

(1) 148 IEC Staff in...

dozens of people having lined up from early Saturday morning. Voters also complained about problems with the voter lists and said that there had been problems with the biometric system. Residents said some polling stations opened late and voter material also only arrived late at some centers. "There were problems with the voter's registration lists, some (sections of the) alphabet were missing and people were disappointed and left the process without casting their votes," Rohullah a resident of Kandahar said. "When we went to register our complaints, but no one was ready to register our complaints," Mahbob another resident said. Meanwhile, the regional IECC office says that it has registered dozens of complaints against violations, challenges and election violations on election day. "Most of the complaints are against the voter's registration lists, the second complaints were against the observers - that some observers were encouraging people to vote for their favorite candidates - but the main challenge was the late opening of the stations and the lack of materials," said Karimullah Stanikzai head of IECC regional office. But the local IEC office said the election had been a success. "Only 10 percent of our polling station was not active at 7am due to security measures in the city because the staff at some stations arrived late," said Nimatullah Wardak head of the IEC regional office. At the same time, on election day, several security threats were reported. "The enemy was active on election day, but our brave security forces discovered and defused several mines in several districts and Kandahar city," said Rahmatullah Atrafi police security chief of Kandahar. "Despite Taliban threats our security forces were able to prevent the enemy (from carrying out) such threats," said Abdul Hanan Munib Kandahar's acting-governor. (Tolo news)

(2) MPs Warn...

Upper house member from Zabul province Zalmai Zabuli also expressed similar views. Senate chairman Fazl Hadi Muslimyar said: "Nangarhar people have not gained this project by force but it has been approved by government and it should not ignore the demand of Nangarharis." "If the donors do not provide fund then why government officials went and laid the foundation stone, Nangarhar is part of Afghan soil. I call on the president to address the issue in the Cabinet meeting and reject it." He called on the government to power lines to extend Nangarhar along the highway because Taliban used to cut off the lines in Badpak district of Laghman and create hurdles for people. (Pajhwok)

(3) Pakistan Embassy...

Taliban member said it was a positive step in terms of facilitating continued talks between Taliban, US and Pakistan while a political affairs analyst Mohamad Mutmaen said: "Pakistan released Mullah Baradar either due to US pressure or due to a goodwill (gesture) between US and Taliban. I think this shows goodwill by the US, Taliban and other countries for peace." Neither government nor the High Peace Council have yet commented but some political figures said the release of Baradar will prolong the war in Afghanistan, and will not help achieve peace. "So far Pakistan is not ready to give up on its previous strategies and the release of him (Baradar) means the continuation of war. Same as the martyrdom of Gen. Raziq is the continuation of war, the release of Mullah Baradar is also the continuation of war," said Ahmad Wali Massoud, head of Ahmad Shah Massoud Foundation.

Last week, a former member of Meshrano Jirga, Afghanistan's Upper House of Parliament, Amanullah Azami said: "Mullah Baradar should be freed in real and no doubt he can play a positive role in peace because he was a prisoner of peace." Sources said last week that Baradar was released after the intervention of Zalmay Khalilzad, US Special Representative for Afghanistan's Reconciliation, who visited Kabul twice this month to discuss peace talks with Afghan leaders. Baradar is a co-founder of the Taliban movement in Afghanistan. He was Mullah Mohammed Omar, the founding leader of the Taliban's deputy. Omar's death was confirmed in October 2016. Baradar was captured in Pakistan by a team of Pakistan's intelligence agency, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), and US's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) officers in February 2010. (Tolo news)

(4) Balkh University...

self-reliance through sustainable development solutions," said USAID Mission Director Herbie Smith. "USAID is proud of Balkh University and the announcement of their financial autonomy," he added. Chancellor of Balkh University Mokamal Alkozai said, "As Balkh University is responsible for leading the academic services in the whole northern and north-east region, this status will enhance our ability to serve better. We thank MoHE leadership in trusting us

with financial autonomy and we promise to deliver as per our responsibilities." USAID's University Support and Workforce Development Program supports the MoHE and 11 public universities to implement strategies designed to ensure quality education and employment opportunities for Afghan students. In addition, the project links universities and potential public and private sector employers and strengthens the management of the partner universities. The partner universities include Kabul University, Kabul Polytechnic University, Kabul Medical University, Shaheed Rabbani Education University, Nangarhar University, Herat University, Balkh University, Kandahar University, Kunduz University, Khost University, and Jowzjan University. (PR)

(5) No Decision...

Afghanistan will take the lead in such talks. "The main objective of the meeting is that Pakistan wants to handover the peace process to the Russians while the process was started by the US," said a member of the Afghan High Peace Council (HPC) Malalai Shinwari. Meanwhile, lawmakers in Afghanistan's Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of Parliament) have said the rivalry between Russia and the US is the key problem and is holding back the talks. One Afghan senator, Mohammad Alam Ezediyar, said: "The role of regional countries is quite important to resolve the conflict in Afghanistan, because the prolongation of war in the military presence of the US in Afghanistan has caused serious concerns in the region."

