was excessive but was sold for very low price. From now on, they would purchase onion and other agriculture products and store them at the warehouses, he said. Then they would sell the products at appropriate time inside the country or export them abroad.

Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACCI)'s Ghazni chapter deputy head, Hayatullah Salimi, said the onion and potato yield was unprecedented in the province this year, however, their prices were much lower. He said businessmen had decided to purchase onion and potato from market and export them at a proper time after processing. He said there was a dire need for cold storage in Ghazni and the warehouses couldn't cope with all issues though relatively beneficial.

However, a gardener, Allah Mohammad, who owns four huge apple orchards, said every year his apples were rotted.

He had to sell the apples against low prices because there was no proper place to store the fruit, he said, asking the government to establish cold storages in districts.

(11) Meshrano...

and increasing animal products and allowing trading of products in a proper way in accordance with international standards specified by the World Organisation for Animal Health.

He said the charter was helpful and of great importance for Afghanistan in preventing animal diseases, exchange of experiences in animal health, standardizing food items and also effective in trading food products.

Meanwhile, Afghanistan's joining of SAARC's contract regarding support in power field would allow the country to access regional power, Zhwande said.

He said Afghanistan could be a good transit area for energy transmission in the region and could earn good revenue through this and it would bring about economic prosperity in Afghanistan. Afghanistan being a connection line between south and central Asia could pave the way for purchasing, selling and transmission of energy in the region.

He said Afghanistan's acceptance of such contracts gave it a chance to avail expertise from other countries in the field of power and contract could lead to a regional integration.

He said the SAARC contract was composed of 20 articles which had been signed by SAARC member countries' foreign ministers in 2016.

Afghanistan, Bhutan, the Maldives, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri-Lanka are members of SAARC.

Both the contract and the charter had been earlier approved by the Wolesi Jirga and now endorsed by the Meshrano Jirga by a majority vote. (Pajhwok)

(12) PIA to Increase ...

has been taken in view of demand for more flight by people travelling between the two countries.

The increased demand for flights between Kabul and Islamabad comes as the main route linking the two countries have been witnessing instability during the recent months.

On the other hand, a strict implementation of border management by Pakistan has resulted to a reduction in the use of land route by travelers.

The latest attempt by PIA to increase flights between the two countries comes as a significant reduction has been noted in bilateral trade between the two nations.

The Pak-Afghan trade volume was \$2.5 billion in 2010 which has now come down to \$1.8 billion, the officials said last month as they expressed concerns regarding that there could be further decrease in bilateral trade if transit trade through Pakistan is not facilitated. (KP)

(13) 950 Displaced...

to 2,500. Shah Mardanqal, a displaced person, said: "We are very happy that land plots are given to us but the plots are located in an area which lacks facilities like transport and drinking water."

He asked the officials concerned to resolve the water shortage issue and provide them with trucks to bring construction materials for building homes.

Allah Murad Dahi, provincial acting refugee affairs director, said over the past two years 3,000 families had taken refuge in Shiberghan fleeing from Faryab, Sari-Pul and some insecure districts of Jawzjan. (Pajhwok)

(14) Afghan ...

although when their families are added 371 people have been given the right to enter the country.

The interpreters' group wrote an open letter to Foreign Affairs Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault and Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian last week, asking for a meeting and claiming that current policy "endangers several dozen auxiliaries".

Despite not having visas, 14 interpreters have left Afghanistan for Europe, "preferring the risks of a dangerous journey to the certainty of a future tragedy", the letter said.

Some are "blocked in terrible conditions outside the European Union", it added.

About 700 Afghans worked for the French armed forces between 2002 and their departure in 2014.

Two-thirds of the were mechanics, labourers or cleaners, the rest interpreters.

UK, US block interpreters' asylum Interpreters who have worked for other countries involved in the war in Afghanistan have also faced difficulty in relocating.

In May an appeal court in Britain overturned a lower court's order to the government to stop deporting Afghans seeking asylum.

In the US a programme to resettle Afghan interpreters was blocked by Republican senators this summer, leading fellow Republican John McCain to accuse them of "signing the death warrants" of people who had risked their lives in the service of the US. (AFP)

(15) Woman Says...

have been sexually, physically or psychologically abused, but only a few thousand cases are reported each year.

