

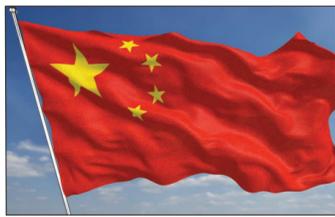
China Natural Gas Imports Up 28.3 Pct in September

BEIJING - China's imports of natural gas continued fast growth in September while domestic production increased steadily, official data shows.

Imports of natural gas surged 28.3 percent year on year to 7.62 million tonnes last month, data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) shows.

The pace was 9.7 percentage points slower than the increase recorded in August. In the first nine months of this year, imported natural gas totaled 64.78 million tonnes, up 34 percent year on year.

China's imports of natural gas have seen steady growth to meet



increasing domestic consumption, partly driven by government initiatives of using clean energy for winter heating instead of coal. Natural gas output increased by 8.5 percent in September, 1.2 percentage points slower than in August, the NBS data shows. (Xinhua)

Foreign Banks Keen to Invest in Mega Project of NPHP: Farrukh

ISLAMABAD - Foreign banks keen to invest in government's mega project of 'Naya Pakistan Housing Programme' (NPHP) announced by Prime Minister Imran Khan.

While talking to PTV, Government spokesperson on Economy and Energy Dr Farrukh Saleem has appreciated to the government for initiating 'Naya Pakistan Housing Programme' said that the programme will facilitate the masses and would help to boost various sectors of national economy. He explained about the benefits of the programme and said that the World Bank will invest in mortgage business that will start in this regard and it would be proved huge economic



driver too. He emphasized that ten million houses are required to be constructed in Pakistan as a common man wants to construct his own house but impos-

sible for him in limited resources adding the government having a solid and comprehensive strategy regarding this programme. (Monitoring Desk)

(1) Afghans Vote for...

Polls close at 4 p.m. (1130 GMT). The results of the polling will not be released before mid-November and final results will not be out until December.

The first parliamentary elections since 2010 are being held against a backdrop of near-daily attacks by the Taliban, who have seized nearly half the country and have repeatedly refused offers to negotiate with the Kabul government. The U.S.-backed government is rife with corruption, and many Afghans have said they do not expect the elections to be fair.

Officials at polling stations struggled with voter registration and a new biometric system that was aimed at stemming fraud but instead created enormous confusion because many of those trained on the system did not show up for work. The biometric machines arrived just a month before polls and there was no time to do field testing.

The U.N. mission in Afghanistan praised those who had made an effort to vote despite the technical issues, many of whom waited in long lines for hours as polling stations remained open late. "Those eligible voters who were not able to cast their vote, due to technical issues, deserve the right to vote," it said in a statement.

The Taliban had vowed to attack the election, and on the first day of polling at least 36 people were killed in nearly 200 attacks, including 27 civilians, according to Deputy Interior Minister Akhtar Mohammed Ibrahim. He said security forces killed 31 insurgents in gun battles.

On Sunday, a roadside bomb in the eastern Nangarhar province struck a vehicle filled with civilians, killing 11 people, including six children, according to Attahullah Khogyani, spokesman for the provincial governor.

No one immediately claimed the attack. The Taliban and an Islamic State affiliate are both active in Nangarhar. Afghan civilians are often killed by roadside bombs intended to target security forces. In the northern Balkh province, insurgents shot and killed four men who were on their way to a polling station late Saturday, said Sher Jan Durani, spokesman for the provincial police chief.

Durani says the men were carrying their national IDs with stickers proving they had registered to vote. He blamed the attack on the Taliban, who have warned people not to participate in the election. (AP)

(2) Huge Turnout...

of democracy they were unable to stop them.

Mohib, after casting his vote in a polling station in Amani High School in Kabul, said the massive turnout was a great achievement for the government and the Af-

ghan nation.

"Despite threats, the Afghans participated en masse in this national process and they showed the enemies of democracy could not create trouble for making their future," he said.