"This meeting in the real sense looks like a major regional maneuver against the US; the Russians and its allies in fact want to convince the Americans that they have influence over the situation in Afghanistan," said MP Ghulam Farooq Majroh. This comes after Pakistan announced on Saturday it would take part in the Moscow talks. Pakistan's Daily Times reported that according to officials, Islamabad will attend the planned meeting on peace in Afghanistan. Originally the meeting was scheduled for September 4 in Moscow, but Afghanistan refused to attend citing that any such discussions should be Afghan-led. When the US turned down the invitation to attend, Kabul followed suit. This came after the Taliban announced it would send a delegation to Moscow from Qatar. However, Russia's Interfax news agency recently reported that the meeting would now take place on November 1 and that Kabul and the Taliban would both attend. But Russia's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova said on Thursday that details including the date and attendees were still being worked on. She said no date had yet been decided on.

In August it was confirmed that Afghanistan and Russia would co-chair proposed talks in Moscow on Afghanistan's peace, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) said. In August, Afghan government announced that Afghanistan and Russia will co-chair proposed future talks in Moscow on Afghanistan's peace. (Tolo news)

(6) U.S. Envoy to...

Khelwager said that is important for the government particularly for the ministry of information and culture to raise awareness about the role of journalists described in Islam. Following the issue, the head of Ariana News Sharif Hassanyar, who also attended the event said that in last two years have been the deadliest years for the media community in Afghanistan. "Unfortunately, we have lost more than 20 journalists in these two years, which is huge and a very bad news for the media family in Afghanistan," he said. Hassanyar, meanwhile, said that there is a battle for brightness and darkness in Afghanistan as he believes that could be the reason why journalists and media outlets were being targeted in the country.

"The reason why enemies are targeting journalists and media in Afghanistan is very clear, this is a fight between brightness and darkness and its very clear that journalists are working for the brightness, for democracy for the freedom of speech to keep this owned and to go forward," he said. (ATN)

(7) Faryab War...

Abdul Ghafoor, 50, who displaced person along with his eight-member family, said they left behind everything at home in Qaisar district and were only able to save their lives. "I lost my foot when a mortar shell landed on our home a month back." Najiba, 40, another war-displaced woman, said they were displaced from Khwaja Sabzppsh district due conflict in their area. She said clashes were ongoing in their district for the past six months. She urged the government to help provide them basic assistance as soon as possible as winter season was fast approaching. A number of other families expressed similar concern and urged the government to provide them preliminary assistance. (Pajhwok)

(8) UNAMA Urges...

the many Afghans for their participation and recognized the expectations citizens now

have that the electoral authorities would ensure that their votes are counted and that any fraudulent ballots will be weeded out, the UN statement said.

The Mission acknowledged the extensive preparations and efforts of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces with regard to the elections.

Given the issues and shortcomings in electoral management that arose at polling stations, the Mission looked forward to the electoral authorities clearly communicating how these are being addressed, while ensuring the maximum level of independent scrutiny by observer entities.

All Afghan authorities and actors - including political parties, the government, candidates and security institutions - should oppose threats or disruption to the electoral process. Any citizen suspecting or witnessing fraud or irregularities should channel complaints through the relevant Afghan authorities, especially the Electoral Complaints Commission.

Voting in parliamentary elections has been completed in 33 of the country's 34 provinces. A decision is pending by electoral authorities on when circumstances will permit voting to take place in the remaining province of Ghazni.

The UN underscores its continued support for the people of Afghanistan and the country's electoral authorities in their efforts to develop sustainable democratic institutions. (Pajhwok)

(9) US Expert Sees...

option is another gap in this strategy. "It relied too much on the idea that the military will help the government regain control of the country and population that has not worked, but now I think they have realized that they are moving on to a different part of strategy which is to seek a negotiated settlement," he added. He said he believes that Washington cannot bring peace to Afghanistan in the absence of Tehran, Moscow and Beijing. "I am afraid if the US tries to bring peace or something like peace to Afghanistan without involving Iran and Russia and China, then it will not succeed, because any of those countries especially Iran and Russia have the capacity to make sure that anything that is against their interest fails," Rubin said. Meanwhile, Bushra Gohar, a former Pakistani senator, said the peace talks should be carried out with Taliban supporters not with Taliban themselves as she said the group is not independent.

"We have to see what their sponsors want. Who is supporting them? Taliban for me, is not an indecent body. So unless we talk to those sponsors, and bring them to the table, change the policies that I find...these are demolition squads that are being used and we are trying to say that they have stakes in peace," Gohar said as he addressed the conference in Herat. Some analysts meanwhile talked about reasons behind the absence of Taliban at the peace talks table.