For cultural and social reasons it is very difficult for an Afghan woman to approach a male officer, Oxfam has said, and when they do their complaints are rarely handled properly. In some cases the police assault or even rape women who come for help, the aid agency said.

In this case, the police commissioner, Akram Zareh, denied any wrongdoing.

"I am an honest policeman. I am 60. She is like my daughter," Zareh told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone. "This is a plot against me."

Mariam's father, Khairuddin, brought his daughter to the capital Kabul to draw attention to her story and seek justice.

"My daughter said that she would burn herself alive, because she could not go out of the house and could not make eye contact with anyone due to shame," Khairuddin said by phone.

"Respecting her privacy, the attorney general asked Mariam to tell her story to a special female anti-violence officer in private," Bakdash Azizi, the attorney general's chief of staff, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

"After hearing the case, the attorney general appointed the Balkh provincial prosecutor and a special military prosecutor to investigate and present their findings as soon as possible."

Zareh is still serving as the district police commissioner, and was already being investigated in another rape case, Azizi said.

In Kabul, Mariam said she would not go home until he was removed from office. "I will burn myself, but will not go back home where he is ruling. I will stay here until I get justice," she said. (Reuters)

(16) Govt. Launches...

was investigating relevant officials and institutions in connection with Yaqoob Sharafat's assassination and would also assess the security situation in Zabul, he said. (Pajhwok)

(17) Zabul Clash...

have not yet commented about the

incident. The group, however, claimed inflicting casualties on security forces in Shajoe, Sewri and Shahr-i-Safa districts. (Pajhwok)

(18) SDA Drivers...

securing release of the abducted officials were underway, but there had been no breakthrough. Tribal elder Haji Gul Habib also confirmed the incident. But the Taliban rejected the fighters had kidnapped SDA officials and said they had no hand in the saga.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said there were many groups who called themselves Taliban and were involved in kidnapping and other crimes. He said the Taliban would punish individuals involved such activities.

He said the Taliban under an agreement had allowed SDA official to work in Logar province. Mujahid did not provide details of the agreement, but said SDA staff had not violated the agreement with them. (Pajhwok)

(19) Taliban Behead ...

peace process one month ago and were made part of the public uprising in Shiramhai area of Sari-Pul city, the provincial capital, had rejoined their former comrades. (Pajhwok)

(20) London March...

Britain decided on a 52-48 margin to leave the EU, a decision that stunned the political establishment who had been expecting a remain vote. (Xinhua)

(21) British Defense...

our armed forces and deliver more stability for military families.

"As well as saving the taxpayer money, around 140 million pounds (174 million U.S.dollars) by the end of the decade, the changes will reduce the number of personnel being regularly moved between different bases, providing greater long-term stability and certainty for our armed forces and their families." (Xinhua)

(22) Iraq Says ...

three weeks of a massive offensive to dislodge the extremist militants from Mosul, their last major stronghold in Iraq. On Oct. 17, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi announced the start of the offensive to retake Mosul, the country's second largest city. (Xinhua)

(23) US Sets...

Commission (USITC) make affirmative final rulings, which are expected to come early next year. CTL plate is widely used in the building sector, agricultural, construction and mining equipment, and machine parts and tooling. (Xinhua)

(24) UN Warns ...

more people at risk of starvation in the months to come as stocks run out. There is a need to act now to prevent a catastrophe," Tisot warned in a statement issued in Juba. FAO said an increasing number of South Sudanese will continue to face difficulty in meeting daily food needs in the coming months despite harvests.

"The renewed violence has had severe repercussions on agricultural production and stability needs to be restored to enable farmers to return to their fields," Tisot said. According to FAO, since the outbreak of fighting in South Sudan's capital Juba and other parts of the country, cereal prices have increased by more than 500 percent compared to the same period last year. (Xinhua)

(25) Kurdish-Led...

the battle to liberate al-Raqqa. The Syrian government has not yet commented on the war on al-Raqqa by the U.S.-backed SDF, but analysts here played down the SDF war on IS as a "media campaign." (Xinhua)

(26) Airstrikes Kill...

airstrikes against civilian areas in rebel-held towns and cities, a claim always denied by Moscow. Much of Idlib has fallen to the rebels over the past two years, with the government holding only two Shiite towns in the countryside of that province. (Xinhua)

(27) Clinton and...

supporters, who had been warmed up with performances by Lady Gaga and Jon Bon Jovi - including a duet on "Living on a Prayer." (AP)