Mohib said Afghan forces had been deployed in all polling stations across the country and voters could safely exercise their right to enfranchise.

The election process is ongoing in all provinces except Ghazni and Kandahar province (today) October 20.

The Independent Election Commission (IEC) said people who could not vote today due some reasons could vote tomorrow (Sunday) in certain polling stations. (Pajhwok)

(3) AIHRC Praises...

voting centres opened 1 to 4 hours late than the specified time and some voting centres did not open. Absence of voter lists in related voting centres:

The commission received consecutive reports from provinces about the lack of lists at polling centres.

Dysfunction of biometric devices: The commission's findings show biometric devices were not functional or employees were not familiar how to use the devices in the majority of polling centres.

Security incidents and threats: AIHRC observers reported over 22 security incidents including a suicide attack in Kabul that inflicted casualties to people.

Absence of IEC staff in polling centres:

Based on the commission's findings show IEC staff were absent from some polling centres or came late to duty station resulting in a delay of the voting there.

Removal of electoral stain from fingers:

The commission witnessed the electoral stain could be easily removed by using detergents.

Based on these observations, the commission asked the IEC to take urgent measures regarding the opening of polling centres, dispatch necessary materials to polling centres and facilitate citizens to use their right in accordance with the provisions of the law.

AIHRC asked defence and security forces to take urgent measures regarding the security of polling centres in during elections.

While visiting a polling centre to cast her vote, AIHRC chairperson, Sima Samar said elections was an important activity so active participation of eligible citizens was a standard for transparent and fair elections. (Pajhwok)

(4) Over 5,500...

The IECC spokesman said in connection to October 20 polls thousands of complaints and reports landed in the commission.

From Kabul 1,700, Farah 91, Faryab 184, Samangan 89, Zabul 59,

Sar-i-Pul 79, Daikundi 47, Khost 15, Jawzjan 97, Takhar 27, Uruzgan 37, Badghis 55, Bamyan 95, Balkh 498, Baghlan 225, Badakhshan 122, Parwan 48, Panjshir 129, Paktia 113, Kunar 85, Kunduz 129, Laghman 28, Logar 200, Wardak 45, Nangarhar 356, Nimroz 103, Herat 649 and Helmand 125 complaints had been received, the source said.

Rohani said some polling stations in Kabul worked in late hours due to unfamiliarity of polling staff with the use of biometric system, non-availability of voter list and lack of ballot papers.

He asked the IEC to address the challenges and let the people to exercise their right of vote. (Pajhwok)

(5) Pak-Afghan...

Afghanistan in smooth conduct of upcoming Parliamentary elections. Moreover, the spokesperson said that the crossing points will remain closed for all kinds of traffic except emergency cases.

According to Reuters, Afghans unable to vote in Saturday's parliamentary election after hundreds of polling stations failed to open were given another chance to cast their ballot on Sunday after voting times were extended despite security threats and warnings of fraud.

Around three million Afghans voted on Saturday, officials said but across the country, there were complaints that polling stations remained closed, often because staff failed to turn up.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan issued a statement saying it was encouraged by the high numbers who voted on Saturday, many of whom endured long delays due to technical and organizational problems.

"Those eligible voters who were not able to cast their vote, due to technical issues, deserve the right to vote," it said.

The Sunday extension was made for 401 polling stations and 500 extra officials were deployed but only 253 actually opened, with the remainder closed for security reasons, Abdul Bade Sayad, chairman of the election commission told reporters.

Armed men loyal to local power brokers in some provinces entered polling stations by force and broke election materials which caused serious irregularities, said Sayad.

Many independent election observers, seen as an important check on efforts to manipulate the result, have been reluctant to work, fearing militant attacks. On Sunday, the bodies of four observers were found in the northern province of Balkh after they had been abducted a day earlier and shot.

"It is not an ideal scenario," one foreign security official said, noting the extra pressure placed on already stretched security forces

which have been on high alert following Taliban warnings that they would target the election.