"The view of the Taliban has not changed from the beginning and will not change. What will change is complicated formulas in regional and international levels," said Shahgul Zezae, an MP. "The main cause behind the failure of peace programs was that the Taliban's main demands were not taken into account. What are the Taliban's main demands? Two big demands: first, the full withdrawal of foreign forces based on a proper schedule, and second, the establishment of an Islamic system which will represent all Afghans," said Nazar Mohammad Motmaen, a political affairs analyst.

The security dialogue is held in Herat every year. According to the Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies (AISS), the conference will discuss the following topics:

- Afghan Conflict: The Nexus of Internal and External Drivers.
- Political System: Presidential VS Semi-presidential VS Parliamentary.
- Afghanistan's Economy: From Rentier State to Developing Economy.
- Afghanistan & The Grand Bargain of South Asia.
- The Taliban: What Do They Want?
- Afghanistan's Foreign Policy Status: Neutral, Connector or Divisive?
- The Way Forward: Do we need a Second Bonn Conference/Process? (Tolo news)

(10) Korea Continues...

In collaboration with the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA) of the Ministry of Interior of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Korea's contribution will support UNHCR's humanitarian activities for refugees in Iran by improving their health status and self-reliance. The objectives of this project will be achieved through a variety of refugee related activities including: supporting the Universal Public Health Insurance Scheme for refugees, providing assistance to maintain and enhance access to primary healthcare facilities, providing business training to establish home-based enterprises, and providing formal vocational training through partners. This generous contribution will be used to fund activities implemented for the project period from January 1, 2018 to December 31,

2020 in coordination with UNHCR's main government counterpart, BAFIA.

The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea in Iran, Ryu Jeong-hyun, and UNHCR Acting Representative, Iryna Korenyak, marked the occasion by signing the Letter of Understanding at UNHCR's country office in Tehran.

Highlighting the importance of supporting the large refugee population in Iran, his Excellency, Ryu Jeong-hyun stated "On behalf of the Korean Government, it is my great pleasure to be able to make this contribution to the meaningful project 'Protection and humanitarian assistance to Afghan refugees in Iran', continuing our close partnership with UNHCR over the past five years and reaffirming the Korean Government's firm commitment to providing humanitarian assistance in the future".

During the signing ceremony Iryna Korenyak appreciated Korea's ongoing support to Afghan refugees in Iran. "As one of UNHCR's longstanding donors, the Republic of Korea continues to support refugees in Iran to ensure that they have access to quality healthcare and livelihoods opportunities so that they are better able to foster self-reliance and to positively contribute to the communities they are living in until conditions in their country of origin are conducive to their safe and dignified voluntary return".

Providing for close to 1 million registered Afghan refugees, the Islamic Republic of Iran currently ranks as the fifth largest refugee hosting country in the world. Of these refugees, 97 per cent reside in urban areas across the country. The remaining three per cent live in 20 government-run refugee settlements. In addition to registered Afghan refugees, government estimates indicate that there are 1.5 to 2 million undocumented Afghans in the Islamic Republic of Iran. In 2017, the Government of Iran initiated a country-wide exercise to identify the undocumented Afghan population and to facilitate the regularization of this large number of individuals.

UNHCR has maintained an uninterrupted presence in the country for 34 years, and works in close coordination with BAFIA to provide protection and assistance to Afghan and Iraqi refugees throughout the Islamic Republic of Iran. (UNHCR)

(11) Afghans Misery...

be in five years, approximately all of the 1,000 respondents said that they do not see a breakthrough in their economic woes at least in the short term period.

"There is chaos when you assess the situations in Afghanistan, therefore we are pessimist about our future," said one resident in Kabul Arzo.

It is very difficult to be hopeful when you see the present situation in Afghanistan" a resident of Kabul Hajji Mohammad Taqi said. "There are problems, but the Afghan government and the Afghan nation are united," said Omid Maisam, deputy spokesman to CEO Abdullah Abdullah.

The unprecedented nature of the findings highlights Afghans' near-universal lack of optimism - a finding that is all the more notable given the population's very young age structure: two-thirds of adults interviewed for the statistically representative 2018 survey are aged 35 or under.

According to the Gallup report, Afghans also give extremely negative responses using another common approach to measuring well-being which asks people about the quality of their day-to-day experiences and emotions. (Tolo news)

(12) 'Powerful Men...

polling stations ran out of ballot papers on the election day.

He said names were missing from voter lists and lack of equipment and personnel hampered the voting process and a large number of people were unable to take part.

Besides these problems powerful individuals were also present and stuffed ballot boxes for specific candidates they supported, he said. (Pajhwok)

(13) Pakistan to...

In August it was confirmed that Afghanistan and Russia would co-chair proposed talks in Moscow on Afghanistan's peace, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) said.

Nasir Andisha, Acting Deputy Foreign Minister for Management and Resources said at the time: "Delegations from Afghanistan, the Russian Federation, the Central Asian countries and Afghanistan's partners are working on a timeline and agenda for the meeting. We will determine the time based on a consensus." "When asked about Afghan government's opposition to the original plan, Andisha said: "It is not about who talks with the Taliban and how we react to it. The point is whether we can accept the fact that the Taliban attends (the talks) as a (single) party at a multilateral discussion where independent countries are attending?"

Officials from Afghanistan's High Peace Council (HPC) said the Afghan government objected to the Moscow talks because the conference had been scheduled without their permission and without it being Afghan-led. "All countries which have met with the Taliban have asked for Afghan government's permission but the Russian's case was no doubt different," said HPC spokesman Sayed Ehsan Tahiri. Moscow's efforts are however not the only attempts to bring

peace to Afghanistan. In recent months, the US has stepped up its efforts to talk peace with the Taliban and is known to have met with the group's leaders on a few occasions in Qatar.

In late September, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo officially announced the appointment of Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad as Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation. Pompeo said in a memo that Khalilzad will lead US efforts to support, facilitate, and participate in a peace process between government and the Taliban.

"There is no one better suited for this duty than an expert diplomat like ambassador Khalilzad, who was born and raised in Afghanistan, and has previously served as the US ambassador to Afghanistan, Iraq, and the United Nations," Pompeo said in a memo.

In the memo Pompeo said he was confident in Khalilzad's ability to execute the mission. "I am confident in Ambassador Khalilzad's ability to execute this mission, and we are grateful for his willingness to step back into public service. As we welcome him back to the Department, let us rededicate ourselves to achieving a durable peace in Afghanistan that will ensure security for the American people. This goal is realistic. We have a team in place to accomplish it. Let's get the job done," said Pompeo in the memo.

Khalilzad has since paid a fleeting visit to the region including two trips to Afghanistan, to Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar.

While in Qatar, he met with a Taliban delegation in a bid to break the deadlock over the peace process.

The group confirmed in a statement that its members met with Khalilzad. They said the head of the Qatar political office Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai, Mawlawi Salam Hanafi, Shuhabuddin Delawar, Qari Deen Moh. Hanif, Zahed Ahmadzai and Sohail Shaheen were at the meeting.

This is the second meeting of a top US official with the Taliban.

In July, Alice Wells, the US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs met with Taliban officials to discuss ways to lay the groundwork for peace talks.

Earlier this month, the head of the High Peace Council, Mohammad Karim Khalili, said some members of the council have also indirectly exchanged ideas with the Taliban leadership and have been told by the group's leadership that war is not the solution for Afghanistan's crisis. Addressing a consultation meeting with political figures and parties on the peace process on October 17, Khalili said the Taliban leadership has reached the decision that war is not the answer.

"We have passed on our ideas and have got their ideas with the Taliban at different levels even with the leadership of the Taliban movement. All these have happened through mediation," Khalili said.

The HPC officials said that President Ashraf Ghani has started discussions about forming an authorized and inclusive delegation to handle peace talks with the Taliban.

"The involvement and coordination by the US as well as China, Russia, India and Britain are necessary. We are trying to have other countries' consensus on peace," said Akram Khpulwak, head of the HPC Secretariat. However, no details on the Moscow talks dates have been announced by the Afghan government as yet. (Tolo news)

(14) Taliban Whip 2...

Pajhwok the lashed women were bread-earners of their families and worked outside home. He said the two women were punished after as per recommendation of Qazal Qashlaq village's mosque prayer leader.

He further said husbands of the two women were in Iran and they were not aware of the incident. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said he was unaware about the incident and promised to investigate it. (Pajhwok)

(15) 13 Abducted...

confirmed the power utility employees had been released and said an effort was underway to reconnect the broken electricity lines. The DAB's workers had visited the Badpak district to reconnect broken power cables when they were kidnapped by the insurgents (Pajhwok)

(16) U.S. Drones Target...

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

Paktia has been among the relatively calm provinces in Southeast of Afghanistan but the security situation of the province has deteriorated comparatively during the recent years. The militants are active in some districts of the province and often attempt to carry out terrorist related activities. (KP)

(17) Taliban Kill Two...

of two security guards of Logar governor and capturing one military vehicle.

Separately, unknown gunmen shot dead a student of Paktia University in the vicinity of the university compound early on Sunday. Police Spokesman Sardar Walli Naseem said the student was named Mohammad Naser and studied at law faculty.

The cause of his killing was personal enmity in Khost and Paktia provinces, he said. (Pajhwok)