Over 120 incidents involving hand grenades or improvised explosive devices were reported on Saturday and scores of people were killed or wounded across the country. In one incident, 15 people were killed by a suicide bomber who tried to enter a polling station in Kabul, but overall the violence was not as bad as some officials had feared.

According to United Nations figures, 36 people were killed and some 130 wounded across the country on Saturday.

Meanwhile, other violence underlined the dangers throughout Afghanistan. Eleven people, including six children, were killed early on Sunday, when their car hit a roadside bomb in the eastern province of Nangarhar. It was unclear if the bomb was related to the elections. (Agencies)

(6) Some Election...

way been intentional. Going forward, government, political parties and the election commissions need to work together to prevent the same mistakes from happening again in future, he said.

On the issue of the biometric system, he said the technical issues the IEC faced came about due to the limited amount of time the commission had had in terms of rolling out the process

He said the people who were not able to vote on Saturday would have the chance to do so on Sunday.

On the issue of presidential elections he said any delay in holding them would be unacceptable and that he hoped no political leaders interfered in the process.

Moving on to the matter of peace, he said countries that support the insurgency could easily help end the war in Afghanistan if they really wanted to.

He also said that during the US Special Representative for Afghanistan's Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad's first trip to Kabul earlier this month he had held discussions with the National Unity Government leadership but had not informed them of any plans to meet with the Taliban during his visit to Qatar in the same week.

He said only when Khalilzad returned to Kabul after visiting four other countries in the region did he tell Kabul about his talks with the Taliban. (Tolo news)

(7) First Meeting...

historical and brotherly relations with Afghanistan, Pakistan is investing in the development of human capital of Afghanistan with the expectation that these students would play a vital role in the economic future of the country.

All the students appreciated Embassy's outreach efforts and were happy to avail opportunity to study in Pakistan. (PR)

(8) Gen. Raziq...

along with the provincial intelligence and military chiefs.

The attack that narrowly missed US and NATO forces top commander Gen. Scott Miller also injured the provincial governor, Zalmay Weesa. Deputy governor for social affairs, Haji Agha Lalai Dastagiri, told Pajhwok that it was a huge loss for Afghanistan and especially Kandahar province that Gen. Raziq was no more.

He said Gen. Raziq was a brave and experienced police commander who with people's cooperation had been able to maintain Kandahar's security.

Dastagiri said unity among the ranks of Afghans could help preserve Gen. Raziq's achievements.

When asked how the attack unfolded, Dastagiri said one of the governor's guards opened fire at the meeting participants. The guard had been appointed about one and a half months ago and the Ministry of Interior was investigating in this regard, he said.

The official said National Directorate of Security chief Masoom Stanikzai had arrived in Kandahar at the head of a high level delegation to investigate the incident.

Dastagiri said tribal elders urged the spymaster to recommend the appointment of Gen. Raziq's brother Tadin Khan Achakzai as the new Kandahar police chief.

The elders also demanded a postponement of the Wolesi Jirga elections in Kandahar and then President Ghani ordered the elections to be delayed for a week.

Wolesi Jirga member from Kandahar Hamid Lalai said Gen. Raziq had recently initiated his peace efforts and a number of Taliban leaders returned to a normal life with his persuasion.

The lawmaker believed the killing of Gen. Raziq was beyond the ability of the Taliban and he must have been killed by regional intelligence agencies.

Deputy police chief for Kandahar Rahmatullah Atrafi announced at the funeral of Gen. Raziq that the president had appointed his brother Tadin Khan as the new police chief.

But later the Ministry of Interior rejected his claim and said Atrafi himself had been appointed as acting police chief.

Kandahar residents said they were shocked over the incident and demanded a serious and comprehensive investigation. (Pajhwok)

(9) Taliban Conduct...

had been closed from the total of 21,000 and several others shut as a result of technical issues.

However, he termed the voting process at night as challengeable and it would get more challengeable in case of delay.

He said praised widely participation of people in the Wolesi Jirga elections and termed it as huge achievement of the government. (Pajhwok)